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MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF UKRAINE

KHARKIV STATE ACADEMY OF DESIGN AND ARTS

Faculty of Design and Architecture

Department of Graphic Design

Wen Xiaoting

DESIGN OF THE VISUAL IDENTITY SYSTEM FOR THE HISTORICAL BRAND SUZHOU CAI ZHIZHAI BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF EMOTIONAL DESIGN

Master's Thesis submitted for the degree of **Master**

Specialty B2 Design

Educational and Professional Program "Visual Communication Design"

The qualification work contains the results of independent research.

The use of ideas, results, and texts of other authors is properly referenced.

Signed by: Wen xiaoting 9E23D31DA92F45F Full Name

(signature)

Scientific Supervisor:Olha Hanotska,

PhD in Art Studies, Professor

Kharkiv – 2026

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CONTENTS

	ABSTRACT	3
	INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER 1.	THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EMOTIONAL DESIGN IN THE RENEWAL OF TIME-HONORED BRANDS	8
1.1	Review of the Literature	8
1.2	Research Methods	11
	Conclusions to Chapter 1	12
CHAPTER 2.	ANALYSIS OF THE VISUAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF SUZHOU CAIZHIZHAI	13
2.1	Theoretical Basis of Emotional Design in Time-Honored Brand Image Renewal	13
2.2	Cultural Resources Survey and Problem Analysis of Suzhou Caizhizhai	14
2.3	Design Principles and Core Requirements Derivation	15
	Conclusions to Chapter 2	16
CHAPTER 3.	DESIGN OF THE EMOTIONAL VISUAL IDENTITY SYSTEM FOR SUZHOU CAIZHIZHAI	17
3.1	Idea. Concept	17
3.2	Project Description	18
3.3	Practical Implementation	20
	Conclusions to Chapter 3	21
	CONCLUSIONS	23
	LIST OF REFERENCES	25
	APPENDIX A (analogues)	28
	APPENDIX B (sketch and project proposal)	32

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

ABSTRACT

Wen Xiaoting. Design of the Visual Identity System for the Historical Brand Suzhou Cai Zhizhai Based on the Concept of Emotional Design – Manuscript.

Master's Thesis submitted for the degree of Master, specialty B2 Design, Educational and Professional Program "Visual Communication Design" – Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts. Kharkiv, 2026.

This thesis examines the renewal of the brand image of Suzhou Caizhizhai through emotional design. The study focuses on a practical problem shared by many time-honored food brands: historical recognition remains valuable, yet the way this recognition is expressed through logos, packaging, and contemporary communication does not always correspond to current visual habits or consumer use. The aim is therefore not to replace a traditional image with a fashionable one, but to identify which inherited features should remain recognizable and how they can be reorganized within a clearer contemporary system.

The research uses a three-level emotional design framework and combines it with product experience, brand experience, heritage-brand, and authenticity research. Chinese scholarship on emotional design, time-honored brand activation, consumer response, cultural inheritance, and regional visual-symbol construction provides the local research context. Rather than summarizing each source separately, the thesis groups the literature around several recurring issues: the balance between inheritance and innovation, the role of cultural fit and authenticity, the visual translation of traditional resources, and the relationship between brand renewal and younger consumers.

The analysis is translated into three main design tasks. Logo design is responsible for rebuilding core recognition and giving the brand a concise symbol that can operate across different media. Packaging design organizes product differentiation, information hierarchy, opening and sharing behavior, and the emotional presentation of representative sweets. IP design provides a more approachable communication layer

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

and supports younger, more flexible brand expression without replacing the authority of the time-honored master identity.

The practical proposal therefore concentrates on a cai–lingzhi logo concept, a packaging family for zongzi candy, pine-nut candy, fritillaria candy, and Su-style crisp candy, and an IP system derived from lingzhi and confectionery forms. Color, typography, secondary graphics, material choices, interaction, and applications are treated as supporting parts of these three principal outcomes. The project demonstrates how emotional design can connect recognition, use, and cultural memory within a focused brand-image system rather than a broad collection of unrelated visual extensions.

Keywords: Emotional design; Suzhou Caizhizhai; Chinese time-honored brand; Logo design; Packaging design; IP design

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

INTRODUCTION

Relevance of the research: The renewal of time-honored brands has become a design problem as well as a management problem. A long history can create trust and cultural value, but those qualities are not automatically visible in contemporary contact points. Consumers may first encounter a traditional brand through a package, an e-commerce image, a short video, or a gift occasion. Existing research therefore increasingly treats renewal as a process of coordinating cultural continuity, authenticity, innovation, and present-day consumer experience [9,12,15–18].

For Caizhizhai, the issue is especially relevant because the brand is associated with Suzhou confectionery, traditional craft, gifting, and local memory. These resources are rich, but visual richness can easily become visual overload. Studies of time-honored brand image and regional cultural symbols suggest that traditional elements are more effective when they are selected, simplified, and reorganized around the specific meaning of the brand rather than accumulated as decoration [7–8,19–20].

Research on younger consumers also indicates that novelty does not automatically improve attitudes toward an old brand. Crossover design, popular-culture references, and product extension are more persuasive when they maintain cultural fit and perceived authenticity [10–13,18]. This makes emotional design useful because it allows the project to distinguish immediate attraction from practical use and later cultural interpretation.

The three-level model of emotional design provides the main theoretical structure [1]. Product-experience and brand-experience research further show that sensory response, behavior, meaning, and emotion develop together across multiple contact points [2–3]. In this thesis, these ideas are translated into three questions: what should the brand communicate at first sight, what should become clearer or more pleasant during use, and what cultural meaning should remain after the interaction.

Purpose of the research: The purpose of the research is to develop an emotional-design-oriented renewal method for Suzhou Caizhizhai and to apply it to three principal

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

outcomes: logo design, packaging design, and IP design. The project seeks to improve brand recognition, product experience, and emotional communication while preserving a clear relationship with the brand's inherited cultural identity.

To achieve this purpose, the following objectives are set:

1. Identify the cultural, product, and regional resources most directly related to Caizhizhai and distinguish them from generic traditional decoration;
2. Review emotional-design, brand-experience, heritage-brand, authenticity, and time-honored brand research and construct an analytical framework suitable for a food brand;
3. Diagnose the main problems of the existing image from the perspectives of core recognition, packaging hierarchy, product differentiation, and emotional communication;
4. Translate the visceral, behavioral, and reflective levels into three design tasks: logo design, packaging design, and IP design;
5. Develop the three design outcomes and establish practical criteria for later evaluation and refinement.

Object of the research – Suzhou Caizhizhai as a time-honored confectionery brand, including its core visual identity, representative products, packaging touchpoints, and emotional communication.

Subject of the research – The application of emotional design principles to the logo, packaging, and IP design of Suzhou Caizhizhai.

Chronological framework of the research – The historical development of the brand is used as background, while the main focus is the contemporary stage of brand-image renewal.

Territorial framework of the research – Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, with particular attention to the Jiangnan cultural context and the urban memory associated with Guanqian Street.

Research methods: The study combines literature review, historical-source checking, field-oriented observation, case analysis, visual-semantic analysis, and design practice. Literature is used to establish the theoretical and disciplinary context;

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

observation and case analysis are used to identify practical problems and comparable design strategies; visual-semantic analysis is used to select cultural resources according to their relevance to the brand; and design practice tests these findings through logo development, packaging systems, and IP applications. Evaluation criteria are proposed for later expert and user testing, but numerical results are not fabricated where empirical data have not yet been collected.

Practical significance of the research: The project provides a focused example of how a time-honored food brand can be updated without turning heritage into either decorative nostalgia or a temporary trend. By concentrating on logo, packaging, and IP design, the research keeps the visual outcomes closely connected with the problems identified in the analysis and creates a clearer relationship between theoretical argument and graduation design practice.

Structure and scope of the thesis. The work consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, a list of references (20 items), and two appendices. Chapter 1 reviews Chinese and international scholarship and explains the research methods. Chapter 2 establishes the emotional-design framework, analyzes Caizhizhai's cultural resources and brand-image problems, and derives three principal design tasks. Chapter 3 develops the logo, packaging, and IP design proposals and explains their practical implementation. Appendix A contains selected visual analogues, while Appendix B is reserved for the author's sketches, development process, and final design outcomes.

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EMOTIONAL DESIGN IN THE RENEWAL OF TIME-HONORED BRANDS

1.1. Review of the Literature

Research Status in China

Chinese research related to this thesis can be grouped into four directions: emotional design, the inheritance and activation of time-honored brands, consumer response to brand renewal, and the visual translation of traditional or regional culture. Read together, these fields show that the central problem is no longer whether old brands should innovate, but how innovation can remain culturally credible and visually coherent.

Research on emotional design has gradually moved beyond functional problem-solving toward the study of affective response, perception, and the relationship among form, function, and culture [6]. This shift is relevant to brand-image design because it makes emotion a design variable rather than a vague stylistic description. For the present study, emotional design is therefore used to connect visual recognition, packaging behavior, and cultural memory instead of being added as an explanatory label after the design is complete.

A second group of studies focuses on the cultural renewal of Chinese time-honored brands. Existing work generally argues that traditional cultural resources should be translated rather than directly copied, and that the effectiveness of renewal depends on the relationship between inherited meaning and contemporary visual expression [7–9]. Research on Jiangnan visual symbols and on visual-symbol innovation in time-honored brands reaches a similar conclusion: regional elements become useful only when they are reorganized into a distinctive and repeatable brand language [19–20].

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

Management and marketing studies provide a further explanation for the tension between inheritance and innovation. Brand activation has been discussed through authenticity, value migration, innovation paths, cultural tradition, and multi-dimensional inheritance [9,12,15–17]. These studies suggest that heritage is not a single visual asset. Product tradition, regional association, historical continuity, craft, and brand values can each become part of renewal, but they do not need to appear with equal visual weight.

Research concerning younger consumers introduces an important caution. Crossover design, popular-culture references, and product extension can attract attention, yet their effect is strongly influenced by perceived cultural fit and brand authenticity [10–13,18]. Novelty alone therefore cannot be used as the measure of successful rejuvenation. For a time-honored brand, a visually younger image is valuable only when consumers can still understand why the new expression belongs to that brand.

Narrative research also shows that the content of a time-honored brand story influences consumer attitude and that craft, cultural inheritance, and brand history do not perform exactly the same communicative role [14]. This observation is useful for packaging design. It suggests that different types of information can be distributed across different contact points: the front panel can remain concise, while secondary labels, inner structures, or digital content can carry deeper narrative material.

Taken together, domestic research provides a strong basis for the present project, but three gaps remain. First, emotional design is not always converted into a concrete decision-making sequence for brand image. Second, studies of brand activation frequently explain why renewal is necessary but devote less attention to the specific relationship among logo, packaging, and IP. Third, some design studies successfully extract traditional motifs but do not fully explain how those motifs should support product hierarchy, use, and long-term recognition. These gaps define the focus of the present thesis.

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

Foreign Research Status

International research contributes four closely related concepts: emotional processing, product experience, brand experience, and heritage authenticity. These concepts are not used to determine the visual style of a Chinese time-honored brand; rather, they provide a framework for analyzing how design is perceived, used, and interpreted.

The three-level emotional design model distinguishes visceral, behavioral, and reflective processing [1]. Its value for this thesis lies in the separation of immediate sensory judgment from practical use and later interpretation. A package may be visually attractive but difficult to use, or convenient but culturally anonymous. A convincing brand-image system therefore needs to coordinate all three levels rather than maximize only one.

Product-experience research further proposes that aesthetic experience, the attribution of meaning, and emotional response interact throughout the encounter with a designed object [2]. This view is especially relevant to food packaging because the package is touched, opened, shared, carried, stored, and sometimes retained. Meaning is therefore produced through both visual form and behavior.

Brand-experience research extends the discussion to sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral responses generated by brand-related stimuli [3]. This supports a broader understanding of brand image in which the logo remains important but is not sufficient. The wrapper, box structure, product coding, material, illustration, and communication tone all contribute to how the brand is learned.

Heritage-brand and authenticity research emphasizes continuity, track record, core values, place, production, and credible historical association [4–5]. The implication for design is that authenticity does not require visual immobility. A redesigned identity can remain credible when the new form has a traceable relationship with the inherited brand. This principle is particularly relevant to Caizhizhai, where simplification should clarify cultural meaning rather than erase it.

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

The international literature therefore provides a useful sequence for the present research: emotional design explains levels of experience; product and brand experience explain the contribution of multiple touchpoints; heritage and authenticity explain why cultural continuity must remain recognizable. The task of this thesis is to translate that sequence into a focused design system centered on logo, packaging, and IP.

1.2. Research Methods

Literature research method: The twenty core references are organized by research theme rather than introduced one by one. The review compares emotional design, product and brand experience, heritage and authenticity, time-honored brand activation, consumer response, cultural inheritance, and visual-symbol construction. This approach makes the literature serve the argument instead of turning the chapter into a sequence of article summaries.

Historical-source analysis: Historical information is treated as factual material and should be checked against reliable brand, local-history, and heritage records before final submission. The design may abstract historical material, but it should not depend on unverified legends or invented claims.

Field-oriented observation method: Observation focuses on the sequence in which a user encounters the brand: core mark, product grouping, package front, information panel, opening, individual wrapper, gift sharing, and digital presentation. The method is used to identify visual inconsistency and practical friction rather than to claim statistical representativeness.

Case analysis method: Reference cases are compared through core symbol, packaging family, product differentiation, illustration or IP, material, and communication consistency. The purpose is to identify transferable design principles, not to imitate the surface style of a successful brand.

Visual-semantic analysis method: Potential design resources are evaluated according to their direct relationship with Caizhizhai, their connection with the product,

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

their regional meaning, and their adaptability across media. This helps prioritize brand-owned resources over generic traditional decoration.

Design practice method: The analytical results are tested through three connected design tasks: logo development, packaging design, and IP design. Iteration compares different levels of simplification, hierarchy, color, material, character expression, and application so that the final outcome remains consistent with the research framework.

Evaluation method: The thesis establishes criteria for later evaluation rather than presenting uncollected data. Logo testing can examine recognition and reduction; packaging testing can examine information search, opening, carrying, and product differentiation; IP testing can examine affinity, recognizability, and consistency with the master brand. Reflective evaluation can further consider cultural specificity and perceived authenticity.

Conclusions to Chapter 1

The literature shows that a time-honored brand should not be renewed through visual novelty alone. Emotional experience, cultural continuity, authenticity, product behavior, and consumer interpretation need to be considered together [1–20]. The key issue is therefore not the quantity of traditional elements but the logic that connects inherited meaning with present-day use.

For this study, the literature is translated into a focused design framework. Logo design addresses core recognition; packaging design addresses product differentiation and behavior; IP design addresses affinity and communication. The next chapter applies this framework to Caizhizhai's resources and problems before the three design tasks are developed in practice.

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF THE VISUAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF SUZHOU CAIZHIZHAI

2.1. Theoretical Basis of Emotional Design in Time-Honored Brand Image Renewal

Emotional design is used in this thesis as a framework for organizing design decisions. The visceral level concerns immediate perception; the behavioral level concerns use, clarity, and interaction; the reflective level concerns memory, identity, and cultural interpretation [1]. Product and brand-experience research reinforces the need to treat these levels as connected rather than isolated [2–3].

At the visceral level, the main task is to establish a first impression that is warm, refined, and recognizable without depending on excessive ornament. For Caizhizhai, this means giving priority to a strong master symbol, controlled color, clear typography, and material cues that are compatible with confectionery and Jiangnan cultural associations.

At the behavioral level, attention shifts from appearance to use. Packaging must distinguish products, organize information, support opening and sharing, and remain legible across different sizes. The IP system also has a behavioral role because its gestures and expressions can help explain product stories or guide communication, but it should not interfere with functional information.

At the reflective level, design needs a traceable relationship with the inherited brand. Research on heritage and authenticity indicates that history, place, production, and continuity matter when they can be recognized as credible parts of the brand rather than as decorative references [4–5]. In this project, reflective meaning is therefore carried through the cai–lingzhi concept, traditional confectionery, gifting, family care, and local memory.

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

The three levels are applied differently across the three design outcomes. The logo is primarily responsible for visceral recognition and reflective identity. Packaging combines all three levels most directly because it is seen, handled, opened, and interpreted. IP design is used mainly to increase affinity and narrative flexibility while remaining subordinate to the master identity. This distribution prevents every element from trying to communicate the entire brand story at once.

2.2. Cultural Resources Survey and Problem Analysis of Suzhou Caizhizhai

Brand-name and identity resources. The semantic relationship between cai (采, to gather) and zhi (芝, lingzhi) provides a distinctive starting point for logo design. It is more directly connected with the brand name than a general Suzhou landscape motif and can therefore function as an ownable core symbol rather than as regional decoration.

Product and craft resources. Representative sweets such as zongzi candy, pine-nut candy, fritillaria candy, and Su-style crisp candy provide differences in shape, ingredient, texture, and emotional association. Paper wrapping, sugar pulling, cutting, folding, and sharing generate visual and behavioral cues that can be translated into packaging structure, pattern, illustration, and product coding.

Regional resources. Jiangnan culture offers a broad visual vocabulary, but research on regional visual symbols suggests that regional identity is stronger when shared cultural elements are combined with more specific brand features [19]. In this project, white space, framed composition, restrained contrast, water-like rhythm, and material subtlety are more useful than directly copying garden windows, bridges, or architectural scenery onto every surface.

Problem 1: core recognition is not sufficiently concentrated. A time-honored brand may already possess historical familiarity, yet the identity still needs to work at small digital scale and across many products. The logo should therefore become simpler and more reproducible while retaining a clear link with the name and inherited meaning.

Problem 2: packaging needs a stronger family structure. Different products should be distinguishable without becoming visually unrelated. The packaging system needs a

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

stable master zone for the brand and controlled differences in color, product imagery, and short copy. This is particularly important because packaging is the most frequent point at which consumers experience the brand directly.

Problem 3: younger communication should not weaken authenticity. Research on crossover innovation, popular culture, and brand extension shows that novelty can attract attention but may also reduce acceptance when cultural fit is weak [10–13,18]. The project therefore avoids treating youthfulness as a separate visual style and instead introduces contemporary expression through simplification, character design, and more flexible communication.

Problem 4: IP should have a defined role. If a mascot is developed only because IP design is fashionable, it can easily become disconnected from the brand. The character system therefore needs to grow from brand-owned resources, remain visually compatible with the logo and packaging, and support storytelling rather than compete with the master identity.

Problem 5: cultural information should be distributed according to use. Historical and craft narratives do not need to appear on the front of every package. They can be layered through inner flaps, small labels, collectible cards, or digital content. This makes reflective meaning discoverable without reducing clarity.

2.3. Design Principles and Core Requirements Derivation

Principle of Authenticity: cultural and historical cues should remain traceable to the brand. Contemporary visual translation is encouraged, but invented heritage and unrelated trend symbols should be avoided [4–5,9,11].

Principle of Emotional Hierarchy: the logo, packaging, and IP should not carry the same amount of information. Core recognition, use, and narrative are distributed according to their different functions.

Principle of Regional Restraint: suzhou character is expressed through rhythm, white space, proportion, material, and selected visual cues rather than through the accumulation of familiar regional motifs [19–20].

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

Principle of System Consistency: logo, packaging, and IP share a common typographic, color, line, and compositional logic so that product variation does not weaken the parent brand.

Principle of Behavioral Clarity: packaging information, opening, carrying, portioning, and sharing are treated as part of brand image rather than as secondary technical details.

Principle of Controlled Rejuvenation: contemporary expression should improve accessibility without turning the brand into a generic youth snack or an unrelated cartoon identity [10–13,18].

Core Design Tasks

1. Logo design: establish a concise cai–lingzhi core symbol, wordmark relationship, color logic, and basic identity specifications;
2. Packaging design: develop a coherent family for representative products, including differentiation, information hierarchy, materials, opening behavior, and gift presentation;
3. IP design: create a character system rooted in lingzhi and confectionery forms, with clear rules for expression, product companions, and communication applications.

Conclusions to Chapter 2

The analysis indicates that the main design problem is not the absence of cultural material but the lack of a clear hierarchy among different kinds of material. Brand-owned resources should define the core identity, product resources should organize packaging, and regional culture should support the overall atmosphere rather than dominate it.

The resulting strategy is deliberately focused on three outputs: logo, packaging, and IP. This structure creates a direct link between theory, problem diagnosis, and the actual graduation design. Chapter 3 therefore develops these three outcomes as parts of one emotional brand-image system rather than as independent visual exercises.

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE EMOTIONAL VISUAL IDENTITY SYSTEM FOR SUZHOU CAIZHIZHAI

3.1. Idea. Concept

The overall concept is ‘Gathering Lingzhi, Gathering Sweet Memories.’ It begins with the semantic relationship already contained in the name Caizhizhai: cai refers to gathering or picking, while zhi evokes lingzhi. The word ‘gathering’ also describes the social life of confectionery — gathering ingredients, gathering around tea, bringing gifts to relatives, and sharing small sweets. The concept therefore connects the brand name with both form and behavior.

The project is organized around three design dimensions. Logo design establishes recognition and gives the brand a stable visual center. Packaging design translates the brand into the consumer’s most frequent physical experience, where product differentiation, information, material, opening, and gifting are combined. IP design adds a more approachable narrative layer and creates flexibility for younger communication. The three parts have different functions but use the same cultural and visual logic.

The visual tone is defined as warm, refined, handmade, and contemporary. Warmth comes from the social meaning of sweets and gifting; refinement is expressed through controlled proportion and white space; the handmade quality appears through material and line; contemporary expression comes from simplification and modularity. The project avoids dense ‘national-trend’ ornament and excessive pharmaceutical imagery because both would weaken the balance between food, culture, and everyday affection.

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

3.2. Project Description

3.2.1. Logo Design

The logo redesign begins with the relationship between the character cai (采) and lingzhi. Instead of placing a complete lingzhi illustration beside the wordmark, the outer cap, central axis, and selected strokes are reorganized into one compact sign. The objective is for the symbol to be read first as a clear brand mark and then to reveal the semantic connection with the name on closer observation.

The form is simplified in black and white before color is introduced. This step is important because the mark must remain recognizable on a small candy wrapper, a social-media icon, a label, and a gift box. Slight irregularity can be retained in the contour to suggest handcraft and old-shop print texture, but the internal structure should remain controlled enough for consistent reproduction.

The Chinese wordmark '采芝斋' is designed to feel stable and cultivated rather than decorative. Its structure can draw from old Song-style type and traditional shop lettering without directly copying a historical typeface. The Latin name CAIZHIZHAI remains secondary and uses restrained spacing so that the English identifier supports the Chinese brand rather than competing with it.

The logo system includes vertical and horizontal combinations, monochrome and reverse versions, clear-space rules, minimum sizes, and controlled background applications. These specifications are not treated as separate VI exercises; they are included because the logo is the visual anchor that allows the packaging and IP to vary without fragmenting the brand.

3.2.2. Packaging Design

Packaging is the main carrier of the emotional-design strategy because it is both visual and behavioral. The package is seen before purchase, handled during use, opened and shared, and often photographed or given as a gift. For this reason, the design system combines a stable master layout with controlled product differences instead of producing four unrelated decorative packages.

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

The master palette uses warm paper white, deep tea brown or ink-like dark tones, and a restrained cinnabar accent. Product colors are then used as a secondary coding system: zongzi candy uses muted caizhi red, pine-nut candy uses pine green and pale ochre, fritillaria candy uses herbal green and warm ivory, and Su-style crisp candy uses osmanthus yellow and off-white. The saturation of the four colors is kept relatively close so that the family remains coherent.

Typography is organized by function. The customized brand wordmark carries identity; a readable Chinese serif face supports cultural or product narrative; a neutral sans-serif is used for weights, ingredients, English information, and digital adaptation. Secondary graphics are derived mainly from the lingzhi contour, candy forms, paper folds, and controlled water-like lines. Regional window-frame rhythm can inform the grid, but it is not repeatedly illustrated as a literal motif.

Zongzi candy emphasizes the memory of traditional paper wrapping and uses a compact folded graphic structure. Pine-nut candy uses simplified nut forms and a quieter color relationship to suggest fragrance and tea. Fritillaria candy uses open space and restrained botanical lines to communicate gentle care without resembling pharmaceutical packaging. Su-style crisp candy uses a warmer yellow tone and a sharing-oriented structure suited to tea and table use.

Gift packaging extends the family system rather than introducing a new visual style. The internal sequence is organized so that the user first recognizes the brand, then distinguishes products, opens the box, and encounters secondary narrative details. Lightweight interaction — such as an inner craft illustration, a collectible label, or a small lenticular element — is used only when it contributes to opening, sharing, or storytelling. The physical package remains understandable without requiring digital interaction.

3.2.3. IP Design

The IP system is developed as a communication extension rather than as a replacement for the brand identity. Its main purpose is to reduce psychological distance,

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

provide a flexible narrative voice, and support younger communication. Because the master brand includes several product categories, the primary character is based on the broader lingzhi concept rather than on a single candy.

The character uses rounded proportions, minimal facial features, slightly irregular hand-drawn lines, and a low-saturation palette. The visual expression is intentionally restrained so that it can appear on packaging and derivative items without making the brand look excessively childish. Product companions can be developed from zongzi candy, pine nuts, fritillaria, or crisp candy, but they follow the same line, eye, scale, and color rules.

Narrative scenes focus on actions that belong to the brand world: making sweets, wrapping, carrying gifts, drinking tea, selecting products, and bringing Suzhou confectionery home. This keeps the IP connected with product and craft instead of using unrelated costumes or trend references. Research on brand narrative and younger consumers supports this need for cultural fit and recognizable brand meaning [10–14].

The IP specification therefore includes basic proportions, expression range, gesture rules, color restrictions, relationship with the master logo, and suitable application contexts. The character can be more flexible on stickers, labels, social-media graphics, and small derivatives, while the logo remains dominant on formal packaging and brand identification.

3.3. Practical Implementation

3.3.1. Logo Applications and Identity Specifications

The logo should first be tested in one color at several scales, including a small candy wrapper, product label, gift-box lid, social-media icon, shopping bag, and display panel. The purpose is to confirm that the cai–lingzhi relationship remains recognizable after reduction. Color and material effects are added only after the structure is stable.

Basic identity applications include the standard color palette, typographic hierarchy, horizontal and vertical lockups, clear space, minimum size, and simple

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

auxiliary graphics. These items form the visual rules that later packaging and IP applications follow.

3.3.2. Packaging Applications and Prototyping

Packaging prototypes should test printed color, paper texture, folding, opening force, information search, product recognition, and the relationship among individual wrappers, retail packs, and gift boxes. Muted colors should be confirmed through physical proofs because uncoated paper can change their perceived warmth and contrast.

Application outputs include the four representative product packages, single wrappers, mixed gift boxes, shopping bags, sealing labels, and selected gift inserts. When interactive elements are used, they are evaluated according to whether they support the product story or the opening sequence rather than according to technical novelty.

3.3.3. IP Applications and Communication Extensions

The IP system is applied selectively to product labels, stickers, small cards, social-media templates, character charms, and limited derivative items. Formal identity surfaces retain the logo as the primary sign, while the character provides a softer communication layer in more informal contexts.

Consistency is tested through repeated application. If the character requires unrelated colors, props, or visual styles to work in different situations, the system should be simplified. The final objective is not to create a large merchandise catalogue but to demonstrate that the character can extend the same brand meaning established by the logo and packaging.

Conclusions to Chapter 3

The design proposal concentrates the brand-image renewal into three mutually supporting outcomes. The logo establishes the core symbol and visual authority; packaging translates the identity into product recognition, use, and gifting; IP design

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D

adds affinity and narrative flexibility. Supporting elements such as color, typography, auxiliary graphics, interaction, and derivatives are organized under these three outcomes rather than treated as independent design systems.

This structure creates a clearer relationship between the thesis and the actual graduation project. It also makes later evaluation more specific: the logo can be assessed for recognition, packaging for hierarchy and use, and IP for affinity and consistency. Emotional design therefore functions as a common method linking three concrete design practices rather than as a broad conceptual label.

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CONCLUSIONS

This research examined the renewal of Suzhou Caizhizhai through emotional design and deliberately narrowed the practical outcome to three connected areas: logo design, packaging design, and IP design. This focus responds to the actual structure of the graduation project and avoids treating brand-image renewal as an unlimited set of applications.

The literature review shows that successful renewal depends on more than visual novelty. Emotional response, product and brand experience, heritage continuity, authenticity, cultural fit, and regional visual translation all influence how a time-honored brand is interpreted [1–20]. On this basis, the thesis uses visceral, behavioral, and reflective levels to distinguish immediate recognition, practical use, and later cultural meaning.

The analysis suggests that Caizhizhai's most useful resources are those most closely connected with the brand and its products: the cai–lingzhi relationship, confectionery forms, paper wrapping, craft gestures, gifting, and memories of sharing sweets. Broader Suzhou elements are used more selectively as compositional and material references. This hierarchy reduces the risk of generic traditional decoration.

The final design strategy assigns different responsibilities to the three main outcomes. Logo design concentrates the brand's core identity. Packaging design builds the most complete emotional experience by combining visual differentiation, information, material, opening, and sharing. IP design creates an approachable narrative layer and supports younger communication while remaining subordinate to the master brand. Together, these three parts form a coherent brand-image system rather than three unrelated visual exercises.

The current study still has limitations. The proposal establishes criteria for logo recognition, packaging usability, and IP affinity, but it does not claim empirical effectiveness without completed user or expert data. Future work should test the design with local consumers, tourists, younger users, and actual production samples. Such

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evaluation would help distinguish between the designer's intended emotional effect and the user's real experience.

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APPENDIX A (analogues)

Ключовий еталонний проєкт/Key Reference Projects

Visual outcome(s):

1. Brand LOGO design
2. Brand IP design
3. Brand packaging and derivative product design

Designed using software such as PS and AI



Chinese brand design



Brand IP image design

Docusign Envelope ID: 1F2BF8CE-2660-806B-81A2-D0F017B0C24D



Packaging design



Physical display

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APPENDIX B(sketch and project proposal)

Black and white logo draft



IP black-and-white draft



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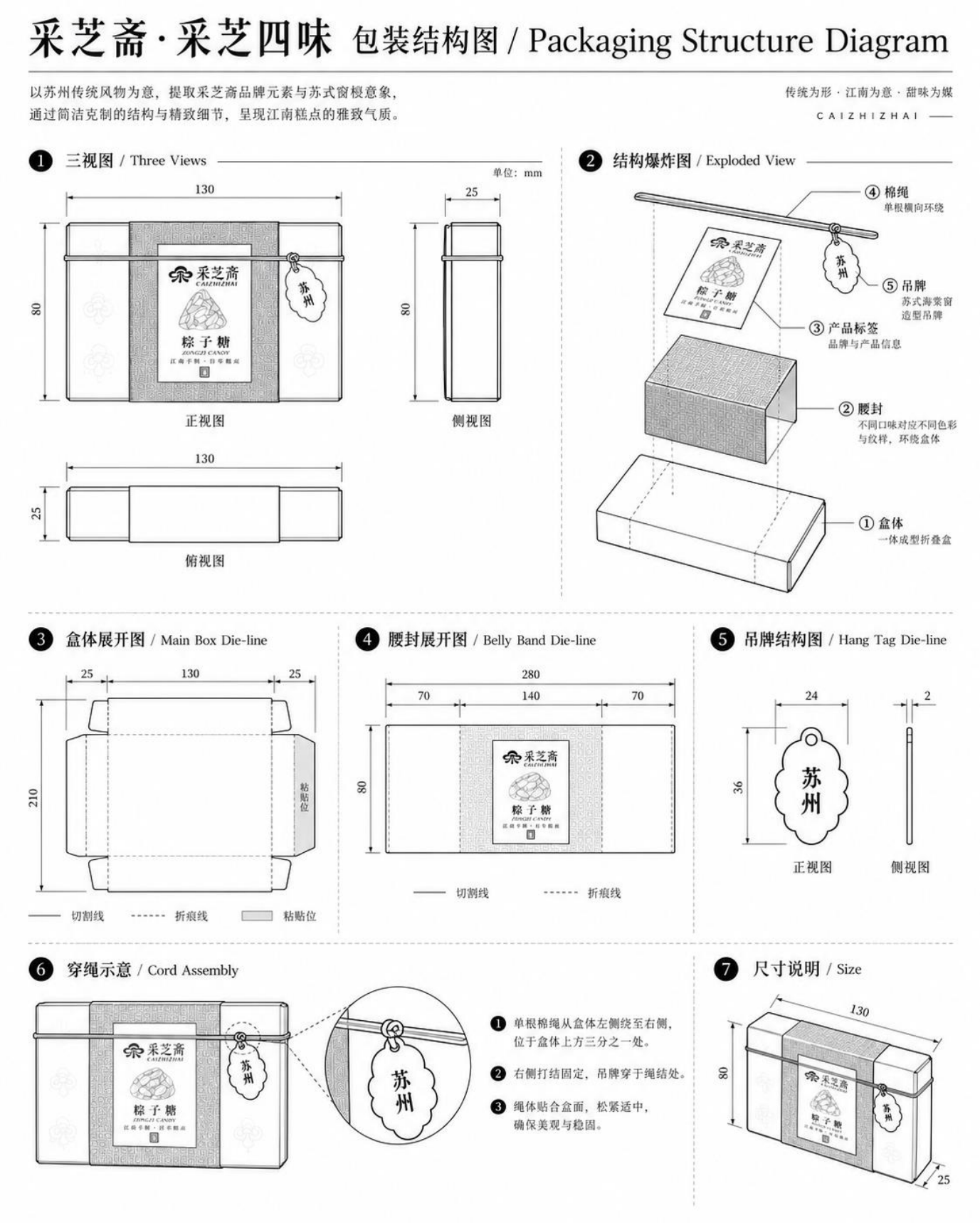
Black and white draft of the packaging knife layout



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BRAND LOGO
Visual Identity

LINGZHI FORM × CHINESE CHARACTER '采'

采芝斋
CAIZHIZHAI

CAIZHIZHAI BRAND MARK

The logo integrates the form of Lingzhi with the Chinese character '采',
creating a distinctive visual symbol rooted in the cultural identity of Caizhizhai.
The design retains the warmth and heritage of a century-old Suzhou confectionery brand
while introducing a concise and contemporary visual language.

IP CHARACTER DESIGN

ZHI XIAO ZONG · BRAND CHARACTER



SIDE VIEW

FRONT VIEW
PRIMARY CHARACTER VIEW

BACK VIEW

Inspired by Caizhizhai's traditional zongzi candy, Zhi Xiao Zong transforms its rounded triangular form
and embedded nut details into a warm and approachable brand character.
The design conveys the sweetness, craftsmanship and emotional memory of the historic Suzhou confectionery brand.





01 | 小厨师款
02 | 茶语款
03 | 游历款
04 | 节日款
05 | 文雅款
06 | 礼赠款

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01 标志设计 LOGO DESIGN

LINGZHI × "采" × HERITAGE

采芝斋
CAIZHIZHAI

以灵芝造型融合"采"字，形成采芝斋的品牌标识，传递百年传承的温度与当代的品牌气质。

The brand mark integrates the form of Lingzhi with the Chinese character "采", conveying the heritage and contemporary identity of Caizhizhai.

图形标志 GRAPHIC MARK
标准组合 HORIZONTAL LOGO
单色应用 MONOCHROME
反白应用 REVERSE

02 色彩与字体 COLOR & TYPE SYSTEM

REFINED · WARM · MEMORABLE · FRIENDLY

宣纸米 RICE PAPER BEIGE	茶墨褐 TEA BROWN INK	采芝朱 CAIZHI VERMILION	松仁青 PINE NUT GREEN	蜜糖金 HONEY GOLD
#E7DCC6	#4C3B2E	#A64A33	#5B7F5A	#D4A353

中文字体 Chinese Type

采芝斋

思源宋体 / Source Han Serif

以时令之味 传江南之美

传承百年苏式糕点
呈现温暖而克制的当代品牌气质。

英文字体 English Type

CAIZHIZHAI

Playfair Display / Serif

TRADITIONAL FLAVOR
MODERN LIFE

Montserrat / Sans Serif

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

03 辅助图形 AUXILIARY GRAPHIC SYSTEM

FROM LINGZHI · NATURAL · ORDERLY

灵芝纹样 LINGZHI MOTIF
几何点缀 GEOMETRIC ACCENT

COLORWAY 01 朱 · 米
COLORWAY 02 褐 · 金
COLORWAY 03 青 · 朱
COLORWAY 04 深褐 · 米

04 应用与IP IP + PACKAGING SYSTEM

ZHI XIAO ZONG
BRAND CHARACTER

正面图 FRONT VIEW
侧面图 SIDE VIEW
生活姿态 DAILY POSE
纸质纹理 PAPER TEXTURE
棉绳细节 COTTON STRING
苏州吊牌 HANGING TAG

粽子糖 ZONGZI CANDY
松仁糖 PINE NUT CANDY
贝母糖 FRITILLARIA CANDY
苏式酥糖 SUZHOU CRISP CANDY

品牌应用延展 APPLICATION DESIGN

A SWEET COMPANION IN EVERYDAY LIFE.



手提袋 SHOPPING BAG
IP卡片 CHARACTER CARD
贴纸 STICKER
周边挂件 CHALENDAR
随行杯 TRAVEL CUP

品牌空间与体验 BRAND EXPERIENCE

TRADITIONAL FLAVOR · MODERN LIFE · SUZHOU

