

From "Beautiful Economy" to "Cultural Symbols": A Study on the International Communication Strategy of Yunnan Flower Brands

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Abstract: Yunnan is known as the "Kingdom of Plants" and the "Garden of the World". 80% of the world's fresh cut flowers come from Yunnan, and the huge profit sales have also upgraded Yunnan's flower industry to a key support object for Yunnan's economic development. Therefore, Yunnan's flower industry is often referred to as the "Beautiful Economy". However, Yunnan's flower industry is not only reflected in economic development, but also has a certain impact on the cultural field. It can be said that Yunnan's flowers are also a symbol of its own identity word. When it comes to Yunnan, Yunnan's flowers will come to mind. At the same time, Yunnan Province also relies on its own resources and geographical advantages to use flowers as a medium of communication, promoting them to neighboring countries and forming a unique promotion path and communication method.

1. Analysis of Yunnan Flowers from "Beautiful Economy" to "Cultural Symbols"

1.1 Connotation of "Beautiful Economy" and "Cultural Symbols"

The "beautiful economy" of Yunnan's flower industry is "economic value", which refers to an economic form that takes "beautiful" resources such as flowers, landscapes, and ecology as the core, drives the development of related industrial chains through planting, trading, viewing, and experiencing, and creates economic value. For Yunnan, the flower industry in the "beauty economy" stage is more reflected in the production, trading, export, and festival consumption of fresh cut flowers, with a dominant industrial form based on usage and commercial functions, emphasizing the "beauty economy" and market-oriented value of flowers as commodities. This industrial form endowed with economic value is the core industrial value of Yunnan's flower industry. However, with the changes and development of the market, people are no longer satisfied with relying solely on the "appearance" of flowers to attract consumers' attention. They connect flowers with culture, express love with flowers, tell a story with flowers, and then integrate flowers into daily life and diet. In fact, this is a manifestation of endowing flowers with certain cultural value. This approach can better attract consumers and the market, and thus generate certain economic benefits. This is known as the "cultural symbol" of the flower industry, which refers to flowers surpassing their material and economic attributes, being endowed with specific cultural significance, spiritual

connotation, and social identity, becoming symbols representing regional culture, lifestyle, or values. For example, Yunnan is committed to making flowers a business card of the province. When people think of fresh cut flowers, they associate them with Yunnan's flowers, which is a strong expression of "cultural symbols".

1.2 The transformation from "beautiful economy" to "cultural symbol"

The transformation of Yunnan's flower industry from a "beautiful economy" to a "cultural symbol" has gone through three stages. Firstly, the extension from "commodity" to "meaning" refers to Yunnan's flower industry breaking through its own form of commodity circulation and transforming into a form endowed with emotional, cultural, artistic, and life significance. For example, the Dounan Flower Market's "selling flowers by weight" to "picking up flowers in Dounan Flower Market is necessary to go to Yunnan to achieve perfection". This transformation from commodity to emotion has enabled Yunnan's flower industry to achieve the first stage of transformation[1-2]; The second stage is the transition from "industry" to "lifestyle". For example, the flower industry in Yunnan is a typical agricultural and commercial behavior, with planting, wholesale, retail and export as the main links. But now flowers are integrated with lifestyle, and flowers enter people's daily life and spiritual world. For example, the Flower Sea Marathon held in Yunnan Province in 2025, and the Qixi Festival in the same year, the subway is decorated with flowers for foreign tourists to use. This "heroic" behavior in Yunnan has aroused netizens' heated discussion, and everyone praises Yunnan Province as a big flower province. This integration of "industry" and "lifestyle" also reflects the strength of the flower industry in Yunnan Province. The final stage is also what Yunnan Province is currently working on: upgrading from "local specialties" to "cultural IP". The flower industry in Yunnan Province used to be circulated as commodities, but since the development of self media, Yunnan Province has gradually realized that flowers have become a recognizable cultural IP. For example, "Yunnan camellia" represents the spirit of Yunnan, "City of Roses" has become a symbol of romance, and "Luoping rapeseed flower sea" has become a symbol of spring tourism, with strong recognition and dissemination power. This transformation precisely reflects the potential development driving force of Yunnan's flower industry[3-4].

The transformation of Yunnan's flower industry from a "beautiful economy" to a "cultural symbol" is essentially the sublimation of industrial value, the embodiment of cultural confidence, and the re creation of local characteristics. This process not only helps to enhance the added value and international competitiveness of Yunnan's flowers, but also makes flowers an important medium for conveying beauty, connecting emotions, and showcasing culture[5-6].

2. Analysis of the Communication Status of Yunnan Flower Industry

2.1 Brand positioning is vague and lacks differentiation symbols

Yunnan Province has the reputation of being the "Garden of the World" and the "Flower of China". When it comes to Yunnan, people associate it with Yunnan's flowers. Although "Yunhua" is widely used as a regional public brand, its connotation is relatively vague, and it does not clearly distinguish the characteristics of sub categories such as fresh cut flowers, potted flowers, and processed flowers. Moreover, most flowers are exported in the form of raw materials or primary products. Brands such as Yunnan roses are known for their "long flowering period and rich colors", but consumers are more familiar with "Ecuadorian roses or Damascus roses". At the same time, it cannot form cultural symbols such as "Dutch tulips" or "French Provence lavender". On the contrary, in existing communication, people's perception of Yunnan flowers is often simply equated with "cheap" and "large quantity", ignoring the unique natural conditions, ethnic culture, and

technological advantages of Yunnan and other differentiated values, resulting in low brand recognition.

2.2 Serious homogenization of dissemination content

On social media, there is a lot of content about Yunnan flowers, but currently, the content mainly focuses on "visual stimulation" and lacks a deep interpretation of "why choose Yunnan flowers". For example, consumers may know that Yunnan flowers are "fresh", but they may not be aware that they rely on the largest flower planting resource library in the country, which currently preserves over 10000 varieties. In addition, Yunnan is the province with the richest wild flower resources in China, accounting for over 60% of the country's total, but this unique advantage has not been transformed into a bright spot for dissemination. Furthermore, Yunnan flowers lack precise content targeted at different groups in the dissemination process. For example, young consumers pay attention to "DIY bouquets" and "Chinese style flower arrangement", family users need "maintenance knowledge", and business scenarios value "gift attributes". However, the existing dissemination content about Yunnan flowers is mostly a "one size fits all" promotion, focusing on price promotion and promotional activities, which is difficult to evoke emotional resonance. In fact, Yunnan, as a gathering place of multi-ethnic cultures, has a deep connection between flowers and ethnic culture, festivals, and art. However, cultural elements are not fully integrated in the dissemination, and a unique "flower culture IP" has not been formed. On the contrary, Luoyang City in Henan Province uses its flower - peony, with the theme of "14 provincial famous cities linkage, millions of miles of national color" as the reporting theme, releases multiple special topics, and has repeatedly topped the national and local hot search lists, with a total reading volume of 1.19 billion times, making Luoyang peony popular and allowing people across the country to once again understand the peony of Luoyang, Henan. At the same time, the mobile Luoyang client innovatively launched four creative long videos, including "Cyberpunk Luoyang - A Peony Feast that Crosses through the Void" and "One Mirror to the End" Crosses through the Divine Capital, Meeting in Luoyang during the Blooming Season ", by combining AI virtual generation technology with real-life shooting. Through the combination of virtual and reality, it presents netizens with a brand new experience of visiting Luoyang and enjoying peonies. This communication method that combines regional culture, lifestyle, and technological culture innovates the content of communication and is worth learning from for the construction of Yunnan flower brands.

2.3 Insufficient international communication effectiveness

There is a problem of insufficient dissemination effectiveness of Yunnan flowers in the international market. Yunnan flowers mainly face three major obstacles in international communication: firstly, language and cultural barriers. Most of Yunnan's flower enterprises are local enterprises, lacking professional international marketing teams and foreign language promotional materials. For example, when receiving foreign enterprises, inaccurate brand introductions, planting techniques, and corporate culture brand translations can cause foreign enterprises to have a wrong understanding of local flower enterprises. In addition, insufficient cultural adaptation is also a major obstacle, for example, Western consumers are more concerned about the "festival symbol" of flowers rather than the "auspicious meaning"; The second is the lack of brand stories for Yunnan flowers. Yunnan flowers mostly focus on price promotion and promotional activities in their advertising, and rarely delve into the cultural value of the flowers themselves, which can easily lead to one-time consumption. On the contrary, the Netherlands, which excels in promoting floral brands, constructs brand narratives through "tulip mania history" and "innovation in floral auction markets". Stories with humanistic warmth can better stimulate

consumers' secondary consumption. Thirdly, digital dissemination lags behind. There are few accounts related to Yunnan flowers on international mainstream social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, and the content format is single, mainly focusing on product images, making it difficult to reach overseas young consumer groups.

3. Analysis of the Transmission Path of Yunnan Flower Industry

3.1 Strengthen brand strategy and create a "cloud flower" matrix

Strengthen the brand awareness of "Yunhua" and create a communication matrix. Yunhua is embarking on a "flower road" and a "flower silk road" that connects the world. Although Yunnan's flower industry has a market share of up to 70% in the country, its brand building is still a weakness. People's understanding of Yunnan flowers only stays at the level of cheap prices and diverse varieties. To truly achieve the transformation of Yunnan flowers, we need to start from the brand level. The marketing of any item cannot be separated from its brand value. The brand building of Yunnan's flower industry can be divided into two steps: one is to establish a variety of "cloud flowers", such as "cloud flowers - natural gifts from the plateau bloom", binding Yunnan's flowers with the word "plateau", highlighting Yunnan's climate advantages, biodiversity, and green planting to create unique Yunnan flowers. For example, the "Rhododendron Season" activity in Shangri La in 2023 will make full use of the biological resources of Duqing Rhododendron through the promotion of Tiktok, Weibo, WeChat official account and other social media, and raise a publicity boom in the rhododendron flowering period, attracting more tourists to pay attention to the "Rhododendron" in Yunnan. The second is to integrate existing flower resources and develop a "cloud flower" mini program to form a cloud flower aggregation effect. At present, flower farmers in Yunnan Province, in order to increase their sales channels, not only sell flowers live on the Tiktok platform, but also sell flowers in the form of small programs. The flowers on the applet are mainly auctioned by auctioneers in the flower trading market, and then uploaded to the applet at S A B C levels for customers to choose. Different from the live flower selling on the Tiktok platform, the customers of Tiktok live flower selling are mostly individual visitors. Most people focus on the price, and the number of orders is small. The customers selling flowers on the applet are more likely to be the flower shop owners, who have much higher requirements for the quality of flowers, so the flower quality and price on the applet will be higher. However, it should be noted that there is an entry threshold for buying flowers through mini programs, with a minimum of 5 free shipping or a minimum order of 100 yuan. There are currently popular flower mini programs such as "Flower Direct", "Cloud Selection of Flowers", "Fangde Flowers", etc. Among them, "Fangde Flowers" has warehouses in Yunnan and Shanghai, and Fangde's flowers are all hydroponic flowers with longer cycles. However, compared to soil cultivated flowers, its flower buds are smaller and the stems are thinner. The existence of these flower mini programs provides great convenience for customers to purchase flowers, and can also enhance people's recognition of Yunnan flower brands.

3.2 Enrich the dissemination content and explore the connotation of "cloud flowers"

To achieve brand upgrading in Yunnan's flower industry, it is urgent to use cultural gene recombination to spread the word. It is also possible to rely on its own natural and cultural resources and explore new connotations of "cloud flowers". The flower industry in Yunnan Province has a profound "cultural gene", which can be simply divided into ethnic beliefs and ethnic inheritance. Ethnic beliefs specifically refer to a certain flower in Yunnan as the flower of a nation's faith, such as the Burmese osmanthus of the Dai ethnic group, which has a pure and symbolic meaning and is often used as a Buddhist offering in Dai culture. Currently, Burmese osmanthus is connected with

AR technology, such as in the mobile game Flower God, where Burmese osmanthus is used as a prop for worship; In addition, the Naxi people regard camellia as their eternal totem and often carve camellia on clothing and utensils. In modern society, Naxi camellia is collected as a digital collection by NFT. The ethnic inheritance contained in Yunnan flowers refers to the revitalization of skills and ancient books related to "flowers". For example, the Yunnan Provincial Museum has restored the flower totem in the "Nanzhao Kingdom Biography" and developed a digital collection of "Ancient Yunnan Flower Rhyme", which is highly favored by tourists; The Bai ethnic tie dyeing technique is also connected to the eternal flower, becoming a customized dress at Paris Fashion Week, showcasing the profoundness of Chinese culture to the world. Exploring the intrinsic cultural value of Yunnan flowers and elevating them to a globally shared symbol of civilization is not only a breakthrough for industrial brands, but also a cultural dialogue mediated by flowers, allowing the world to understand Yunnan's landscape soul, ethnic roots, and cultural charm through "flowers".

3.3 Localized dissemination and strengthened international promotion

Yunnan flower brands need to go beyond the provincial borders and also step towards the world. On August 1, 2025, the Office of the Rural Work Leading Group of the Yunnan Provincial Committee of the Communist of China, the Yunnan Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the Yunnan Provincial Department of Commerce, the Yunnan Provincial Taxation Bureau of the State Administration of Taxation, and Kunming Customs jointly issued a notice on the issuance of measures to optimize tax collection and management services and promote the export of characteristic agricultural products from the Yunnan Southern Plateau. This provides policy assistance for the "going global" of Yunnan's flower industry. Currently, Yunnan's flower industry is facing a contradiction between the relatively weak domestic flower market and the thriving development of the flower industry. It is urgent to explore the international market, and the "going global" of flowers is an inevitable trend. At the same time, the international flower market is large, and for the mature Yunnan flower industry, its international sales momentum and potential are strong. In response, in 2024, Chenggong District, Kunming City, Yunnan Province, innovatively created the "There is always a flower for you" IP using flowers as a medium, attracting 670000 overseas viewers through overseas live broadcasts; Organize district level grassroots workers to shoot recommendation videos in six languages, among which "There is always a flower for you" is displayed on the homepage of "Chinese Culture" of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, reaching audiences in different regions around the world through an international media matrix. At the same time, Yunnan's flower industry has innovated its narrative style, shifting from "other narrative" to "our narrative", and narrowing the distance to overseas audiences through multi-dimensional dissemination such as industry, cross-border, and network. Yunnan flowers need to be based on local customs and traditions in the process of dissemination, achieve localized dissemination, and promote the "going global" of Yunnan flower industry. With the help of convenient routes, Yunnan starts emerging markets and sells its flowers to more than 50 countries such as Russia and Australia. In addition, with the opening of China Laos railway freight trains, a three-dimensional logistics network of "combined land and air transport" has been established, allowing flowers to reach the terminal market in Southeast Asia within 48 hours, so that the world can see the speed of China and smell the flowers from "Eastern Yunnan Province".

4. Conclusion

In the process of external communication, Yunnan's flower industry can strengthen its brand strategy and create a "cloud flower matrix" to unify and integrate Yunnan's flower industry into a world-class brand, proposing a cultural identity that combines Chinese recognition and global

resonance. Furthermore, by narrating from multiple dimensions, we can explore the deeper connotations of 'cloud flowers' and create a cultural experience that is perceptible, participatory, and empathetic. Finally, by strengthening the localization dissemination in international propaganda discourse, cultural stories can be embedded according to local cultural customs during the dissemination process, enhancing the dissemination capability of Yunnan's flower industry. In short, the "beautiful economy" of Yunnan's flower industry has laid the foundation for its cultural symbolization. Only through deep cultural exploration, innovative narrative expression, and precise channel layout can this "cloud flower" not only bloom in the world market, but also be rooted in the common cultural memory of humanity, becoming a vivid carrier for telling Chinese stories and conveying Eastern aesthetics.

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