



Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai Village at Liuzhou, China:  
Public Space and Meaning Change in the Process of Minority Development

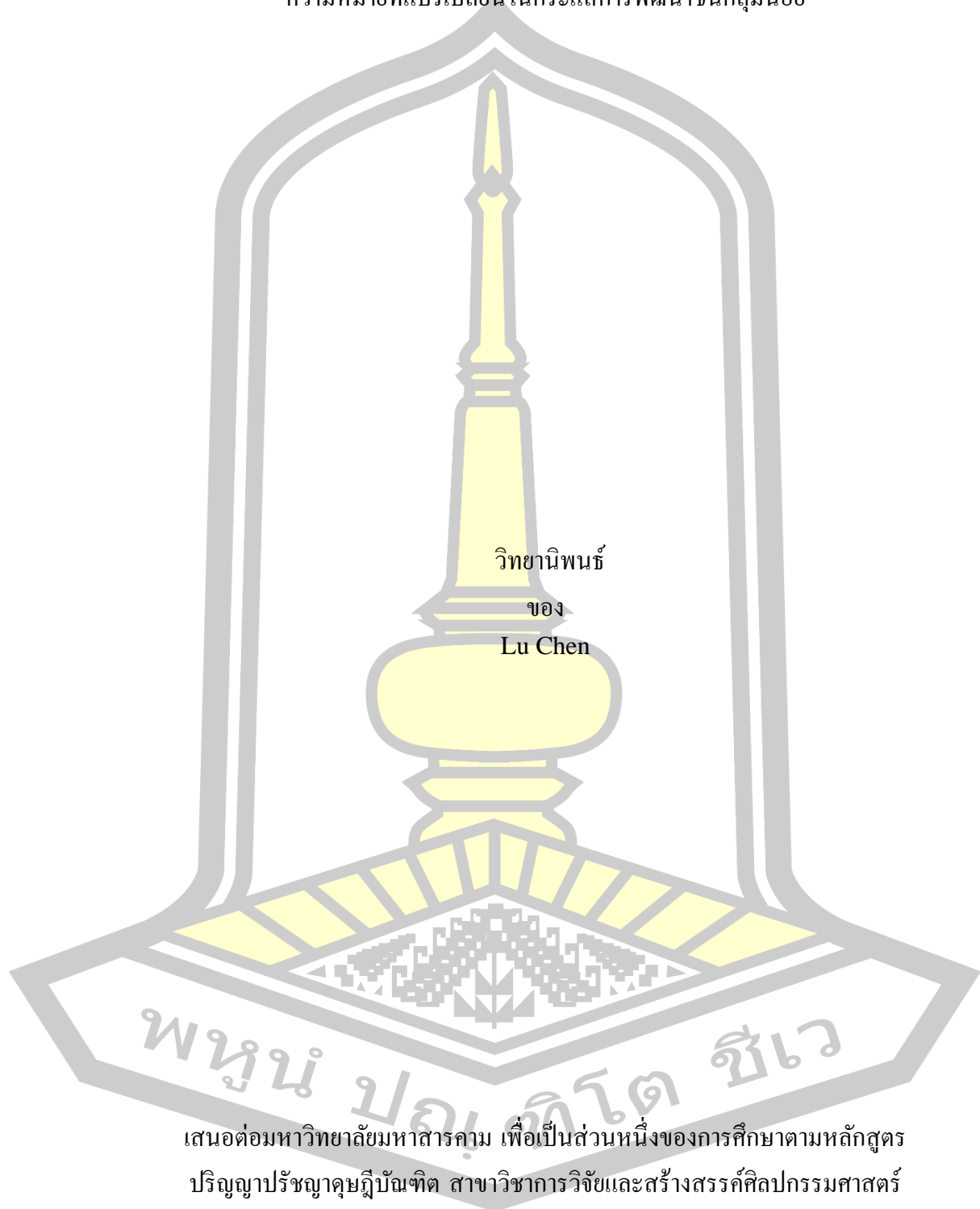
Lu Chen

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation

July 2024

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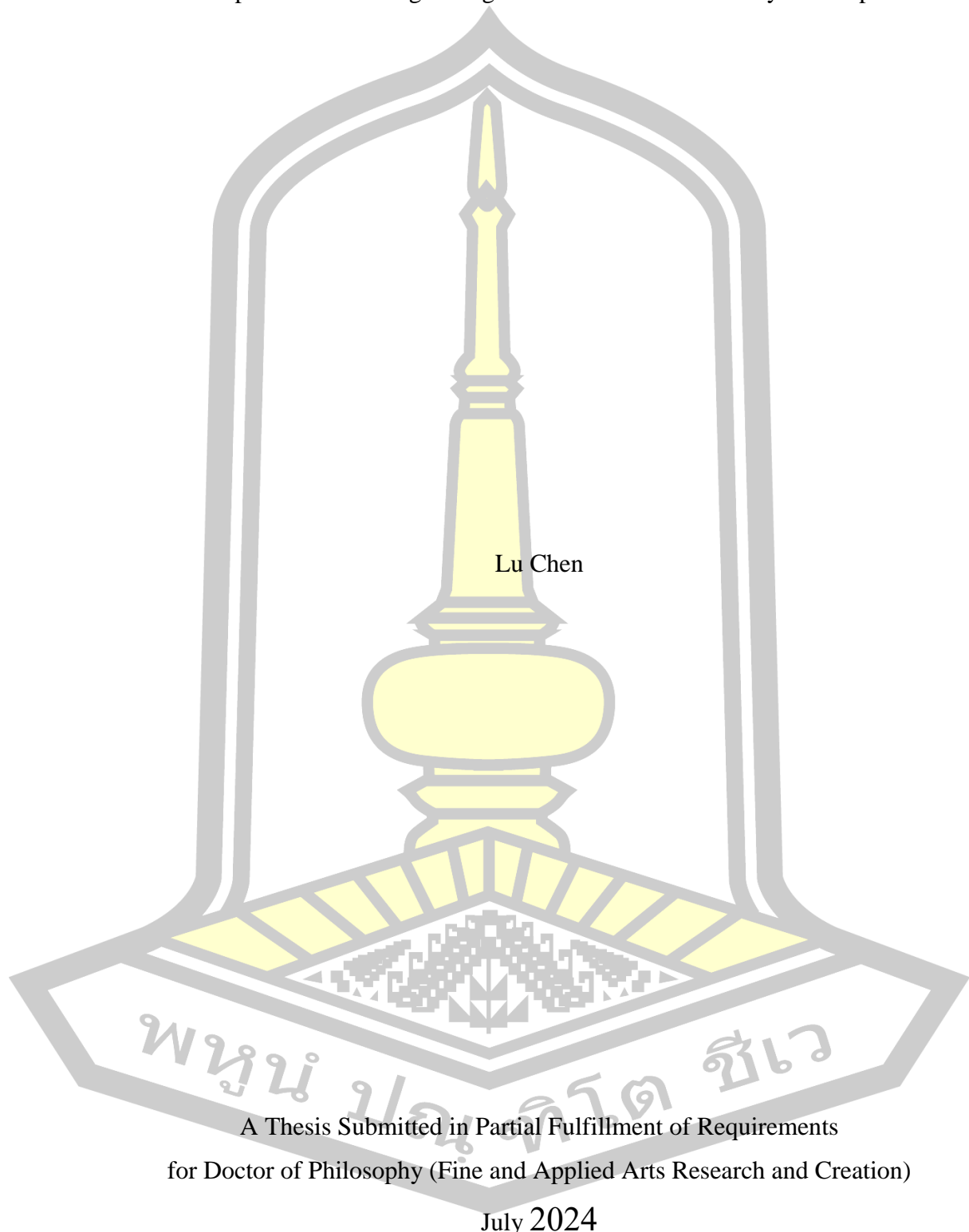


เสนอต่อมหาวิทยาลัยมหาสารคาม เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตร  
ปริญญาปรัชญาดุษฎีบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาการวิจัยและสร้างสรรค์ศิลปกรรมศาสตร์

กรกฎาคม 2567

ลิขสิทธิ์เป็นของมหาวิทยาลัยมหาสารคาม

Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai Village at Liuzhou, China:  
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The examining committee has unanimously approved this Thesis, submitted by Ms. Lu Chen , as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation at Mahasarakham University

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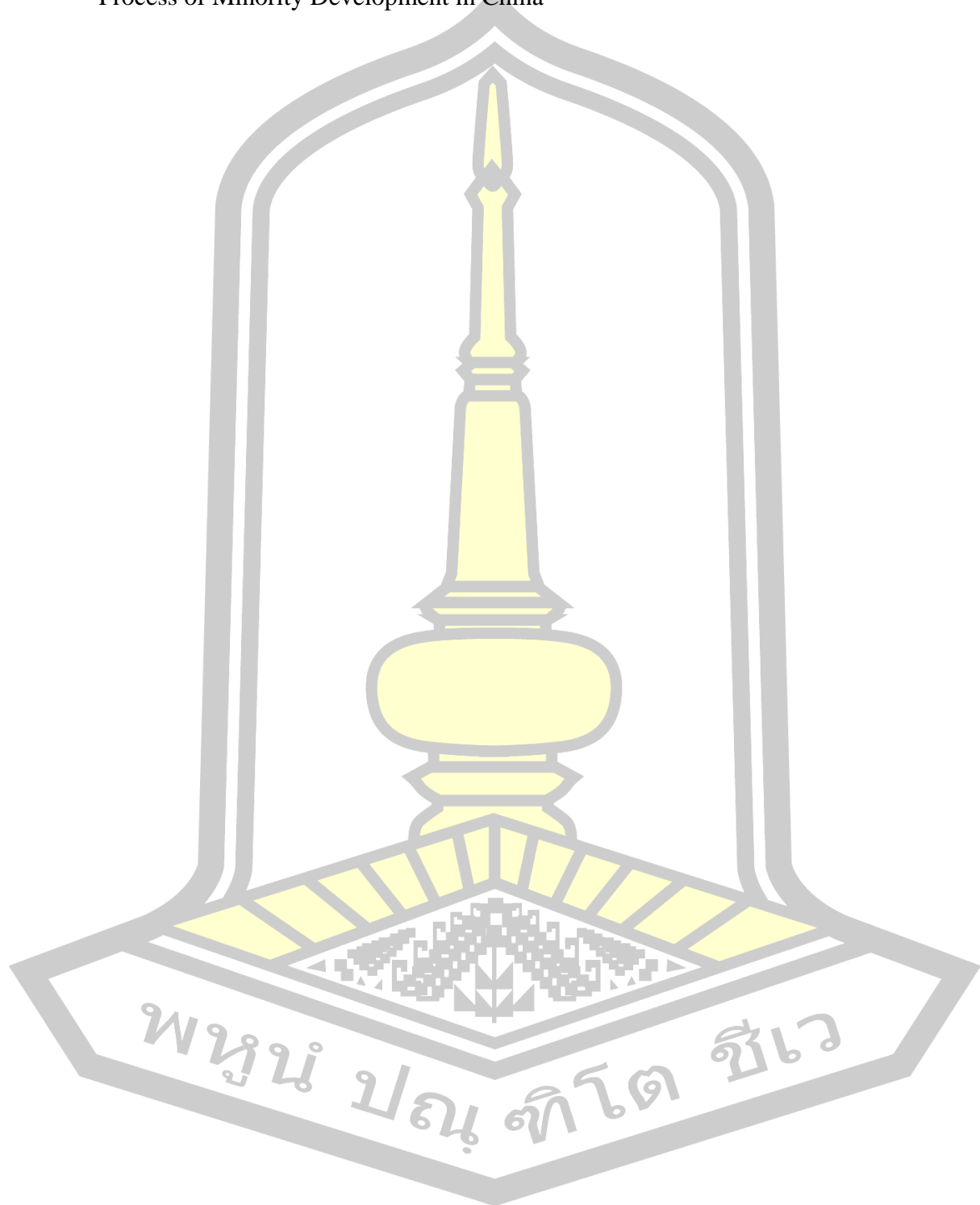


<b>TITLE</b>	Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai Village at Liuzhou, China: Public Space and Meaning Change in the Process of Minority Development		
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<b>DEGREE</b>	Doctor of Philosophy	<b>MAJOR</b>	Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation
<b>UNIVERSITY</b>	Maharakham University	<b>YEAR</b>	2024

### ABSTRACT

This study is basic research and uses qualitative research methods. From the phenomenon of 'Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai Village at Liuzhou, China', we will study the issues of Public Space and Meaning Change in the context of the development process of China's minorities. The research found that the emergence of the Dong's Wind and Rain Bridges was influenced by the physics, climate and production mode of Chengyang Baizhai, and contained meaningful relationships between landscape features, including the resources of the surrounding physical area and the social and cultural life of the Dong people in this particular area. Therefore, the Wind and Rain Bridge becomes a public space functioning by the community to support the social space. The Dong people use "ethnic culture technology" to build, use and maintain this public space as a mental space. At the same time, the Wind and Rain Bridge is a special place with its own identity. It has influenced the phenomena of ethnicity, invention and tradition of public space, both in everyday and formal life. Especially in rituals, it is created as an imaginary space for the journey to heaven or the afterlife, weddings and other important events. The Dong people have created meaning for the wind and rain bridge as a public space, and built their ethnicity identity in this process. Later, after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Dong transformed from an 'ethnic' into a 'minority' in China. In the context of the development of minorities, Wind and Rain Bridge, as a public space, reflects the important aspects of the relationship between ethnic minorities and outsiders, different groups and different levels. And constantly produce new meanings superimposed on the old meanings, the area multi-interaction of social space in a complex current situation. About production in public space, there is a fusion of physical, social and mental production. In particular, the Dong uses power technology to create sacred things to protect the wind and rain bridge, constructing a special mental space. An important finding in the research is that citizenship and racial identity of minorities can coexist, and that citizenship does not necessarily curb racial identity, but rather promotes minority development. All of these are a unique architectural culture linked to the cultural landscape, ethnicity identity and the external world, namely the "wind and rain bridge culture".

Keyword : Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge, Public Space Meaning Change, The Process of Minority Development in China



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Three years have passed, and when I write this, it means that my doctoral career is about to be completed. This is a complicated, busy, arduous and happy process, in which I have seen a wider world and met better people. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all those who have guided, helped, accompanied and supported me!

First of all, I am deeply grateful to my most beloved mentor, Prof. Dr. Supachai Singyabuth. Thanks to your patient guidance and support, I was able to complete this doctoral thesis. In order to mold me into an international researcher, you have devoted countless hours and energy to teaching, mentoring and helping me. And constantly encourage me to explore, research and discover problems. You did more than guide my thesis, you reinvented a new me. Your passion and focus on academic research, your rigorous attitude towards teaching and your encouragement and tolerance towards students will continue to influence my future research and teaching work.

Secondly, I sincerely thank those scholars and local Dong people who provided me with information and pictures, which made my thesis solid and credible. I would like to thank Associate Professor Bian Jichen from Guangxi University of the Arts for providing information about the wood construction skills of Dong nationality and for working with me in the field. I would like to thank Yang Qiushi, Yang Yundong, Yang Yunqing and other Dong people of Chengyang Bazhai for sharing information and photos about Chengyang Bazhai and Wind and Rain Bridge with me without reservation.

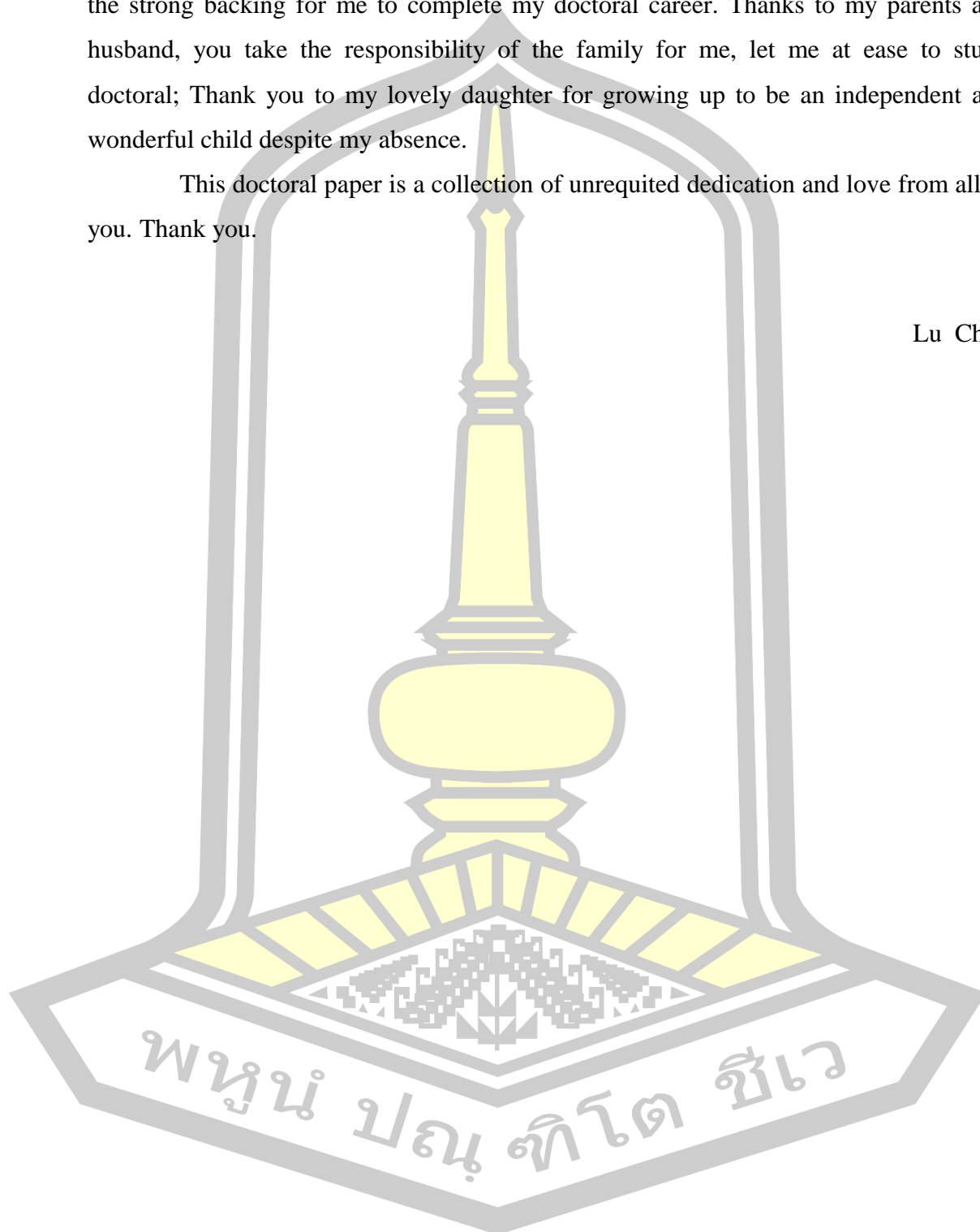
Thirdly, I would like to thank all the teachers of the the Faculty of Fine Arts and Cultural Science for their help, guidance, encouragement and concern. They care and help for our Chinese students makes us feel at home in a foreign land. Thank you also to all the committee members who evaluated my paper and provided valuable input to the current research.

Fourthly, I would like to thank my doctoral classmates Li Ying, Jiao Pu, Deng Yinghong, and Chen Yanyan for their company in making us grow together. In academia, through countless discussions with you, I have found answers to questions; In life, your company makes me happy to enjoy the doctoral time.

Finally, I would like to thank my dear family, whose support and dedication are the strong backing for me to complete my doctoral career. Thanks to my parents and husband, you take the responsibility of the family for me, let me at ease to study doctoral; Thank you to my lovely daughter for growing up to be an independent and wonderful child despite my absence.

This doctoral paper is a collection of unrequited dedication and love from all of you. Thank you.

Lu Chen

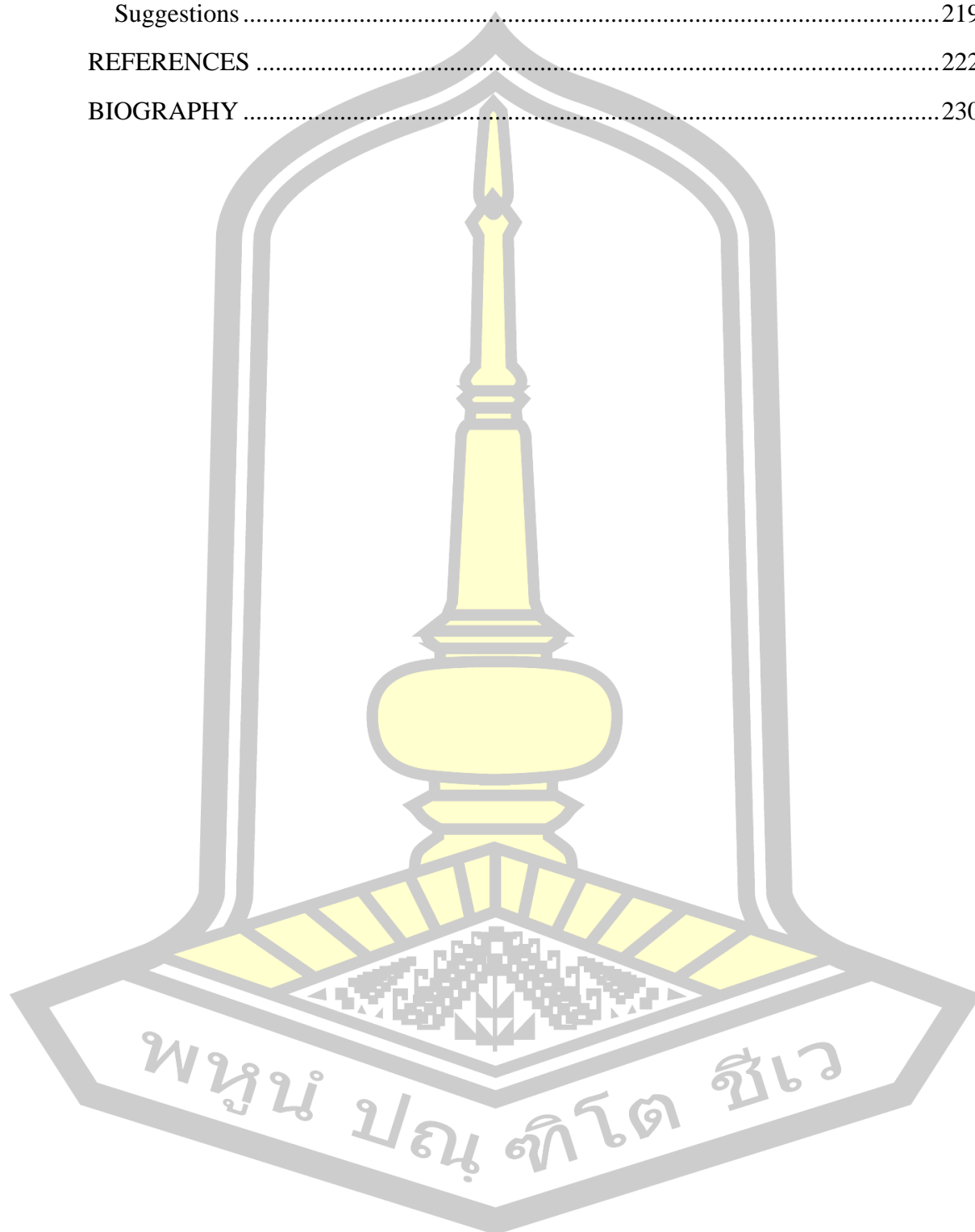


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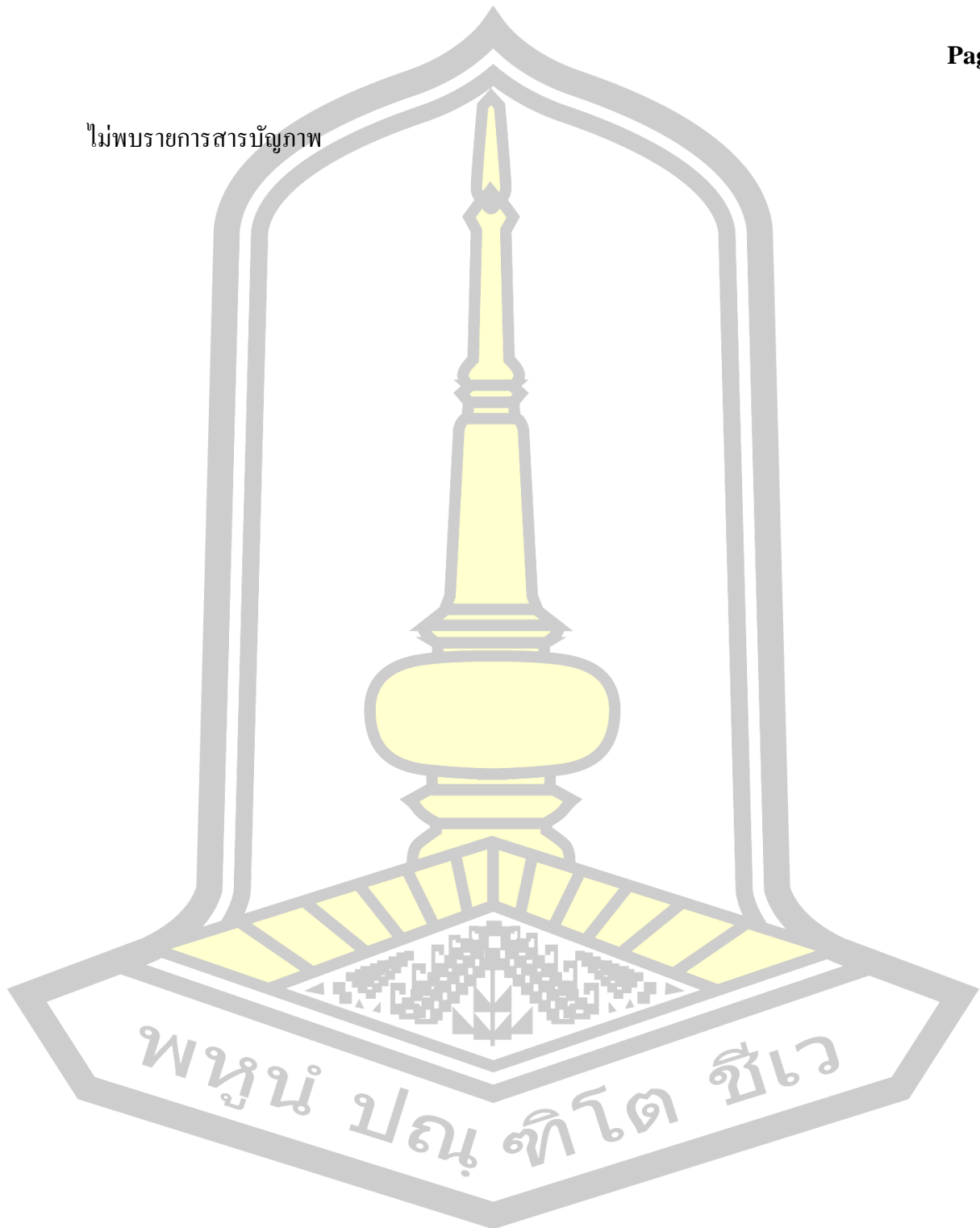
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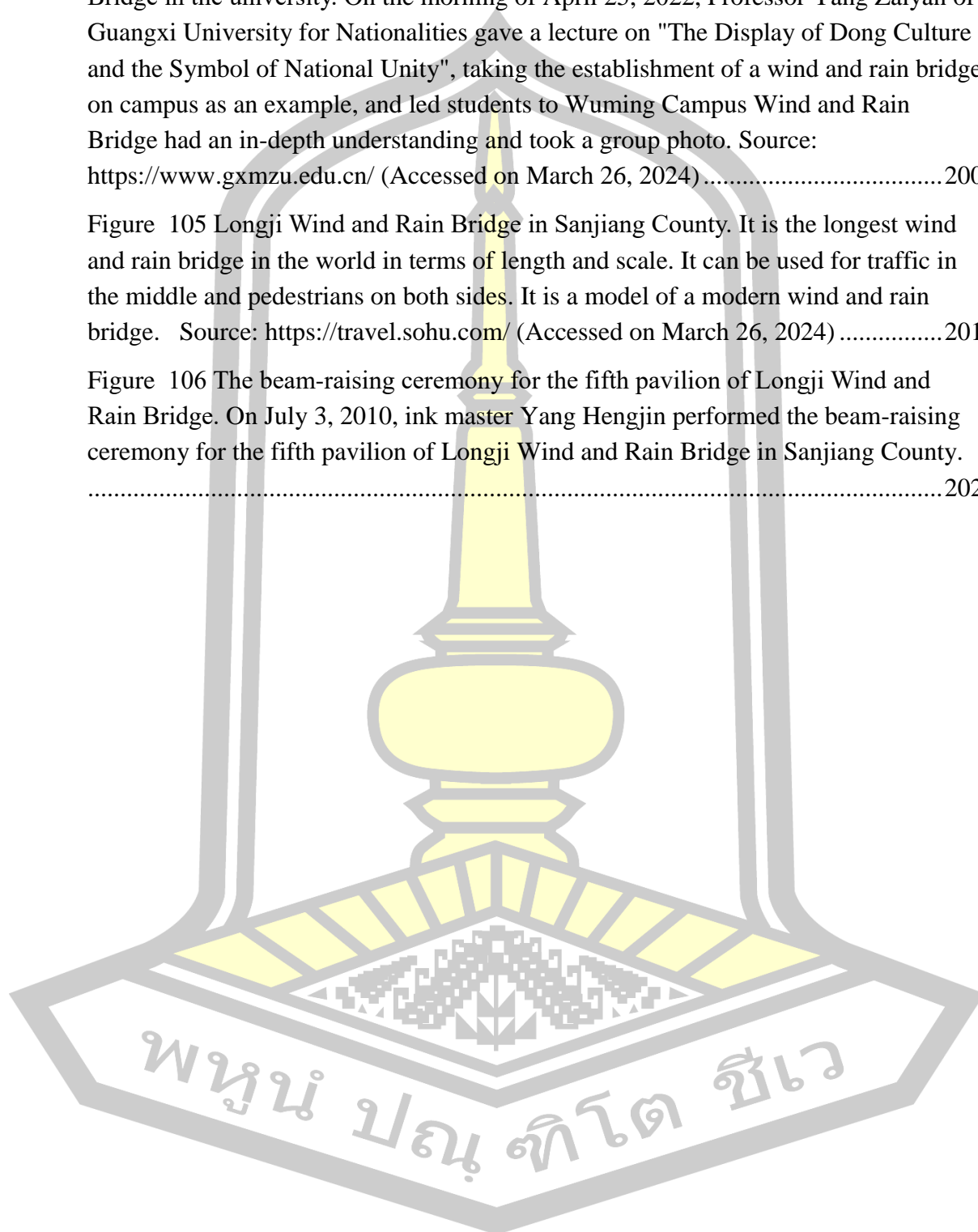
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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1. Research Background

Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge is a very important 'Public space' of the Chengyang Bazhai village, a Dong's Village at Liu Zhou, China. It carries the production and life of the Dong people and various activities such as interaction and worship, is a space built, used, and maintained by the village together, and is a carrier of the social memory of the Dong people. In the process of minority development, Chengyang Bazhai was developed by the government into a national 5A tourist area, and from a closed Dong village to a developed tourist area, Wind and Rain Bridge changed in stages. In different social contexts, the wind and rain bridges create different production of space to show 'the Meaning change'. These are the main concepts of this research.

A Dong's Village of Chengyang Bazhai is located in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region or "GUI" for short. Guangxi is a provincial administrative region of the People's Republic of China. It is located in South China, 104°28' ~ 112°04' east longitude, 20°54' ~ 26°23' north latitude, east to Guangdong, south to Beibu Bay and Hainan across the sea, west to Yunnan, northeast to Hunan, northwest to Guizhou, southwest to the Vietnam Socialist Republic. There are 12 ethnic groups inhabiting Zhuang, Han, Yao, Miao, Dong, Mulam, Manan, Hui, Jing, Yi, Shui, and Gelao. Zhuang nationality accounts for 31.4% of the permanent population of the district. From the website of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China (<https://www.gov.cn>. 2023).

Thence Dong is a minority group that has a highly unique ethnicity and identity. Especially, they are acknowledged for the outstanding of "Wind and Rain Bridge". Which is my research text. It reflects the large issue of ethnicity and the meaning change very well.

In order to protect and develop ethnic minorities, the Central Government of the People's Republic of China changed Guangxi Province into "Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region" in 1958, and Guangxi was set up as a provincial autonomous region for ethnic minorities and given certain policies for the development of ethnic minorities. Liuzhou is a city in the central and northern parts of Guangxi, where many ethnic groups live together. The Zhuang and Dong are the oldest native ethnic groups in Liuzhou. The northern part of Liuzhou is home to the largest Dong population in Guangxi.

In the dimension of the historical development of the community, Chengyang Bazhai Village is located in the north of Liuzhou. It is a village with a dense population of Dong people. It is composed of eight natural villages, namely Chengzhai, Pingfu Zhai, Jichang Zhai, Dazhai, Maanzhai, Pingzhai, Yanzhai, and Pingping, which are connected by wind and rain bridges.

The 'Physical space' of Chengyang Bazhai Village belongs to the hilly mountains, the terrain is high in the north and low in the south, and the region is surrounded by mountains, and rivers, belonging to the subtropical monsoon climate. There is no winter in winter and no hot summer in summer. The climate is humid, and

the precipitation is abundant throughout the year. The average precipitation can reach 1493 mm, which is obvious in spring and summer. Rich rain and fertile soil are suitable for planting rice, and Dong people like to eat rice. The physical environment is suitable for Dong people's production and living. Influenced by Han culture in the past, Dong people regarded water as their wealth. The Linxi River running through Chengyang Bazhai Village is not only an important material for the production and life of Dong people but also a symbol of their belief culture. The Dong people choose to live near the water and build their villages along the Linxi River. Such geographical and climatic conditions have influenced the Dong people to establish their villages here, thus forming a village.

The ancestor of the Dong people established their village. Adapting to the cultural landscape with mountains, hills, and a river flowing through the village. Such physical characteristics influence the characteristics of a particular cultural landscape. Especially the construction of the Wind and Rain bridge for transportation and public use. Both in the dimension of function and identity of the people of Dong.

Therefore, the characteristic of Chengyang Bazhai Village is the ecological, cultural, and social factors that affect the generation of Wind and Rain Bridges. Chengyang Bazhai Village is located in the mountains. A subtropical mountain climate, short winter, and long summer, abundant rainfall, streams, and valleys dotted. The cultural characteristics of the Dong people like to open doors and look at the water and mountains, which makes the village Dong people formed by the Linxi River. Since the economic life of the Dong people mainly comes from paddy fields and mountain forests, people need to cross forest rivers frequently to carry out production. As a result of the above factors, bridge building has become a necessary demand of the Dong village.

Bridges built by Dong communities are a combination of "bridge, corridor and pavilion", which can shelter pedestrians from wind and rain, so they are called "Wind and Rain Bridges". The research text is Wind and Rain Bridge. The wind and rain bridge of the Dong people originated in the Ming and Qing Dynasties and prevailed in the Dong villages adjacent to Hunan, Guangxi, and Guizhou provinces. It was constructed with the wooden construction technique of the Dong. The whole building was connected by riveting instead of riveting with a single iron nail, with a solid structure and a unique technology. On May 20, 2006, the wooden construction technique of the Dong was listed as a national intangible cultural heritage (Tao Zhe. 2016). Chengyang Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge is a national intangible cultural heritage and an example of the wooden construction technique of the Dong.

In the dimension of social space, the development of the Dong society is slow, and it has not experienced slavery. It retains more characteristics of the primitive clan society, such as the legacy of matriarchy that worships the grandmother. The mountain forests, pastures, and fish ponds in Dong villages are all public, and the primitive social habit of sharing the prey equally with each family after hunting is retained. Various relics of the primitive society have long influenced the material and spiritual life of the Dong people, making them maintain many traditions of the primitive society and have a strong sense of village. Strong public character in the cultural consciousness. On the basis of this public nature, the Dong village has formed the social organization form and system of "He Kuan". The so-called "He" means to unite with the villagers of all families and gather the villagers under the will of the



villagers. By "Kuan", I mean the statute to which all families have agreed. Dong's "He Kuan" has the characteristics of a primitive clan rural commune and primitive tribal alliance (Shi Linxia, Zhu Enfu.2012). The social organization form and system of "He Kuan" have unified the consciousness of Dong people in the village. The social and psychological space formed on the basis of the social and cultural foundation of the above-mentioned Dong communities enables the Dong people to work together to build Bridges.

In addition to the physical and social dimensions, Wind and Rain Bridge also has an imaginary dimension or 'Mental space'. The construction of the Dong people's wind and rain bridge not only communicates with the outside and inside the village but also communicates with people and gods. The Dong people believe that the bridge is the channel to communicate between the "Yinjian" and the "Yangjian", and the human soul needs to go to the "Yangjian" or back to the "Yinjian" through the bridge. If a Dong woman has been married for a long time and is infertile, her child will not be able to be reincarnated due to the obstacles of rivers and streams. In this case, they need to go to the bridge to induce the soul to be reincarnated. When the wind and rain bridge is completed or restored, the grand ceremony of "Stepping on the bridge" will be held to obtain an heir through the reincarnation of the soul. On the wind and rain Bridge of Dong nationality, the "Bridge temple" will be built to worship Bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas are called "bones" in the Dong language. After the construction of the Wind and Rain Bridge, the Dong people will hold the "touring bones" ceremony, which is to invite the Bodhisattvas to the bridge temple to tour the eight villages (Liu Hongbo. 2016). These Dong traditions, customs, and rituals make the Wind and Rain Bridge an important building in the village.

Therefore, Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge is a 'Public Space' for Dong's people and other communities who connect here.

With the Wind and Rain Bridge being a public space, it is protected and preserved in the dimension of Dong society as a whole. The Dong people have built their customs and rituals on this bridge. Thus, creating a sacred meaning for their shared public space as the ritual and festivals. Dong people will hold a wonderful Lusheng performance on the Wind and Rain Bridge. When the guests of other villages come and go, the residents of this village wear their festive costumes and gather at the end of the bridge to greet them, sing the "Blocking Road Song" and serve the "Guest Wine" to show the friendly friendship between the villages. During the harvest season, the Wind and Rain Bridge provides shelter from the wind and rain. The Dong people pile crops on the bridge boards, beams, and railings, turning the bridge into a temporary granary for common use in the village. When the dry season comes, the old people of each village will come to the bridge Temple to bow down to the Bodhisattva and ask for signs and divinations in order to rain. This ceremony is called "asking for rain", and every few years Dong people also hold the "charcoal bridge" ceremony on the Wind and Rain Bridge. "Charcoal" means great sacrifice. When these ceremonies are held on the bridge, many people give rice, baba, and sour fish to everyone to eat, and also hold a "Bei Ya" activity, that is, offering cloth. Some of the women offered dyed cloth and sold it at a discount after the sacrifice, with the proceeds used to repair and maintain the Wind and Rain Bridge (Guo Jing. 2017).

Amid these customs and rituals, the Wind and Rain Bridge has been transformed from a river-crossing aid into a public space in the Dong village. Everyone in the village

has responsibility and ownership of the Storm bridge, and they must work together to build it, use it, and maintain it, through various traditions and rituals. The social life in this public space becomes the common memory of the village, and the bridge can indicate its ethnic identity.

The Wind and Rain Bridge dimension of architecture and part of the physical space of the Chengyang Bazhai village. Wind and Rain Bridge becomes a public activity place shared by different groups in the village, namely Public Space. The construction form of the Wind and Rain Bridge proves its publicity from the side. Generally, 50-150 meters long, the wind and rain bridge are mainly composed of three parts: pier, bridge span, and pavilion gallery:

The bridge pier is made of bluestones from the mountains, which are strong and durable. Small-span Wind and Rain Bridges with wooden bridge piers built on both sides, such as Pinan Bridge. The Wind and Rain Bridges with large spans are built with bluestone piers in the river to resist the water, such as the Yongji Bridge, Puji Bridge, and Helong Bridge in the Chengyang Bazhai village. Wind and rain Bridges of different sizes serve as theatres with different functions in the village.

The bridge span and pavilion are wooden structures, which are made of fir trees from the mountain. The Dong people adopted the "Bracket simple beam" structure to build the Wind and Rain Bridge, which can not only reduce the number of piers in the river but also increase the flood discharge of the river bed, bringing economic and security benefits to the village and people. The bridge corridor, usually with a one-floor corridor, is equipped with seats on both sides of the bridge corridor, which creates a temporary space for pedestrians to shelter from wind and rain and also protects the whole bridge deck from rain erosion.

The Bridge Temple is the most important part of the Wind and Rain Bridge, dedicated to the common ancestor "Sa" of the Dong people. "Sa" is the meaning of beginning grandmother. Everything in the Dong people should be sacrificed to "Sa" first. There are many biographies, myths, and stories of the Dong people, which have been passed down from generation to generation. "Sa" is called "Sa" culture together with other folk literature and art of the Dong nationality. In the pavilion of the Wind and Rain Bridge, there is an "ancestral shrine" with a male and a female statue. The male is named Jiang Lang and the female is Jiang Mei, which are the ancestors of the Dong people. The central tower and the right tower of the wind and rain bridge are dedicated to "Wu God" and "Wen God", in order to eliminate disasters. Influenced by the Han nationality, the Dong people also worship loyalty, courage, righteousness, and literature. Therefore, they often set up Guan Temple and Wenchang Palace by the central tower and the right tower of the Wind and Rain Bridge, which are located on the important road and have convenient transportation, so as to worship the gods of Wu and Wen in their hearts. Guan Gong, in particular, was not only a hero of loyalty, bravery, and fighting demons, but also the savior and patron of the ancestors of the Dong people and their protector god. The location of the Bridge Temple was also very specific. It had to face upstream of the river, so as to protect the village. The Bridge Temple of Wind and Rain Bridge becomes a practice village of Dong people's rituals and traditions, as well as an imaginary village of Dong people. The space of the Wind and Rain Bridge is the "practical reflection of the social life of social groups" (Wang Zhongxin.2000), whose public reaction is in both morphological and subjective significance.

In everyday life and in ritual traditions with an ethnic dimension, Wind and Rain Bridge becomes a public space. Urban public space has two meanings. First, they constitute a link of urban static structure space. Secondly, it reflects the purpose and significance of urban life in public space. The purpose of human behavior in urban life endows urban public space with meaning (Zhou Bo.2005). The same is true for the public space of Chengyang Baizhai Village.

When the Wind and Rain Bridge is a part of the physical space of the village, its volume, form, texture, style, and other forms are consistent with other architectural forms in the village, which together constitute the physical characteristics of the village space. The eight natural villages of Chengyang Baizhai Village are attached to forests, rivers, and main roads, showing a pattern of large dispersion and small settlements. For example, Maanzhai and Yanzhai are located in the north of the Linxi River, and Pingzhai, Chengzhai, and Dazhai are located in the south of the Linxi River. The Drum Tower, Stilted house, walled gate, and other buildings in each village are distributed in a belt along the Linxi River, forming a high-density zone-shaped settlement. Open Spaces and ponds are also scattered in the walled village to facilitate fire prevention. The drum tower of each village is usually located in the center of the village, while the Wind and Rain Bridge is built over the Linxi River, serving as A stronghold of traffic between the various villages, within and outside the village (Tao Zhe. 2016).

At the same time, the Wind and Rain Bridge is also the door of the village, which serves as the function of protection and defense against risks. The gate of the Wind and Rain Bridge is often used as a gate into a Village. Chengyang Yongji Bridge, for example, Chengyang Yongji Bridge is the gateway into Maanzhai, and Helong Bridge is the transport link between Pingzhai and Yanzhai, as well as the gateway to Yanzhai. The Wind and Rain Bridge is not only a place for people to enter and leave but also a symbol of the village domain. The domain defines private ownership and the domain creates exclusivity. The Dong people are a social organization formed by blood ties, following the principle of "living together with the same surname and clan", where both internal centripetalism and external exclusivity exist. Wind and Rain Bridge then becomes a tool to consolidate the Dong social form to help establish the private ownership of village space.

Public space generally exists as a system of spaces to meet certain needs. As a public space in a village, the Wind and Rain Bridge fulfills the need for interpersonal interaction and the construction of social organization in the village. The bridge is flat and covered by a promenade, which is lined with benches, so people often talk and rest, and young men and women fall in love here. The bridge has become an important space for interaction within and between the Dong villages. Customs and activities such as "stopping the village gate" and "singing a welcome song" are repeated in this public space, giving it a new meaning in different social contexts. The Dong people worship their ancestors and gods on the wind and rain bridges, and they use the "stepping on the bridge", "sacrificing the bridge", "adding to the bridge", "resting the bridge", and "crossing the bridge" (Li Zhe. 2017). Through the collective participation of people in the village, the nature of the wind and rain bridge as a public space is constantly strengthened and given meaning. The attributes of village public space reflect the meaning of the purpose of life in public space. The purpose of human behavior in the life of the village gives meaning to the Wind and Rain Bridge.

However, Dong village is part of China's nation-state. This village has been changing following the national context, especially the national policy in each context. It also influences to change the meaning of Wind and Rain Bridge.

In Dong Village, the Wind and Rain Bridge and the culture that has grown out of them have a long history. Over the course of more than 700 years of development, the bridge has evolved from a transport building to a public space for living, production, and worship, and has since become world-renowned for its unique architectural style and skills, and has been given unique social significance as the social environment of the village has transformed, becoming an indispensable public space for production and living. It serves as a bridge between the Dong people within the village, as well as between the village and the outside, the nation and the state, and the country and the world.

People's feelings about the Wind and Rain Bridge, their role and impact on people and society, are constantly changing and have their meaning in every period. The following will be discussed in four texts according to the changes in the social environment, from the three dimensions of the Production of Space. I explain as follows:

In the beginning period, Chengyang Bazhai is located in the northern part of Sanjiang County, with a geographical location of  $108^{\circ}\sim 109^{\circ}\text{E}$  and  $25^{\circ}\sim 26^{\circ}\text{N}$ . It has a subtropical monsoon climate with a mild climate and abundant rainfall throughout the year, with an average annual temperature of  $17^{\circ}\sim 19^{\circ}$  and an average annual rainfall of 1,493mm. Chengyang Bazhai is located in Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County at the junction of Gui, Xiang, and Qian, and it is adjacent to Passage County of Hunan Province to the east, Bajiang of Sanjiang to the west, Guanghui Village of Zhouping Township of Sanjiang to the south, and Guandong Village of Linxi Township to the north, with a total area of about  $30\text{km}^2$ . (Si Linxia, Zhu Enfu. 2012) They are called "Chengyang Bazhai".

The terrain of Chengyang Bazhai is generally high in the north and low in the south, with hilly terrain at an altitude of 50-1000m and a land area of about  $12\text{km}^2$ , of which 70% is mountainous and 30% is river valley and hills. The hills in Chengyang are connected to the mountains, so it is really a case of "opening the door to the mountains". The hillsides are covered with oil tea and cedar forests, and there is not much paddy land, about 30% per capita, mostly in the valleys and a few along the river banks. Planting oil tea forests and rice was the main form of production for the Dong people living in the eight villages of Chengyang, who then chose to live near the water and build their villages around the Linxi River. As the tea forests and rice fields are located in the valleys, the people have to cross the Linxi River frequently for their production. Therefore, the bridge must be created to communicate the natural connection.

But the bridge was not created at the birth of the village, it was closely related to the social and productive conditions within the village, and the ability of man to create and transform nature. The Dong people living in Chengyang Bazhai are one of the ancient Baiyue people. In ancient times, due to the low level of productivity, people's production and life were severely constrained by natural conditions, and they were unable to master nature or explain it. The natural environment seriously influenced the development of a race and determined its rise and fall. The Dong people have long lived in southwest China, where the land is barren, transport is

closed, the natural environment is very harsh, and social development is extremely slow. Under such circumstances, the people were keen to find an ideal place to live and be blessed by the gods.

Throughout history, the ancestors of the Dong people have migrated many times. When they arrived at a certain place, they found that the feng shui was unfavorable and moved again. In this way, they moved again and again and finally settled at the junction of today's Hunan, Hubei, Guangxi, and Guizhou, including today's Chengyang Bazhai. After living for some time, when they realized that this "feng shui treasure" was inevitably subject to natural and man-made disasters, they tried to find a remedy. They believed that man and nature were connected and that by choosing a suitable place outside the village to build a 'bridge of blessing', they could achieve the perfect state of "The unity of man and nature" and the village would be safe and the people would be happy. This is why the bridge must be created to meet the spiritual needs of the Dong people.

At the beginning of the village's establishment, due to the low material conditions and production level, the Dong people placed stones in shallow streams or wooden planks on small rivers to solve the river crossing problem, and the first bridges were created. At this time, the bridge helped the Dong people to cross natural barriers and facilitated the material production of the village, while satisfying the Dong people's imagined space for the bridge. The bridge made meaning to the material production and spiritual space of the Dong people and became a thing that was bound to come into being.

In the Feudal period of China, the policy pursued by successive rulers was one of ethnic oppression. They referred to the minority groups in the south as barbarians and barbarians, and so on. uncivilized and barbaric peoples. Since the Wei, Jin, and Northern Dynasties, the Dong ancestors were referred to generically as bureaucratic barbarians, and so on. unrecognized and inferior barbaric peoples. The inequality of social classes created an internal centripetal force and an external defensive force for the Dong people, who gradually moved towards the valleys and basins to create a natural defense system for the safety of their village. These valleys and basins on the banks of rivers and streams are called Dong. During the Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, the feudal literati called the Dong people Dongmin, Dong Barbarians, Dong People, Dong Miao, Dong People, and Dongjia.

During the Song and Yuan dynasties, many Han Chinese of Jiangnan origin moved into the Dong areas due to war or calamity and because they could not bear the oppression and exploitation of the feudal dynasty. During the Ming Hongwu period, the rulers, in order to consolidate their local power, used the former chief in the Dong areas, or sent some " Meritorious soldiers" to act as the "Tusi", and implemented the "Tunbao system", "allocating troops to the towns and people to the villages". Through this policy, a large number of Han Chinese were integrated into the Dong village. These Han Chinese brought with them Han culture and beliefs and influenced the Dong people, causing the Dong to expand from the worship of their primitive ancestors and the worship of all things natural to the acceptance and merging of Han beliefs and culture. During the Tang Dynasty, the interaction between the Dong people and the Han people increased and the Dong people learned how the Han people made bridges and invented the bracketed simple beam-type structure to build wooden bridges using local cedar wood. During the Song and Yuan dynasties, the

techniques of building wind and rain bridges became increasingly perfected, forming a unique architectural skill of the Dong people, which was constantly improved. During the Qing Dynasty, the development of wind and rain bridges reached its heyday, and wherever there was a Dong village there was a Wind and Rain Bridge (Guo Jing. 2017).

The techniques of making wind and rain bridges have been acquired and studied by the Dong people continuously over the course of history, and have been practiced in the Dong communities, eventually becoming the 'local wisdom' of the Dong people. In accordance with the belief of "blocking feng shui and barring the village", the Dong people in the Chengyang Baizhai village-built Wind and Rain Bridges downstream of the Linxi River, for example, Chengyang Bridge, Helong Bridge, Puji Bridge, and Wanshou Bridge at the downstream of Maanzhai, Yanzhai, Dazhai, and Yanzhai respectively. The location of the bridges at the lower reaches of the river creates a contraction in the space where the water exits, which satisfies the feng shui function of a closure, preventing the loss of "wealth" and "good fortune".

At the same time, according to the geographical environment and climatic conditions of the region, the Wind and Rain Bridge is built as a "bridge, corridor, pavilion" in the form of one. Because Chengyang Bazhai has plenty of sunshine and rainfall and is located in a mountainous area, the wind is strong and the angle of drifting rain is small. In order to achieve the complementary effects of rain, sun, and ventilation, the bridge was built with overlapping eaves, forming a small angle between the upper and lower eaves to block the rain and avoid direct sunlight.

The eaves of the bridge are carved with dragons, and the pavilions are often topped with gourds and upside-down Arowana, symbolizing good fortune, and wooden fairy birds are often placed on the painted eaves. The architectural decoration is a reflection of the culture of the building, and the decoration of Wind and Rain Bridge has distinctly Han Chinese cultural characteristics. At the same time, the temples of the wind and rain bridges are placed with the "Wu God", "Wu God", and "Land God", which are worshipped by the Han Chinese. These architectural features and beliefs, which are identical to those of the Han Chinese, further confirm the fusion of the Dong and Han cultures, creating a diverse cultural space.

The Wind and Rain Bridges were built and enjoyed by the Dong people, and have become a public space for many social activities. The Wind and Rain Bridge at the end of a village or village not only provides shelter from the rain and a place to rest but also serves as a downstream building to beautify the village environment and has even evolved into a public place for social and recreational activities. In the past, when the Dong people visited their relatives, they usually waited at the bridge before dark and could not enter the village until dusk, as a sign of respect to their hosts. The Wind and Rain Bridge is the welcome bridge of Dong village and represents the face of the village. If you are a guest in another village, people often praise the Wind and Rain Bridge of the host village. Whether it is a festival or a star-filled night, young Dong men and women love to sing and talk about their love on the bridge. The Dong Wind and Rain Bridge are closely linked to the love life of young Dong men and women. The Dong' Wind and Rain Bridge has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the Dong people and has become a spiritual link between the individual and the village, a meaning that is constantly being modeled and transmitted through the bridges as a public space for the village (Liu Hongbo. 2016).



The various ceremonies of tradition, belief, and custom performed on the Wind and Rain Bridge have become the common memory of the Dong village. For example, the "stepping on the bridge" ceremony to pray for longevity, wisdom, and fertility; the "offering of the bridge" ceremony to link one's life to the bridge on New Year's Eve; the "adding the bridge" ceremony to bless the safety of children; the "resting the bridge" ceremony to guide the souls of children to the yang world; and the "Bridge of Crossing" ceremony, where the bride enters the man's home. The various rituals on the Bridge of Wind and Rain raise the significance of the bridge to the life and soul of the people within the village, and the bridge is given Sacredness.

The construction of the Wind and Rain Bridges at Chengyang Bazhai crossed natural barriers, bridging villages and facilitating production; at the same time, the Dong wind and Wind and Rain Bridges became the face of the village, their form and construction techniques representing the ethnic culture and local wisdom of the Dong people. This is the first layer of meaning that emerges from the Wind and Rain bridge. The bridge then becomes a link between the individual and the village, and a common memory for the village, as the Dong people hold various social activities and ceremonies on the bridge, i.e., social space. The architectural style of the Wind and Rain Bridges and the expression of faith and worship by the Dong people on them, i.e., the psychological space, give rise to the third layer of meaning of the Wind and Rain Bridges. The Wind and Rain Bridge between man and nature, the Dong people and the Han people, and man and God become a bridge that crosses natural barriers, cultural barriers, and temporal barriers (Liu Hongbo. 2016).

In the Socialist period, the founding of New China in 1949 changed the policy of ethnic oppression pursued by successive rulers. The Chinese government proposed the implementation of regional autonomy in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities through the Common Programme. In December 1952, the county-level Dong Autonomous Region was established in Sanjiang County, where the Chengyang BaZhai is located, and in September 1955 it was transformed into a Dong Autonomous County. With strong government support, a road was built in 1965 in Chengyang, breaking down the village barriers imposed by nature and facilitating communication between the village and outside areas. In 1965, Guo Moruo, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, inscribed a poem on the Yongji Bridge at Chengyang Bazhai and wrote the words "Chengyang Bridge" (Jin Kaicheng.2010).

Chengyang Bridge is given life as a space by graphics and symbols, and the authors of these graphic symbols represent a space in a narrative way when Chengyang Bridge becomes not only a space for the production and use of people within the village but also an imagined space for others outside the village. It constructs a new kind of social space.

From 1966 to 1975, the Cultural Revolution was carried out in China, equating the ethnic issue with the class issue, equating the differences between ethnic groups with class differences, and forcing ethnic minorities to change their customs. During the Cultural Revolution, ethnic and religious work was severely damaged and the beliefs and worship of the Dong people were curbed. Before the Cultural Revolution, there were wooden statues of Guan Gong, Wen Chang, Kui Xing, Magistrate, Land, and Zhou Lun worshipped at the bridge temple of Chengyang Bridge. People would usually go up to the bridge on the 15th day of the eighth month of the lunar calendar,

or on the first or 15th day of the first month, to burn incense and worship the gods. This folkloric form of Dong's religious belief was totally rejected under the highly unified ideology of the Cultural Revolution and the highly powerful political revolutionary measures, and all the idols on the wind and rain bridge were destroyed (Jin Kaicheng. 2010).

Lefebvre (1991) explains that the space is produced with intention and purpose, and is primarily a product of the political economy. The destruction of the idols on the wind and rain bridge during the Cultural Revolution was a case of the owners of power at the time dictating the space at their own will in order to conform to their imagination of the space. At this point, the producers of the space of the wind and rain bridge shifted from those within the village to the political power holders outside the village, although it still had the most basic meaning of passage for those within the village.

From this period, we can see that before the Cultural Revolution, the wind and rain bridge connected the village and the government and that it helped the Dong people to cross the barriers of social class and was a symbol of ethnic equality and unity. After the Cultural Revolution, the bridge connected the Dong people with the power holders, who homogenized the space in order to reproduce it. In different socio-cultural contexts, the space of the wind and rain bridge expands and competes, and as Levers argues, the space itself is actively involved in the production of the whole commodity and, more importantly, in the historical process (Wang Minan. 2006).

In the Economic Reform and Opening up period, in 1978, China began its economic reform and opening-up policy. During the modernization process guided by China's reform and opening up, exchanges between the Dong society and different ethnic groups in different regions were more frequent and expanded than ever before. During this period, economic activities were impacted on the basis of the existence of the traditional Dong culture. The entry of various foreign cultural elements has led to a change in the heritage of the Dong culture from closed to open and a change in the system of cultural meanings that has been perpetuated for generations.

The Chinese government has played an important role in policy formulation and implementation, becoming a new subject involved in the spatial construction of the Chengyang Bazhai village and the wind and rain bridge, creating a 'political space'. On 1 October 1984, the Chinese government implemented the Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy, which stipulates in thirteen articles the obligation of higher state organs to help the development of ethnic autonomous areas (Gao Yongyuan, Zhu Jun. 2010). The State has formulated and adopted a series of special policies and measures to help and support the economic development of ethnic areas in the light of their actual situation and has mobilized and organized developed regions to support ethnic areas.

The reconstruction of the space takes place in the practical activities of new subjects within the space and gives rise to new meanings. The Dong people in the village, as the original owners of the space, have been repairing and working to maintain the wind and rain bridge for many years through the unique spirit of mutual help and cooperation and the cohesiveness of family lineage in Dong society. After the founding of the country, the state attached great importance to Chengyang Yongji Bridge, allocating funds to renovate it several times in 1962 and 1974, and listing it as



National Key Cultural Relics Protection Unit in 1982. In 1982, the Chengyang Yongji Bridge was hit by a flood that washed away two piers. The government immediately organized scientific researchers and Dong craftsmen to work together to repair the bridge, which took 20 months and cost 300,000 yuan and finally restored the bridge to its original appearance (Ma Ke. 2012). After the founding of the country, the government was involved in the production and reconstruction of the space of the wind and rain bridges. Although the appearance of the bridge has not changed, the nature of the space has changed, and the bridge connects the nation and the country and is a link to practice the policy of national unity.

Due to the uneven economic development in the east and west of China, social backwardness and economic poverty in the west have become an important obstacle to the modernization process of China, so the Chinese government has put forward Western Development Policy in the context of economic reform and opening up. According to the policy combined with the actual situation of Guangxi, the Guangxi government put forward the requirement to accelerate the development of tourism in Guangxi and build an advanced province of tourism in Guangxi. Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County is one of the better-preserved areas of Dong culture in the south. In order to make full use of the advantages of resources and to better develop the economy, in 1997 Sanjiang County was designated by the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region as a key county for the tourism of the ethnic minorities in northern Guangxi. Chengyang Bridge scenic spot is one of the earliest developed scenic spots in the Dong area and is also one of the more established tourist brands in the development of Dong tourism in Sanjiang County, Guangxi, which has produced good social and economic benefits (Wu Chong. 2020).

Chengyang Bridge scenic spot is one of the earliest developed scenic spots in the Dong area and is also one of the more established tourist brands in the development of Dong tourism in Sanjiang County, Guangxi, which has produced good social and economic benefits. In the early 1980s, many foreigners came to Chengyang to see the Wind and Rain Bridge, and after returning home, they publicized it on TV stations, newspapers, and magazines, so more and more foreigners came across thousands of mountains and rivers to Chengyang and Sanjiang for a "mysterious journey to the East". Through photographs or video, the foreigners have transformed the bridge into a representative symbol, and through the dissemination of this symbol, they have re-created an imaginative space for people outside the village. The construction of this imaginary space creates a heterogeneous cultural otherness for the outsiders of the village and attracts them to come.

The space of Wind and Rain Bridge produces a unique culture through its unique form and the productive way of life of the Dong people. This produced culture in turn defines the ethnicity of this space and the people in it. When foreigners or others from outside the village arrived with information about the different spaces, it influenced the reconstruction of this space. Thus, in 1987, the government began to develop the Chengyang Bridge scenic area, which was managed by the Sanjiang County Cultural Bureau and assigned to sell tickets, so that foreign visitors would have to pay a fee to pass through the Chengyang Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge. The government's claim directly changed the spatial production of the Wind and Rain Bridge, which was transformed from an exclusive public space within the village into an open commercial space for society (Guo Ling, Wang Zhizhang.2014).

The process of tourism development has led to a change in the mode of production in the village, with the natural economic mode of production transforming into a modern commercial mode of production. At first, the Dong people were not able to adapt to this, buying and selling things or becoming guides for a fee conflicted with the Dong tradition of believing in the importance of commerce, virtue over profit, and unpaid hospitality. However, tempted and stimulated by the profitability of tourism, they soon adapted to this mode of production and began to create new models of tourism in exchange for profit. From the list of tourist programs offered to visitors at Chengyang Wind and Rain Bridge, we can see that some of the Dong customs and traditions that have faded out of history have also been rediscovered and displayed in the space in the form of performances to gain profit. For example, "singing and sitting at night" used to be a social activity for young Dong men and women to fall in love, but nowadays, as young people are generally studying in schools or working outside, the way they fall in love is not much different from that of the Han Chinese. But nowadays, in order to satisfy the visitors' imagination of space, it is shown again in the form of performance. The Hundred Feast, for example, is a unique and ancient traditional folk culture that belongs to the Lantern Festival. It was originally developed from the "making of spring blessings", a prayer ceremony held within the clan to "gather clansmen, discuss clan affairs, pray for a good harvest and ensure peace". Nowadays, it has become an event that visitors can experience by paying a fee. There are also Dong people who put back on their long-lost Dong costumes in their daily lives to sell their products as an ethnic group (Tao Zhe.2016).

The visitor's imagination and expectations of Chengyang Bazhai form the "tourist gaze", which further changes the production of space. The wind and rain bridge has become a focus of the tourist gaze and a symbol of the Dong culture. With the brand effect of Chengyang Wind and Rain Bridge, Sanjiang County has successfully held three "Doye - Chengyang Bridge" cultural tourism festivals, followed by the annual China (Liuzhou - Sanjiang) Dong Doye Festival. Through the festival, the symbolic image of the wind and rain bridge is constantly shaped and spread outwards. In the current scenario of tourism development, this symbolic role is further reinforced by external forces. This intensification is the result of a conscious reinterpretation and re-creation of the culture of the wind and rain bridge by the Dong people and the local village (Chen Zhu, Ye Min. 2009).

The Wind and Rain Bridge connects the ethnic village with the outside world and provides a bridge for the local Dong village to communicate with other cultures. The culture of the Dong people is no longer mainly retained and expressed in the social space of the village but has become a popular culture widely enjoyed by the people. It has not only spread within the village but also from one society to another through mass communication tools and tourism. The wind and rain bridge, which became a symbol, began to spread in the heterogeneous world and to merge with other cultures to produce new meanings. When Hong Kong returned to China in 1997, Guangxi presented the country with a carved work of art of the wind and rain bridge as a national gift. This work was based on the Chengyang Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge and was named the Concentric Bridge. The bridge was then used as a symbol to connect mainland China and Hong Kong, becoming a symbol of the heart-to-heart of the Chinese nation.

The Wind and Rain Bridge has gradually evolved from the original Dong cultural symbol into a cultural symbol of Guangxi's ethnic minorities and has been given the meaning of unity and cohesion. In 1988, the Museum of Guangxi Autonomous Region built the Ethnic Heritage Garden behind its exhibition building, where the wind and rain bridge was constructed in a realistic way. In 2008, the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities was established in Guangxi and the wind and rain bridge was built in its open-air display garden. In 2010, Sanjiang County built the world's largest and longest Sanjiang Wind and Rain Bridge, which became a symbol of Sanjiang. Since then, Wind and Rain Bridges combining history and modernity have increasingly appeared in various parts of Guangxi, in parks, scenic spots, and even universities, such as the one in Shishan Park in Nanning, the one in the scenic area of Xiangsi Lake Park in Nanning, the one in Guangxi University for Nationalities and Nanning College. In 2021, President Xi Jinping communicated with the people of Guangxi under the rain and wind bridge at the Guangxi Nationalities Museum and delivered a speech on national unity. All these phenomena prove that the Wind and Rain Bridges have gone from the Dong ethnic group to the minority groups in Guangxi, becoming a symbol shared between ethnic groups (Ma Ke. 2012).

As we enter the 21st century, the wind and rain bridges have attempted to convey Chinese culture to the world from a national and state perspective, becoming a link between China and the world. Driven by national policy, the wind and rain bridges have become a medium for cultural exchange between China and the world. In 2005, the General Office of the State Council of China issued the Opinions on Strengthening the Protection of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage, gradually forming a system for the protection of non-traditional heritage with Chinese characteristics. The art of building the Wind and Rain Bridge, the Dong wooden construction technique, was included in the first batch of the national intangible cultural heritage list on 20 May 2006 (<https://www.gov.cn/>. 2003). The builders of the Wind and Rain Bridge have gone from being carpenters to being intangible heritage bearers, and these intangible heritage bearers do more than pass on their skills and spread their culture. They take part in the International Maritime Silk Road Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition, showcasing Chinese culture to the world with their artwork of the Wind and Rain Bridges. The artworks of the wind and rain bridges reflect the cultural and spiritual identity of China in the midst of the world's diverse cultures. The Chinese government attempts to convey China's cultural identity to the world through wind and rain bridges.

The Wind and Rain Bridge is a kind of adaptation and transformation of the natural environment for the survival of the people, and its meaning is a "collective unconscious" construction behavior, shared and communicated within the ethnic group. However, the development of the tourism economy has had a major impact on the traditional Dong culture during the social transformation brought about by the economic reform. In the midst of social change, the object of the Wind and Rain Bridge has replaced the ontology and has become a symbol of the Dong people and of the local village, i.e., a symbol of a people and a culture. This symbol, in turn, is transmitted and recreated with other spaces of heterogeneous cultures, creating meaning beyond its own culture and becoming a symbol of unity and cohesion. The Wind and Rain Bridge becomes a medium for inter-ethnic sharing and cultural exchange with the outside world.

Therefore, the 4 periods above, at the beginning of the village's establishment, the bridge was just a barrier to crossing nature. During the feudal period, the Dong people borrowed from the Han culture and fused it to create the wind and rain bridges, which became a representation of the ethnic culture and local wisdom of the Dong people and a reflection of their ethnic identity. The Dong people then held various social events on the wind and rain bridges, which became a link between individuals and society within the village. The Dong people's expression of faith and worship on the wind and rain bridges became a medium of communication between the people and the gods. During the socialist period, the wind and rain bridge connected the village inside and outside, connecting the Dong people to the government. The wind and rain bridge helped the Dong people to cross social classes and was a symbol of ethnic equality and unity. And during the special period of the Cultural Revolution, it became a participant in the historical process. During the period of reform and opening up, dramatic changes in production methods made the wind and rain bridge a cultural symbol for tourism; and then again by the practice of space, becoming a symbol of Dong culture; and then by intermingling with heterogeneous cultures, crossing the boundaries between ethnic groups and finally, it transcends its own meaning and becomes a symbol of unity and cohesion.

The meaning of the 4 periods of the Wind and Rain Bridge changes constantly in different social contexts, from lower to higher, from inside to outside, bridging man and nature, man and man, man and God, man and society, nation and country, nation and the world. The rain and wind bridge becomes a bridge that crosses natural barriers, cultural barriers, space-time barriers, and class barriers. It is not just a material thing, a landscape, but a cultural thing, a spiritual thing.

In this research, I want to explore the meaning change of the wind and rain bridge as a public space.

The phenomenon in this research area is a very clear reflection of the large issue of public space in human society. The wind and rain bridges of Chengyang Bazhai are therefore a particularly suitable area of research for the study of the phenomenon of public space. These Dong people construct public space through a mode of production and cultural beliefs related to the local cultural ecology and give it new meaning in their ongoing spatial practices. Another issue is the second part of the change of meaning. During the development process of China's ethnic minorities, the Chengyang Bazhai village was influenced by the external environment and social structures changed, prompting changes in physical, psychological, and social spaces, which in turn led to different meanings for the wind and rain bridge. These different periods of meaning have made the wind and rain bridge a space of changing meanings. Public space and changing meanings are very interesting academic questions.

I have reviewed literature about international research on Wind and Rain Bridges. I found that the study of Wind and Rain Bridges includes architectural, anthropological, and sociological theories. Most of the research on wind and rain bridges tends to focus on the architectural dimension, which focuses on architectural techniques, and on modern methods of preservation and transmission. There is also a sociological dimension to the study of the tourism effects of bridges. The last group of studies focuses on the rituals of the Wind and Rain Bridges. Very few of these studies have taken a sociological or anthropological perspective on the changing meaning of

wind and rain bridges in the dimension of spatial production, which is a particular phenomenon among the Dong Wind and Rain Bridges today. This research will therefore expand the boundaries of research on Dong Wind and Rain Bridges and add new cases to the study of the concept of public space, while the interdisciplinary approach will add to the academic value of the current study.

This research focuses on the public space of Dong Wind and Rain Bridges and explores the meaning change of Wind and Rain Bridges in different social periods. I will use "the Production of Space" by Henri Lefebvre (1991) to consider Wind Rain Bridge of Chengyang Bazai Village. There are three dimensions of Physical Space, Social Space, and Mental Space to explain the meaning of the Wind and Rain Bridges in different periods and finally analyze the changes in meaning. I will attempt to explore the meaning change of the public space of the Wind and Rain Bridges in an interdisciplinary and integrated perspective, charting the interplay of ethnic identity and ethnicity that accompanies the development policies of ethnic minorities. This research will be an interesting academic issue.

I will be researching "Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai Village at Liuzhou, China: Public Space and Meaning Change in the Process of Minority Development".

The concept of "public space" from Hannah Arendt's book 'The Human Condition' will be used in this research. (Hannah Arendt. 1958) to study and understand the formation of public space and the practices within it at Chengyang Bazhai Wind and Rain Bridge. The concept of "meaning" is combined with Alexander Jeffrey C's doctrine of Culture as Meaning, which examines the meaning of Wind and Rain Bridges in four different social periods. The concept of "Physical space", "Social space", and "Mental space" from Henry Lefebvre's 'The Production of Space' is also used to study the changing meaning of space of the Wind and Rain Bridge in the Process of Minority Development.

This research will be an important guide to the academic village of Dong architectural culture in China. The research model devised can be used as a research model for studying the phenomenon of public space in other communities in China and around the world. Importantly, my research can support the policy use of ethnic minority development in China at both local and national levels.

Importantly, this research will describe a bridge that acts as a connection point. Between local wisdom and the outside world. It is a bridge connecting Dong village and the majority of Chinese. Between China and the world in the context of globalization.

In the process of minority development, the Wind and rain bridge is the interconnection function. The former bridge is a connection point to the Tong village center. Subsequently, it played a role in connecting the Dong people with China, and in the context of globalization, the Dong bridge played a role in connecting China with the international village. Who wants to experience this bridge? As an object of national identity, tourism is the identity of ethnic minorities.

## 2. Research Objectives

2.1 To study the history, social, and cultural development of Chengyang Bazhai related to the Wind and Rain Bridge(960-2023A.D.).

2.2 To Study the Wind and Rain Bridge in the dimension of Cultural Landscape and Architectural Culture.

2.3 To study the Meaning of the public space of Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai before the Minority Development Policy (1960-1948 AD).

2.4 To study the Meaning Change of the public space of Wind and Rain Bridge in the development process of the Minority Development (1949-2023A.D.).

### **3. Research Questions**

3.1 How has the history of the Chengyang Bazhai Village been since its inception to the present (2013)? Especially how the wind and rain bridge as a public space for the Chengyang Bazhai Village?

3.2 How do the wind and rain bridge act as a public space from an architectural dimension? And how did the wind and rain bridge as part of the physical space of the Chengyang Bazhai Village?

3.2 What was the meaning of the wind and rain bridge to the Chengyang Bazhai Village in the dimension of physical space, social space, and mental space in the social periods before the minority development policy was introduced?

3.4 How has the meaning of the wind and rain bridge changed during the minority development process, studying its meaning in the dimensions of physical space, social space, and mental space?

### **4. Definition of Terms**

#### **4.1 Public Space**

“Public space” in this research refers to space created, used and maintained jointly by people in the village. In addition, the understanding of public space in this paper mainly analyzes the production of space in material space, social space and spiritual space and studying the communication, behavior, and activities of people in public places, as well as the interaction between people and nature people and society Both local and local, local and state and outsiders, and local and international, which made the meaning of the wind and rain bridge constantly change.

#### **4.2 Meaning Change**

Meaning Change in this research Refers to the relationship between people, and groups of people related to the Wind and Rain Bridge in the Dong village, Chengyang Bazhai in various contexts. However, the bridge is still the Dong Bridge. However, relationships between people and groups are becoming more diverse and in ever-changing contexts. This causes the meaning of such relationships to change as well the study of semantic change, therefore, helps to understand social characteristics related to cultural objects during the changing period as well.

#### **4.3 Production of Space**

The "production of space" in this research refers to the view that "space is the product of society" put forward by Lefebvre in The Production of Space. Three dimensions of "mental space", "social space" and "physical space" will be used to analyze the interaction process between social relations and space of Dong communities and Wind and rain Bridges in different social environments.



#### 4.4 Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge

The "Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge" in this research is a kind of bridge construction integrating a bridge, corridor, and pavilion, which is built by the wooden construction technique of Dong nationality. This kind of bridge is mostly distributed in the villages of the Dong ethnic group and becomes a public space for the production and life of the Dong village, as well as the belief and ceremony. Its unique construction style and craftsmanship make it a model among Bridges. Chengyang Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge, Pinan Wind and Rain Bridge, and Helong Wind and Rain Bridge have all been set as national key cultural relic protection units or Guangxi Autonomous Region level cultural relic protection units by the government.

#### 4.5 Chengyang Bazhai Village

In this research, "Chengyang Bazhai Village" refers to the Dong village located in Linxi Town, Sanjiang County, Liuzhou City, China. It consists of eight natural villages of Dong nationality, namely, Chengzhai, Pingfu, Jichang, Dazhai, Maan, Pingzhai, Yanzhai, and Pingzhai, which are connected by wind and rain bridges. In the past, it was a closed and natural economy-oriented Dong village. Now it has become a tourist area of Dong culture. In 2007, Eight villages in Chengyang were named as "the first Group of National landscape Villages". In 2009, it was awarded a national 4A-level scenic spot by State Tourism. In 2013, the Maanzhai, Pingzhai, and Yanzhai villages of Pingyan Village were included in the preliminary list of World Cultural Heritage.

#### 4.6 Community

In this research, "community" refers to the Dong ethnic group who live together in Bazhai Village of Chengyang, share a common history, beliefs, and values, and carry out various activities together with a high degree of unity. Phillips.D.(1995) proposed a representative definition of a village: A village is a group of people who live in a common area, share a common history and shared values, participate in a variety of activities together, and are highly united (Lai Liangyang 2009).

#### 4.7 "Ethnic Group" and "Minority Group": Similarities and Differences in Definition

The word 'Ethnic' or 'Ethnic Group' refers to a group of people. Including a community of people or a population group consisting of people who share a common ethnic and cultural background. Do they have the same pattern in life and society? Such as dress, architecture, language, art, traditions, rituals, etc., which indicates the 'Ethnicity' that indicates who they are. How is it different from 'other people'? The various expressions within the social and cultural culture of each ethnic group are called "Cultural Identity", in which it expresses "Self" both to one's group and to other groups as mentioned above.

As for the word "Minority", it has two main meanings. The first meaning refers to a particular ethnic group. that are interspersed with other ethnic groups that are more numerous, they therefore became a small group of people among a large group of people. Meaning 2 is related to a nation-state where a particular group of



people is the main population has political and administrative power and has various ethnic groups as components. This characteristic is called Minority, which is part of nationality.

The second meaning of minority is related to politics and government at the state level. Importantly political issues Each country has different management methods through definitions. Some countries define minorities as a political problem. They must be suppressed and assimilated into one large group. Cultural assimilation is a method that creates serious conflicts. Meanwhile, some countries in China define Minority as the diversity and beauty of culture within the country and have a policy to develop minorities through various forms and methods such as in the case of China. However, from the above, "Ethnic Group" and "Minority Group" are the same people. The difference is only in the definition of the nation-state involved. The two words often go together, but we have to differentiate them in each situation and context.

#### 4.8 Tourist Gaze

In this research, "tourist gaze" refers to the integration of tourism desires, tourism motives, and tourism behaviors of tourists who come to Chengyang Bazhai Village with their imagination of Dong nationality villages. This kind of imagination and desire will act on Chengyang Bazhai Village and then change this place.

### 5. Research Methodology

Qualitative research method was adopted in this research. Fieldwork and literature research was used to collect research data. Analysis through anthropological and sociological concepts. Present the findings in the form of descriptive analysis. The research methods are explained as follows:

#### 5.1 Population:

##### 5.1.1 Key Informants

##### 1) Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai Village

The group is made up of the Dong people who used to live in Chengyang Bazhai. They formed a unique cultural society in different social environments. In the past, they were the Dong people in the process of cultural identity. Now, the Chengyang Bazhai village has been transformed into a tourist area, where they have become traders, tour guides, and performers.

##### 2) Government officials

This refers to local government officials and national government officials. It has played an important role in policy formulation and implementation, making Chengyang Bazhai a national 4A scenic spot and Wind & Rain Bridge an international cultural relic. At present, they are also playing a role in making Chengyang Bazhai Village a 5A scenic spot and Chengyang Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge a World Cultural Heritage site.

##### 3) Wood artisan

This refers to the Wood artisan who masters wood construction skills in the Dong village. They play an important role in the Chengyang Bazhai village and Wind and Rain Bridge. They were able to build wind and rain Bridges and have a certain cachet in the village. Now, Dong's wood-building skills have become a national intangible cultural heritage. Some of them have acquired non-inheritor status

and are using their status to teach skills in universities and to communicate culturally with the world.

#### 4) Researchers

Chengyang Bazhai has attracted many researchers from all over the world and China, such as architects, cultural researchers, sociologists, writers, etc. Their research contributions contributed to the Dong wooden construction technique becoming a national intangible cultural heritage and will continue to contribute to the application of Wind and Rain Bridge as a World Cultural Heritage.

#### 5.1.2 Casual Informants

##### Travel companies

The tourism company here refers to the company jointly formed by the government and related enterprises after Chengyang Baizhai became a 4A tourism area, which is responsible for the operation, management, and maintenance of Chengyang Baizhai's scenic spot. They use the Dong culture and representative construction such as the Wind and Rain Bridge as a selling point for tourism.

#### 5.1.3 General Informants

##### Tourists

The tourists here are tourists who come to Chengyang Bazhai to consume the Dong culture. It offers various forms of Dong cultural tourism, including a tour of the Wind and Rain Bridge.

#### 5.2 Field of Research:

Main Place: The study area consists of Chengyang Bazhai Tourist Area.

Sub place: refers to the interactive platform related to the Wind and Rain Bridge outside Chengyang Bazhai Village. For example, universities, museums, and other areas with weather Bridges, as well as film and television or literary works related to weather Bridges.

#### 5.3 Data Collection

Data collection Data will be collected through fieldwork and literature.

##### 5.3.1 Fieldwork

- 1) Interview; Formal interview,
- 2) Informal interview, Focus group interview
- 3) Observation; Normal observation (or general observation), Participatory observation

##### 5.3.2 Documentary data collection.

- 1) China National Knowledge Network, Google Academic, and SCI-Hub
- 2) Concept books and books related to text and background

##### 5.3.3 Tool or Equipment for data collection

The basic data recording tools are cameras, voice recorders, and notebooks.

The camera is used for image data acquisition and image data acquisition. Recorders are used to record conversations in formal or informal situations to facilitate further data analysis and research. A Field notebook is used to

record key information about visits and observations in the field. Document notebook is used to record reading records and citation records of documents.

#### 5.4 Data Synthesis and Analysis

5.4.1 Data synthesis: The researchers used the research conceptual framework as the primary tool for grouping data. And according to the research objectives in the system to provide information, detailed comprehensive information. I'm constantly looking at the data, is each set of information enough, or is there any part of it that's not enough? This is to gather additional information.

5.4.2 Data analysis: Researchers conduct a descriptive analysis of the concepts in each chapter and analyze the data. In addition, I will conduct analysis through dialogue with other people's research. The research on Wind and Rain Bridge and the work of the same concept group, in my research on this issue.

#### 5.5 Research representation

5.5.1 Full paper of research-Descriptive analysis

5.5.2 Research article international research article, Scopus level.

### 6. Scope of Research

#### 6.1 Scope of Area

I defined two areas of study. The Main Place is the Chengyang Bazhai tourist area. The Sub place refers to the interactive platform related to the Wind and Rain Bridge outside Chengyang Baizhai Village. For example, universities, museums, and other areas with weather Bridges, as well as film and television or literary works related to weather Bridges.

#### 6.2 Scope of Period

My research period includes 4 periods, namely, the beginning of village establishment, the feudal period, the socialist period, and the economic reform and opening period.

#### 6.3 Units of Analysis

I will study "Chengyang Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge" from the perspective of unit analysis. Taking the construction and restoration of Chengyang Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge as an example and its evolution in the present, it demonstrates the role and influence of China's economic reform on the Dong people and society in the development process of China's ethnic minorities, namely the change of meaning.

Built-in 1916, the Chengyang Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge was located in Chengyang Baizhai Village. It is a model of the wooden architecture construction skills of the Dong ethnic group, a national intangible cultural heritage. It was recognized as a national key cultural relic in 1982. In 1997, it was included in the preparatory list of the country's declaration of World Cultural Heritage to the United Nations.

There are two reasons why I chose Chengyang Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge as the analysis unit.

1) Chengyang Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge was built in 1916 and repaired again in 1983 due to floods. As an important public space of Chengyang Baizhai Village, it carries important functions such as daily life, traditional customs, memorial ceremonies, and festival activities of the Dong people. Therefore, taking it as the analysis unit, the significance of the wind and rain bridge to the Dong people can be more clearly analyzed.

2) Chengyang Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge was recognized as a national key cultural relic in 1982 and included in the preparatory list of World Cultural Heritage submitted to the United Nations in 1997. Moreover, it is located in the Chengyang Baizhai Village, a national 4A scenic spot, and has become a representative of landscape architecture. Therefore, it can be used as an analysis unit to more clearly see the changes and relations between the village and the outside, the nation and the country, and the country and the world. It can be used as a representative of the wind and rain bridge to show the change in its meaning.

## 7. Concepts and Conceptual Framework

The research concept framework of this research takes the Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Baizhai Village as the text and the development process of ethnic minorities as the research context. Through the 4 different social contexts of the village, the concept of Production of Space is used for analysis, to study the function and influence of the Wind and Rain Bridge as a Public Space and people's feelings about it, so as to get its Meaning Change.

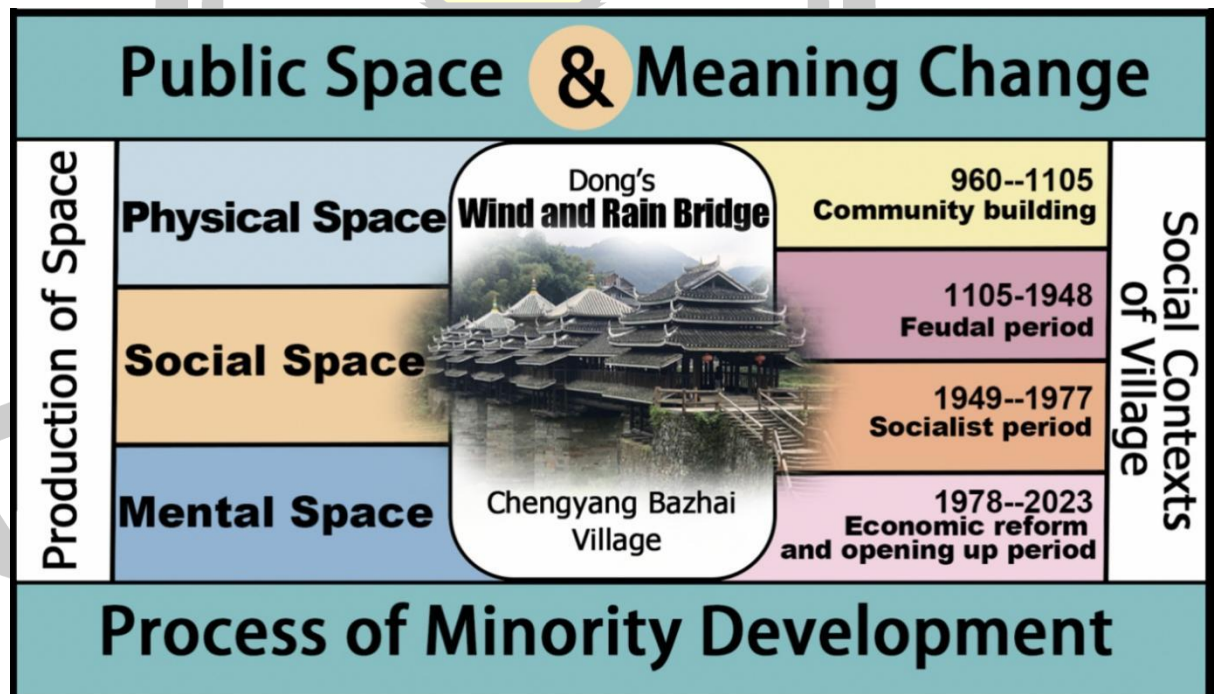


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework  
Source: Drawn by Chen Lu. January10, 2023

## 8. Literature review

### 8.1 Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge

"Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge" is a kind of bridge construction integrating a bridge, corridor, and pavilion, which is built by the wooden construction technique of Dong nationality. This kind of bridge is mostly distributed in the villages of the Dong ethnic group, becoming an important public space for the production and life of the Dong village, as well as the religious ceremony.

Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge is the text of this research. It can be seen from the previous literature that most of the literature mainly focuses on the study of the construction technology of Wind and Rain Bridge and the methods of its protection and inheritance in modern times from the architectural dimension or the study of the tourism effect brought by the Wind and Rain Bridge from the sociological dimension. Other studies have studied the rituals of wind and rain Bridges ethnographically. However, few of these studies regard the weather bridge as a public space. From the perspectives of sociology, anthropology, and art, interdisciplinary research is conducted on the significant change of the weather bridge in the dimension of space production.

Wind and Rain Bridge is a regional form of wooden corridor bridge in ancient China. It is customary to call the wooden corridor bridge distributed in the traditional gathering areas of Dong nationality in Hunan, Guizhou, and Guangxi "Wind and rain bridge", and the Dong people call it the "flower bridge" or "Fu bridge" (Jiang Ye. 2010).

The Wind and Rain Bridge has become a model of bridge construction because of its unique construction techniques. Li Zhe studied the whole design system of wind and rain bridges through a case and explained the design process of the corridor bridge frame with the case. Taking the case as the object, it describes in detail how the craftsman transformed the design on the drawing into the concrete construction operation in the actual construction (Li Zhe. 2017).

Professor Liu Hongbo studied the source of architectural skills and culture of the Dong people's Wind and Rain Bridge from a historical perspective and pointed out that the construction skills of Wind and Rain Bridge had its historical development process. In the Song Dynasty, the population migration to the south brought the technology of the northern corridor bridge into East China, forming a mature wood arch bridge technology and culture. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, in order to consolidate the local power, the population migrated from east to west. Moreover, the suppression and spiritual education of ethnic minorities in the south have been strengthened. The corridor bridge of the Han nationality and its related folk beliefs and feng shui culture has entered the Dong area strongly. After the self-digestion and transformation of the Dong people, the unique style and culture of the wind and rain bridge of the Dong people have gradually formed (Liu HongBo. 2016).

The style and culture of Wind and Rain Bridge can be shown through its decoration. The decoration of the Wind and Rain Bridge can be divided into external decoration and internal decoration. The exterior decoration focuses on the roof of the bridge pavilion, the positive ridge of the roof, the eaves, and the entrance of the bridge. The interior decoration is mainly painted. On the outside of the Wind and Rain Bridge, the pavilion eaves are up and down, the flying horns are warped, and the



porch ridge and tower ridge are decorated with flowers, grass, phoenix, fish, birds, and animals. At the top of the gallery pavilion, there are bowls, bright bottles, and some bronze birds or white cranes. These foods are equipped with metal pieces in their mouths, which turn in the wind and sing in the wind. The eaves plate is often red phoenix Chaoyang, carp jumping beach, sitting lion containing treasure and some geometric patterns of plants, positive ridge plastic double dragon, and decorated with colorful flowers on it. Between the pillars of the bridge gallery and the lintel board are the main positions of the painting. The contents of the paintings are all-inclusive, including stories of historical figures, myths and legends of the Dong people, and so on (Guo Jing. 2017).

Some scholars have also studied the shape and decoration of wind and rain bridges. They also noted the relationship between the beauty of the Wind and Rain bridge and the Dong culture. Ma Ke studied the aesthetic thoughts of the wind and rain bridge in his master's thesis: The simple and natural shape and simple decoration of Dong wind and rain bridge are elegant and fresh, which is a successful model of the combination of practicality and beauty in architectural art. The beauty of the wind and rain bridges is embodied in shape, artistic conception, and connotation: coordination is the universal rule of the beauty of wind and rain bridges; It is the pursuit of the harmonious artistic conception of Dong people's wind and rain bridges. The simple and honest folk customs of the Dong people can also be reflected in the Wind and rain bridge construction (Ma Kekao. 2012).

In addition to the research types of architectural dimension, some scholars also use ethnographic methods to study the construction ceremony of Longji Wind and Rain Bridge in Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, Guangxi. The ceremony and culture in the construction process of the Dong Wind and rain bridge are basically the same as those in Zhejiang and Fujian. That is to say, during the construction of a bridge, there are usually eight procedures, such as starting construction on the day, placing a happy beam, offering prayers to the stream (or starting work on the offering river), applying the beam, taking money to reward the people, driving away on the road (or walking away on the bridge), driving away on the happy beam and blessing of the round bridge (or finishing the bridge). This ancient bridge-building culture and ritual process have always been preserved in the Dong nationality area of Hunan, Guizhou, and Guangxi (Liu HongBo. 2016).

Wind and Rain Bridge is a symbol of Dong culture, and using it as cultural capital to transform is a good way to develop the economy of Dong villages. Some scholars have studied the economic benefits of the wind and rain bridge from the perspective of sociology and economics. For example, Tao Zhe pointed out that the abundant cultural symbols in Wind and Rain Bridge are the expression of the living style of Dong ethnic groups, and directly affect the economic and social development of Dong ethnic areas. In order to preserve the traditional culture of the nation and develop the modern commodity economy at the same time, the better way of growth is to take the Wind and Rain Bridge culture as the core, promote the upgrading of the industrial structure by creating the characteristic tourism and cultural industry, rely on the tertiary industry to drive and optimize the local agriculture and manufacturing industry, constantly improve the added value of products and form economies of scale (Tao Ze. 2016).

## 8.2 Public Space

Public space is one of the main concepts the researchers used to study Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge in the Chengyang Baizhai Village.

"Public sphere, the Chinese translation of the English public sphere, also translated as a public sphere or public space, mainly refers to the independent social sphere between the individual and the state public authority. Jurgen Habermas, a famous German social thinker and originator of the public sphere theory, once defined it as follows:

"By 'the public sphere' we mean above all the sphere of our social life in which things like public opinion can be formed. In principle, the public sphere is open to all citizens. Part of the public sphere consists of conversations in which people, as private individuals, come together to form the public. At that time, they were not dealing with private conduct as businessmen or professionals, nor were they accepting the statute of the laws and regulations of the state bureaucracy as legitimate bodies. Citizen act as a collective when they address issues of general interest without coercion. Thus, such actions guarantee that they are free to express and make their views known (Fang Ping. 2000).

"Public space" and "public sphere" are sometimes used interchangeably in history and society (Lv Zhuohong. 2003).

The term "public space" first appeared as a specific noun in the 1950s, when British sociologist Charles Madge published his article "Private and Public Space" in 1950. And the political philosopher Hannah Arendt in her book *The Human Condition*.

In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt pointed out that the difference between public and private can be distinguished by two cognitive categories "visibility" and "collectivity." The public/private division in the former sense refers to the open, the revealed, the visible, as opposed to the hidden, the withdrawn, and the invisible). The latter refers to the collective versus the individual, and the whole of a social collectivity versus a group.

The contents of these two cognitive categories do not correspond but overlap. For example, what belongs to the collective does not necessarily mean that it is open and visible, and what belongs to the individual does not necessarily mean that it is hidden and invisible. The author believes that Arendt's two concepts provide an epistemological basis for analyzing and concluding public space. The "visibility" of public space, as a platform for social activities, is compared with private activities. The "collectivity" of public space is a platform for public participation, which emphasizes the significance of public space as a gathering of the individual will to form collective cognition. Nadoui also referred to these two cognitive concepts when summarizing the theory of public space (Chen Zhu, Ye Min. 2009).

Kong Xianghe believes that public space is a material carrier for people to discuss social affairs in an open state and gain public recognition. Therefore, public space in a broad sense refers to the material that accommodates these public behaviors, such as media, law, authority, and so on.

In addition, he pointed out that the factors affecting the constitution of public space include natural factors, cultural factors, economic factors, etc., and the publicity of a space is the special attribute given to it by the social public sphere and



the reason why "public" is an external manifestation of space meeting the needs of the social system. Other influencing factors of public space, such as natural factors and technological factors, become auxiliary factors on the topic of "public" and affect other value systems of public space (Kong Xianghe. 2005).

Some scholars have explained the definition of public space from various aspects. In this research, public space emphasizes its social attribute, namely publicity. How the Dong people in the village jointly build, use, and maintain the public space of the wind and rain bridge is the focus of the study.

Research papers using the concept of public space are mainly distributed in architecture, sociology, and economics. The main body of the thesis focuses on the design theory of public space, the shape shaping and evolution of public space.

The relevant papers on the design theory of public space mainly focus on architecture. For example, from the perspective of urban design, Guo Enzhang analyzed the existing problems in the construction of urban public space, its characteristics, and quality evaluation standards, and put forward the countermeasures to create high-quality urban public space. Huang Jianwen takes public space as the breakthrough point to study the reconstruction of the old city, rethink and understand the essential characteristics and mutual relationship between public space and old city reconstruction. On the basis of the system theory, this paper analyzes the elements integration and network construction of the public space system and promotes the development of the design theory of the public space in the existing old city reconstruction.

It is also a hot topic to study the shape shaping and evolution of public space from the perspective of sociology and history. Zhou Xiang takes the form of urban space as the main research text in his paper. He points out that the morphological study of urban space also includes diachronic and synchronic contents, and he chooses Guangzhou City China as the research case. Using the methods of history, typology, and structural association, this paper studies the form and evolution process of urban public space in Guangzhou from 1759 to 1949 from the perspective of urban design and morphology. In addition, many scholars have studied the form of space. For example, in Zhou Bo's paper "Historical Evolution of Urban Public Space, with the Evolution of Urban Public Space in China in the Second Half of the 20th Century as the Research Focus", From the unique perspective of urban history, this paper systematically studies and examines the mechanism of the development and evolution of urban public space in China in the second half of the 20th century through a long period of historical investigation, and reveals its internal relations, manifestations, characteristics, and laws.

It is worth noting that some scholars use the theory of public space to study villages. For example, Dai Linlin studied the public space of historical and cultural villages in the suburbs of Beijing, mainly studying its formation motivation, system composition, and development changes.

There is also a review article by Zheng Yun, which summarizes and concludes the concept of village public space, research overview, types and characteristics of village public space, evolution trend, and the reasons behind it by analyzing Chinese research literature on village public space.

For the research topic of "Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai Village at Liu Zhou, China: Public Space and the Meaning Change in the

Process of Minority Development", the text of the research is Wind and rain Bridge. It is a public building in a village with a public character. Therefore, Wind and rain bridge belongs to the category of public space.

At present, the research on public space is mainly focused on the design planning and shape shaping of public space. At the same time, the theory of "space production" is rarely used to study public space.

Therefore, researchers will use this concept, as mentioned above, as a conceptual framework to study the reasons why Wind and Rain Bridge becomes a public space, as well as the production, life, and cultural beliefs of the Dong people in the public space.

### 8.3 Production of space

In 'The Production of Space', Lefebvre put forward the view that "space is the product of society" (Lefebvre H. 1991). He believed that "capitalist reproduction is not the reproduction of things, but the differentiated production of social relations"(Zhuang Jingxiang, Hu Yi, Sun Dongqi. 2014).

Lefebvre constructed the tripartite dialectics of "society-history-space". At the end of Section 15, Chapter 1 of the Production of Space, page 33 of the English edition, Lefebvre put forward the core category of his own tripartite dialectics of space for the first time:

First, Spatial practice. It encompasses production and reproduction, as well as the special place and spatial characteristics of each social form. The continuity and degree of this union in social space and in every relationship between society and space are reinforced by the practice of space.

Second, Representations of space. This is closely related to the relations of production, and to the "order" that these relations influence, and thus to knowledge, symbols, codes, and "frontier" relations.

Third, representational spaces. Space of representation/ representational spaces. It concretely expresses the complex system of symbols associated with the hidden side of social life, which is sometimes coded and sometimes not, and which is also closely associated with art (which may ultimately be defined as a symbol representing space rather than just space) (Zhuang Zikai. 2007).

According to the analysis of relevant Chinese literature, the research on space production can be divided into three aspects: first, the interpretation of relevant concepts of space production theory; Second, the space production framework, dynamic mechanism, research methods, and other in-depth analysis; Third, domestic research focuses on the product research after the development of spatial production theory, such as tourism spatial production.

In terms of the interpretation of relevant concepts in the theory of space production, Gui Rong believes that the practice of developing national cultural tourism space is carried out in the space of natural geographic landscape and national cultural material carrier, and proposes the concept of "national cultural tourism space". Ming Qingzhong focuses more on ancient towns. He not only redefines the spatial practice, spatial representation, and the concept of representational space of ancient towns but also believes that the spatial practice of ancient towns is the production of material space based on perceptual experience. The spatial representation of ancient towns is the imaginative, conceptual, and symbolic thought

space of social cohesion and accumulation, and the representation space is the living space of ancient towns. And explore the connotation relationship on a deeper level.

In terms of space production framework, dynamic mechanism, and research methods, Hu Zhiqiang uses the theory of space production to analyze the interest demands of the government, developers, and the public in the space production of Chuhe Han Street. Guo Ling takes Hongsha Village as an example to discuss the three subjects of the state, market, and traditional forces and their decisive roles in the trend of rural culture and the development path of rural tourism from a macro perspective.

In terms of product research after the development of the spatial production theory, some scholars have studied the application of the tourism spatial production theory in different tourist fields (represented by ancient tourist towns, ethnic villages, characteristic blocks, and B&Bs facilities), so as to closely combine the tourism spatial production theory with people's production and living practice. From the perspective of the production of tourism landscape space in the ancient town, Ming Qingzhong divided the tourism landscape space of the ancient town into three parts: front stage space, transitional space, and backstage protection space emphasizing the reconstruction of the tourism landscape space of ancient town with efficiency, fairness, and quality as the starting point. And LiBiao pays attention to the unique analysis of the ancient town tourism space, from the production power mechanism of tourism space of power, capital, village, and market can promote the development of a tourism town. Based on Li Biao's research, Zhao Chenyu internalized power, capital, village, and market into spatial productivity, production relations, producers, and consumers.

From the above studies, we can see the application of the concept of space production in China. This research belongs to a field that uses the theory of space production, namely the Bazhai Village in Chengyang. However, this research will explore the significance of wind and rain bridges to people and society through the study of the concept of space production, which will be a unique perspective.

Therefore, in this research, the spatial trivariate dialectics of Lefebvre will be used to analyze the meaning of wind and rain bridges in different social periods from the three dimensions of Physical space, social space, and Mental space, so as to obtain the change of its meaning.

#### 8.4 Meaning Change

The Meaning Change means that different meanings are produced in different periods. If these different opinions are analyzed together, the change of meaning can be found. Alexander's theory of Culture as Meaning explains the relationship between culture and meaning in this way:

This approach to culture emphasizes meanings embedded in interactions. It gained popularity among scholars, especially in sociology, in the last decades of the 20th century and continues to be a common perspective for social scientists studying culture today. Cultural sociologists tend to approach culture in this way, as being created by shared meaning-making processes and embedded in and used during interactions. As such, this approach does not envision one coherent Culture in a society but a diversity of cultures ensuing from a diversity of meaning-making processes. Culture is regarded as a “social construction” rather than an objective

reality (Crane 1994). Although scholars in this vein regard culture as a construction, they are simultaneously aware of the power of culture to influence individual and institutional behavior. From this perspective, culture is a product of meaning-making processes but itself “possesses a relative autonomy in shaping actions and institutions” (Alexander. 2003).

Therefore, scholars often associate the Meaning Change with culture.

Taking Shikumen as an example, Jiang Yuwei explores the deep cultural significance behind the symbols and forms of Shanghai architecture in the historical background of Shanghai -- the relationship and contradiction between the forms and cultures, as well as the alternations of family culture, consumer culture, and immigrant culture in the process of historical evolution, and then discusses the different meanings of symbols and forms of Shanghai architecture in the new era. Take Xintiandi as an example to analyze the different social roles undertaken by Shikumen in the new consumption era, and whether the transformation of this role can really leave the cultural connotation of Shanghai architecture (Jiang Yuwei. 2021).

Based on the theoretical view that culture is regarded as a "social construction", some scholars link the change of meaning with the change of social environment.

By analyzing the reports related to the Silk Road in domestic media, mainly People's Daily, since 1949, Wang Xia found that the significance of the Silk Road in different social contexts was constantly changing.

An article about the meaning of the Guangxi Bronze Drum changes, to give inspiration to this research. Huang Guofei, Chen Jingyi, and Huang Wenbo summarize the historical evolution of the bronze drum and its symbolic meaning to present the changing process of the bronze drum from being a god to being a human representative. In the article, the meaning of the bronze drum is discussed as follows: The bronze drum culture of Guangxi has a long history. During the development of more than two thousand years, the cultural connotation of the bronze drum has already exceeded its practicability. From the initial cooking utensils to the heavy instruments and ritual instruments symbolizing the ruling power and divine right, to the cultural symbols of ethnic regions, Musical Instruments, and special products, the changes of The Times have constantly endowed the bronze drum with new connotations of The Times. From the perspective of the social life history of things, we can think that the origin, rise, decline, and resurgence of the bronze drum are closely related to the development of human society, which reflects the connection and change of the political, economic, and cultural relations between people (Huang Guofei, Chen Jingyi, Huang Wenbo. 2021).

It can be seen from the above studies that the study of meaning change is often connected with cultural and social changes. This research will use the concept of meaning change in connection with cultural and social change.

## **9. Benefits of Research**

### **9.1. Benefit for academic circle**

This research will systematically analyze and sort out the Dong ethnic wind and rain bridge with the concept of public space and meaning change, reveal the significance of the Dong ethnic wind and rain bridge to the village, nation, and country under different social environment, and analyze the meaning change.

This will expand the boundaries of the research field of Wind and Rain Bridge, enrich its content, further supplement the connotation of the concept of public space and meaning change, and provide a new research model for the spatial research of the same situation in other regions.

#### 9.2 Benefit for Society and village of research place

Through the research on this subject, the value of the wind and rain bridge is further analyzed from the perspective of anthropology and sociology, which is helpful for people to deeply understand the significance of the wind and rain bridge and the development of the Dong society.

This will be conducive to the development of tourism and the development and utilization of Dong culture in Bazhai, and even guide the development and utilization of national culture in Liuzhou, Guangxi, and China. More importantly, it will help Chengyang Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge to be listed as a World Cultural Heritage site and upgrade Chengyang Bazhai from a national 4A scenic spot to a 5A scenic spot.

#### 9.3 Benefit for setting the policies of a nation or local government

The completion of this research will facilitate the formulation and adjustment of policies with national or local governments in the areas of tourism, ethnic minority development, and national heritage.

#### 9.4 Expand the Concept of Public Space

This study focuses on explaining through the point of public space using the idea of space production. This, if successful, will broaden a new viewpoint on public space and is a significant topic in worldwide academic circles. It develops into a research model that may be used to investigate different public spaces and help scholars comprehend other public space occurrences.





## CHAPTER 2

### The Historical and Socio-Cultural Development of Chengyang Bazhai Related to the Wind and Rain Bridges

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses how Chengyang Bazhai adapted to the local landscape and gave birth to the bridges. It also explores the changes and developments in Chengyang Bazhai before and after the arrival of minority development policies, providing a comprehensive understanding of the background of the village's emergence and development, and laying the foundation for subsequent research. The chapter is divided into three parts for introduction: first, the physical space of Chengyang Bazhai and the birth of the Wind and Rain Bridges; second, the cultural and social aspects of Chengyang Bazhai before the arrival of minority development policies (1960-1948 A.D.); third, the cultural and social evolution of Chengyang Bazhai in the process of minority development policies (1949-2023 A.D.).

#### Part 1: Physical Space of Chengyang Bazhai and the Emergence of 'Wind and Rain Bridges'

Wind and Rain Bridge is a special wooden bridge with pavilions and corridors built by the Dong people in China to adapt to the local landscape. Its name is derived from a Chinese word that means bridge of wind and rain, implying that its function is to provide shelter from wind and rain. The name originated from the geographical and climatic characteristics of the area. The environmental factors of heavy wind and rain prompted the emergence of Wind and Rain Bridge.

These details the geographical characteristics of Chengyang Bazhai, including geographical landforms, river systems and mountain forest vegetation. At the same time, local climate characteristics will also be included. The unique geographical and climatic characteristics of Chengyang Bazhai allow the Dong people living here to adapt to the local landscape and develop a unique production and lifestyle. The physical space of Chengyang Bazhai and the unique way of life and production of the Dong people determine the emergence of Wind and Rain Bridge that adapts to the local ecology in Chengyang Bazhai Village. This article will deeply explore how physical space and life and production methods affect the birth of local Wind and Rain Bridge.

Physical Space: Hilly Terrain, Abundant Water and Rivers Resources, and Mountain Forests

Chengyang Bazhai is located in the north of Sanjiang County, Liuzhou City, Guangxi Autonomous Region, China. It is geographically located at 108°~109° east longitude and 25°~26° north latitude. It has a subtropical monsoon climate with mild climate and abundant rainfall throughout the year. The average annual temperature is 17° ~19°, with an average annual rainfall of 1493 mm. Chengyang Bazhai is located in Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County at the junction of Guangxi, Hunan and Guizhou. It borders Tongtong County in Hunan Province to the east, Sanjiang Bajiang to the west, Guanghui Village of Zhouping Township in Sanjiang to the south, and



Guantong Village of Linxi Township to the north. The total area About 30km<sup>2</sup>. The eight Dong villages of Ma'an, Pingzhai, Yanzhai, Dongzhai, Dazhai, Pingpingzhai, Pingpuzhai and Jichangzhai are adjacent to each other, so they are called "Chengyang Baizhai"(Yang Ligu. 2022).



Figure 2 Map of Chengyang Bazhai. Chengyang Bazhai is located in the north of Liuzhou City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. The unique geographical features formed the characteristics of the Dong people's settlement environment, which influenced the birth of Wind and Rain Bridge. Source: Drawn by Chen Lu. November 20, 2023

#### 1.1.1 Hilly Terrain Dominates Influenced to the Cultural Landscape of Chengyang Bazai

Chengyang Bazhai is a Dong residential area in Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, Liuzhou City, Guangxi. It has complex topography, abundant water resources, dense water network, and rivers winding around the mountains, including Linxi River, Mapang River and other water bodies. The soil is fertile and suitable for farming. There are relatively flat areas along both sides of the river system, and farming is scattered among the mountains and rivers (Liao Xiangjun. 2007).

Chengyang Bazhai is located in the narrow strip at the intersection of the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, Hunan hills and Guangxi hills. The entire region is high in the northwest and low in the southeast. The terrain is hilly, with altitudes ranging from 2,000 meters to more than 300 meters. The land area is about 12km<sup>2</sup>, of which 70% are mountains and 30% are valleys and hills (Yang Ligu. 2022).

The Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County where Chengyang Bazhai is located has Wuyi Mountain and Foding Mountain in the north, Yuecheng Ridge and Jiuwanda Mountain in the south, Miao Ridge Branch in the west, Xuefeng Mountain

in the east, and two major rivers spanning the Pearl River and Yangtze River in the middle. The Leigong Mountains system of the water system serves as a watershed. The terrain of the entire region is very complex, with not only hills, mountains, mid-mountains, low mountains and other terrain types, but also basins and valleys of different sizes interspersed among them. However, it is dominated by low and medium mountains, hills, basins, and valleys, among which mountains account for the largest proportion. It is a typical mountainous area known as "nine mountains, half water and half farmland" as the saying goes. The mountainous area accounts for nearly 80% to 90% of the entire region. The hillside has undulating wrinkles and rivers cut deep into it. The entire topography is just like what is sung in the song of the Dong people: "Go up the mountain to the clouds, go down to the river, and you can have a conversation across the river, and you can meet half of the sky."

Chengyang Bazhai is located on the southern edge of the Jiangnan Ancient Continent, between the Jiuwandashan Dome Fold Belt and the Dragon Vein Fold Belt. It has experienced many crustal movements, and folds and faults are very developed. The middle and low mountains at an altitude of about 1,000 meters are crisscrossed with continuous peaks and mountains. The surface of the mountains is covered with red loam and yellow loam with a depth of 60 to 300 centimeters. The vegetation is well preserved. Various plants are spread throughout the ravines and valleys, with lush branches and leaves (Liao Xiangjun. 2007).

#### 1.1.2 Rich Hydrological Environment which was selected to be the Community

The water network system composed of all rivers, lakes, and other water bodies in the basin is called a water system. Due to its vast territory and huge differences in climate and terrain, mainland China's rivers mainly flow to the Pacific Ocean, followed by the Indian Ocean, and a small amount flows into the Arctic Ocean. China has formed "seven major river systems", all of which are composed of rivers: the Pearl River system, the Yangtze River system, the Yellow River system, the Huaihe River system, the Liaohe River system, the Haihe River system and the Songhua River system.

Because the Dong inhabited area is located on the watershed of the Yangtze River system and the Pearl River system, this area is rich in water resources, with numerous streams and rivers. The main rivers belonging to the Yangtze River system include Qu Shui, Wushui, Yuan Shui, etc. Belonging to the Pearl River water system include the Xunjiang River, Duliujiang River, etc. (Chen Xingliang and Deng Minwen. 2014).

The rivers flowing through Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County are mainly the Xunjiang River and Duliujiang River, which belong to the Pearl River system. The Xunjiang River originates from Chengbu Miao Autonomous County in Hunan Province, flows through Longsheng Autonomous County in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, flows into Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, and joins the Duliu River. Duliujiang River originates from Lalin, Dushan County, Guizhou Province, and flows into Rongjiang River and Congjiang County through Sandu. Its main tributaries include Pingyong River, Zhaihao River, Zaibian River, Sizhai River, etc. Then it flows into the Liujiang River, Qianjiang River, Xijiang River and Zhujiang River through Sanjiang, Rongan and Liuzhou in Guangxi and flows into the

South China Sea ("Overview of Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County" writing team. 2005).

Chengyang Bazhai is mainly run through by the Linxi River, a tributary of the Xunjiang River. The Linxi River originates from Pengmu Mountain, Shuituan Village, Linxi Township, with a total length of 42km. It flows through Chengyang, Guanghui, Wenda and other places to Huangpai Village, Zhouping Township and the eight rivers converge and merge into the Xunjiang River at Shiyankou. In addition to the Linxi River, countless streams meander at the bottom of the mountains and valleys in the Chengyang Bazhai area. The vertically and horizontally connected water system network is developed and the surface water runoff resources are very abundant.

The abundant water resources in Chengyang Bazhai mainly benefit from the nourishment of the Linxi River. The water resources here are abundant and the water quality is excellent, which provides strong support for the development of local agriculture, forestry, and fishery. At the same time, these rivers are also important ecological barriers for Chengyang Bazhai, effectively regulating the local climate and environment, bringing a pleasant climate and beautiful natural scenery to this land. At the same time, Linxi River not only provides domestic water and agricultural irrigation for residents but has also become an important part of Dong culture.

In Chengyang Bazhai, the Dong people used abundant water resources to build Dong waterwheels, water dams, wind and rain bridges, and other buildings to facilitate production, forming a cultural landscape closely related to the river.



Figure 3 Dong waterwheel located on the bank of Linxi River. It was built to irrigate farmland. This proves from the side that the abundant water resources in Chengyang Bazhai are used for the production and life of the Dong people. Source:

<https://www.mafengwo.cn/> (Accessed on November 20, 2023)

### 1.1.3 Physical Areas Suitable for the Diversity of Plants and Forests

The terrain of Chengyang Bazhai is mainly hilly and mountainous. The area of Chengyang Bazhai is more than 30 square kilometers; the total cultivated land area is 5,750 acres, including 4,299 acres of paddy fields; the mountain forest area is 43,700 acres, and the camellia oil forest area is 14,200 acres, totaling 2,197 There are 9,701 households (Yang Aoyu. 2008).

Due to the varying altitudes of mountains, different types of soil distribution occur. The soil in Chengyang Bazhai is mostly developed from metamorphic rock series (mainly sandstone and sandy shale), of which red soil and yellow soil are the main ones, followed by yellow-brown soil and a small amount of alluvial soil. Most of the soil is weakly acidic, with a small amount being acidic and a very small amount being weakly alkaline. The soil is deep, loose in texture, has good water and fertilizer retention, is rich in organic matter, has high natural fertility, is suitable for a wide range of species, is suitable for the growth and reproduction of trees, and provides extremely good conditions for the growth of various crops and plants. The forest vegetation coverage rate in Bazhai Mountain in Chengyang is as high as 79%, and the forest vegetation is divided into vegetation varieties according to the height of the terrain and altitude (Ma Qizhen. 2022).

The mountain range of Chengyang Bazhai is 500-800 meters above sea level, which is suitable for planting fir trees. Therefore, fir trees have become the main building materials of the Dong people living in Chengyang Bazhai, from Fengyu Bridge, Drum Tower, stage, folk houses, village Doors, etc. are all made of cedar trees. The Dong people are also a people who mainly focus on agriculture. The environment and climate are suitable for the growth of crops, so they grow rice, corn, beans, sweet potatoes, taro and various vegetables and other crops. There are many types of crops and they become seasonal vegetation. These seasonal crops are planted on the banks of Linxi River or in the depressions found in mountains and forests. The Dong people complete their daily production and life by frequently crossing the wind and rain bridge.



Figure 4 Fir trees piled on the side of the road cut down to be used for house construction. The suitable soil environment of Chengyang Baizhai is conducive to the growth of Chinese fir trees and provides important materials for the construction of



the village buildings, including wind and rain Bridges. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2023

Climate Characteristics: Chengyang Bazhai's Unique Geographic Environment Nurtures a Wet and Rainy Climate

Chengyang Bazhai belongs to the subtropical Lingnan humid climate zone, with rain and heat in the same season, distinct cold and heat, and abundant rainfall.

#### 1.2.1 Humid Climate with Distinct Seasons

Chengyang Bazhai has a humid subtropical mountain climate, with an average annual temperature between 14 and 18°C. January is the coldest, with the monthly average temperature ranging from 3.7 to 7.3°C; July is the hottest, with the monthly average temperature ranging from 23 to 27°C. The annual average frost-free period is about 300 days. In winter and spring, there is ice and snow in alpine and shady areas, while there are flowers in river valleys and sunny areas. Therefore, there is a folk proverb: "There is snow on the peach blossom mountain at the bottom of the mountain, and there are two heavens in front of the mountain and behind the mountain."

Chengyang Bazhai has rain and heat in the same season, with distinct cold and heat, and abundant sunshine. The annual average temperature is 18.3 degrees, the annual average sunshine is 1151.9 hours, and the frost-free period is 320 days. The altitude is generally between 600-900 meters, and the temperature difference between the north and the south is 1°C to 2° C. There are four seasons here throughout the year, with cold waves and rain in spring, heavy rains and high temperatures in summer, drought in autumn, and frost in winter (Yang Ligu. 2022).



Figure 5 Spring and winter landscape of Chengyang Bazhai. The upper picture is an aerial view of Chengyang Bazhai in spring, and the lower picture is an aerial view of Chengyang Bazhai in winter. Chengyang Bazhai has a humid climate with distinct differences between cold and heat. Source: <http://www.sjcybz.com/> (Accessed on March 2, 2024)

### 1.2.2 Abundant Precipitation and Enveloping Clouds and Mists

Chengyang Bazhai has abundant rainfall, with annual precipitation ranging from 1100 to 1400 mm. About 70% of the precipitation is concentrated in spring and summer, and the annual precipitation days exceed 170 days. It has the characteristics of high humidity and abundant heat, plus rain and heat occur in the same season. This climatic condition provides unique advantages for rice and forestry production. At the same time, abundant rainwater also affected the unique design of the wind and rain bridge in the village, making shelter from the wind and rain a basic need for bridges for the Dong people.

Chengyang Bazhai is located among mountains, with relatively few sunshine hours and high humidity, resulting in a beautiful cloud and mist landscape. The average annual actual sunshine hours are 1333.3 hours. This area belongs to the monsoon climate zone, and the dominant wind direction is north-northeast wind, followed by northerly and northeasterly wind. The annual average fog days reach 79 days, the annual average frost-free period is 321 days, the annual average snowfall days are 5 days, the annual average freezing days are 7.2 days, and the annual average relative humidity is 81%. These unique climate characteristics jointly shape the unique natural environment and cultural landscape of Chengyang Bazhai.

In short, the natural environment of Chengyang Baizhai is characterized by hilly mountains, rich water resources, and forest vegetation. At the same time, the subtropical humid climate area, with distinct cold and summer and abundant rainfall, is suitable for farming, and also gives birth to dense forests and various kinds of herbaceous vegetation, providing good ecological conditions for the survival and reproduction of many wild animals. But at the same time, because there are many mountains few fields, high mountains, and dense forests, it affects the cultivated area of rice, so it has a unique production mode. The Dong people have to pay more labor intensity to ensure a stable and high yield of food crops, so frequent crossing of rivers to work in the mountains has become a necessary condition for production.

### Unique Live and Production Methods of the Adapted Landscape Promoting the Emergence of the Bridges

In order to adapt to the natural landscape of Chengyang Bazhai, the Dong ancestors developed a unique farming life and production method of planting glutinous rice on mountain terraces, raising fish and ducks in paddy fields, and planting trees on the mountains. This farming life and production method requires frequent crossing of rivers because of its uniqueness. This adaptation and utilization of the natural environment provide a social foundation for the creation of bridges, making bridges an indispensable component of this lifestyle part.

### 1.3.1 Terraced Glutinous Rice Cultivation Adapted to Mountainous Terrain



Chengyang Bazhai has a mild climate and abundant water resources, which is suitable for cultivating fertile land. There has been a tradition of planting rice since ancient times, especially the cultivation of glutinous rice. It has a long history and originated from the "Luotian" of the ancient Yue people.

The ancestors of the Dong people are one of the founders of China's rice farming culture. "The Biography of Huo Zhi" records: "The land of Chu and Yue is vast and sparsely populated. Rice is eaten and fish is cooked, or people are cultivated by fire." This shows that Yue is one of the first areas to plant rice.

Liu Xifan described the hardships of cultivating terraced fields in ethnic minority areas in "Lingbiao Jiman": "Barbarians cultivated fields into fields where forests were dense and mountain streams murmured. Therefore, their fields ranged from the foothills to the mountainside, layer upon layer., forming a long and slender ladder shape. The height of the field is almost the same as that of a city wall. It winds and bends, lingering like a line against the mountain, and the smoke and clouds often protect it. The farmers are scolding the clouds, so close to each other that they hardly know where they are. The Han people named it "terraces" because of their shape like stairs. The project of digging terraces was very large and difficult (Yang Yonghe. 2022).

The Dong people mostly live in valleys, and the cultivated land in Bazi is very vast. The Dong people combine the natural terrain and build terraces along the mountains without destroying the natural situation. From the foot of the mountain to the top of the mountain, the terraces are stacked in a radial pattern. The shapes hang on the hillside piece by piece along the ridge like the back of an ox and are scattered around the village on a grand scale. The terraces reflect the wisdom and glory of the Dong people and create a long and precious mountain terrace farming cultural heritage. The terraced fields are the result of collective construction by the Dong people. They are not only beautiful but also passed down from generation to generation.

In Chengyang Bazhai, you can enjoy the magnificent landscape from every angle. Some terraces are wide enough for a horse to ride, and the narrow terraces have a saying "A frog leaps across two fields." The mountains are set against each other, the hills are connected, and the mountains are full of valleys. , there is a Dong village nestled among the terraced fields, with smoke curling from the cooking pots, chickens and dogs hearing each other, the mountains are covered with lush pine forests, and the mountain wind blows, swaying constantly, like a reed field, singing songs and drums, Dong girls going up the mountain road Passing through the terraced fields, you can see the golden fields falling like a jade belt.

During the fieldwork, the local village elders happily introduced us to the terrace construction techniques. From the words, we can understand the rich cultural flavor of the Dong people's terraces, which is also their way of survival and creation passed down from generation to generation. "There are four elements for building terraces: first, the slope, second, the lighting, second, the water, and fourth, the geology." When building terraces in the mountains, "it should be small but not large." When building terraces, it is necessary to "follow the mountain without breaking the mountain", and you can experience the rich "ecological" heritage. When building terraces, you must open drainage outlets. Generally, one is open for small fields and two or two for large fields. You can practice fish farming in rice fields to

create fish secluded areas for fish to spend the winter. There are also "two taboos" when building terraces, that is, "the Bian Mountains cannot be cut off", "the mountains surrounding the mountains must not be dug up completely", and "the stomata of the mountain dragons cannot be blocked". The Dong people have been engaged in terraced rice farming for a long time. All agricultural activities follow their traditional customs. There are many sacrificial activities and many taboos, forming their own unique and rich farming culture. The Dong people celebrate the Spring Society Festival and Cunshan Yangyang Festival every year—Festival, Guyu Festival, Changxin Festival, Lusheng Festival, etc. (Ji Chengqian. 2012).

In most areas of the Dong people, glutinous rice is mainly grown, and glutinous food is the staple food for three meals a day. Before the 1950s, there were more than 40 varieties of glutinous rice grown in Dong areas, some of which were identified by rice scientists as the earliest varieties in the history of Chinese rice (japonica rice) and were famous for their high quality, flavor, and fragrance. The word "million" (transliteration) is still used in the Dong language, which is the name of an early variety of japonica rice in the ancient Vietnamese language. It later evolved into a general name for grain in the Dong language; "Banya" (transliteration) in the Dong language Nouns related to rice cultivation such as "wa" (transliteration, meaning rice), "Mennong" (transliteration, meaning waterwheel), "min" (transliteration, meaning water canal), etc., are all Derived from ancient Vietnamese. (Historical Survey Data Series. 2009)

The Dong people's rice cultivation has already formed a set of traditional farming methods. They have accumulated rich experience from seed selection and seedling cultivation to pest and disease control, from fertilization to intensive farming, from production tools to the use of water conservancy facilities. Such as selecting good seeds according to local conditions; mastering the solar terms and cultivating strong seedlings; burning ashes to improve the soil and plowing the fields in winter; cultivating intensively and applying sufficient fertilizers; damming rivers and building canals; raising fish in rice fields and weeding pine roots; releasing ducks and catching ducks in rice fields. Pests, use pests to control pests and ensure a good harvest. Rice farming culture is the core of Dong farming culture and the main body of local national culture. The intergenerational inheritance of rice farming culture also integrates the history and cultural memory of the entire society. Among them, including their family values, religious beliefs, customs, and habits, local history and social values are engraved in this way of collective historical memory, and social identity and cultural consciousness are born from this.

Dong farming culture not only includes agricultural production methods with rice production as the main body and related farming culture, but more importantly, the traditional rice farming culture also obtains special emotional sublimation and contains a special meaning of life (Yang Yonghe. 2020).

### 1.3.2 Rice-Fish-Duck Integrated Farming Utilizing Water Systems

The co-breeding model of rice, fish, and duck is a typical example of Dong's ancestors making full use of geographical advantages and natural conditions. Chengyang Bazhai has rich water resources and is suitable for rice planting, fish farming, and duck farming. Therefore, rice planting, fish farming, and duck farming

have become the three main household activities in the farming society of Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai.

Rice-fish-duck farming is an agricultural practice in which Dong's ancestors planted rice, fish, and ducks at the same time and in the same rice field. With the arrival of the rice growing season, rice fields have become a complete agricultural, cultural, and ecological cycle system. Every spring, before and after the Grain Rain, Dong people insert seedlings into the rice fields, followed by fish fry. When the fry grows to two or three fingers long, they put the ducklings into the rice fields. Rice fields provide a living environment and abundant bait for fish and ducks to grow. The fish and ducks clear the rice fields of pests and weeds while foraging, reducing the use of pesticides and herbicides. The movement of fish and ducks loosens the soil. The excrement of fish and ducks maintains and fattens the soil.



Figure 6 Rice-Fish-Duck Integrated Farming Utilizing Water Systems. The unique production method of the Dong people uses the farming wisdom of raising rice, fish, and ducks in the water system. Dong girls are catching grown-up fish from the paddy fields. Source: <http://www.sjcybz.com/> (Accessed on March 2, 2024)

Based on the growth and living habits of rice, fish, and ducks, the Dong ancestors are suitable for the environment and natural resource advantages. After long-term practice, they have explored an environmentally friendly, energy-saving, and efficient rice farming model that is suitable for rice field agriculture in most areas of the south. In the rice, fish, and duck ecosystem, relevant principles such as seasonal changes, food chains, and biological growth needs are used to maximize the characteristics and advantages of each species in the system through human intervention and regulation, and through the interaction and mutual influence of species. Finally, good returns from rice field planting were obtained, ensuring the sustainable development of traditional agricultural ecology and benefits (Yang Ziqi. 2015).

Human production methods are always inseparable from social life. The agricultural ecosystem of Chengyang Bazhai is closely related to the life and social activities of the Dong people. First of all, rice, fish, and duck are the main foods



of the local people. Secondly, fish is not only the main local food but also a necessity for local social and cultural activities such as sacrifices and celebrations. Finally, rice straw, especially glutinous rice straw, can be utilized as feed for cattle, returned to rice fields as a source of organic fertilizer, used as raw material for weaving, and even locals use the ashes of glutinous rice straw to wash their hair and clothes. In short, the rice-fish-duck system is not only an agricultural ecological cycle system of rice fields but also a socio-economic ecological cycle system (Zhou Pidong, Ou Guowu and Sun Qiu. 2010).

As mentioned earlier, the rice-fish-duck system was gradually developed under the basic economic, cultural, and political conditions of the Dong village. It is well adapted to the local ecological environment and natural resource conditions, and it also meets the needs of the local people's demand for productive life and culture. The implementation of the rice, fish and duck breeding system has become an important part of the Dong people's life and has higher value to the Dong people's livelihood, culture, and lifestyle.

### 1.3.3 Planting Fir Forests: The Wisdom of Creating Forests to Protect Villages and Livelihoods

#### (1) The Fir Forest was Planted to Protect and Build the Village

The Dong people mostly live in valley areas. During the rainy season, the soil from the mountains is easily washed down, destroying terraces and villages. To prevent this risk, the ancestors of the Dong people planted trees in the mountains to protect the village. They called this forest a "protective forest." Since most of Chengyang Bazhai is clastic rock, the soil is deep and loose, making it suitable for planting fir trees. The Dong ancestors of Chengyang Bazhai adapted to the local water and soil resources and planted fir trees. According to "Guizhou General Chronicles" the Dong people have cultivated fir trees artificially for more than 300 years. The Dong people used fir trees to build all the buildings in the village, including the Wind and Rain Bridge, Drum Tower, residences, and house gates.

The way the Dong people harvest forest resources in their traditional livelihood is also very unique. It can be collectively referred to as the agricultural and animal husbandry management method that uses harvesting instead of planting and combining harvesting with planting. In general, artificial forests are divided into thinning and main cutting. Although the Dong people are known as people who are both forest farmers and farmers. However, there is no concept of main cutting in their plantation forest management. The carefully cultivated fir trees always grow into one tree and are thinned out one tree at a time. They are never cut down completely. Axes are generally used for logging, rather than saws, in order not to tear away the cambium layer of the cedar trunk and ensure that the cedar saplings can regenerate after being cut down. The time for felling is in late autumn, and the remaining stumps are rinsed with glutinous rice pulp after felling. Next year, these stumps will be able to sprout cedar saplings. Moreover, the cedar saplings sprouted in this way grow very fast and can become useful in eight years. Therefore, their harvesting and planting of wood are not two operating procedures, but one operating procedure. Ultimately, the inevitable harvest will never disturb the original structure of the forest ecosystem. It does not interfere with the growth of all organisms that are not the target of logging, nor does it cause inevitable soil erosion caused by surface exposure, nor does it leave

vacant ecological niches and leave hidden dangers for biological invasion (Liao Junxiang. 2005).

This method of harvesting forest resources that adapts to the local ecology allows the Dong people to have enough fir trees to build houses, effectively maintains water and soil, and protects villages.

## (2) The special life style 'Planting Wild Plants and Grains

In the process of afforestation, the Dong people developed a farming method of intercropping crops in the forest, commonly known as "forest-grain intercropping." The Dong people carry out forest-grain intercropping in newly reforested land, substituting farming for tending, achieving a double harvest of forest and grain. Depending on the terrain, soil quality, sunshine and distance from the village, intercropping methods such as "forest-grain intercropping", "forest-vegetable intercropping" and "forest-fruit intercropping" can be implemented in forest land. "Forest grain intercropping" mainly intercrops millet, soybeans, corn, red sweet potato, buckwheat, potato, etc. in forest land; "forest vegetable intercropping" mainly intercrops pepper, carrot, white radish, etc. in forest land; "forest fruit intercropping" mainly intercrops in forest land interplant watermelons, sweet potatoes, etc. in the forest.

Just like the folk songs compiled by the Dong people: "Planting trees and growing grains, one land can be used for many purposes. There will be profits in the current year, and the trees will be in rows in the next year."; "Plant red sweet potatoes, and the branches will not be dense for three years, and then sow buckwheat for another year"; "Planting trees and growing grains is a really powerful method, the trees will be used for money, and the grains will feed the intestines"; "Planting trees and growing grains will provide food for half a year on the mountain." These folk proverbs about forest-grain intercropping reflect the basic understanding of forest-grain intercropping in Dong society, and also fully reflect the status and role of forest-grain intercropping in the production of Dong society (Yang Zhuhui. 2006).

The Dong ancestors practiced forest-grain intercropping to cultivate saplings intensively, which not only made the saplings grow vigorously but also increased the food supply in the village. Since the Dong people who live in the valleys have less land that can be exploited for rice fields, and the rice in the fields is not enough for the village population, they carry out "forest-grain intercropping" in the forest land to obtain "mountain grain" to survive. "Forest-grain intercropping" is the Dong people's artificial forestry production process. Through forest-grain intercropping, they achieve "growing from short to long", thus easing the contradiction between the long cycle of forestry production and daily life.

Marx believed in the Communist Manifesto that the production of everything is closely related to social production and life (Marx, K., & Engels, F. 1848). The emergence of Chengyang Bazhai Wind and Rain Bridge is a product adapted to the social production and social life of the Dong people. Whether planting glutinous rice on mountain terraces, planting fir trees on the mountain, or raising fish and ducks in paddy fields, the ancestors of the Dong people needed to frequently cross bridges, so the creation of bridges became inevitable for this unique farming production method.

## **Part 2: Chengyang Bazhai Before the Context of Minority Development Policies (960-1948 A.D.)**

Before the founding of New China in 1949, the Dong people were an independent ethnic group. They adapted to the unique landscape of Chengyang Bazhai to create a unique production and lifestyle, and due to the natural barrier of the mountains surrounding the village, they continued to preserve the traditional farming society from the origin of the Dong people in 960 ADS until the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The origin, social structure, history and culture of the Dong people will help further understand the background of this period.

### **2.1 Movement and Resettlement of the Dong People in Chengyang Bazhai**

#### **2.1.1 The Origins of the Dong Ethnicity**

The Dong people are an ancient ethnic minority in southern my country. The Dong people call themselves "Qian" (gaeml), or "Geng" (geml), or "Jin" (jeml). Some places are called "jeml laox", "jeml jaox", and "jeml tanx". But from the etymology point of view, the self-proclaimed names of various places are consistent. The self-proclaimed Dong nationality is derived from its basic meaning, which refers to the ethnic group living in villages with protective barriers ("A Brief History of the Dong Nationality" writing team. 2008).

The ancestors of the Dong people are called "Qianshou", which has appeared in documents before the Pre-Qin Dynasty. After Qin Shihuang unified China, he established Qianzhong County in "Qian". During the Tang and Song dynasties, the name "Qian" evolved into "Dong" or "You", and "Qianshou" also evolved into "Xidong people" or "doing people". The name of the Dong people was found in Han historical records in the Song Dynasty, and was recorded as "GeLin" or "GeLan". Volume 4 of "Notes of Laoxue'an" written by Lu You in the Southern Song Dynasty records: "In the areas of Chen, Yuan, and Jingzhou, there are "GeLin" and "GeLan". The urgent pronunciation of "GeLin" (Keec lanp) is consistent with the Dong people's self-proclaimed "Qian" (Gaeml) has a close pronunciation, which may be the transliteration of the Dong people using Chinese characters with double sounds. "Ling" is also the title of the Dong people, which is recorded in history books. "Longshengting Chronicle·Customs" records: "There are many kinds of barbarians in the southwest with different customs. Yuan (Ling) and Dong (Dong) are the same." Since the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the Dong people have been called "Dong Liao" and "Liao people" "Dong people", "Dong barbarians" and "Dong Miao" are generally called "Miao" or "Yi people". During the Republic of China, they were called "Dong family". After liberation, they were collectively called Dong people according to the wishes of each ethnic group (Liao Junxiang. 2005).

It is generally believed that the Dong people developed from the ancient Baiyue people. The place where the Dong people live now belonged to the Chu Kingdom (Yue) during the pre-Qin period. After the unification of the Qin Dynasty, under the promotion of the central government, Qianzhong County and Guilin County were established here. In the Han Dynasty, it belonged to Wuling County and Yulin County. In the Wei, Jin, Southern, and Northern Dynasties and the Sui Dynasty, it was called the "Land of Five Streams". During the Tang and Song Dynasties, it is recorded as "Xidong" in the history books.



Spring and Autumn Period to the Qin and Han Dynasties, there were "Yue people", "Qianzhong Barbarians" and "Wuling Barbarians" living here; from the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties to the Tang and Song Dynasties, they were called "Wuxi Barbarians" or "Barbarians". The minority ethnic group "Liao" lived here, and people in the Tang and Song Dynasties also called it "Xidong Prefecture Barbarians". By the Ming Dynasty, although the Dong people had separated from the Liao people, they were still called "Liao" by many people. Gu Yanwu of the Qing Dynasty said in "Book of Benefits of Prefectures and Countries in the World" "Dongliao people, the people of Lingbiaoxidong, were called Shanyue in ancient times. Since the Tang and Song Dynasties, they have begun to spread to Guangzhou." Thus, Dong, Liao, and Yue were divided into several different types of the names are connected in series (History of the Dong Nationality. 2008).

Regarding the historical origin of the Dong people, historians have different views. But there are mainly four types. The first view is the "indigenous theory". The Dong people have lived on this land since ancient times and formed a community in their long-term life. Some scholars believe that the ancestors of the Dong people developed from the "district people" in Baiyue. The "district" here specifically refers to the Yue people living in the upper reaches of the Yuanshui River, that is, the Dong people. The second point of view is "speaking from the outside". It is believed that the Dong people developed from the Ganyue branch of the ancient Yue people, and were later called "Dongyue" or "Dongou". In the early Warring States period, they moved to Wuzhou, Guangxi, and then gradually developed into a regional community, the Dong ethnic group. The third view is that the Dong people developed from the Luoyue branch. The main basis is that the distribution area of Luo Yue in history is the distribution area of Dong people today. Dong culture and Luo Yue culture have many things in common, and they are the inheritance and development of Luo Yue culture. The fourth view is that the main components of the Dong people are indigenous people, and they have been integrated with other ethnic components that migrated from other places in the long historical process (Zhang Guanghong. 2018).

#### 2.1.2 The Movement of the Dong Ethnicity

According to relevant research, the Dong people are descendants of the Baiyue people in southern China in ancient times and have migrated many times in history. In history, the Dong people experienced the Chu annihilation of Yue, Qin Shi Huang's expansion of Lingnan, the Han Emperor Wu's annihilation of South Vietnam, and the Ming and Qing rulers' repeated wars against Guizhou and Miao Yao in Guangxi. Only after the Dong ancestors were forced to migrate from the plains gradually, they migrated to live in the mountainous area at the junction of Hunan, Guangxi and Guizhou.

Historically, every war in the Lingnan region caused great migration and displacement of the southern ethnic groups. At this time, the southern ethnic minorities, as the defeated party, were forced to leave their hometowns, and the imperial court, as the victorious party, would definitely try to move in a large number of settlers to settle the land. With the support of the imperial court, the settlers who moved in could easily obtain plain land with better farming and living conditions. However, many Dong ancestors had to give up the plain land on which they relied for survival and with superior production and living conditions, and fled into the

mountain jungles.; Furthermore, due to language barriers with the Han people, not knowing Chinese characters, and often being bullied by the Han people, ethnic minorities are fearful and conservative in their interactions with the Han people. These are the reasons why many Dong ancestors migrated to remote mountainous areas or avoided living together with Han people.

In addition, Sanjiang County is surrounded by high mountains on all sides. "The emperor is as powerful as the emperor, and the Yi virtues are endless." There are many rivers and dense forests in Sanjiang County, making it a good place to take refuge in disasters. Therefore, even small social unrest will cause Han people from abroad to continue to flow into the Sanjiang River, and the dense rivers provide a natural route for them to follow. With the continuous deepening of the ruling power of the Han people and the uneven political, economic and cultural development of various ethnic groups, the status of various ethnic groups in Sanjiang in feudal society is quite unequal. The social status of the Dong people is higher than that of the Miao Yao and lower than that of the Han Zhuang. Based on this historical origin, the low hilly area in the central part of the county with gentle terrain and fertile land and the valley basins on both sides of the two main rivers Xun and Rong are mostly occupied by the Han and Zhuang ethnic groups, while the Dong people live in the valley areas in the mountainous areas or on both sides of the rivers, while Miao Yao was squeezed to remote mountain areas (Wei Yujiao. 2002).

It can be seen that the geographical environment choice of the Dong villages to live close to the mountains is an inevitable result of the historical changes of the Dong people.

### 2.1.3 The Origins of the Dong Ethnicity in Chengyang Bazhai

Regarding the origin of the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai, field surveys and previous studies have different opinions.

There is a theory that he is from Wuzhou. Lao Wu of Yanzhai Village in Chengyang said that he heard from his elders in his family that he migrated from Wuzhou, Guangxi. This statement was also recorded in the "Ethnography of Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County" compiled and published in 1989: "It is said that some of the Dong people in Liping, Congjiang and Rongjiang areas in Guizhou Province moved their ancestors from Wuzhou area in Guangxi to Liuzhou, and then moved to Where I live now." (Ethnic Affairs Committee of Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County. 1988) Zhang Min wrote in the article "Discussing the Migration of the Dong Nationality from the Ancestor Sacrifice Song": "In ancient times, the Dong people settled in Wuzhou. When they migrated, they followed the Xunjiang River, passed through Liuzhou, and entered Guizhou against the capital Liujiang River. They first settled in ancient times prefecture, and then extended from the ancient prefecture; some moved to the passage, and then moved northward to Tianzhu and Xinhuang through the passage; the other part migrated eastward and settled in Sanjiang, Longsheng and other counties." (Zhang Min. 1991)

In addition, there is also a saying from Ji'an, Jiangxi. The "Jiangxi theory" has more evidence in the research on the origin of the Dong people. "A Brief History of the Dong People" states: "As early as the Song and Yuan Dynasties, there were many Han people from Jiangnan who were affected by war or could not bear the exploitation and oppression of the feudal rulers., moved into the Dong area. In the

Ming Dynasty, in order to consolidate local political power and strengthen feudal rule, Zhu Yuanzhang not only followed the Yuan Dynasty's mantle and appointed officers who had "served meritoriously with the army", but also set up forts in the Dong area, "mobilizing the troops to settle down." They sent the people to the village and carried out military rule over the Dong people, and most of these people were Han Chinese from Ji'an Prefecture, Jiangxi Province. The theory that the ancestors of the Dong people came from Jiangxi is actually a reflection of ethnic integration." Sanjiang Linxi Township Dynasty, Liangzhai, the genealogy of the Wu surname in the Hehua area also records that their ancestors originally lived in Taihe County, Ji'an Prefecture, Jiangxi Province. Because of violating the royal law, they fled to Yuankou in Guizhou (today's Tianzhu, Guizhou) a long time ago. At that time, Lu, virtue, Ming and Xiong. The Xionggong branch was later divided into Linxi, Huangchao, Liangzhai, Hehua, Pingpu, Jichang and other places in Sanjiang (Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County Ethnic Affairs Committee. 1988).

According to the field oral information of Chengyang residents, the first people to settle in Chengyang Bazhai were Cheng and Yang, and the place name "Chengyang" came from this. The population of the two surnames Cheng and Yang developed slowly in later generations. Today, there is only one household with the Cheng surname and three households with the Yang surname. The other surnames continue to develop and grow, with Yang as the most common, Wu as the second, and Chen as the third. There is no record of the specific year when more than ten surnames moved into the Bazhai in Chengyang. However, the "Family Name Festival" (also known as the "Winter Festival") passed down to this day in the community records the days when the ancestors of each surname entered the village. For example, some people with the surname Yang in Pingzhai and Dazhai use the first day of the eleventh month of the lunar calendar as the anniversary of the surname entering the village, and the local people call it "Yang on the first day of the lunar month"; in some parts of Dazhai, the winter festival falls on the sixth day of the lunar month, called "Yang on the sixth day of the lunar month". In the Bazhai community, basically every surname has its own anniversary day for entering the village.

Since the Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China, Chengyang has slowly developed into eight villages. Due to the consistency in geography, economy and culture, they are locally called "Chengyang Bazhai".

## 2.2 Unique Social Structure and the "Dou" and "Kuan" Organizational Forms in Chengyang Bazhai

### 2.2.1 The Social Structure of the Dong Ethnicity in Chengyang Bazhai

The social organizational structure formed in Chengyang Bazhai is at the social level and can be understood as a network of relationships formed in human interaction activities. The social organizational structure of Chengyang Dong Village is a social structure spontaneously organized by people. It is mainly composed of Family, House clan (Dou) , Hamlet, Village, Small Dong , Big Dong (Small Kuan), Big Kuan. According to this order, they are arranged from front to back to form a structural hierarchy from bottom to top.

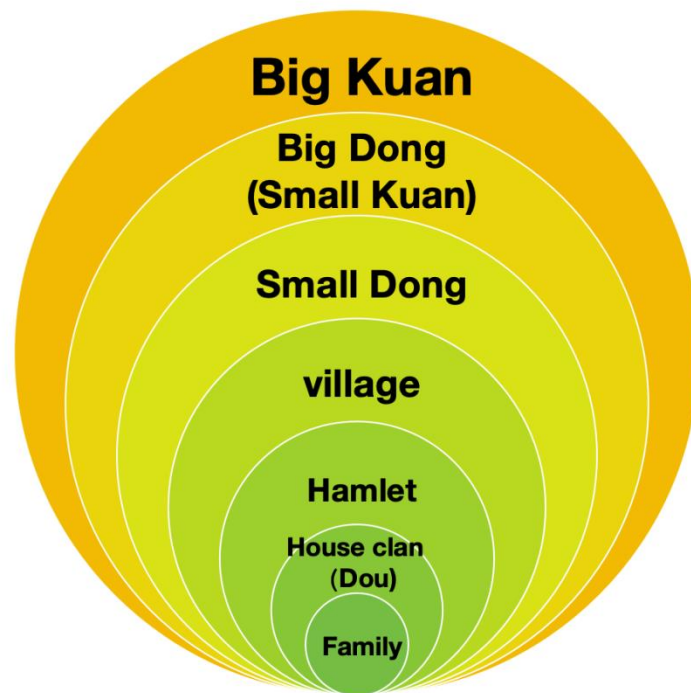


Figure 7 The social structure of the Dong people. It is a social structure spontaneously organized by people. It is mainly composed of Family, House clan (Dou), Hamlet, Village, Small Dong, Big Dong (Small Kuan), Big Kuan. They are arranged in this order from front to back to form a structure from bottom to top structural levels. Source: Drawn by ChenLu. November 25, 2023

The family is the smallest structure in the social organization structure of Chengyang Dong Village, and it is a small family dominated by the patriarchal family.

The House clan is also called "Dou". It is generally composed of paternal blood relationships within five generations. And several "Dou", or several House clans, form a "zhai" together, forming a state of common settlement of several "Dou".

Generally, there is a close blood relationship between the "zhai"s, so the "zhai"s are combined into village. The more typical Chengyang Bazhai, the eight "zhai"s are divided into three administrative villages, namely Pingyan Village, including Ma'an Village, Pingzhai, Yanzhai and Pingping Village; Chengyang Village composed of Dongzhai and Dazhai; Pingpu Village includes two villages, Pingpu Village and Jichang Village. Therefore, it can also be seen from the fact that eight "zhai"s form different villages that due to the influence of geographical location, relatively close "zhai"s will naturally be more closely connected to form villages.

The "zhai" and the village among the Dong people are two different concepts. A "zhai" is a small residential area, while a village is a village with several "zhai"s connected together. "zhai" and villages have stable and clear geographical



boundaries. The wind and rain bridges, drum towers, fish ponds, river sections, mountains, etc. are common to all members of the village.

A village or several villages can form a "Small Dong".

Several "Small Dong" form a "Big Dong", and the big hole is also called the "Small Kuan" in the above arrangement. "Kuan" came into being more than a thousand years ago. It is based on regional relations and is an alliance organization between villages. It is also a geographical organization among the people.

Several "Small Kuan" formed a "Big Kuan". The "Big Kuan" was temporarily combined based on the specific historical conditions at that time, so the "Big Kuan" did not have a fixed place of activity and geographical scope.

Therefore, this kind of settlement composed of "zhai", villages, "Small Dong", "Big Dong", and "Big Kuan" has obvious ethnic regional characteristics. It is a relatively independent single social organizational structure of the same type, juxtaposition, and close connection. There are family, blood, and marriage connections between villages, which form the spatial characteristics of Dong settlements (Ma Qizhen. 2022).

#### 2.2.2 "Dou": Village Clan Community in Chengyang Bazhai

The surnames in the area of Chengyang Bazhai mainly include more than ten surnames such as Yang, Wu, Chen, Shi, Li, Liang, Shi, Huang, Zhang, and Yang. Among them, Yang, Wu, and Chen are the three major surnames in the area. The most common surname is Wu, followed by Chen. "Ran" means a household in the Dong language. It is the basic unit of Chengyang's social organization, with monogamy being the mainstay. Based on the patrilineal blood line, several generations of children and their families from an ancestor form a specific house clan "Dou". A "Dou" is a House clan, which is formed by the branches and leaves of a tree meaning.

For example, Yanzhai has 223 households and 1,170 people, with four surnames: Yang, Wu, Chen, and Zhang. The Yang surname was the first to move in and developed the fastest, with 135 households, including 3 "dou"; there are 50 households with the surname Wu, which is 1 " There are 35 households with the surname Chen, one of which is "dou", and 3 households with the surname Zhang, and one with the surname Yang is "dou". The common ancestor of "Dou" is called "Bu" (grandfather, great-grandfather, great-grandfather).

"Dou" is the most basic grassroots organization of the Chengyang Dong community. The internal and external activities of members and their families within the clan are based on "Dou", and they implement autonomous management internally and protect the interests of the organization externally. In terms of social relations, it is an organization of self-protection, self-management, self-inheritance and education; in terms of economic relations, it is a union of multiple families that help and benefit each other. In Dou, it is forbidden to marry each other, have ancestors worshiped in common, hold sacrificial activities together, discuss family affairs together, participate in weddings and funerals within Dou, assist members of the family in building new houses, finance and help each other in economic life, and have seniority the difference order is to abide by the clan rules and covenants together.

Each House clan has a House clan leader, also known as the clan leader. The clan leader is usually a middle-aged and elderly person with higher seniority and prestige in the clan. He oversees the major affairs of the clan and calls on the clan members to discuss matters democratically and jointly make decisions. All members must abide by the code of conduct and ethics and moral customs. Violators will be judged and sanctioned by the clan leader together with the clan members, ranging from fines and compensation to serious ones including expulsion from the clan or even deprivation of the right to life. Usually, the clan leader participates in various affairs within the village and small organizations on behalf of this "dou". "Dou" members have the obligation to help the elderly, helpless, widowed, lonely, poor, sick and weak within the clan. Externally, when Dou members are bullied or unfairly treated by others, it will also be regarded as an insult to Quan Dou. Depending on the circumstances and the severity of the consequences, Quan Dou will fight back or denounce it.

"Dou" is the basic unit that organizes the internal order of the area. Therefore, all residents in the village must belong to different "dou" and participate in clan activities as a member of the clan. Therefore, only a few households in the village cannot Forming a "dou" of its own, different surnames will also join the "dou" of other surnames in a "sworn sworn" manner. The "Dou" organization itself is an open system, allowing members to move freely, usually in family units. It is relatively common to accept members of different sects, opposite sexes, and even different ethnic groups to join a certain "Bu La", and new joiners are also allowed. Maintain the status of dual "Bula" members, and there is no rigid requirement for new members to change their surnames. They are all regarded as brothers of the same blood within the "Bula" and are not subject to any discrimination. Therefore, the "fighting" organizations in this region also show the characteristics of "simulated blood relationship" relationships, which are different from the patriarchal system of the Han people that emphasizes blood inheritance (Liao Junxiang. 2005).

In the history of Chengyang area, families with different surnames moved in one after another and developed into "Dou". Later, as the clan population expanded, they continued to branch out. Due to the migration and reproduction of foreign clans and families with other surnames, multiple "Dou" were formed one after another 8 villages living together. Villages are developed on the basis of "fighting" and are social communities formed based on geographical relationships. The collective lifestyle of living together in a village, with "Dou" as the unit, and under the leadership of each clan leader, they donated money, materials, and work, and built a large number of village collective facilities, such as drum towers, stages, and wind and rain bridges, pavilions, village gates, wells, etc., meet the needs of collective production and life.

### 2.2.3 "Kuan": The Social Organization Form of Dong Nationality in Chengyang Bazhai

"Kuan" is "Kuant" in the Dong language, which means "to form a film" and "alliance", as well as "speech" and "negotiation", and is extended to "make friends" and "alliance". The "Kuan" organization is named after based on blood ties and geographical ties, villages form a political and military alliance through mutual oaths.



Due to very inconvenient transportation and lack of information, the ancient Dong society was basically a "free" country, self-sufficient and governed by Dong people. Under this circumstance, the Dong people formed their own democratic leadership organization, the Kuan Organization, which has a long history as a non-governmental social organization of the Dong people.

Scholars such as Deng Minwen and Wu Hao believe that the Dong payment system originated from the marriage system in the primitive clan period in the Dong area. It is pointed out that with the development of clans, the ethnic group marriage system practiced in the early days of clans was gradually replaced by out-ethnic group marriages. The clans that married each other gradually evolved from marriage alliances into economic alliances, political alliances and military alliances through "mutual oaths", thus giving birth to a unique form of social organization in the Dong area—the organization (Deng Minwen. 2009).

By the end of the Tang Dynasty and the Five Dynasties, the form of clan organizations in the Dong area had basically taken shape. By the Song Dynasty, the Dong people were separated from other ethnic groups as a single ethnic group, and Dong clan organizations had already widely existed in Dong society. Records about Dong money have also begun to appear in historical materials. "Rongzhai Essays" written by Hongmai of the Southern Song Dynasty records: "The land of Jingzhou... Tian Ding's residence, with steep rocks and heavy mountains, most of the ten families gathered together. In the event of a vendetta, then set up fences and cloth thorns to receive it, and each has its own door (league) money. Those who have door (lead) money are still mentioned as Wu Ji, and those who borrow oxen (cai) in the adjacent cave are called pulling the door money." (Hong Mai (Song).1987). Zhu Fu's "Xi Man Cong Xiao" records that the local barbarians: "were united to each other and made oaths with their blood" and "helped each other in emergencies, which was called 'menqian'" (Zhu Fu (Song Dynasty). 1987). Volume 11 of "Liuzhou Prefecture Chronicles" in the 29th year of Qianlong's reign in the Qing Dynasty also records the situation of joint funds in Huaiyuan County (today's Sanjiang, Guangxi) at that time: "When the people in Huaiyuan encounter theft, they call the crowd to collect money, and do not talk about it.", there are few people in my hometown who dare to commit robberies" (Ethnic Affairs Bureau of Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County. 2012).

As a complete political and military system, the Dong organization slaughters cattle and takes blood, swears alliances and erects monuments to collect funds, establishes alliances internally for autonomy, and forms military alliances externally to jointly fight the enemy. It consists Four levels of "Small Kuan", "Medium Kuan", "Big Kuan" and "Joint Big Kuan". A "Small Kuan" is composed of several or more than a dozen villages adjacent to the same river. It is the most basic social organizational entity for civil self-government in the Dong area. There are six "Small Kuan" s in Sanjiang: Linxi Kuan, Wuluo Kuan, Miaojiang Kuan, Wubaiheli Shaijiang Kuan, Rongjiang Shitang Kuan, and Xunjiang Jiuhe Bureau expanded Kuan. Linxi Kuan includes about 20 villages along the Linxi River such as Chengyang Dazhai, Dongzhai, Pingpu, Jichang, Yandong, Pingzhai, Ma'an, Pingping, Guanda and Guanxiao.

Chengyang Bazhai is a whole externally and eight individuals internally. It is a bit like a federal system. The "Joint Kuan" of the eight villages is its highest governing body, and the "Kuan" of each village is its subordinate governing

body. The “Joint Kuan” only plays a role in matters related to the eight villages, and the affairs of other villages are managed by the financial organization of the village. In order to play a greater role in the “Joint Kuan” of Bazhai, or to win more seats and thus be able to dominate the affairs of Bazhai, the larger villages must show their strength.

Since most of the eight villages are related by marriage, the relationship is very close. It is not feasible to use force to show strength. In history, there have been no armed fights between villages. How can we demonstrate our strength in a peaceful way? A great way to do this is through sports competitions. The larger the village, the stronger the manpower and material resources, and the more powerful players can be selected to rob it. By seizing the first shot or the most shots, the strength of the village is revealed, thus enabling the village to control the cooperative organization to a large extent and dominate the voice of the Bazhai (Yang Aoyu. 2008).

#### Powers of “Kuan”

The “Kuan” has two powers: internally, it can create and remove "village elders" (referring to the head of the bureau), hold meetings, and try and punish illegal activities; externally, it can call on the bureau to organize the masses to arm themselves to resist external enemies.

The leader of the “Kuan” is the “Kuan” chief (the village elder). They are publicly elected by the villagers. The conditions for being elected are that they are honest, fair, eloquent, good at doing things, warm-hearted, and prestigious. Generally, the village elders are old people. Because the Dong people have the custom of respecting their elders. They are very similar to tribal leaders in primitive society. They have real power, but no privileges or hereditary inheritance. They still have to participate in labor without any compensation. The people have the right to impeach. This is one of the important reasons why there was no independent country in the history of the Dong people. The number of village elder in the “Kuan” is directly proportional to the size of the “Kuan”. For small “Kuan”, there are three or five people, and for large “Kuan”, there are more than ten people. For example, if there are 99 joint “Kuan”s in the joint venture, the number of village elders will be relatively large.

The “Kuan” has a permanent organization, and the “Kuan” committee (village meeting, drum tower meeting) is the highest authority for its deliberations and actions. The Drum Tower is the gathering place for organizations. There is a big drum hanging in the Drum Tower. When something happens, the village elders will beat the drum to call for rallies. Most of the matters decided at the meeting were decided based on public opinion, and the village elders did not dare to do it all. "Sanjiang County Chronicles" says: "... Drum Tower must be built in Dong villages. ... The tower must have drums and seats. It is also the meeting place of the village. All matters related to regulations... or if there is any reform, all the drums will be beaten and the meeting will be held here.". During the meeting, all adults in the village have the right to speak, and decisions are made impartially and according to the terms, with little manipulation." It can be seen that the “Kuan” is a relatively democratic autonomous organization.

### **Joint Kuan activities**

Linxi Kuan, where Chengyang Bazhai is located, has participated in many joint financing activities in history. In 1910, the three small “Kuan” s of Linxi, Wuluo and Miaojiang in Sanjiang County took the lead in jointly raising funds to oppose the imposition of 72 “new li” (exorbitant taxes and miscellaneous taxes) by the county magistrate Shi Jiajian and the excessive levies imposed by the magistrate Liu Renbin. Later, the joint “Kuan” s were expanded to cover 121 villages in the county. In 1911, in cooperation with Liu Xihao, a member of the Tongmenghui, in his anti-Qing struggle, he overthrew the rule of Zeng Jianxun, the last magistrate of the Qing Dynasty in Sanjiang. In the second year of Tongzhi in the Qing Dynasty (1862), more than 500 villages in Huaiyuan County, Guangxi, including Linxi, Wuluo and Mengjiang in today's Sanjiang County, were united to form a large “Kuan” . “One call is answered by hundreds of people, the voice and the breath are connected, the neighbors sing and follow each other, and the watch and help are always the same, even in the wind and rain.” (Yao Lijuan, & Shi Kaizhong. 2005).

Chengyang Bazhai area has also participated in several large-scale joint “Kuan” operations in the history of Dong people. First, during the Hongwu period of the Ming Dynasty (1378), Wu Mian, a native of Wukailandong in Liping, Guizhou, organized a 200,000-strong “army” by joining forces with the “big kuan” and led a massive Dong peasant uprising that lasted for a long time for eight years. Kuan words such as “King Mian kuan”, “In the past we did big kuan”, “In the past King Mian made big kuan” that are still circulating in the Dong area of Sanjiang record the historical overview of the organization and actions of the “United Da kuan” at that time. (Shi Kaizhong. 2009)

### **Kuan Agreement**

Kuan Agreement is the core component of the Dong kuan organizational system. The “Joine kuan” organization has formed unwritten or written rules and regulations through alliance oaths. It is said in the “Legislation on Funding” that “when there was no money agreement in the village and no legislation in the village, good deeds were not praised, bad deeds were not punished, internal troubles could not be eliminated, and foreign troubles could not be resisted. Some people had unclean hands and feet and stole vegetables in the garden. Stealing melons, stealing chickens and ducks in cages. Some have evil intentions in their hearts, and carry out murders with knives during the day, and steal cattle and horses at night. There are also troubles and quarrels, and brazen fights. They kill good people, cause disasters, and cause trouble in the village. There was no peace, and the fighting made the place uneven. The villages hoped to stop the chaos, and the village demanded that the bad guys be punished.” So “the leader of the village invited the elders of the village, and the masters spread the news to everyone. Everyone gathered on the same square, agreed on the village rules, and made an oath to kill the cow. Synthesize the kuan, gather the crowd, and formulate regulations.”

The Kuan Agreement has formed a customary law that integrates organizational form, conceptual system and execution to effectively control the society, standardize individual social behavior, and ensure the normal operation of community life.

The contents of the Kuan Agreement circulated in the Dong area are mostly the same and rich in content, involving all aspects of production and life, such as marriage and family, moral standards, theft, arson and murder, land and forest disputes and protection, foreign relations, farming, literature, etc., and can be divided into types. It is: "Pingping kuan", "Convention kuan", "Creation kuan", "Custom kuan", "Hero kuan", "Expedition kuan", "Blessing kuan", "Invite God kuan", "Sacrifice kuan", "moral kuan", "hua kuan", "Wu Mian kuan", etc.

### **Kuan's Organizational Activities**

Kuan's Organizational Activities are divided into four categories: "talking about kuan", "opening kuan", "gathering kuan" and "starting Kuan". "Talk about kuan" means the head of the section explains the "rules and regulations". The time for lectures is relatively fixed, and in the Sanjiang area, lectures are mostly held in spring and autumn.

Before the lecture begins, there is often a strict sacrificial ceremony. According to Deng Minwen and Wu Hao who visited Ma'an Village in Chengyang in 1986, before "Talk about kuan", pig heads, livers, grass carp, wine, paper money and other objects were used to worship the gods from all directions. There is a bench in front of the altar. Three "Talk about kuan" people wearing robes and white Xiaopa are standing on the bench. One on the left is holding a paper umbrella, one on the right is holding a reed, and one in the middle is reciting "Invite God Kuan". The gods invited are Grandmother God, Liulang God, Feishan God, etc. After the recitation of "Invite the God Kuan" is completed, the "Lusheng Treading Hall Dance" is performed again, and then the formal lecture activity begins. When the highlight is mentioned, "young and old come to the altar to lecture day and night, men and women gather together, and the cheers are continuous." The wonderful scene (Deng Minwen and Wu Hao. 1986).

The purpose of the "Talk about kuan" activity is to strengthen the community's awareness of kuan, and through publicity and education on kuan's rules and contracts, the cohesion within the kuan organization will also continue to increase.

"Kaikuan" is a public trial and public sentencing activity. If there is a violation of the rules and regulations, the entire community will be summoned and the collective judgment will be relied on. Everyone is equal before the "rules and regulations" and the final punishment will be implemented only with the unanimous consent of the community. The venue for the public trial is Dazhai Drum Tower or Jiuping. The basic procedure is: "First, the 'head of money' will let the person concerned have a rational dialogue with the 'people of money'. Every time something is mentioned, a section of straw will be folded and placed, and the money will be given." It is decided that the parties involved can refute it. If it is verified to be true, it will be handled according to the provisions of the 'contract'. Otherwise, the grass will be taken back, which means the matter is cancelled. If there is no rule in the contract and it is difficult to sever the case, then through "cutting the chicken", "Boil the rice", "drain the oil pan" and other "divine referee" methods to solve the problem (Bai Zhengliu. 1997). Punishments ranged from compensation to expelling from the village, or to executions such as burning, flooding, or being buried alive.



"Gathering kuan" means holding a general meeting of the tribesmen, where the tribesmen and tribesmen gather together. After holding sacrificial activities, they kill cattle and drink blood to make oaths, and jointly agree on the regulations of the tribes, or discuss important matters related to the nation (Bai Zhengliu. 1997).

"Starting kuan" is a military operation to achieve joint defense and self-defense. Once the chicken feathers are reported to the village or neighboring villages, the chief of the tribe immediately summons the tribesmen and gathers armed forces to resist foreign enemies (Bai Zhengliu. 1997).

The unique social structure and organizational form of the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai make the connections between individuals in the social network closer. The Dong people are a nation with a very strong group consciousness. This is its national characteristic, which is more significant than other ethnic groups. This is based on its unique social structure and organizational form. This is the social foundation for the construction of the wind and rain bridge with complex skills.

### 2.3 The Historical Background of Chengyang Bazhai in the Context of Changes in Minority Policies

#### 2.3.1 Chengyang Bazhai Before Modern Times (960-1912A.D.)

Chengyang Bazhai is a typical Dong village, and most of its residents are Dong families. A plaque in Ma'an Village in Chengyang Bazhai records that Ma'an Village was established in the Song Dynasty, around 960 AD. Therefore, it can be roughly inferred that the village was first established in 960 AD. in the Song Dynasty.

Regarding the historical evolution of Chengyang Bazhai, a promotional material in the scenic area introduced that the vast majority of residents in Chengyang Bazhai are Dong people, but has the area of Chengyang Bazhai been settled here since ancient times or is it in the process of historical development? It is not easy to verify who migrated here. This is also related to the development process of the Dong people.

Some scholars have proposed that the Dong people in Chengyang area should belong to the Dan Dong branch of the Dong people. They were the Dan people of the Sui and Tang dynasties, who migrated from Sujiang in Wuzhou in the mid-Tang Dynasty (Wu Zhongjun. 1998). The origin of Chengyang Bazhai has been circulated that two people named Cheng and Yang fled here with their families to avoid the war and settled here. Later, people with more than ten surnames such as Yang, Wu, Li, Chen, and Shi successively came from different places. The place moved here, and they jointly developed it with the Cheng and Yang families, reproduced their descendants, and built this common home for them.

According to historical records, Chengyang Bazhai in Sanjiang County belonged to Wuling County and Yulin County during the Han Dynasty (202 BC - 220 AD). During the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties (220-589), it was Qixi County. In the Sui Dynasty, Yixi County was established and was subordinate to Shi'an County. In the early Tang Dynasty (618-712), the counties were changed into prefectures, and counties were set up under the prefectures. The great peasant uprising in the Central Plains that broke out in the late Tang Dynasty (about 830 AD) resulted in the prefectures and counties being occupied by local leaders with big surnames. Therefore, in the thousands of years until the Tang Dynasty, it can be

seen that although the centralization of power established counties and administrative divisions in the Sanjiang Dong area, they were located in remote areas, which still made the central government's local jurisdiction of no practical significance, the jurisdiction over the Sanjiang Dong area exists in name only (Yuan Tuotuo. 1985).

During the Song Dynasty (960-1279), in order to strengthen its rule over the Dong area, the dynasty developed and ruled the Sanjiang Dong area in political, economic, cultural and other aspects. In the late Northern Song Dynasty, the feudal system was increasingly strengthened and the land was transformed into feudal ownership, which bound the people to the land. During the Jiading period, the government began to exercise control and allowed "Dong Ding" and "Archers" to sell or transfer land (Yuan Tuotuo. 1985).

During the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), the development of the chieftain system was at its peak, and the Dong people were severely exploited and oppressed. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the centralization of power further deepened. The Dong people initially migrated into the mountains to avoid the disasters of war, but they were forced to launch a people's uprising movement. The most famous thing is that in the 11th year of Hongwu in the Ming Dynasty, Wu Mian led the Dong peasant uprising to deal with the Ming army, covering almost the entire Dong area (Xian Guangwei. 1995).

From then until the end of the Qing Dynasty (1936-1912), peasant uprisings of various sizes occurred among the Dong people without interruption. From the Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China, eight natural villages were gradually formed in Chengyang, namely Chengyang Dazhai, Dongzhai, Pingzhai, Yanzhai, Ma'an, Pingping, Jichang, and Pingpu, commonly known as "Chengyang Bazhai".

### 2.3.2 Semi-Feudal and Semi-Colonial Period of Chengyang Bazhai (1840-1912A.D.)

Before the Opium War, China had always been an independent feudal country. The agricultural economy was the mainstream of China's development, and the natural economy was in a dominant position. After the Opium War in 1840, China's semi-colonial and semi-feudal society was formed. Foreign capitalism changed the entire traditional economic system of China. Naturally, the Sanjiang Dong area was also more or less affected accordingly, but the invasion of capitalism was relatively slow.

After the Sino-French War in 1883, the government began to open up the Guangxi region, and Guangxi began to slowly shift from a closed state to an open state. The introduction of capitalist industry and commerce and the overall social situation at that time caused the overall situation in the Sanjiang Dong area to begin to change. During the Xuantong period, historical records record that the Dong people in Bajiang, Linxi, Dutong, and Tongle jointly resisted, causing the central government to begin to strengthen its jurisdiction and control over Guangxi, and it began to become a semi-colonial and semi-feudal state under the indirect rule of imperialism. Region (Yang Enwei. 1989).

In a whole sense, Chengyang Bazhai is part of China, and should have been reduced to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. However, the Dong people live in the relatively remote northern Guangxi region of Guangxi, and the invasion of



foreign capitalism has not been able to reach here. The invasion is relatively slow, it has not had much impact on the overall structure of the Dong region. Although they have been suppressed many times by the imperial court, the cohesion of the Kuan organizations within the Dong people is extremely strong. The "starting kuan" activities dominated by the Kuan organizations and the uprisings of the Dong people have never stopped. Therefore, within the social organization of the Dong people at that time, the "kuan" organization was still the main structure of the Dong society. It played an important role in handling various affairs of the Dong people internally, resisting foreign aggression and government oppression externally, and maintaining the internal stability of the Dong people. various interests.

Chengyang Bazhai is a farming settlement with a feudal nature based on blood relations. The changes like Chinese society and the influence of foreign capitalism have changed the completely feudal environment of Chengyang Bazhai. The nature of China's state during this period also determined the instability of the Dong region. Therefore, the social organizational structure within the settlement and the construction of architectural spaces for coexistence were all adopted by the Dong people to unite the nation in an unstable environment method.

### 2.3.3 Chengyang Bazhai During the Period of the Republic of China (1912-1948 A.D.)

After the founding of the Republic of China in 1912, China began to implement a republic. The local autonomy system advocated by Western countries was regarded as a policy that could save the country and was implemented throughout the country. The local government realized that the Dong people accounted for the majority of the population in Sanjiang County, and the Dong people played a great role in the implementation of autonomy in Sanjiang County. The "Sanjiang County Chronicle" mentioned: "Everything in this county should first pay attention to the Dong people, and the common people can be included. Get twice the result with half the effort." It is also recorded: "After the 22nd year of the Republic of China (1933), the self-government system promulgated by the government was fully followed... The Drum Tower of Dong Village is nothing more than a regular village hall, and it uses its old trees to self-defense and self-governance. With a good foundation, we will move towards a new track of good governance and good education (retranslated by Wei Ren and compiled by Jiang Yusheng. 1975)."

From these two historical records, it is easy to see that at this time, the Chengyang Bazhai area in Sanjiang still generally had control over its ethnic group. The government considered that the Sanjiang Dong area had the custom of holding meetings of the people in the Drum Tower, so it designated the Drum Tower as the the office space inside the Dong village. Under the rule of the autonomous system of the Republic of China government, the Sanjiang Dong people still exert their traditional system and culture without major changes.

In addition, during the Republic of China, eight villages in Chengyang Bazhai were formed. People gradually formed eight different geographical settlements in Chengyang Bazhai based on the division of terrain, surnames, population, etc. Before the eight villages were clearly formed, the interior of Chengyang Bazhai was a more mixed settlement space. Therefore, after the Republic of China, people were able to settle down relatively stably in the nature of a

semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. Although they experienced constant wars such as the Anti-Japanese War and the Liberation War in the past few decades, several villagers with mixed surnames living in Dong settlements began to rebuild their lives. The living space was divided into eight villages today, forming a way of life that is both interdependent and differentiated.

## 2.4 Original and Uniqueness of Dong Ethnic Culture in Chengyang Bazhai

### 2.4.1 Yue Ye: A Form of Collective Interaction Across Villages

"Yueye" is an important form of collective communication among the Dong people. It is called "weex yeek" in the Dong dialect and translated into Chinese as "being a guest" and "making friends". It is an important way of communication and entertainment for the Dong people. "Making friends" here is not simply friendship between two or more people, but refers to collective friendship between villages. It mainly manifests as all men, women, old and young from one village visiting another village. Usually there are two visits, each lasting 3-5 days. The two villages are respectively the main village and the guest village invites the guest village to carry out entertainment activities in the main village. In other words, "Moon" is an important medium for local ethnic communication (Luo Caijuan, Guan Qiyu. 2024).

Liu Xifan recorded the full story of the Dong people's "Yue Ye" custom in "Lingbiao Jiman": Before the meeting, young men and women from each village made an appointment in advance to gather at a certain village on a certain day... and marched to each village together. When arriving at a certain fortress, a certain village must welcome and send off guests with courtesy - the whole village of Arhats and Lanmen welcome them at the gate of the village - and then separate them into each house to receive them solemnly. At about noon, the men, women, and children of the main village (that is, the village where people gather to stay) and the guest village (that is, the Arhats and Lanmen from outside) gather in the "Lusheng Hall"... At dusk, the main village will use the cattle that were slaughtered today, entertain guests from the guest village. In the future, the host village will be a guest in the guest village, and the guest village must also be treated with due respect... (Liu Xifan. 1991).

Carrying out "Yue Ye" across villages is still a favorite way of social interaction for the Dong people. This method of communication helps maintain friendly relations and solidarity among villages, thus establishing a racial community that helps each other.

### 2.4.2 Hundred Family Together Banquet: Traditional Dong Ethnic Dining Customs

Hundred Family Banquet, also called "He long fan", originated from an ancient legend of the Dong people: a Dong village was attacked by a flood demon. Seeing that the rice fields were flooded, the houses were about to collapse, and the Dong people were about to be swallowed up by the floods, a hero descended from the sky and cut off the flood demon's back with his strong arms. The Dong people were saved and wanted to invite the hero to their home to express their gratitude. But the hero was leaving the next day and couldn't just go to the Dong people's house. At this time, the village elder came up with an idea: let every household in the village bring

out a few dishes and set up a long banquet in front of the Drum Tower to entertain the heroes. From then on, whenever important guests came to Dong township, the Dong family would hold a "Hundred Family Banquet" to entertain them. Since then, the Dong people have held a "Hundred Family Banquet" whenever distinguished guests come, happy events occur, or when clan members gather together.

The Hundred Family Banquet begins. First, the clan leader or village elder delivers a few words of welcome or congratulations, and then they raise their glasses together and shout "Jianla - oh hoo", "Ula - oh hoo" and then drink a full glass of wine. Drinking it all reflects the unity and unity of the Dong people. When I was half drunk, I started singing drinking songs. There were bursts of singing and shouts, making it very lively. Everyone also drinks "Cross-cupped wine" and "Turning the wine" during the dinner. The food at each table is different. Everyone can eat from the first table to the last table. You come and I go, drink and drink, and it is very lively.

This traditional Dong food custom has become a part of the social interaction in Chengyang Bazhai in a unique form and unites the will and emotions of the Dong people.

### **Part 3: Chengyang Bazhai in the Context of Minority Development**

#### **Policies (1949-2023 A.D.)**

In 1949, with the founding of the People's Republic of China, Dong changed from an ethnic group to one of China's ethnic minorities. To maintain the unity and unity of the country, the Chinese government has formulated policies for ethnic minorities. Chengyang Bazhai, where the Dong people live, has been affected by policies and has changed social structure, culture, history, and other aspects.

#### **3.1 Government-Managed Social Organizational Forms**

##### **3.1.1 Social Structural Changes Brought by the Establishment of the People's Republic of China**

In 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded, which changed the original social structure and established a top-down social management system led by state institutions.

State institutions are the general term for a set of state organs established by the ruling class to exercise state power and realize state functions. China's state institutions are composed of six major organs: state power agencies, the state president, state administrative agencies, state military agencies, state judicial agencies, and national prosecutorial agencies.

Among them, the national administrative organ is the Chinese People's Government, including the Central People's Government and local people's governments at all levels. The Central People's Government is the highest state administrative organ in China, also known as the State Council of the People's Republic of China. The State Council is led by the Prime Minister and is responsible for decision-making on principles, policies, plans and major administrative measures. Major issues in the country's work must be discussed and decided at the executive meeting of the State Council or the plenary session of the State Council.

Local people's governments at all levels are administrative agencies at all levels of the People's Republic of China and are mainly responsible for local administrative management at all levels. It mainly includes provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government, autonomous prefectures, and cities divided into districts; counties, autonomous counties, cities without districts, municipal districts, townships, ethnic townships, and towns. They are under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government.

The change of the national system has changed the original social organization and management form. Chengyang Bazhai is part of China and has adapted to the system, and the social organization and management form has changed.

### 3.1.2 Social Organizational Management Forms in Chengyang Bazhai Adapted to the People's Republic of China

In New China, Chengyang Bazhai was divided geographically and became part of Sanjiang County, Liuzhou City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. According to administrative management, Chengyang Bazhai is divided into three administrative village committees, namely Chengyang, Pingyan, and Pingpu, and is managed by the village-level government, the smallest level of the Chinese government. The village committee is the management and administrative organ of the village-level government and is led by the village party secretary. Village affairs are decided by the village committee.

This social management system completely broke the "Dou" and "Kuan" organizational forms of the Dong's primitive society. This directly affects the development direction of Chengyang Bazhai. The government can build the traditional Dong village into a tourist area by "setting the main tone."

### 3.1.3 The Original Role of Village Elders Has Disappeared and the Emergence of the Elderly Association from the Chinese Government's Minority Policy

With the development of society, especially since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the central government's actual dominance over Dong villages has been strengthened. The establishment of administrative villages and the emergence of village committees have actually replaced the social functions performed by village organizations. The "Kuan Agreement" has also been replaced by the country's various legal systems, which means that this organization has actually withdrawn from the stage of Dong political history.

The village elders, as the leading organization of the kuan organization, did not disappear. In order to adapt to the social environment, it changed its name to the Elderly Association, and became a non-governmental organization under the government's village committee. Although its functions are much weaker than before, such as no judicial power, war power, etc., it still has great influence and prestige, manages and organizes (or assists) various social lives in the village, and continues to exert its influence plays its own unique role. Nowadays, the elderly generally do not stay at home, but go to chat and make payments. They call it "baikuan" in Dong language, which also shows that it has strong vitality. The "Kuan Agreement" also continues to play the role of village rules and regulations. It can be



said that the Dong people regard the laws of the country as their basic law, and the "Kuan Agreement" is their own moral law.

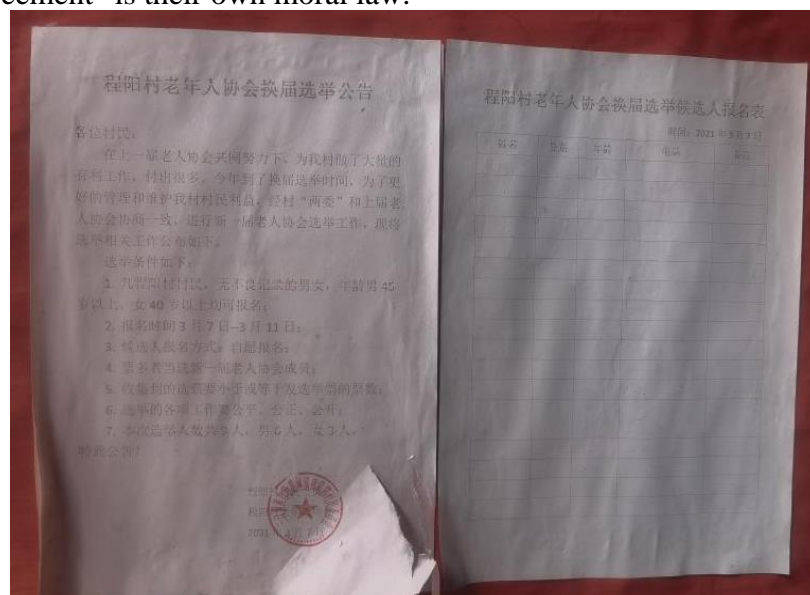


Figure 8 Announcement posted by the Elderly Association on the pillars of the Drum Tower. The content is the announcement of the general election of the Elderly Association. This shows that the original social management structure of Chengyang Bazhai has changed, but the village elders still play a role in the village and make decisions, and manage certain matters. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. November 2, 2023

During fieldwork, the researcher observed an announcement on the pillars of the Bazhai Drum Tower in Chengyang, with the theme being the 2021 general election of the Elderly Association. It says that to better manage and safeguard the interests of the villagers, 9 new members of the Elderly Association will be elected this time, 6 men and 3 women. As long as the villagers in Chengyang Bazhai can participate in the election, men must be over 45 years old and women must be over 40 years old. The registration period is from March 7th to March 13th. What is important is that the announcement states that this is done under the guidance of the Chengyang Village Committee, a department of local government, and is stamped with the official seal of the Chengyang Village Committee. This shows that the original social management structure of Chengyang Bazhai has changed. The leadership rights of village elders have been weakened in the past, but they still play a role in the village, making decisions and managing certain affairs in the form of elders' associations.

### 3.2 Evolution of China's Minority Policies

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Dong people have transformed from an ethnic group into a member of China's ethnic minorities. The Chinese government attaches great importance to the protection and development of ethnic minorities and has formulated ethnic minority development policies that meet the country's political needs at different historical stages. Minority



cultural policies have gradually enriched the needs of the political environment. At different historical stages, the pertinence of ethnic minority cultural policies is also different.

In the early days of the founding of New China, the country was in desperate need of revitalization. How to eliminate ethnic barriers, establish socialist ethnic relations that meet the needs of the country, and lead people of all ethnic groups in the country to actively participate in the political and economic construction of New China has become a question before the Communist Party of China. important topic. Therefore, the core content of cultural policies for ethnic minorities during this period was to eliminate barriers and build unity. The main political will is to build cultural identity by formulating cultural policies that meet the needs of ethnic minorities, thereby establishing centripetal force towards New China. For example, the "Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference" states: "All ethnic groups within the territory of the People's Republic of China are equal and practice solidarity and mutual assistance."

Since the economic reform and opening up in 1978, the focus of the Chinese government has shifted to the construction of socialist modernization. The implementation of reform and opening up has opened a new chapter in socialist modernization. Stable social relations must keep pace with it. Therefore, on the basis of grasping the basic laws of the development of ethnic minorities, we should establish cultural policies and legal systems to ensure rapid economic development, attach great importance to the construction and development of cultural undertakings in ethnic minority areas, and shift the focus of work for ethnic minorities to the goal of socialist modernization. During the construction process, continuously narrowing the gap with the Han people has become the core content of the cultural policy for ethnic minorities at this stage. Ethnic affairs departments must also shift their focus accordingly to serve socialist modernization. "Modernization requires ethnic minorities very much, and ethnic minorities also need modernization very much" (Luo Chunqiu, Zhu Yunsheng and Dai Jun. 2020).

After the 21st century, with the implementation of the Western Development Policy in the southwest minority areas, a number of administrative-led economic and cultural policies such as farmland water conservancy and fire and disaster prevention were implemented in order to focus on solving poverty problems. Nowadays, under the policy background of cultural heritage protection and tourism development, roads and water conservancy facilities in southwest ethnic areas are moved and adjusted very frequently, resulting in the relocation of villages and residents and the planning and adjustment of village space changes also occur frequently.

Since entering the new era of Xi Jinping, on the road to realizing the great Chinese dream, building a socialist cultural power has become a new historical task. While grasping the socialist culture with Chinese characteristics, more attention has been paid to the cultural construction of ethnic minorities. Unity and stability have become the key to this period. core themes. For example, the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed to comprehensively implement ethnic policies, adhere to and improve the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and continuously enhance the identification of people of all ethnic groups with the great motherland, the Chinese nation, Chinese culture, and identify of the

Communist Party of China with the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and better safeguard national unity, social stability, and national unity.

General Secretary Xi Jinping has visited ethnic minority areas more than ten times. In the snow-covered plateau, the north and south of the Tianshan Mountains, and in the northern and southwestern frontiers of the motherland, he has personally witnessed the rapid changes in the ethnic areas and the flourishing lives of the ethnic minority people, and has had face-to-face interactions with people of all ethnic groups.

In 2020, Xi Jinping made a speech when meeting with outstanding representatives of grassroots ethnic unity: "To build a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way, no ethnic group can be missing." At the national and government levels, we should pay full attention to the economic development and people's lives of ethnic minorities.



Figure 9 Xi Jinping meeting with outstanding representatives of ethnic unity. Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, President of the State, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission. In 2020, I visited Hongde Village, Hongsibao Town, Wuzhong City, Ningxia, and spoke with representatives of grassroots ethnic unity: "To build a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way, no ethnic group can be left behind." Source: <https://news.cnr.cn/> (Accessed on March 10, 2024)

Ethnic minority policies interact with the national political environment. Policies originate from political needs. The party and the country embody their political will in national policies and pass them on to the people of all ethnic groups, creating a social environment and socialist citizens that are in line with the development of the times. China's ethnic minority policies continue to change with the development of the times, but its underlying theme has always been: gradually building political identity through building cultural identity, adhering to regional autonomy, promoting the construction of political democracy in our country, and maintaining ethnic unity.

### 3.3 Historical Perspectives of Chengyang Bazhai in the Process of Minority Policy Development

#### 3.3.1 Chengyang Bazhai During the Socialist Period (1949-1978)

From the founding of New China, which liberated the whole of China, to the entry into the 21st century, these decades have been a stage of national self-repair, hard work, and improvement. The entire country and society are in the midst of major changes, from politics, economy, society, culture, and even the art field is undergoing changes together with the country. The socialist development of New China has affected people's ideological concepts, cultural life and other aspects.

After the establishment of Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, bandits were eliminated under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. The era of government leadership of the Dong people has arrived. However, the era of Sanjiang Dong people relying on internal self-defense and autonomy within the lease period has passed, and gang organizations have also been taken over by grassroots organizations of the Central People's Government replace. In the past, the Dong people had few opportunities to communicate with the outside world. The "kuan" organization managed all the affairs of the entire ethnic group, bringing complete cohesion and centripetal force to the people within the ethnic group. Although the "kuan" organization is an ancient system of the Dong people, the Dong people's valuable etiquette spirit has enabled the Sanjiang Dong people to play an important role in the legal society and the modernization process after the founding of New China. Nowadays, travel is convenient, opportunities for communication with the outside world have increased, and people's ideas and concepts have begun to change after receiving new things and information. More young people are slowly downplaying the "kuan" culture of the older generation and other intra-ethnic systems and cultures.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, a series of development movements were implemented. The people's commune movement, the destruction of the Four Olds, and the Cultural Revolution all caused considerable damage to the development of public space in Dong settlements. The state began to transform agriculture, commerce, and handicraft industries, and nationalized everything owned by the people, which caused huge changes in ethnic minority villages and became more politicized.

After the historic formation stage of Chengyang Bazhai being divided into eight villages during the Republic of China, another important period of development was after the founding of New China. The Dong people's national nature, political system, social structure, economic form, and cultural characteristics changed. He was also deeply affected by the earth-shaking changes.

The first thing is the intervention of state power. Dong villages with "village elders" as the core are taken over by local government personnel and village committee personnel sent by the state. Dong society begins to be under the actual management of the state, which also leads to strong internal tension among the Dong people. The social organizational structure, management characteristics, and national color of the country have gradually weakened. These changes directly led to the separation between tribesmen and the strict intra-tribe system began to fade. Although the tribe still lives together as a group, the original settlement relationship has been changed.

### 3.3.2 Chengyang Bazhai in the Context of Economic Reform and Opening Up (1978-2024)

The reform and opening up in 1978 was a great turning point in China's political and economic development. The government began to charge fees for Chengyang Wind and Rain Bridge in 1987, and then transformed it into a tourist-oriented ethnic minority characteristic village. The settlement space expanded and developed accordingly, breaking the Dong ethnic minority instead of the original, closed settlement form of the settlement, people have also begun to pay attention to modern settlement living conditions that focus on practicality and functionality.

China has begun nationwide poverty alleviation work since the mid-1980s, implementing planned and large-scale poverty alleviation policies. In the seven years from 1994 to 2000, it solved the problem of food and clothing for the poor and drove poverty-stricken areas to Economic development drives the progress of the entire region from policy, economy, life and other aspects. Among them, the increase in housing in Chengyang Bazhai reflects the corresponding improvement in the lives of the ethnic people, which means that the original family structure and the characteristics of settlement are slowly changing. In 1960, the total population of Sanjiang County was more than 166,000. By 2000, the total population of Sanjiang County had reached nearly 350,000, approximately tripling. The increase in population has also led to a corresponding increase in the number of housing constructions, which increased from 40,000 houses in 1960 to about 70,000 houses in 2000.

After entering the 21st century, the country promulgated a series of poverty alleviation policies to accelerate the development of poverty-stricken areas, and proposed targeted poverty alleviation policies. Post-development has provided a foundation for winning the battle against poverty and achieving all poverty alleviation, and for the revitalization and development of Chengyang Bazhai to many opportunities. The beautiful countryside policy proposed in 2014 and the rural revitalization strategy proposed in 2017 provide theoretical guidance for the renewal and progress of traditional villages. The goal of the rural revitalization strategy is to achieve civilized rural customs, prosperous industries, effective governance, ecological livability, and a prosperous life, and to achieve mutual promotion and common development, using the development of tourism as a breakthrough point to supplement the infrastructure of traditional tourist settlements, we should increase financial support for traditional ethnic villages and optimize the tourism environment under the overall background. The development of tourism in Chengyang Bazhai played an important role in alleviating poverty and becoming rich for the entire ethnic group, and brought development opportunities to the traditional settlement space of Chengyang Bazhai. The villagers began a top-down, all-people participation in the settlement renewal process in the village Phenomenon.

Opportunities for people to increase their income from crops, tea, handicrafts, housing, etc. Not only have many new roads been built, allowing the village to communicate with the outside world more frequently and conveniently, but the large-scale export of crops and tea has also driven the development of the village of economic development. The rise of tourism has caused people to rapidly expand settlements, building a large number of buildings to accommodate tourists and create new income for villagers. However, the addition of buildings has expanded the entire



settlement space. As settlements continue to expand outwards, they will gradually occupy the original cultivated land and water sources, and thus changed the original settlement spatial pattern of the Dong people. The arrangement of mountains, water, and space cannot completely follow the traditional environmental aesthetics, but it does not mean to completely abandon it, but to combine the traditional spatial pattern with the settlement pattern required by modern times. It adapts to the development of tourist villages and the development direction of modern society.

### 3.4 Chengyang Bazhai in the Process of Ethnic Cultural Tourism and Commoditization

Under the guidance of the national economic reform and opening-up policy, the national culture of the Dong people has become a kind of cultural capital and transformed into commodities through tourism. And because of the gaze of tourists, the tradition changes and becomes a performance.

#### 3.4.1 Yue Ye: A Folk Performance

"Yue Ye", as a traditional form of Dong collective communication, has become a folk performance in the context of tourism development. The Dong people cooperate with external tourism development companies to turn this ancient folk custom into a commodity for sale to tourists.

In 2017, the Guangxi government held the Guangxi Cultural Tourism Development Conference and established a tourism project with Dong characteristics in Yueye Dong Village. In the same year, Guangxi Tourism Development Group invested RMB 378 million to build the Yueye Dong Village project in Sanjiang County, 16 kilometers away from Chengyang Bazhai.

With "Yue Ye" as the cultural theme, this project hired Dong folk craftsmen to carefully design and build Dong iconic buildings such as the Bird's Nest, "Yue Ye" Drum Tower, Diaojiaolou Group, Bullring, and Feast Hall; refining "Yue Ye" "The essence of the event is carefully prepared for China's first large-scale Dong-style live performance in Zuomei Sanjiang, a banquet for hundreds of families in Zuomei Sanjiang, the cattle battle Sanjiang Ox King Competition and other cultural masterpieces, which comprehensively interpret the cultural connotation of the Dong people's "Yue Ye" and let everyone visitors to Dong Township are immersed in the cultural feast of the Dong people.



Figure 10 Yueye Dong Village tourism performance project. The tourism company built the Yueye Dong Village project in Sanjiang County, 16 kilometers away from Chengyang Bazhai. The picture shows the project's Dong Bird's Nest building and the



Dong song and dance performances performed inside. The traditional culture of the Dong people has been transformed into a commodity in the context of tourism.

Source: <https://www.ctrip.com/> (Accessed on March 2, 2024)

#### 3.4.2 Hundred Family Banquet: A Tourist Experience in Chengyang Bazhai

Hundred Family Banquet, as a traditional eating custom of the Dong people, has gradually transformed under the gaze of tourists into an experience project that caters to the needs of tourists in Chengyang Bazhai.



Figure 11 Chengyang Bazhai hundred banquet tourism experience activities. In July 2021, the author and his students came to Chengyang Bazhai to experience the Hundred Family Banquet event. This traditional food custom is taken out in the context of tourism and becomes a commodity that can be sold to tourists. Source: Photographed by ChenLu. July 6, 2021

In the Yanzhai Drum Tower Square in Bazhai, Chengyang, a lively Hundred Family Banquet will be held at 5:30 pm almost every day during holidays. The Dong village cooks sang and danced, inviting guests to taste their home-cooked special dishes. Visitors can experience this event by purchasing a 50-yuan Hundred Family Banquet dining ticket before 4pm every day.

The original organizer of this Hundred Family Banquet tourism experience project was Ms. Wu Aixian from Yanzhai. In 2008, the Dong "Hundred Family Banquet" was listed as an autonomous region-level intangible cultural heritage. After Ms. Wu Aixian sensed the business opportunity, she decided to open a B&B and made preparations for Hundred Family Banquet. She registered Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County Yanzhai Naigeng Catering Development Co., Ltd., specializing in the Hundred Family Banquet tourist experience project in Chengyang Bazhai. According to Ms. Wu Aixian, when the tour first started, the guests were scattered, and sometimes there were only two or three Hundred Family Banquets in a month. At that time, a Hundred Family Banquet only cost 20 to 30 yuan.

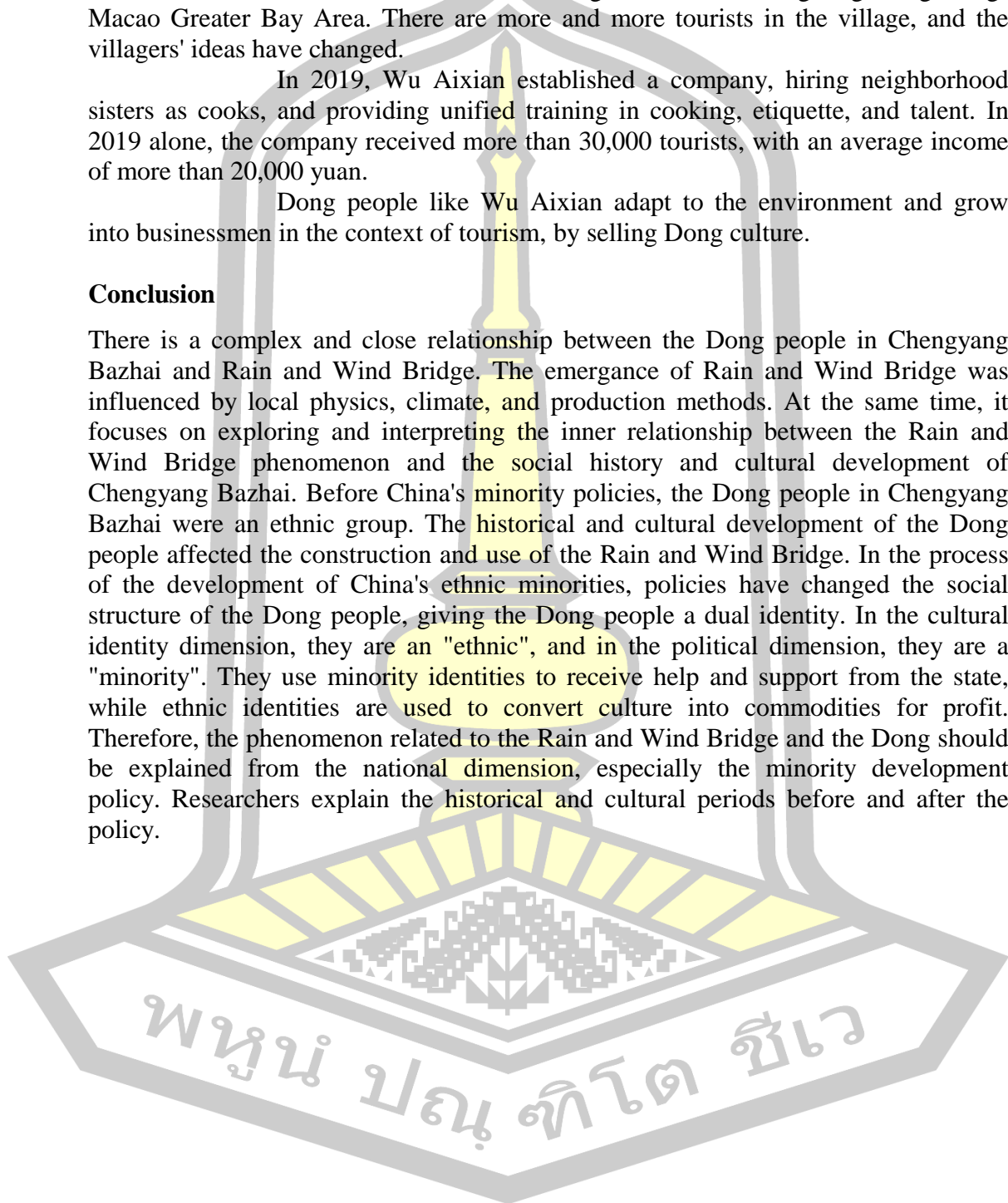
Since the end of 2014, with the continuous improvement of transportation infrastructure, Chengyang Bazhai has gradually integrated into the tourism economic circles such as "Greater Guilin" and the "Pearl River Delta", and Dong Township has transformed into a livable and travelable back garden of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. There are more and more tourists in the village, and the villagers' ideas have changed.

In 2019, Wu Aixian established a company, hiring neighborhood sisters as cooks, and providing unified training in cooking, etiquette, and talent. In 2019 alone, the company received more than 30,000 tourists, with an average income of more than 20,000 yuan.

Dong people like Wu Aixian adapt to the environment and grow into businessmen in the context of tourism, by selling Dong culture.

### Conclusion

There is a complex and close relationship between the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai and Rain and Wind Bridge. The emergence of Rain and Wind Bridge was influenced by local physics, climate, and production methods. At the same time, it focuses on exploring and interpreting the inner relationship between the Rain and Wind Bridge phenomenon and the social history and cultural development of Chengyang Bazhai. Before China's minority policies, the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai were an ethnic group. The historical and cultural development of the Dong people affected the construction and use of the Rain and Wind Bridge. In the process of the development of China's ethnic minorities, policies have changed the social structure of the Dong people, giving the Dong people a dual identity. In the cultural identity dimension, they are an "ethnic", and in the political dimension, they are a "minority". They use minority identities to receive help and support from the state, while ethnic identities are used to convert culture into commodities for profit. Therefore, the phenomenon related to the Rain and Wind Bridge and the Dong should be explained from the national dimension, especially the minority development policy. Researchers explain the historical and cultural periods before and after the policy.



## CHAPTER 3

### Wind and Rain Bridges: Cultural Landscape and Architectural Culture

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses how to construct wind and rain bridges under the influence of natural and cultural factors. The researcher discussed the construction style and technology of the wind and rain bridge from an architectural perspective. To understand the genesis of the wind and rain bridge from the perspective of cultural landscape and architectural culture. It considers the Yongji Bridge case study. Additionally, Chapter 3 serves as a foundation for the other chapters. To divided into three parts: the first part is the formation of the wind and rain bridge in the dimension of the cultural landscape. Including the impact of natural factors and cultural factors on wind and rain bridges. Second, in the architectural dimensions of the wind and rain bridge including architectural styles and techniques. Third, Yongji Bridge is a case study for analyzing Yongji Bridge in terms of cultural landscape and architectural style.

#### Part 1: Conceptual Discussion of Cultural Landscape and Wind and Rain Bridge Architectural Culture

In the book "Morale Landscape and Culture", German geographer Carl Sauer first proposed the concept of "Cultural Landscape" (Sauer C. 1925). Cultural landscape is not a specific landscape, a whole, a special terrain, or a vegetation type; it is an attribute, a concept, and away. A cultural landscape can be understood as the tangible or intangible whole on the earth's surface that is closely related to human cultural activities. Carl Sauer believed that landscape should be regarded as a cultural product and emphasized the dynamic and comprehensive nature of the cultural landscape. It influenced to establish the human communities. So, it is called cultural landscape.

Then in 1925, American cultural geographer Carl O. Sauer published the book "Landscape Morphology", in which the concept of cultural landscape linked the relationship between landscape and groups (including nations). He explained that cultural landscape should be the result of a certain group (country, region, nation, sect) using nature and transforming nature (Sauer, C. O. 1925).

In this book, Carl O. Sauer proposed many theories about the formation and development of cultural landscapes, and emphasized the importance of surface morphology in culture, history, and human activities, laying the foundation for later landscape anthropology the development of cultural geography laid an important foundation.

Wind and Rain Bridge is a unique building of the Dong people. It is closely related to the production and living activities of the Dong people and the regional natural landscape. It has been a long-standing part of the Dong culture. Its formation is closely related to the history, migration, and beliefs of the Dong people. On the other hand, the formation of the Wind and Rain Bridge is closely related to the

local special terrain and climate environment. Its construction materials are taken from fir trees in the area where they live, which is the result of the Dong people's utilization and transformation of nature. Cultural landscapes are the result of the interaction between nature and humans. They are cultural nature, that is, landscapes created by humans who consciously utilize and transform nature to meet certain practical needs. In this study, we focused on the cultural landscape of Wind and Rain Bridge, including the natural factors and human factors that formed this cultural landscape, as well as the architectural culture related to the cultural landscape. The formation of Wind and Rain Bridge forms a replicative and close interaction between architectural style and cultural landscape. Taking a cultural landscape perspective provides an interesting perspective to explore the replicated relationships between peoples, communities, and environments.

Cultural landscapes have far-reaching significance in terms of cultural inheritance, identity, and social symbolism, and are closely linked to regions and ethnics. It records the lifestyle, social structure, and technological level of human beings in a specific geographical environment. The cultural landscape formed by the Wind and Rain Bridge shows how the Dong people live, work, and interact with each other in specific areas. Cultural landscapes shape individual and group identity and belonging, reflecting people's emotions and identification with specific regions. The establishment of wind and rain bridges, such as Yongji Bridge, represents the shared history, values, and cultural characteristics of a group or community, and strengthens the collective cohesion within the community. Buildings, monuments, artworks, etc. in cultural landscapes often have symbolic meanings and represent certain values, beliefs, or power structures. They are not only material existences but also expressions of social and cultural significance. Therefore, the Wind and Rain Bridge can reflect the values and spiritual outlook of Dong society.

The research aims to discuss the concept of the cultural landscape, describe its formation process, discuss its expression in the environment and culture, and explore its interactive relationship with the ethnic. Through in-depth research, we seek to deepen our understanding of cultural landscapes and recognize their relevance to important academic issues in today's world the connection between landscape and built culture. The cultural landscape is not only related to the local environment, but to the architecture full of local wisdom and belief culture, and is shaped through continuous spatial practice. This unique way of shaping is the characteristic of the cultural landscape, which continues and changes in the environment of modernization and globalization.

Architectural culture refers to the accumulation and reflection of human history, tradition, technology, art, and social culture in the field of architecture. Architecture is not only a physical structure but also a carrier of culture and an expression of society. Architectural culture not only covers the technology and craftsmanship of construction but also has social symbolism and cultural significance. For example, Wind and Rain Bridge's unique architectural craftsmanship is a reflection of local wisdom, and the bridge temple set up in Wind and Rain Bridge can perform religious sacrifices and pray for blessings and is a symbol of Dong society and culture.

By analyzing the formation and architectural culture of Wind and Rain Bridge through the concept of cultural landscape, we can deeply explore the



complexity and diversity of Wind and Rain Bridge in environmental, social, cultural, and other aspects. Therefore, this analysis helps to understand the meaning of Wind and Rain Bridge. In addition, from the perspective of the cultural landscape, we can see the integration of Wind and Rain Bridge architecture and the natural environment and the display of the local wisdom of the Dong people's wooden structure. Through this analysis, it helps to understand that bridges are not only physical architectural structures, but also carriers of culture and expressions of society, embodying the complex relationships between humans and nature, history and tradition, art and aesthetic values, and their impact on communities and society, and ethnicity has an important relationship. To sum up, the conceptual analysis of the cultural landscape not only helps to understand the special cultural significance of Wind and Rain Bridge itself, but also provides us with insights into the profound relationship between architecture, society, and the natural environment.

## **Part 2: The Influence of Natural and Cultural Factors on Wind and Rain Bridges**

### **2.1 The Influence of Natural Factors on Wind and Rain Bridges in Chengyang Bazhai**

#### **2.1.1 Chengyang Bazhai Along the Mountain with Water Beside the Forest**

Chengyang Bazhai is located in Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, Liuzhou, Guangxi, with an altitude of 600-900m. It has a mild climate, hot and rainy seasons, and abundant rainfall. This area has hilly mountains, rich water systems, and dense mountain forests. The Dong people adapted to this land and established villages according to the rules of "close mountain, water, and forest."

(1) The terrain of hills and hillsides gives meaning to the location of the Dong people's residences

Chengyang Bazhai is located on a narrow strip of land at the intersection of the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, Hunan Hills, and Guangxi Hills. Its terrain shows a trend of being high in the northwest and low in the southeast. The entire regional terrain is mainly composed of six types of terrain: residual mountains, cliffs and narrow ridge mountains, V-shaped valleys, river hills and river valleys, and residual piedmont terraces. The mountainous areas account for about 90% of the entire area, and there is a saying that "nine mountains, half water, half farmland".

The Dong people regard high mountains and ridges as "dragon veins." Village site selection must go through four steps: dragon hunting, sand inspection, water observation, and acupuncture points, and then a "feng shui treasure land" is delineated to build a settlement. Most of the Dong's traditional settlements are it has the characteristics of "sitting west and facing east, facing the sun with the wind behind it, and facing the water with its back to the mountains." This site selection method and layout characteristics are mainly because most of the Dong people are located in hilly areas, with relatively little sunshine time, and miasma is easy to accumulate in low-lying areas. The settlement is chosen to be arranged in a location with the back of the mountain facing the sun, which is conducive to the upward flow of miasma in the lower areas and accelerates the gas circulation around it to evacuate the trapped gas.



(2) The resource-rich hydrological environment creates the meaning of life associated with rivers

The land of Chengyang Bazhai is rich in water resources. The Linxi River and its east branch and west branch together nourish the Dong people. In areas where rivers pass through, villages will also be arranged in a strip along the water system.

In the Dong people's long-term process of site selection for settlements, houses, or houses, there was an inherent evaluation system relative to the layout of the water system. Cai Ling summarized its layout characteristics, "In Feng Shui, an ideal village site is backed by mountains, fronts open space or water, flanked by hills, centered on a flat area, surrounded by rivers, and has a compact water outlet" (Cai Ling. 2007). Zhou Tian explained that the Dong people would call the surrounding water system "Jade Belt Water", and the water in it is "auspicious", and conversely, the water in the shape of a "bow" is "unfortunate" (Zhou Tian. 2008). At the same time, the Dong people planted rice, forming a unique production method for the Dong people - the breeding of rice, duck, and fish in the same field, and the production and lifestyle of local specialties fish-rice and rice-fish. The Dong people's feng shui concept of water production and lifestyle have combined their settlement distribution with water and formed a water-related village layout system.

(3) The mild and humid climate environment generates the meaning associated with the forest's belief

Chengyang Bazhai is located in a low-latitude area, with an average annual temperature of 17 to 19 degrees Celsius. The temperature difference between the north and south of the territory is within the range of 1 to 2 degrees Celsius. It belongs to the subtropical Nanling humid climate. It has four distinct seasons throughout the year, a pleasant climate, and is suitable for production and breeding. There are mostly cold waves and rainy days in spring, high temperatures in summer, and relatively low rainfall in autumn, making it prone to drought. Winters are cold with frost and snow.

The unique topography and mild and humid climate environment have created the farming civilization and lush mountain forest landscape of the Dong people in Sanjiang. The residents make good use of the conditions provided by nature and form a regional traditional national culture and village characteristics. The Dong people have the understanding that "all things are animistic", and the rich and diverse mountains and forests that are always green have been given new connotations by the Dong people. The Dong people regard the fir forest as a feng shui forest. Every year during festivals, local villagers go to the fir forest to pray and tie ribbons on the trees to wish for peace and health throughout the year. Combined with the villagers' tradition of choosing sites on their backs, the "dragon vein" covered with fir trees adds vitality to the village, symbolizing the luxuriant branches and endless life in the village. Secondly, the houses built by the traditional Dong people are also made of fir. Such mountain forests full of fir trees make it convenient for local villagers to build village buildings (Chen Qianting. 2019).

To adapt to the natural landscape of Chengyang Bazhai, which is "close to mountains, close to the water and close to forests", the Dong people have developed a unique production and lifestyle that adapts to the landscape. They crossed

ivers to plant cedar trees in the mountains and forests and planted rice beside the rivers. Frequent crossing of rivers became a necessity in daily life. Therefore, the Wind and Rain Bridge has become a necessity for the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai to meet their survival needs.

### 2.1.2 Distribution of Eight Natural Villages and Seven Wind and Rain Bridges in Chengyang Bazhai

Chengyang Bazhai includes eight natural villages: Ma'an, Yanzhai, Pingzhai, Dazhai, Dongzhai, Jichang, Pingtan, and Pingpu, so it is called Bazhai. Except for Pingtan and Jichang, the eight villages are all densely and orderly arranged along the Linxi River. There are a total of 2,000 stilted buildings, 8 drum towers, and 7 wind and rain bridges (Huang Chao. 2016).

Chengyang Bazhai Wind and Rain Bridge are set up according to the landscape of Chengyang Bazhai water system. The main water system in Chengyang Bazhai is the Linxi River, which is a tributary of the "Pearl River Water System-Xijiang-Liujiang-Guyi River". Chengyang Bazhai is located on both sides of the Linxi River, with 7 wind and rain bridges standing on the Linxi River and its tributaries. Linxi River runs through the entire Chengyang Bazhai from north to south. There are three water systems, namely Linxi River, East Branch, and West Branch. The wind and rain bridges on the Linxi River in the main water system include Yongji Bridge, Helong Bridge, and Puji Bridge. The wind and rain bridges on the west tributary include the Wanshou Bridge, Pin'an Bridge, Meishao Bridge, and Hongjun Bridge. There are no wind and rain bridges on the east branch. (Hong Zizhen. 2018).

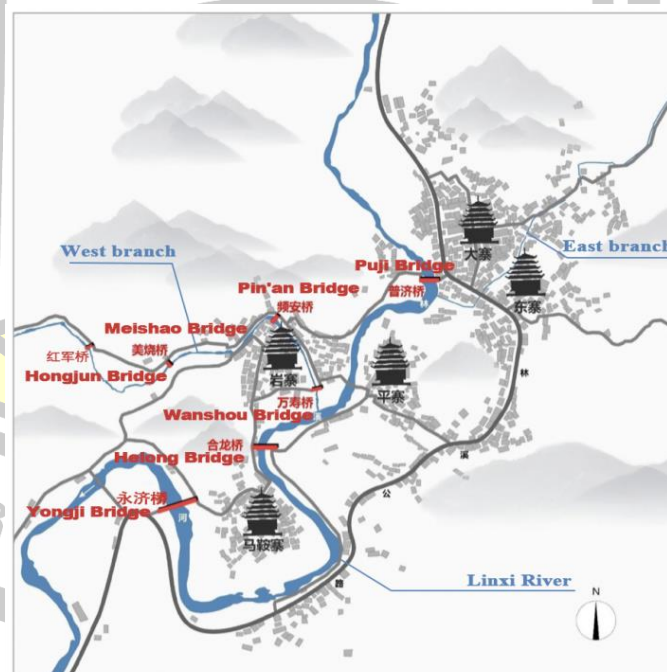


Figure 12 Distribution map of Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai. The blue color in the picture indicates rivers. You can see that there are three water systems in Chengyang Bazhai, namely Linxi River, West Branch, and East Branch. There are Yongji Bridge, Helong Bridge, and Puji Bridge on the Linxi River, Wanshou Bridge,

Pin'an Bridge, Meishao Bridge, and Hongjun Bridge on the west branch. The east branch has a small water system and no wind and rain bridge has been built. Source: Drawn by Hong Zizhen, annotated by Chen Lu. May 1, 2022

The three main bridges on the Linxi River, the main river in Chengyang Bazhai, are the Puji Bridge, Helong Bridge, and Yongji Bridge. Puji Bridge is located in the upper reaches of the river and southwest of Pingpu Village. It is the bridge connecting Pingpu, Dazhai, Dongzhai, and Jichangzhai in the upper reaches of the Linxi River and Ma'an, Yanzhai, Pingzhai, and Pingtanzhai in the lower reaches of a channel. Helong Bridge is located in the middle section of the Linxi River, south of Yanzhai, and is the core thoroughfare within Bazhai. Yongji Bridge is at the end of the Linxi River, southwest of Ma'an Village, and is an important gateway for communication between Chengyang Bazhai and the outside world.

In addition, the Wanshou Bridge, Pin'an Bridge, Meishao Bridge, and Hongjun Bridge on the west branch are all located in Yanzhai, the central area of Chengyang Bazhai.

Most of the seven wind and rain bridges were first built from the late Qing Dynasty to the early Republic of China and were later damaged. However, after continuous repairs and reconstruction by the Dong people, it is still a complete water channel system, closely connecting eight villages.

### 2.1.3 Relationship of Wind and Rain Bridges with Other Cultural Landscapes and Architectural Structures in the Villages

#### (1) Relationship of Wind and Rain Bridges with the Linxi River

The establishment of the Wind and Rain Bridge is the result of Dong people's adaptation to local water system conditions, which is mainly related to the width of the water system and the degree of curvature of the river channel.

First, the construction of the Wind and Rain Bridge is related to the width of the water system. Wind and rain bridges are mainly distributed on the Linxi River and the west branch. There are no wind and rain bridges built on the east branch. The main reason is that the width of the east branch is small and not enough to build wind and rain bridges. In some places, wooden bridges or stone bridges can be built it is passable; Dazhai, which the west branch passes through, is the largest village among the eight villages in Chengyang. Linxi Highway, the main road connecting the villages and towns, passes through it. Linxi Highway is sufficient to meet the transportation functions of Dazhai and Dongzhai. No need to build a Wind and Rain Bridge.

Second, the establishment of the Wind and Rain Bridge is related to the curvature of the river. The distribution of wind and rain bridges is not only affected by the width of the river but also by the curvature of the river. Judging from the distribution map of the Bazhai water system in Chengyang, the water system is highly curved. Taking the Linxi River as an example, there are seven continuous bends within the study area. The winding water system also brings great difficulty to the location selection of Wind and Rain Bridge. It can be seen from the current situation that the three wind and rain bridges on the Linxi River are all located at the bends of the water system.

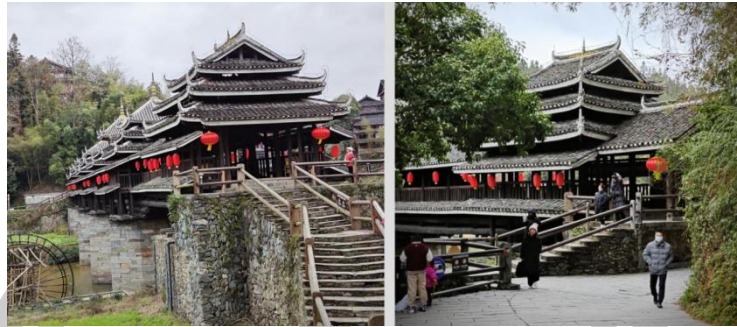


Figure 13 The abutments at the left and right ends of Yongji Bridge. The abutment on the left is located on the outside of the bend of Linxi River, and the abutment on the right is on the inside of the bend of Linxi River. Since the water flow on the outside will form an alluvial embankment, the height of the outside abutment will be increased to adapt to the flow characteristics when building the bridge. Therefore, the abutment on the left side of the Yongji Bridge is higher than the abutment on the right side. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. February 3, 2024

Based on the geomorphological principles of river meanders, the site for establishing Wind and Rain Bridge can be viewed from two aspects: First, due to the greater scouring force on the outside of the river meander, river embankments are often built outside the river meander to prevent water from invading the villages. At the same time, the river embankments also serve as the abutment of the Wind and Rain Bridge; on the other hand, due to the erosion of the water flow, the alluvial embankment is formed, and its height is higher than the other side. To ensure that the Wind and Rain Bridge can pass when the water level rises in the rainy season, the highwater level is considered during construction to build revetments and Bridge abutments (Hong Zizhen. 2018)

The Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai built 7 wind and rain bridges of different sizes to adapt to the conditions of the Linxi River and its tributaries, and connected eight natural villages through the wind and rain bridges.

(2) Relationship of Wind and Rain Bridges with the Unique Village Form and Architectural Distribution in Chengyang Bazhai  
Chengyang Bazhai has unique village forms and buildings. Wind and Rain Bridge plays different roles in the village and is closely related to these buildings and village forms.

The unique village form and architectural distribution of Chengyang Bazhai are the biggest differences from other ethnic villages. The eight natural villages in Chengyang Bazhai are centered on the Drum Tower, and the residential buildings are arranged in a ring around the Drum Tower. The surrounding residential buildings are usually lower than the height of the Drum Tower. This layout highlights the central and commanding status of the Drum Tower. In addition, various element nodes such as Walled gate, Wind and Rain Bridge, Satan, Feishan Temple, roads, etc. are combined to form eight natural villages as a whole. Wind and Rain Bridge plays the following roles in the unique village form and architectural distribution of Chengyang Bazhai:

#### ① Wind and Rain Bridges as Gateways in Ma'an Village



Ma'an Village is surrounded by the Linxi River, forming a spatial pattern of "one side is supported by mountains and three sides are surrounded by water". It is surrounded by hills to the north and water in three directions: west, south, and east. The landscape environment pattern of "mountain behind and surrounded by water" allows Ma'an Village to have better water frontage, and the water system surrounding it makes the village a relatively closed space (Chen Qianting. 2020).



Figure 14 Aerial view of the village landscape form of Ma'an Village and Wind and Rain Bridge. Ma'anzhai is surrounded by water on three sides and mountains on one side. Wind and Rain Bridge is the only gateway to communicate with the outside world. Source: <http://www.sjcybz.com/> (Accessed on March 10, 2024)

Wind and Rain Bridge mainly serves as the only way for the village to communicate with the outside world. Due to the space constraints of being surrounded by mountains and water, the limited arable land in the village limits the development of the village. Ma'an Village must maintain communication with the outside world. Therefore, Wind and Rain Bridge plays a role in communicating with the outside world in Ma'an Village. Since it is the only way to enter the village, it is a landmark building at the entrance of the village, just like the "gate" of the village.

## ② Wind and Rain Bridges as Roads in Yan Village

Yan Village is divided into two independent spaces because the Linxi River passes through it. The water flow of the Linxi River plays a dual role in passing through the village. On the one hand, it divides the village; on the other hand, the stream also becomes the context of the development of the village, with the houses of the village extending along both sides.





Figure 15 Pin 'a Bridge is used as a road in the Yan Village. The west branch of Linxi River divides Yan Village into two parts in order to connect the divided village space.

Pin'an Wind and Rain Bridge was built here as the road to Yan Village. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. May 2, 2023

The establishment of Wind and Rain Bridge enables the village layout to maintain integrity. A small wind and rain bridge, Pin'an Bridge, was built in Yan Village to connect the divided village space. Wind and Rain Bridge became the road to Yan Village at this time. At the same time, because Wind and Rain Bridge is close to the buildings in the village, it often becomes a public place in the village, acting as a transition for the extension of the village building space.

③ Wind and Rain Bridges as Connectors in Da Village, Dong Village, and Ping Village

Dazhai, Dongzhai, and Pingzhai are all located on one side of the Linxi River system, but their waterfront area is much smaller than that of Ma'anzhai. Due to the large flow of the Linxi River in the villages, these villages create travel barriers with other villages.



Figure 16 Puji Bridge serves as a connector between the villages. On one side of the Puji Bridge are Da Village, Dong Village, and Ping Village, while on the other side is Yan Village. The Puji Bridge connects the two villages and becomes a traffic artery connecting the villages. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. May 2, 2023

The establishment of large-scale wind and rain bridges enabled Da Village, Dong Village, and Ping Village to cross river obstacles and communicate with other villages. For example, Puji Bridge helps Da Village, Dong Village, and Ping Village, and Yan Village communicate, becoming an important transportation link between the inside and outside of the village.

## 2.2 The Influence of Cultural Factors on Wind and Rain Bridges

### 2.2.1 The Historical and Social Impact on the Birth of Wind and Rain Bridges

Wind and Rain Bridge did not exist in Dong villages from the beginning. It was gradually born due to the development of social history. The Dong settlement area has a subtropical climate with abundant rainfall and numerous streams. Most Dong villages are built on both sides of rivers and streams, across the water. Therefore, the bridge has become an indispensable transportation facility in the life of the Dong people. In the isolated ancient times, the ancestors of the Dong people only placed some large stones in shallow streams or set up planks in ditches and rivers to solve travel problems until the Tang Dynasty.

#### (1) Tang Dynasty: Dong Ethnic People Learned Han People's Bridge-Building Methods

The Tang Dynasty was a stage in which China's society, economy, and culture was highly developed. Bridge construction also reached a period of prosperity, and bridge construction technology spread from the north to the south of China. As the exchanges between the Dong people and the Han people increased, after the Dong people learned the bridge-building techniques of the Han people, they used the local abundant fir resources and learned from the Han people's construction experience and skills to invent the method of building wooden bridges with bracketed simple beam structures method. This kind of wooden bridge has no bridge corridor and is just a slightly larger wooden bridge that can cross the river.

#### (2) Song and Yuan Dynasties: Further Technological Advancements and Cultural Exchanges

During the Song and Yuan Dynasties, many Han people from Jiangnan moved into the Dong area due to wars or famines, as well as the oppression and exploitation of the feudal dynasty. In the fourth year of Chongqing in the Northern Zhu Dynasty (1105), Sanjiang began to establish Huaiyuan County. The central feudal dynasty directly ruled Sanjiang. Many Han officials and Han working people also moved in, which objectively promoted the socio-economic development of this region. At the same time, it also brought about further migration of technology and culture (Ethnic Affairs Committee of Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, 1989). During the Song and Yuan Dynasties, bridge construction technology became increasingly perfect and was continuously improved and developed.

(3) Ming Dynasty: Han-Dong Integration and Cultural Blending  
During the Hongwu period of the Ming Dynasty, to consolidate their local political power, the rulers used the original long-standing lawsuits in the Dong area, or sent some "meritorious soldiers" as a "Tusi", and implemented the "Tumbao system" "mobilizing the troops to go to the villages and the people to go to the villages" Through this policy approach, a large number of Han people have integrated into the Dong community. These Han people brought Han culture and beliefs and influenced

the Dong people, which expanded the Dong people's worship of primitive ancestors and nature to the acceptance and integration of Han beliefs and culture (Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County Ethnic Affairs Committee, 1989).

During this period, the Dong people were influenced by the beliefs and culture of the Han people, which was later reflected in the construction of Wind and Rain Bridge.

#### (4) Qing Dynasty and Republican Era: Formation of "Local Wisdom" and Extensive Construction of Wind and Rain Bridges

In the Qing Dynasty, the rulers strengthened the application and popularization of Han culture and writing in the Dong area. The architectural skills of Han covered bridges and related folk beliefs and Feng Shui culture also entered the Dong area during this period, and underwent self-digestion and transformation within the Dong area, all integrated into the construction of the bridge. Moreover, during this period, the Dong people gradually formed the "local wisdom" for building Wind and Rain Bridge through long-term practice and exploration.

In the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China, the development of Wind and Rain Bridge reached its peak. The number of Wind and Rain Bridges has increased sharply, and their scale has become larger and larger. Wind and Rain Bridges have gradually become a symbolic landscape within Dong society.

### 2.2.2 The Influence of Han Ethnic Covered Bridges and Dong Ethnic Drum Towers on Wind and Rain Bridges

From the social history of the birth of Wind and Rain Bridge, we know that the Dong people learned the Han people's covered bridge-making skills, combined with their own life experience and aesthetics, improved the skills, and finally formed the local wisdom of Dong Wind and Rain Bridge production that we see now.

#### Impact of Han Ethnic Covered Bridges on Wind and Rain Bridges

Han Chinese covered bridges have a long history. According to records, the earliest covered bridge construction appeared in the Qin and Han Dynasties. After the development in the Wei, Jin, Southern, and Northern Dynasties, covered bridges developed from simply supported beams to outrigger beams, and the forms of bridge houses gradually became richer. The bucket-type beam frame technology has matured, and roof forms such as verandas, resting mountains, hanging mountains, and Diejian mountains are available. It has also been widely used. Covered bridges and their culture during this period only existed in northern China (Jiang Ye. 2010).

The Tang and Song Dynasties were a prosperous period for covered bridge construction, and also a period when covered bridge culture spread from north to south and across the country. Covered bridge buildings appeared in many places across the country. During this period, the structural function of the covered bridge was weakened, and its practical functions became more diversified, including sightseeing, commercial activities, and worship functions. The Song Dynasty was an important period for the migration of ancient Chinese science

technology and culture to the south. During this period, covered bridge technology also migrated to the south.

By the Ming and Qing dynasties, covered bridges had further expanded to other regions in the south, with a large number of covered bridges appearing in Anhui, Jiangxi, Hunan, Guizhou, Guangxi, Yunnan, Sichuan, and other places. The location of the covered bridges in this period was already close to the Dong area, and due to the migration of the Han people southward in the Ming Dynasty, the integration with the Dong people brought technology, which in turn affected the bridge manufacturing technology of the Dong people, prompting the birth of the Dong Wind and Rain Bridge (Liu Hongbo. 2016).



Figure 17 Covered bridge in Taishun County, Zhejiang Province, China. This kind of covered bridge is the prototype of the Wind and Rain Bridge architectural style. The bridge-building technology brought by the Han people's integration into the Dong community during the Ming Dynasty allowed the Dong people to build wind and rain bridges similar to covered bridges. Source: <http://www.ts.gov.cn/> (Accessed on March 10, 2024)

The common Han Chinese corridor bridge architectural style is to build a corridor on the bridge, protect the bridge with corridors, and integrate the bridge and corridor. The Dong people's Wind and Rain Bridge was built by learning and imitating the style of Han-covered bridges. From the perspective of the bridge's support system, the Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge mainly inherits the outrigger technology of the covered bridge; from the perspective of the bridge deck building structure, the Dong Wind and Rain Bridge completely adopts the bucket-type building structure, which is the most common in the south; from the perspective of the bridge In terms of roof forms, Dong wind, and rain bridges are most commonly seen in the most representative official architectural styles in the Central Plains, such as double eaves with mountain tops, double eaves with four corners and peaks, and double eaves with six corners and peaks. It can be seen from this that the origin of the Dong people's wind and rain bridge technology and culture is in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. With the migration of the population, the foreign population introduced the Han-covered bridge technology to the Dong area. Therefore, the Dong



Wind and Rain Bridge is the integrated covered bridge style we see (Liu Hongbo, 2016).

#### Impact of Dong Ethnic Drum Towers on Wind and Rain Bridges

The Dong Wind and Rain Bridge evolved from the Han-covered bridge, but there is a difference. This difference is that the Dong people integrated their important drum tower architecture into the Wind and Rain Bridge. From the comparison of the architectural styles of Han-covered bridges and Wind and Rain bridges, we can see that beam bridges have corridors but no pavilions, while Wind and Rain bridges have both corridors and pavilions. Upon careful observation, it is not difficult to see that the pavilion on Wind and Rain Bridge is very similar to the drum tower of the Dong ethnic group.

The Drum Tower is the center of the Dong village. As soon as you enter the Dong Village, the Drum Tower is the first thing you see. From a distance, the Drum Tower looks like an isosceles triangle, like a tall cedar tree. The Drum Tower is composed of three parts: the roof, the waist, and the bottom. The roof has a spire and a top, and there are single-story roofs and double-story roofs, the waist of the building is double eaves, with varying numbers of floors, mostly odd-numbered floors, such as seven, nine, eleven; the bottom of the building is a hall for people to gather to discuss matters; around the Drum Tower is the Drum Tower Ping (Liu Qiumei, He Mingwei, and Liu Huyang. 2022).



Figure 18 The one-column Drum Tower in Pingzhai and the pavilion of Wind and Rain Bridge. The architectural style of the Drum Tower was integrated into the construction of Wind and Rain Bridge and became a bridge pavilion, making Wind and Rain Bridge a unique architectural style of the Dong people. Source: <http://image.baidu.com/> (Accessed on March 10, 2024)

From the construction of the pavilion of Wind and Rain Bridge, we can easily see the similarities with the Drum Tower. The bridge pavilions have spires and tops, single-layered roofs, and double-layered roofs. The waist of the pavilion has double eaves, with varying numbers of layers, mostly odd numbers. During the construction process of Wind and Rain Bridge, the Dong people integrated the form of the drum tower into a bridge pavilion, becoming a unique Dong bridge.



The Han-covered bridge and Dong drum tower influenced the architectural style of Wind and Rain Bridge to a certain extent. This Han and Dong architectural culture is perfectly integrated into Wind and Rain Bridge. Under the influence of culture, the Wind and Rain Bridge formed the complex style we see now.

### 2.2.3 The Influence of Dong Ethnic Fengshui Beliefs and Soul Concepts on the Birth of Wind and Rain Bridges

#### (1) Dong Ancestor Fengshui Beliefs: Bridges Can Penetrate Dragon Energy and Guard Wealth

Due to the geographical environment and the living and production reality of the Dong people, the Dong people have formed their unique concept of Feng Shui, which has an impact on the spatial layout of the village, which determines the construction of the bridge and its location in the village.

Dong's Feng Shui incorporates concepts such as dragon veins, bright halls, vitality, and acupuncture points. By examining the geographical context of mountains and rivers, an auspicious architectural layout is selected. Dong villages often use the concepts of gaining momentum and receiving qi in Feng Shui to choose and build "Feng Shui treasures" in Dong villages. They believe that an ideal living environment is a place that "hides the wind" and "gets water". They pay special attention to the site selection of the village. Wind, water, and strive to obtain satisfactory terrain conditions. Regardless of whether the Dong village is close to water or close to mountains, the builders of the village must always try to find a relatively flat and comfortable place, preferably with a small river or stream flowing through it, to build the village. The mountain range that the village relies on is called "dragon vein", the flat place where the dragon vein ends are called Bazi, and the place where the dragon vein ends are called "dragon head" or "dragon mouth". The gentle slope in front of the dragon's head is called the dragon mouth, which is where the central house of the village is, also known as "sitting on the dragon's mouth", is an ideal village location. For any animal, the importance of the head is self-evident. It is the most vital place. Therefore, if the settlement is chosen at the "head" of the mountain, it can make the Dong village more dynamic and make the population more prosperous (Wei Jianzhong & Wu Bo. 2014).

For example, Ma'an Village among the eight villages in Chengyang faces water on three sides the south, east, and west. It is located in a stream surrounded by streams. The river passes around the village. The village is centered on the Drum Tower and residential buildings are built around it. This is the "sitting Dragon's Mouth" in the Dong Feng Shui theory. (Xu Ganli. 2015).

Although the village is built at the dragon's mouth, there is still a place where the dragon's veins rest, which is where the mountains separate. This place is often cut off by rivers, which is the "water mouth position" in Feng Shui. Dong's Feng Shui theory believes that at this time, a bridge should be built at the resting point of the dragon's veins so that the dragon's energy can flow through it and harmonize the flow of energy.



Figure 19 Aerial view of Chengyang Bazhai. It can be seen from the picture that the Dong people built the Wind and Rain Bridge where the mountains separate. This is because the Dong people's Feng Shui theory believes that mountains are called "dragon veins", and the "dragon veins" can be connected through wind and rain bridges, which can allow the dragon energy to flow through. Source: Photographed by Liu Hongbo. July 16, 2023

Although Ma'an Village has formed a Feng Shui pattern of being surrounded by mountains and water, the village is highly closed and has no connection with the outside world. According to Feng Shui theory, the Dong people built two wind and rain bridges, Yongji Bridge and Helong Bridge at the "water mouth" across it. It is connected with the outside of the village so that the dragon energy can be connected through it. Of course, when the village was first established, these two water outlets were just simple bridges made of wooden planks and stones.

The bridge can block feng shui and prevent wealth from flowing away. The Dong Feng Shui theory believes that people have "spiritual energy" and the earth has "treasure energy". The function of the bridge is to prevent the "treasure energy" from being lost. The ancestors of the Dong people believe that rivers can easily wash away people's money and hurt people. Therefore, it is necessary to build a wind and rain bridge under the village to prevent the river from washing away people's wealth. This way, the village will gradually become wealthy, and the people living here will become happier. This is what Dong Feng Shui says: "The place where water comes from is the Heavenly Gate, and where the water goes is the ground household. The Heavenly Gate wants it to be open, and the ground household wants it to be closed. And the houses on the ground should be surrounded and protected by overlapping dunes or barriers" (Wei Yujiao and Wei Lilin. 2002).

The Feng Shui ideas of the Dong Village influenced the establishment of the village, and more importantly, the birth of the bridge in the Dong Village.

## (2) Passageways for Souls: Mental Space of Dong Soul in the Wind and Rain Bridges

Wind and Rain Bridge is a bridge that is shared between living people and spirits. It is wisdom or cultural technology to control the shared use of public space. This is where the ritual worship on the bridge comes from. The Dong

people base their rituals on this shared bridge, using the Wind and Rain Bridge as a channel for their souls. Wind and Rain Bridge has become an important psychological space for the Dong people.

The Dong people's view of the soul is that the bridge is a passage leading to the "Yinjian" or the "Yangjian". This passage must be built in the village to help the Dong people extradite their souls.

There is a local folklore in Chengyang Bazhai: "It is said that at the intersection of the Yin and Yang worlds, there is a river called the Yin Yang River, and there is a bridge on the river. Everyone in the world, whether they are strangers or Dead people needs to walk on this bridge. If a person dies, he or she needs to walk on this bridge to go to the underworld. If a person wants to be reincarnated, he or she needs to walk on this bridge to return to the earth. At that time, if the reincarnated people could not squeeze onto the bridge, they would have to build a fir tree beside the bridge as a bridge to cross the river." (Zhang Di. 2024).

Therefore, the bridge is a special existence for the Dong people that is different from other ethnic concepts. The Dong people believe that everyone can have their bridge. The bridge here can be a small wooden strip tied next to the bridge, a single-plank bridge, a stone bridge, or even a wooden board placed in front of one's house. It can also be counted as one's bridge, so the bridge is related to each person's soul.

The Dong people believe that although people will always die, their souls can exist forever and can even be reincarnated as reborn people. The way for souls to reincarnate is through bridges, so bridges have become something that the Dong people must build.

### **Part 3: The Architectural Dimensions of Wind and Rain Bridges**

The unique architectural form and decoration of Wind and Rain Bridge make it a public activity place shared by different groups of people in the Dong village, that is, Public Space.

#### **3.1 Architectural Forms of Wind and Rain Bridges Adapted to the Cultural Landscape of Chengyang Bazhai**

##### **3.1.1 Structure of Wind and Rain Bridges**

The architectural form of Wind and Rain Bridge is the physical condition for the formation of public space in Dong villages, which confirms the publicity of the space from the side. Wind and Rain Bridge is generally 50-150 meters long and mainly consists of three parts: piers, spans, and pavilions from bottom to top. Some wind and rain bridges are stone arch bridges, which completely combine the piers and spans into one, both made of stone. They have only two parts, the stone arch part, and the pavilion and gallery building part.

##### **Bridge Piers**

The construction materials of Wind and Rain Bridge are all taken from the local area. Chinese fir and bluestone are common bridge-building materials. The bridge piers are made of bluestone from the mountains and are made of strong and durable materials.

The long-span Wind and Rain Bridge has bluestone piers built in the river to resist the water, such as Chengyang Bridge, Puji Bridge, and Helong Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai.



Figure 20 Piers of Puji Bridge. Puji Bridge is located on the Linxi River. The bridge is 51.4 meters long and has a large span. Bluestone piers are built in the water to support the bridge. The bridge piers are hexagonal, which can effectively resist water flow. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. May 2, 2023

There are two most common types of bridge piers: one is the "boat-shaped" bridge pier, that is, the front surface has a sharp angle, and the back surface has no corners or is extremely rounded. This type of bridge pier looks like a ship in shape. Many rivers in the south are flooded when the water rises. The water flow is large, and the water surface facing the water is in the shape of a ship's tip or a wedge shape, which can reduce the resistance generated by the water flow. For example, the piers of Huilong Bridge in Hunan Passage and the piers of Longjin Wind and Rain Bridge in Zhejiang are all of this type.

The other is a "wedge" pier, which is a hexagon with symmetrical front and back, with sharp angles on the front and back surfaces. This kind of bridge pier is very common in the Sanjiang area of Guangxi. Many large-scale wind and rain bridges use this kind of bridge pier, such as the piers of the Batuan Bridge in Dutong Township, Sanjiang County, Guangxi, the piers of the Bajiang Wind and Rain Bridge in Bajiang Township, Sanjiang County, and the Pingliuci Bridge in Dutong Township and so on.

In addition, the wind and rain bridges with small spans use wooden beams as the span and are directly erected on the stone abutments on both sides of the bank without piers, such as the Pin'an Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai.

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Figure 21 Pin'an Bridge without piers. The Pin'an Bridge is 23.5m long, has a small span, and has no piers. It uses wooden beams as the bridge span and is directly erected on the stone abutments on both sides. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. May 2, 2023

#### Bridge Spans

The Wind and Rain Bridge's Bridge Spans straddle the stone structure and the wooden structure consists of two large categories. After the Ming and Qing Dynasties, there was the use of arch Bridges cut into green stones as the bridge span of wind and rain Bridges. Some large modern weather Bridges use concrete to build the span of the weather bridge to pass the car. In different regions, due to different geographical environments, wood types, and technical conditions, local people will choose different bridge types to support the pavilion corridor of the wind and rain bridge, to have local characteristics and styles. Common bridge span types in Chengyang Bazhai Wind and rain bridges include simple supported beams and extended-arm wooden beams.

##### ①simple supported beams

A simply supported beam means that the two ends of the beam are resting on supports. The supports only constrain the vertical displacement of the beam, and the ends of the beam can rotate freely. The simply supported beam wind and rain bridge structure is the simplest. It is a 2-layer wooden beam with 5-7 logs evenly arranged on the embankments on both sides of the water system. Its length is determined according to the distance between the water banks, and its width is often 3-3.5m, and then arrange the wooden piers perpendicular to the direction of the wooden beams in the middle of the 2-story main beams to have a balancing effect. Simply supported beam structures are common in small-scale Wind and Rain Bridges. Pin'an Bridge, Meishao Bridge, and Hongjun Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai directly adopt simply supported beam bridge span structures due to the small width of the water system (Hong Zizhen. 2020).





Figure 22 The span of the Pin'an Bridge. It adopts a simply supported beam structure. The simply supported wooden beam structure is common in small-scale wind and rain bridges. Source: <http://image.baidu.com/> (Accessed on March 10, 2024)

Many of the existing Dong wind and rain bridges are simply supported beam bridges, which generally have a small span and the bridge deck is relatively close to the water surface. In terms of materials, there are three types: all-wood structure, stone structure, and stone-wood mixed structure. Examples of all-timber structures include the Mengmaohua Bridge in Zhaoxing Township, Liping County, Guizhou, the Wind and Rain Bridge in Yaren Village, Tongtong County, Hunan, and the Pin'an Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai, Sanjiang County, Guangxi. Wooden structures simply supported beams also have a double-layer wooden beam structure, with a log crossing the middle. The double-layer structure can not only increase the strength of the bridge but also increase flexibility; stone structure simply supported beams have both single-hole bridges and porous bridges. But not common in Dong areas; stone-wood mixed structures generally have stone strips on both sides of the bridge deck and wood in the middle. The main load-bearing columns in the bridge deck construction fall on the strips of stone. This way, the stability is better, and the bridge deck construction is not the entire building will be affected due to the decay of the wood supporting the system. For example, the Yinglong Bridge in Gaojin, Maogong Township, Liping County, Guizhou has the above characteristics (Liu Hongbo. 2016).

#### ② Extended-arm wooden beams

To solve the problem of long-span bridges, the outrigger beam structure was developed based on simply supported beams. The extended-arm wooden beams bridge is set up parallel to wooden poles layer by layer, one end is fixed on the shore or pier with sand and stone, and the other end is picked out layer by layer. The shape extending out in both directions is like two arms, shortening the distance between the pier or the two sides, and then connected with parallel wooden supported beams. Extended-arm wooden beams are widely used in mountainous areas of many countries, and there are extended-arm wooden beam Bridges in India, Pakistan, Japan, and South American countries. The earliest recorded extended-arm wooden beams bridge in China was a 50-meter span wooden extended-arm wooden

beams bridge built on the Yellow River in Gansu Province in 308-313 AD (Liu Hongbo, 2016).

The structural system of the extended-arm wooden beams allows the gravity to be evenly concentrated on the piers and abutments and increases the support area. Because the sizes of the timber vary, wooden piers and boards are placed between the rows to make them horizontal.



Figure 23 The span of the Helong Bridge. It adopts an extended-arm wooden beam structure. The extended-arm wooden beam structure can increase the support area and is often used in wind and rain bridges with larger spans. Source: <http://image.baidu.com/> (Accessed on March 10, 2024)

There are many large-scale wind and rain bridges with extended-arm wooden beams existing in the Dong area. For example, the Yongji Bridge, Puji Bridge, and Helong Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai all adopt extended-arm wooden beam span structures, that is, multi-layer logs are used to form outriggers on the bridge piers to support the girders, thereby increasing the span of the wind and rain bridge.

#### Pavilions and Corridors

The bridge deck buildings of Wind and Rain Bridge are mainly pavilions and corridors, which are also the most distinctive features of Wind and Rain Bridge. Some wind and rain bridges are smaller and only consist of corridors, such as the Yongshou Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai. Some wind and rain bridges are larger in scale and have corridors and pavilions, such as Yongji Bridge and Helong Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai. According to this difference, we divide the Wind and Rain Bridge into the corridor-type Wind and Rain Bridge and the pavilion corridors-type Wind and Rain Bridge.

##### ① The Corridor-type Wind and Rain Bridge

The corridor-type Wind and Rain Bridge is the simplest type of Wind and Rain Bridge classification. The entire bridge house is composed of corridors and has no other appendages. There are two types of corridors on the bridge body. One is the wind and rain bridge with a single eave hanging mountain corridor. Each corridor of this type of wind and rain bridge has the same height and the same width. The scale is usually small and the wind and rain are blocked rain is very functional. The number of corridors is controlled at five to seven, with the smallest being only three; the other type is partly a double eaves hanging mountain corridor top. Based on the original single eaves hanging mountain corridor top, part of the height of the golden pillars is increased, making the number of roofs of the bridge

roof increased to achieve the effect of double eaves. The lifted part is often in the middle, and some parts are symmetrical. Two or three triple eaves are common, and the shape is more abundant than that of a single eave hanging mountain roof (Liu Qiumei, He Mingwei & Liu Huyang. 2022).



Figure 24 Yongshou Bridge is a typical corridor-type wind and rain bridge. The entire bridge house is composed of corridors without pavilions. Yongshou Bridge is small in scale and focuses on its function of shielding from wind and rain. Source:

Photographed by Chen Lu. May 2, 2023

Yongshou Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai is a typical corridor-type wind and rain bridge. The tower was built in 1920 and is located below Yanzhai. The bridge is 18.5 meters long, with a bridge path of 4.6 meters and a bridge deck height of 7 meters. It is a stone pier and wooden structure with 2 piers, 1 pier, and 2 holes. There are 7 bridge corridors on the piers. There is a shrine on the bridge for villagers to burn incense and worship the gods, pray for good fortune, and bless their homes and houses.

## ② The Pavilion Corridors-type Wind and Rain Bridge

The pavilion-corridor type Wind and Rain Bridge adds the element of a pavilion to the gallery, that is, the bridge house is composed of a gallery and a pavilion. This type of wind and rain bridge is larger. The original monotonous corridor-type wind and rain bridge with single eaves hanging on the top of the mountain corridor is divided into several sections with bridge pavilions. There may be a double eaves hanging mountain top in the middle of each section, which is the key point of construction. In the pavilion part of the bridge. There is a structural counterpoint between the bridge pavilion and the bridge pier, which not only beautifies the Wind and Rain Bridge but also serves as a structural reinforcement. The number of double eaves of a bridge pavilion is an odd value. The lowest value starts from the triple eaves. There are several basic forms: Xieshan Pavilion, Four-corner Pavilion, Hexagonal Pavilion, and Octagonal Pavilion (Ling Kai & Wei Yujiao. 2019).





Figure 25 Yongji Bridge is a pavilion corridor-type Wind and Rain Bridge. The bridge deck consists of a corridor and 5 bridge pavilions. From the middle to the two sides, the pavilions are hexagonal pavilion, four-corner pavilion, and four-corner Xieshan pavilion. The entire Wind and Rain Bridge not only has practical functions but also has aesthetic functions. Source: <http://image.baidu.com/> (Accessed on March 10, 2024)

Yongji Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai is a typical pavilion-corridor wind and rain bridge. There are 5 bridge pavilions on the bridge, which are also the most exquisite part of the entire Wind and Rain Bridge. From the middle to both sides are the hexagonal pavilion, the four-corner pavilion, and the four-corner mountain pavilion, all with five-fold eaves. The hexagonal pavilion in the middle is the largest of the five bridge pavilions and is called the main pavilion of Yongji Bridge. Each of its main pillars is painted with a blue dragon, and the ceiling is painted with phoenixes that echo each other and are lifelike. The Four-Corner Pavilion and the Four-Corner Xieshan Pavilion are relatively small in size. They have a treasure gourd installed on the top of the treasure roof, and there are carvings of flying fairy birds on the corners of the eaves.

#### (4) Bridge Temples of Wind and Rain Bridges: The Mental Space of the Dong Ethnic People

Henri Lefebvre divided the concept of production of space into three parts: physical space related to physical characteristics, social space related to people's society, and mental space related to imagination or giving meaning to beliefs. The unique structural bridge temple in Wind and Rain Bridge is a mental space endowed with meaning. It was designed to be a home for the sacred, that is, for the collective imagination of the community.

Whether the Big Wind and Rain Bridge or the Small Wind and Rain Bridge, bridge temples are set up on the bridges. Large wind and rain bridges often use one side of the pavilion as a bridge temple. For example, Yongji Bridge has 5 bridge pavilions and 3 bridge temples are set up in the middle and on both sides of the bridge pavilions. If the small Wind and Rain Bridge has only a corridor or a pavilion, a bridge temple will be set up in the middle. For example, the Yongshou Bridge has only a corridor, then only a small bridge temple will be set up in the middle.

The "Bridge Temple" carries the traditions and rituals of the Dong people and builds the imagination space of the Dong people. There is an "ancestral worship temple" in the pavilion of Wind and Rain Bridge. There is a statue of a man and a woman in the shrine. The man is called Jiang Lang and the woman is called Jiang Yu, who are the ancestors of the Dong people. The middle and right towers of Wind and Rain Bridge are dedicated to the "Wu God" and "Wen God" to eliminate disasters. Influenced by the Han people, the Dong people also worship loyalty, courage, righteousness, and literature. Therefore, they often use the central and right towers of Wind and Rain Bridge, which is located on an important road and has convenient transportation, to set up the Guan Temple and the Wenchang Palace to worship the "Wen God" in their hearts and "Wen God".

In particular, Guan Gong (Wu God) is not only a loyal, brave, and capable hero who suppresses demons and monsters but is also said to be the savior and benefactor of the Dong ancestors and their patron saint. The location of the shrine is also very particular. It must be facing away from the downstream and facing upstream, to protect the village. The bridge temple of Wind and Rain Bridge has become a community of practice for the Dong people's rituals and traditions and also built an imaginary community for the Dong people. The space of Wind and Rain Bridge is "a reflection of the practicality of social life of social groups" (Wang Zhongxin, 2000) its publicity is reflected in its morphological meaning and subjective meaning.



Figure 26 Puji Wind and Rain Bridge Temple. It dedicated to the "Wu God " Guan Gong. On the first or fifteenth day of every month, Dong people come here to worship. The bridge temple carries the beliefs of the Dong people, is an area used by every member of the community, and becomes a sacred thing that oversees public places, becoming a public space jointly maintained by the community. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. May 2, 2023

### 3.1.2 Decoration of Wind and Rain Bridges

Architectural decoration is a reflection of architectural culture. The decoration of Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge reflects the distinct culture of the Dong people, supports the Dong people's beliefs, and makes the Wind and Rain Bridge a public space for the Dong community.

The decoration of Wind and Rain Bridge can be divided into two parts: external decoration and internal decoration. The exterior decoration of the Dong Wind and Rain Bridge is on the roof of the bridge pavilion, the main ridge of the roof, the eaves, and the entrance of the bridge; the interior decoration is mainly composed of paintings.



### Exterior Decoration

The main exterior decoration of Wind and Rain Bridge is the roof-shaped decoration. The roof decoration of Wind and Rain Bridge is generally decorated on the main ridge and ridge of the bridge roof, as well as the top of the spire. The main ridge of the roof of Wind and Rain Bridge usually has the shape of a dragon or is decorated with tiles. The ridge decoration on the roof is usually in the shape of a phoenix bird. The top of the spire has a gourd shape and a phoenix bird. The entrances of some Wind and Rain Bridges will also have animal shapes, and the design and production of some entrances, such as the Dong village gate, are very complex. The roof of the Dong Wind and Rain Bridge is decorated with various animal shapes with certain connotations. These complex and vivid shapes enrich the spiritual connotation of the Wind and Rain Bridge architecture and appear gorgeous and solemn. They reflect the important position of the Wind and Rain Bridge architecture in the Dong public buildings' main means.

The shapes and images of ancient Chinese architectural decorations are all related to a certain culture, reflecting the local people's belief and spiritual pursuit of architecture (Liu Hongbo, 2016). Dragons, gourds, and phoenix birds often appear in the decorative shapes of the Dong people's wind and rain bridges. They are connected with the Dong people's beliefs and worship and build an imaginative space.

#### ①Dragon

In the external decoration of Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge buildings, the dragon shape runs through most of the Wind and Rain Bridge buildings. The meaning of the dragon here is not a symbol of the earth king in ancient China, but it is also related to Dong folk mythology, Feng Shui, and folk beliefs.

Legend has it that a long time ago, there was a large deep pool near Mengzhai the Dong people. There was A green dragon and a black python at the bottom of the pool. Green dragon does carpentry work for the Dong villagers, such as building drum towers, wind and rain bridges, and villages, while the black python harms the villagers everywhere. Once the black python caused a flood, the green dragon turned into a long bridge to rescue the village. After a fight, the green dragon was killed, and finally, the green dragon defeated the black python. To commemorate the green dragon, many buildings in the Dong village are carved with dragon shapes, expressing the Dong family's wish to pray to the dragon god to bless the world, have good weather every year, and ensure peace and prosperity for the country and the people. The dragon shape not only appears frequently in the Wind and Rain Bridge but is also a core theme in the decoration of the Drum Tower. It can be seen that the Dong people worship and are grateful to the dragon (Xu Jiesun, Yang Xiunan & Xu Guilan. 1992).



Figure 27 Dragon decoration of the Puzi Bridge. The top of the roof ridge of the Puji Wind and Rain Bridge is decorated with a dragon shape, which reflects the Dong people's worship and gratitude to the dragon. This is related to Dong folk mythology, Feng Shui and folk beliefs. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. May 2, 2023

The decoration of the dragon on Wind and Rain Bridge is mainly made of wood carving and gray sculpture. The most common ones are to design the shape of two dragons playing with beads in the middle of the roof ridge of the corridor between the two pavilions of Wind and Rain Bridge, or on the overhanging ends of some eaves. Designed in the shape of a flying dragon, there are four dragons on the pointed roof at the four corners. Many dragons have very vivid images. In Sanjiang area, the two dragons appear symmetrically and are relatively stable; in Liping area, the dragon shape on the roof of Wind and Rain Bridge is livelier, in a tumbling style, passing through the roof ridge, giving a strong sense of movement and space.

The shape of the dragon also has Feng Shui meaning. Many wind and rain bridges are built at the end of the water in villages. There are often mountains at both ends of the bridge. The locals call it Dragon Veins. Wind and rain bridges play the role of reconnecting the dragon veins opened by the river, so many Dong people's wind and rain bridges are named "Connecting Dragon Bridge", "Returning Dragon Bridge", "Welcoming Dragon Bridge", "Closing Dragon Bridge", "Gathering Dragon Bridge" and other bridges directly named after dragons, the meaning of the dragon is self-evident.

## ② Gourd

The gourd is one of the Eight Immortals in traditional Chinese architectural decoration. It has the homophone and meaning of "Fu Lu" and also has the symbolic meaning of fertility worship. In ancient times, there have been various legends about gourds being used in ethnic minority areas in the south to avoid floods and save lives. According to myths and legends of the Dong people, the ancestors Jiang Lang and Jiang Mei used gourds to escape from the flood, and later got married and reproduced the descendants of the Dong people; among the Yao people, there is also a story of the Fuxi brother and sister who hid in the gourds for seven days and nights, got married after the floods receded, and reproduced human beings. Legend

has it that in the wedding customs of the Yi people, there is a ceremony of "breaking the pot to get married", which is to commemorate the ancestors of the Yi people who came from the gourd, and also to wish the newlyweds a speedy birth. In the Dong area of Guizhou, the gourd is used as a symbol of fertility worship. The end of a small gourd with a vine pedicle is sawed open, tied with three feet of green cloth or floral cloth to look like a baby, and given to the bridegroom's bride to show the propagation of the groom's family (Que Yueping. 2007).



Figure 28 The gourd decoration of Yongji Bridge. The top of the pavilion of Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge is decorated with the shape of a gourd, which is taken from the meaning of the gourd "Fu Lu" and the symbolic meaning of fertility worship. This is closely related to Dong's folk myths and folk traditions. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. May 2, 2023

The gourd shape in the decoration of Wind and Rain Bridge is mainly used on the top of the spire. The gourd top is like a reduced pagoda. The number of sections of a gourd is generally odd. The so-called odd number is Yang, and Yang is auspicious. This is the same as the number of floors of the Dong Drum Tower, which is also an odd number.

### ③ Phoenix Bird

Apart from the dragon, the most common decorative shape on the roof of the Dong Wind and Rain Bridge is the phoenix bird. China has had a culture of worshipping the phoenix bird since ancient times. The phoenix, like the dragon, is a spiritual totem created by ancient ancestors. It is also difficult to find a clear boundary between phoenix and bird. Phoenix bird patterns are very common in Dong embroidery. Some phoenix bird patterns are very similar to Han patterns and have obvious traces of being passed down from the Central Plains. Some phoenix bird patterns are simple and primitive, with a strong local flavor and the primitive flavor of southern ethnic minorities.

The Dong area has a cultural custom of respecting birds as gods and loving birds as life. The ancient Yue people have cultural origins of worshipping bird totems. The worship of birds by the Dong people is related to the protective role of beneficial birds in agricultural planting activities in the rice farming culture. Even among the Dong people In the Genesis ballad, there is a legend about Jiang Lang and Jiang Mei using a big bird as a matchmaker, and the big bird brought rice from afar to

sow the seeds. Dong men in Sanjiang, Guangxi also have the custom of decorating their costumes with bird feathers. Therefore, the worship of birds is also used in the architectural decoration of the Dong Wind and Rain Bridge (Liu Hongbo. 2016).



Figure 29 Phoenix birds' decoration of Yongji Bridge. The eaves and corners of the Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge are decorated with the shape of phoenix birds, which reflects the Dong people's worship of birds. This is closely related to the agricultural planting activities of the Dong people. Birds can eat pests to protect farmland. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. December 2, 2023

The phoenix bird shape appears at the top of the eaves of the pointed gourd shape of the Wind and Rain Bridge Pavilion. The phoenix bird that appears at the top of the gourd shape of Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge has a supreme status, like a sacred bird looking into the distance. Like the Dong Drum Tower, it is also at the top of the Drum Tower building, leading the spiritual temperament of the entire building. In addition, the bird shapes are not only on the top of the spire but also at the ends of the ridges and the corners of the eaves. They decorate the entire Wind and Rain Bridge building and make the Wind and Rain Bridge building more magical.

#### Interior Decoration

The internal decoration of Wind and Rain Bridge is not a necessary part of Wind and Rain Bridge decoration. Some of Dong's Wind and Rain Bridges are relatively simple and have no internal decoration; some Wind and Rain Bridges are decorated with paintings on the inside.

The decorative parts of the Dong Wind and Rain Bridge are mainly the tops of the central bridge pavilion and bridge pavilions on both sides, the whole wooden board based on the frame, and the upper lintel board between the columns of the bridge corridor. The contents of the paintings are all-encompassing, including stories of historical figures, Dong myths and legends, and important information during the construction of the Wind and Rain Bridge. The painting technique is like Su-style painting among Han paintings (Liu Hongbo. 2016).





Figure 30 Interior decoration of Jielong Bridge. Jielong Bridge in Longcheng Town, Tongdao County. The caisson on the top of the central bridge pavilion depicts the story of the Eight Immortals crossing the sea, a Taoist figure. Source: Photographed by Liu Hongbo. December 12, 2015

For example, on the Jielong Bridge in Longcheng Town, Tongdao County, Taoist figures are painted on the caisson on the top of the central bridge pavilion, and the historical story of Fan Lihua is painted on the lintel between the columns of the bridge corridor.



Figure 31 Interior decoration of the Diping bridge. The interior painting of Diping Wind and Rain Bridge in Liping County, Guizhou uses typical activities in the traditional culture of the Dong people. Source: <https://image.baidu.com/search/detail> (Accessed on November 30, 2023)

Another Wind and Rain Bridge depicts festival activities closely related to the life of the Dong people. For example: After the Diping Wind and Rain Bridge in Liping County, Guizhou was rebuilt in 2005, the internal paintings used typical activities in Dong traditional culture. The painting style is modern but has an obvious local flavor (Liu Hongbo. 2016).

### 3.2 Architectural Techniques of Wind and Rain Bridges: The Local Wisdom of the Dong Ethnic People

The construction technology of Wind and Rain Bridge is the local wisdom of the Dong people, creating an important public space for the Dong community and reflecting the identity of the Dong people. "Local wisdom" refers to the ability to solve problems, adapt to new information, and pass on acquired knowledge and experience from generation to generation to ensure survival (Clifford Geertz. 1983). The Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai used natural building materials provided by the natural environment, accumulated and improved wooden construction skills, and "Moshi" character-created practice to build the Wind and Rain Bridge in the Dong community.

#### 3.2.1 Traditional Dong Wooden Construction Techniques: The Local Wisdom of the Dong Ethnic People

The wooden structure construction skills accumulated and improved by the Dong people in specific landscapes have become unique local wisdom. The Dong people learned the Luban wood structure technique of the Han people, reinvented the Han people's Luban wood structure technique by adapting to the local landscape characteristics of the community, and passed on the experience and knowledge gained from generation to generation, becoming the Dong people's wood structure construction technique this is the local wisdom of the Dong people and was established as an "intangible cultural heritage" by China in 2006. The Dong people used their local wisdom to build wind and rain bridges, drum towers, and residential buildings in the community, forming a unique cultural landscape of the Dong community.

#### Construction Process of Wind and Rain Bridges

The construction of Wind and Rain Bridge can be divided into six links: site selection, design and planning, material selection, plan deepening, drawing and measurement, and final confirmation. First, determine the specific location of the bridge. Second, draw the plan and structural drawings of the bridge deck and determine the construction steps. Third, select the wood materials for piles and columns, then select wood materials such as cantilever beams, and determine the details of the materials used. Fourth, adjust the bay, depth, height, etc. of the corridor bridge, and adjust the materials used at any time. Fifth, draw and measure the horizontal and vertical poles, and then determine the order of building the bridge based on the measurement results. Sixth, the finishing work is mainly about springing the thread and asking for withdrawal with bamboo sticks (Huang Xiaomin & Tao Hong, 2022).

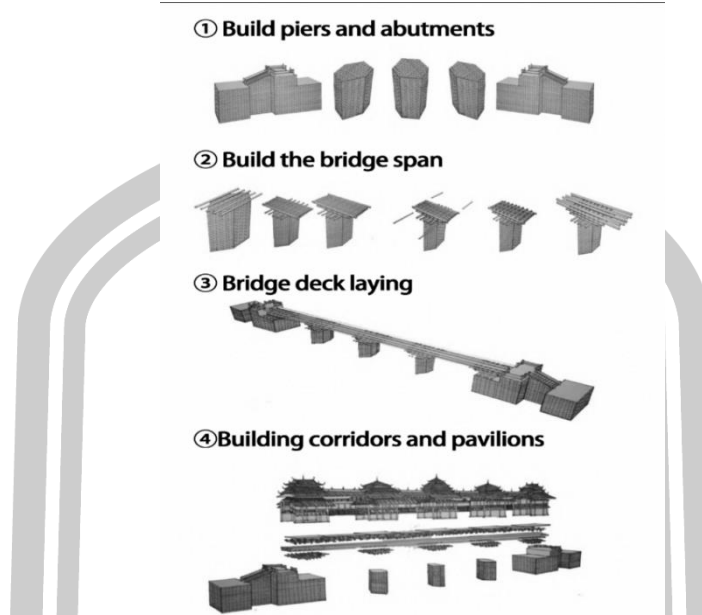


Figure 32 Schematic diagram of the specific bridge construction process of Wind and Rain Bridge. It is divided into four steps: Source: Drawn by Huang Xiaomin, annotated by Chen Lu. April 1, 2024

- ① Building piers and abutments
- ② Build bridge span
- ③ Building deck bridge
- ④ Building the Corridors and pavilions.

The specific bridge construction process can be roughly divided into

① Building piers and abutments. First, build the bridge abutment, stabilize the base, and then build the bridge piers;

② Build bridge span. Place gaskets and two layers of brackets on the built piers, then embed the flanges, then place the gaskets and the girders, which form the span of the wind and rain bridge;

③ Building deck bridge. Use fir to connect the middle part and build the overall structure of the bridge deck;

④ Building the Corridors and pavilions. Build bridge corridors and bridge pavilions, and decorate and carve shapes such as dragons, gourds, and phoenix birds on the top of the pavilions or the ridges of the corridors, and add decorative patterns and elements to some internal corridor panels. Finally, a bridge-stepping ceremony will be held. The above is the general construction process. The process is complex and cumbersome, but it is in good order and reflects the Dong people's wisdom in building bridges.

#### "Jianggan" Measurement System

From the construction process of Wind and Rain Bridge, we can see that its construction process is complicated and the accuracy requirements for each component of the building are very precise. Measurement has become a very important part of the Dong people's construction skills.

The "Jianggan" measurement system is an original measurement system created by Dong craftsmen. This system can accurately complete complex engineering measurements using only the three simplest tools: Luban ruler, Jianggan, and bamboo sticks. Dong craftsmen used this system in their construction, including the construction of the Wind and Rain Bridge.

The scale used by craftsmen in the "Jianggan" measurement system is not a modular ruler in a certain sense but is composed of auspicious and unlucky units concerning human body scales and parts. These units are not composed of abstract geometric figures but instead emphasize certain important parts of the human body, such as the head, joints, and feet. As a measurement system established concerning the human body, the Dong craftsman's scale is not an ideal perfect "universal man" as used by Corbusier but relies on the body measurements and proportions of different craftsmen who make the craftsman's scale. This craftsman ruler corresponds to the traditional Luban ruler, reflecting the cultural traditions of the Dong people and structural methods related to the human scale (Li Xuemei, Xiao Dawei, Kendra Smith & Albert Smith. 2018).

In the construction of Dong buildings, the human body is used as a reference for converting proportions and scales. Therefore, the scale of the human body is also used by craftsmen to build their sacred drum towers and wind and rain bridges through craftsmen's rulers. The Dong buildings built based on this craftsman ruler are endowed with meaning related to human life.

### (3) Amazing Measurement Tool: The Lu Ban's Rule, Jianggan, and Bamboo Strips

Dong craftsmen mostly use local materials to make their tools. For example, Yang Yundong, a Dong craftsman from Yancun, created many tools by himself. Common tools include saws, knives, axes, hammers, chisels, shovels, drills, rulers, and ink fountains. Some of these tools were created by Dong craftsmen themselves, and some were created based on improvements from certain tools in the Central Plains region.

The measuring system of Dong craftsmen consists of three basic craftsman rulers: Luban ruler, about 30 to 42cm long; Jianggan ruler, about 3m long; mortise and tenon bamboo ruler, each piece about 33cm long, used for determining the position of the tenon and tenon joints and detailing size.

Luban ruler is also a woodworking tool used to check whether materials and structures are vertical and whether edges are at right angles. Dong craftsmen all used different Luban rulers to construct their community buildings. The earliest Luban ruler is 42.9 centimeters long. It is said to have been made by Gongshuban of the State of Lu in the Spring and Autumn Period. It is a traditional Chinese woodworking tool. The full name of the Luban ruler is "Luban construction ruler". It is a measuring tool used when building houses, similar to the curved ruler used by craftsmen.

Although the earliest Luban ruler was 42.9 centimeters long, the length of Luban rulers is not uniform. In the Qing Dynasty's "Regulations on Engineering Practices of the Ministry of Industry", 124 dimensions were listed according to the Luban ruler.

The inner passages marked on various Luban rulers are not necessarily the same. Some Luban rulers are marked with words related to time and



luck such as Menguangxing, Jiuliangxing, Qiu Gongsha, etc. on both sides, which are used to help the craftsman choose the time to build the door. The back of some Luban rulers is marked with ten sections, engraved with the words "Ding, Harm, Prosperity, Ku, Yi, Guan, Death, Xing, Loss, Wealth". It is generally used to measure the dimensions around the shady house or the burial site. The size or length and width of the tomb are good or bad. There is also a kind of Luban ruler with eight-star characters engraved on the back, namely Noble Star, Natural Disaster Star, Natural Disaster Star, Natural Wealth Star, Official Luxury Star, Lonely Star, Heavenly Thief Star, and Prime Minister Star, which are mainly used in conjunction with the front (Li Zhen. 2009).



Figure 33 Luban ruler made by Mr. Yang Yundong, a Dong carpenter. The words marked above represent lucky or unlucky dimensions. Dong craftsmen use special Luban rulers to choose lucky sizes to build houses, bridges and so on. Source: Photographed by Yang Yundong. December 1, 2023

The Luban ruler of Chengyang Bazhai Dong carpenter Mr. Yang Yundong is about 45.5cm long, and each side is divided into 8 equal unit lengths. Each unit length represents 1 inch, about 5.68cm, and has different meanings. The two sides of the Luban ruler are respectively defined as the yang side or the yin side. The yang side of the Luban ruler, from top to bottom, is defined as the Tiangui star, Tianwei star, Tianfu star, Genius star, Tianlu star, lonely star, Tianfa star, and Prime Minister star. The Tiangui Star, the Genius Star, the Tianlu Star, and the Prime Minister Star all represent auspicious meanings and the ideal and suitable size for selection; while the rest of the Heavenly Crying Stars, Heavenly Disaster Stars, Lonely Stars, and Heavenly Defeat Stars express inauspiciousness and inappropriateness selected size.

Jianggan is made of moso bamboo, which can be long or short, with dense symbols painted on it. The length of jianggan is determined according to the height of the house. After getting a construction project, the ink master will measure the foundation, and then according to the height of the terrain After determining the basic framework of the building based on the topography, radius, and area, the complete shape of a house is stored in the mind of the architect.

As a large-scale measuring tool for buildings, Jianggan is based on the craftsman Luban's foot ruler. The process of making jianggan is called "pai jianggan". The material is usually hard bamboo, and its length depends on the height of the building. Craftsmen scraped the bamboo skin and used rulers and pens to draw and engrave the length and size of the building components on it to make "Jianggan". A Jianggan about 3m long is repeatedly divided into several measurement units by the craftsman Luban's foot ruler, which can be extended to the height of the entire building (Li Xuemei, Xiao Dawei, Kendra Smith & Albert Smith. 2018).



Figure 34 The process of making craft poles by Mr. Yang Yunqing, a Dong carpenter. He first scraped the bamboo skin and then used a ruler and pen to write the length and size of the building components on it with ink. When writing the names of various parts of the house, he used the unique "moshi" Character. Source: Photographed by Bian Jishen. December 26, 2022

Jianggan's rough surface is marked with symbols that only craftsmen can recognize, the "moshi" Characters, which are: front, back, left, right, up, down, middle, sky, cross, hang, beam, cross beam, column. These are the names of components of Dong architectural structures.

Jianggan, a Dong craftsman, not only serves as a tool for building measurement but also gives Dong architecture a special meaning. Jianggan controls the length, width, and height dimensions of the entire building, and the dimensions are usually selected according to the homeowner's requirements, such as "enhancement", "wealth", "multiple children" and so on. The length, width, and door height dimensions of a building bay must meet the wishes of the homeowner, choose the corresponding dimensions on Jianggan. The height dimensions of Dong public buildings such as the Wind and Rain Bridge must be selected in an auspicious size unit. For Wind and Rain Bridge, the column height is about 2.96~2.98m, which puts it in the "genius" position on Jianggan, which means that there are many talented people in the village. "Do not choose to build units marked black on Jianggan" is also the construction principle of Dong craftsmen. This means that the height of a column,

from the ground to the bottom of the coupling beam, must fall in auspicious units of size. Therefore, the width of the building can be determined only after determining the height of the building. According to the topography of the building structure, the building plan is extended by increasing the number of frames to extend the length and the width by increasing the number of external columns. A Jianggan will be drawn on each bridge or drum tower, which will be placed under the bridge after use and kept permanently. These can fully reflect the infinite wisdom of the Dong people. Dong craftsmen used this small Jianggan to build countless buildings that amazed the world (Li Xuemei, Xiao Dawei, Kendra Smith & Albert Smith. 2018).

Bamboo rulers are made by craftsmen who cut bamboo into pieces that are about 33cm long and 1cm wide. Craftsmen use a bamboo ruler to measure and position the mortise and tenon structure and use black ink to draw symbols and marks on the rough inner surface of the bamboo ruler.



Figure 35 Bamboo ruler. It is made from bamboo sheets and is used to measure and position the mortise and tenon structure of the building. Use black ink to draw "moshi" characters and marks on the rough inner surface of the bamboo ruler to record the name and size position of the mortise and tenon components. Source: Photographed by Bian Jishen. December 26, 2022

When Dong craftsmen are making the joint components, they must use a carpenter's 90° angle ruler to measure the length, width, and depth of the tongue and groove openings on the columns and connecting beams, and mark them on the bamboo ruler with the Dong craftsman's "moshi" character for later use. Then refer to the mortise and tenon dimensions he marked to make the corresponding mortise and tenon components. Therefore, each pair of mortises and tenon components must have a correspondingly marked bamboo ruler.

The following takes the common male and female tenon production in Wind and Rain Bridge as an example to demonstrate the local wisdom of Dong craftsmen.

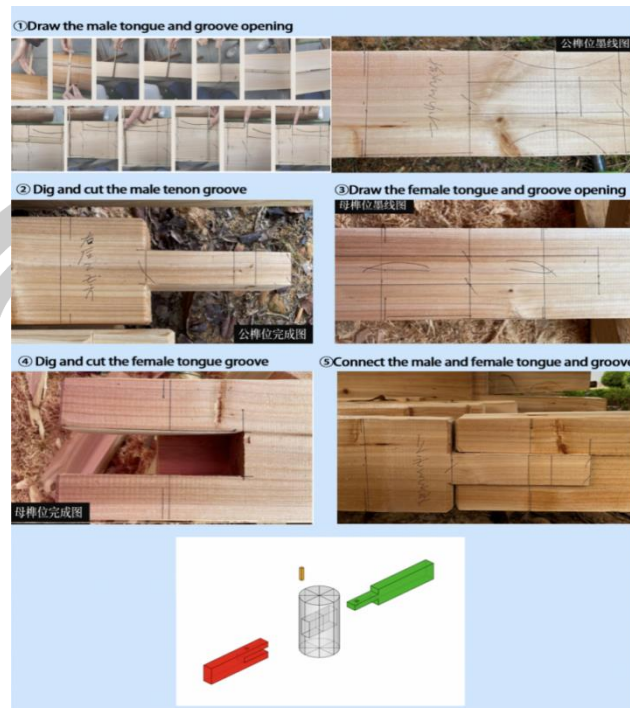


Figure 36 Schematic diagram of the production of male and female tenons for common building components of Wind and Rain Bridge. Source: Photographed by Bian Jishen, Standard by Chen Lu. December 26, 2022

Male and female tenons refer to two building components that can only be connected in a unique form. They are divided into two parts. During the connection, one part is completely contained by the other part. The contained one is called the male tenon and the other is called the female tenon. The steps for Mr. Yang Tao to make this part are:

① Draw the male tongue and groove opening: Use a bamboo stick as a measuring tool to draw the length, width, and depth of the tongue and groove opening dimensions on the wood.

② Dig and cut the male mortise and tenon groove: Use a tool to dig and cut the male mortise and tenon groove according to the drawn ink line.

③ Draw the opening of the female mortise: Use the other side of the bamboo stick to measure and record the length, width, and depth of the opening size of the male mortise, and then draw the corresponding length, width, and depth of the opening size of the female mortise on the wood.

④ Dig and cut the female mortise: Use a tool to dig and cut the female mortise according to the drawn ink line.

⑤ Connect the male and female mortises: Use the male and female mortises in the final assembly of the building.

Therefore, the Dong people's buildings, whether they are drum towers or wind and rain bridges, do not have a single nail inside but are all drilled with mortises and tenons. Mortise and tenon joints, beams and arches, and columns, and beams are



connected without a single iron nail. The structure is solid and well-joined, and it has survived decades of wind, water, and rain and has remained intact. These Dong buildings are examples of the Dong people's wooden building construction skills and are also a reflection of the local wisdom of the Dong people.

### 3.2.2 The Engineers of Wind and Rain Bridges: Dong "Zhangmo" Masters and the Enigmatic "Moshi" Character

#### (1) The Engineers of Wind and Rain Bridges: Dong Ethnic Zhanmo Masters

Among Dong carpenters, craftsmen who can independently direct, design, and organize construction projects are called "Zhangmo" Masters, who are known as "masters who control the ink line." "Zhangmo" Masters is the chief engineer in charge of project construction, the "supreme commander" of Dong construction projects, and an outstanding representative of Dong carpenters. The designer and inheritor of Dong wooden architecture. "Zhangmo" Masters is of great significance and value to the inheritance of Dong wooden architecture and has a very high status and reputation in the Dong area.

The famous "Zhangmo" Masters were not only invited to build stilted buildings, drum towers, wind and rain bridges, village gates, stages, and other buildings locally but were also invited to other villages to carry out the construction of important buildings. Most of the masters who are engaged in carpentry work have low academic qualifications. They have learned skills from their masters since they were young and participated in wooden construction with their masters, practicing and learning at the same time. After reaching a certain level and possessing the ability to "Zhangmo" independently, they will be recognized as qualified "Zhangmo" Masters. Only carpenters with "Zhangmo" master qualifications can undertake small or large-scale wooden construction projects on their own. "Zhangmo" Masters has been exposed to wooden architecture for many years and has superb wooden building construction skills. They have built large buildings such as Wind and Rain Bridge and Drum Tower, making these buildings come alive and have souls (Liu Qianqian & Mo Fujian. 2023).



Figure 37 "Zhangmo" Masters Yang Hengjin and Yang Fuyu. During the beam-raising ceremony of Longji Wind and Rain Bridge in Sanjiang County, the names of "Zhangmo" Masters Yang Hengjin, Yang Fuyu, and Yang Nianlu were written on the

main beam. It reflects the Dong people's great admiration for "Zhangmo" Masters who have superb wood construction skills. Source: Photographed by Yang Yundong. October 3, 2010

"Zhangmo" Masters not only presides over the construction work of the building but also serves as a host in some construction ceremonies. Their names will be written under the main beams of important buildings or engraved on relevant inscriptions to indicate which "Zhangmo" Masters's architect designed the building. The main beam usually also has the words "good weather, good weather, peaceful country, and people's peace", as well as information such as Zijiang XXX, Chief XXX, and the time when the beam was raised. Being recorded on the main beam is an honor, which symbolizes that the work was completed by XXX "Zhangmo" Masters, and also means that this master's skills are worshiped and recognized by the local villagers. This also reflects that the Dong people attach great importance to the wooden construction culture and have great respect for masters with superb wooden construction skills.

According to oral reports from Dong villager Chen Yuetiao, the Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge was washed away by floods in 1962, and experts from all over the country were intensively preparing to rebuild the Wind and Rain Bridge. At this time, many local Dong craftsmen came. They took a look at the bridge body and began to prepare materials. No drawings were needed, and the Wind and Rain Bridge was quickly built as before, which surprised all construction experts. An architectural expert once asked Dong craftsmen how to build magnificent wooden buildings like Drum Tower and Wind and Rain Bridge without drawings. Dong craftsmen said: "We make small models of buildings using materials such as bamboo chips and logs according to certain proportions. After they are completed, we write down the dimensions and data on the wood chips and logs and give them to the craftsmen who built the building. It will be built according to the above data. "Zhangmo" Masters will conduct a Feng Shui survey and site selection for the house, and then plan and design it. At the same time, "Zhangmo" Masters will supervise the excavation of the foundation and the processing of other materials. The completion of a series of activities such as laying out the ink, erecting the house, and capping the beam. Dong "Zhangmo" Masters does not draw drawings according to tradition and keeps the structure of all houses in mind. "Zhangmo" Masters relied on his superb skills and amazing memory to establish specific plans in his mind based on his rich experience and Party A's requirements, and built amazing buildings such as the Drum Tower and Wind and Rain Bridge.

To become a "Zhangmo" Master, it usually takes more than ten years or even longer. Only those with talent and perseverance can become an outstanding "Zhangmo" Master. According to tradition, if you want to learn the Dong wooden structure construction skills, you need to learn the skills from a master, which requires specific rituals and apprenticeship stickers. Some places are stricter, and men must be over 36 years old to become true disciples. After passing the apprenticeship ceremony, the master-disciple relationship is permanent. At present, the "Zhangmo" Masters group does not have a fixed organization. They are all independent groups or carry out activities as a family organization (Liu Qianqian & Mo Fujian. 2023).



Figure 38 Researcher interviewed "Zhangmo" Masters Yang Qiushi. He talked about his journey as a "Zhangmo" Masters. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2023

The "Zhangmo" Master Yang Qiushi interviewed by the researcher is a representative inheritor of the fifth batch of national intangible cultural heritage projects (Dong wooden structure construction skills). He lives in Yanzhai, one of the eight villages in Chengyang. Yang Qiushi was born into a family of carpenters. He was obsessed with carpentry crafts since he was a child. He taught himself to install floor slabs at home at the age of 12. His uncle saw that he was eager to learn and took him to learn the art. In 1988, he officially paid homage to Master Yang Mingan to learn the art. Due to his deep knowledge of ancestral skills, coupled with his diligence and studiousness, high understanding, and increasingly refined craftsmanship, he soon became a famous local carpenter. In 1996, he first designed, designed, and built wooden structure stilted buildings, corridors, pavilions, etc. in the Chinese Ethnic Cultural Village in Jiangxia District, Wuhan City; he designed and built 16 drum towers, 5 wind and rain bridges, and many Dong houses, corridors, and Pavilions, etc., and hundreds of wooden buildings completed in cooperation with other wooden architects. The wooden buildings he built include drum towers, wind and rain bridges, stilt towers, stage, village gates, pavilions, etc. They not only inherited the excellent characteristics of "ganlan" style buildings but also included stilts inside, making the buildings more beautiful and creating their unique style. Timber construction technology system. After years of practice and long-term experience accumulation, his skills have improved day by day, and he is recognized as a skilled Dong carpenter inside and outside the region.

#### (2) The Enigmatic "Moshi" Character

The Dong people are born artists. They can cultivate fields during the day and become skilled craftsmen when building houses. Architects often do not have written records of wood structure techniques. They have inherited the experience from their masters or created their creations during long-term practice and mastered Dong wood structure techniques. Based on the actual conditions of the environment, terrain, climate, material sources, etc., they invented a set of special construction tools such as jianggan, bamboo sticks, sky hammers, and adzes. They also invented a set of architectural symbols passed down from generation to generation called "Moshi" Character (Cai Ling, Wang Yaning & Deng Yi. 2022).



Figure 39 "Moshi" Character. The unique architectural symbol "Moshi" Character of the Dong people. They are carved on the "Jianggan" and on building components to help Dong craftsmen mark the building component and its orientation. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. November 3, 2023

The "Moshi" Character was passed down orally from master to apprentice and has been used from generation to generation. They are engraved on "jianggan" and architectural components. There are approximately 26 symbols for these secrets, and the commonly used symbols have approximately 13 words. The Dong people generally do not use drawings when constructing wooden structures but use "jianggan" mapping to draw important data on them. The "Moshi" Character is painted on incense sticks and large and small squares and pillars. Only Dong craftsmen understand the meaning. This not only reflects the extraordinary wisdom of the Dong craftsmen but also reflects the uniqueness of the Dong's wooden construction skills, giving the Dong's wooden construction skills a touch of mystery. Although this "jianggan" is an extremely simple architectural tool, it plays an extremely important role for craftsmen. Without the "jianggan", it is equivalent to missing the left arm, and without the "Moshi" character, the right arm is missing. Therefore, if people want to learn the wood construction skills of the Dong people, they must start with the tools and symbols they use.

Those old craftsmen that the "Moshi" Character is very difficult to memorize. It needs to be used many times and memorized repeatedly to master it. Only one who can skillfully control this mysterious symbol can be regarded as a qualified Dong craftsman. If a certain symbol is repeated, many parts of the building will not be perfect, and the various parts will not be able to interlock with each other, and the building will even have to be rebuilt. Therefore, craftsmen will strictly check the symbols on it, for fear that there will be a slight mistake that will affect the overall situation. Dong craftsmen can build such ingenious buildings with only a ruler, an ink fountain, a "jianggan" and other magic weapons of Dong construction craftsmen. People can't help but admire the infinite wisdom and superb architectural skills of Dong craftsmen. The wooden structure of the Dong people is a symbol of Dong culture. The towering drum tower integrates with the local simple folk customs and complements each other, reflecting the ethnic characteristics and rich cultural connotations of the Dong people.

Adapting to the natural environment of the community, the knowledge inherited and accumulated through continuous practice has become the



"local wisdom" of the Dong community. The Dong people use this local wisdom to build public buildings in the community, such as the important Wind and Rain Bridge in the community. Built with local wisdom, the Wind and Rain Bridge becomes a public space for the community and embodies the identity of the Dong people.

The architectural attributes of Wind and Rain Bridge, regardless of size, style, materials, technology, and tools, were selected and designed by the people of Chengyang Bazhai to meet certain needs of this society. It has become an important public space for the Dong community and reflects the Dong people's identity.

#### **Part 4: The Cultural Landscape and Architectural Dimensions of Yongji**

##### **Bridge**

Any architecture is the result of adapting to the local cultural landscape. Yongji Bridge is the representative of the Dong people's wind and rain bridge. Its establishment was influenced by local natural and human factors, and formed a unique architectural form.

##### **4.1 Factors Influencing the Establishment of Yongji Bridge**

Yongji Bridge is the most significant wind and rain bridge in Chengyang Bazhai. It connects the terraced fields on the mountain and the water source of the Linxi River. More importantly, it connects the Chengyang Highway. Dong people living in Chengyang Bazhai use it to transport glutinous rice, tea, fir, etc. from the village to the market in Sanjiang County for sale. Yongji Bridge is a necessary node for communication between Chengyang Bazhai and the outside world.

##### **4.1.1 Yongji Bridge Connecting the Terraced Fields in the**

##### **Mountains**

Linxi River is the main water system of Chengyang Bazhai, which supports the Dong people's daily production and life here. The Dong people-built waterwheels along the Linxi River to divert water to the rice fields for irrigation. The unique natural characteristics of Chengyang Bazhai are more mountains and less land, which means that the cultivated land next to the village cannot satisfy the use of the entire population. Therefore, the Dong people use terraced fields to cultivate crops in the mountains. Therefore, the Dong people frequently cross the Linxi River to farm in the mountains.

The Yongji Bridge was built at the entrance of the Linxi River to help the Dong people, especially the Dong people in Ma'an Village, cross over to the terraced fields in the mountains and forests for daily farming.

##### **4.1.2 Yongji Bridge Linking the Chengyang Highway**

Yongji Bridge is the only wind and rain bridge among the Bazhai Wind and Rain Bridges in Chengyang that is connected to the Chengyang Highway leading to the outside. Ma'an Village, Yan Village, Ping Ping Village, and Jichang Village all need to communicate and trade with the outside world through the Yongji Bridge. Ma'an Village is surrounded by water on three sides and mountains on one side, which makes the village close to external communication. Yongji Bridge has become a necessary node for Ma'anzhai to communicate with the outside world. Yanzhai, Pingtanzhai, and Jichangzhai need to pass through Ma'anzhai, and then cross Yongji Bridge to Chengyang Highway.

Dong people living in Ma'anzhai, Yanzhai, Pingtanzhai, and Jichangzhai go to Sanjiang County for trade through the Yongji Bridge, which facilitates life and production.

#### 4.1.3 Yongji Bridge as the Gateway to Defense for Chengyang Bazhai

Yongji Bridge is the channel for communication between Chengyang Bazhai and the outside world, and of course, it is also the gateway for defense. The Dong people in Ma'an Village, Yan Village, Pingtan Village, and Jichang Village use the natural Linxi River as a moat and Yongji Bridge as a defensive gateway. If outsiders come to invade, obstacles will be set up at the head of the bridge.

#### 4.1.4 Yongji Bridge Constructed in Accordance with Dong Ethnic Fengshui

Yongji Bridge is built at the entrance of the Linxi River. Water entrance plays an extremely important role in traditional Chinese ancient villages. The so-called Water entrance refers to an ideal settlement in Feng Shui and is the place where village water flows in and out. The water outlet in the village is where the "financial resources" flow in and out, and the sewer outlet is where the "financial resources" flow out. Therefore, the purpose of building Yongji Bridge at the outlet of the Linxi River is to intercept the "financial source" and keep the "financial source" in the village.

At the same time, there are many shrines in the bridge temple of Yongji Bridge, which mainly play the role of sacrifice and protection. This ensures that "blessings" are not lost. The establishment of Yongji Bridge meets the Dong people's requirements for Feng Shui and helps the Dong people retain "wealth" and "blessings" through the bridge.

The establishment of Yongji Bridge was influenced by the landscape and cultural landscape of Chengyang Bazhai and had significance to the daily production, life, and cultural beliefs of the Dong people.

### 4.2 Architectural Forms and Functions of Yongji Bridge

Yongji Bridge was built in 1912 and completed in 1924, which took 12 years. Yongji Bridge is 77.76 meters long, 3.75 meters wide, and 11.52 meters high. It is mainly built using bluestone and fir from the mountain. Yongji Bridge is mainly composed of four systems: roof part, bridge deck part, bridge span part, and bridge pier part. The construction of piers, spans, decks, and roofs of Chengyang Bazhai Wind and Rain Bridge, as well as their mutual relations, fully reflect the village builders' understanding of life, construction experience, and environmental adaptability, and reflect the mutual influence and integration of diverse ethnic cultures (Hong Zizhen, 2020). The following explains the construction techniques of Yongji Bridge and the local wisdom in it from four aspects: Roof Section, Bridge Surface Section, Bridge Span Section, and Bridge Pier Section.

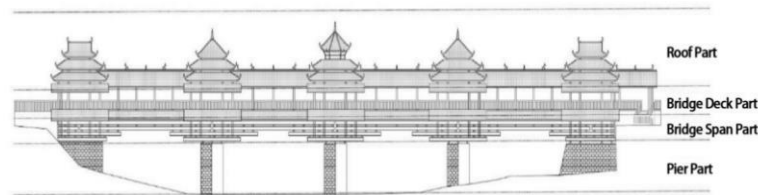


Figure 40 Structural diagram of Yongji Bridge. It consists of four parts: roof part, bridge deck part, bridge span part, and bridge pier part. Source: Drawn by Hong Zizhen, annotated by Chen Lu. April 10, 2024

#### 4.2.1 Roof Section: Reflecting Landscape Functionality and Dong Ethnic Cultural Aesthetics

The roof of Wind and Rain Bridge is an important part of the building that is adaptable and local. It is mainly reflected in two aspects: First, the roof exists to shield the core structure of Wind and Rain Bridge from wind, rain, and sun, including the "double eaves" of Wind and Rain Bridge. The architectural form is also to better protect the wooden structure, improve the durability of the Wind and Rain Bridge, and reflect the adaptability of the Wind and Rain Bridge to nature; secondly, the construction technology of the Wind and Rain Bridge is derived from the covered bridge, and its roof style is not completely consistent with the covered bridge. The roof style remains the same but incorporates the architectural features of the Dong region, which are concentrated in the roof part. The roof is the most unique part of Wind and Rain Bridge.

The roof of Wind and Rain Bridge is exquisite and changeable. It not only has a variety of roof types such as resting top, spire, hanging top, etc., but also inherits the architectural feature of the "double eaves" of the Dong drum tower. The richness of the roof style can reflect the status and scale of the Wind and Rain Bridge. The roof of Yongji Bridge is the most representative one with the richest roof styles and the largest number of double eaves. The 5 bridge pavilions contain 3 types of roofs and are five-eaves. The roof type in the middle is hexagonal five-eaves. The spire has four corners and five-fold eaves on both sides, and the uppermost two sides are five-fold eaves on the top of the mountain (Li Mingjiong, 2020).

#### 4.2.2 Bridge Surface Section: Space for Dong Ethnic Interaction and Beliefs

From the perspective of usage functions, the bridge deck is the core area of Wind and Rain Bridge. The bridge deck layout of Yongji Bridge is composed of three spaces: Bridge Platform Space, Bridge Corridor Space, and Bridge Pavilion Space.

##### Bridge Platform Space: Flood Defense and Balancing Elevation Differences

Bridge Platform Space is the Head and tail of the wind and rain bridge. It is a space built according to the environmental characteristics of connecting the two sides of the water system. It has basic functions such as passage and stabilizing the bridge body. It also functions as an entrance and exit, so it can also be called an entrance and exit space. Due to the complex topography and environment

of the Dong area, the Bridge Platform Space has different forms to adapt to the surrounding topography and landform environment, reflecting the Bridge Platform Space's strong ability to adapt to the environment (Hong Zizhen. 2020).

Through the investigation of the Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai, based on the different ways in which the Wind and Rain Bridge Platform Space handles the terrain environment, the Bridge Platform Space can be divided into two types: direct connection type and elevated platform type. The wind and rain bridges of the direct-connected Bridge Platform are generally small and medium-sized wind and rain bridges in villages. They are located in ditches or streams with low widths, and the water level has little impact on them. To facilitate construction and passage, they are often directly connected. Connecting both sides of the bank; using the elevated Bridge Platform, they are all large-scale wind and rain bridges in villages, located in the main water system - Linxi River. To consider the highwater level during flash flood disasters, it is necessary to build a wind and rain bridge that adapts to the highwater level, so the Bridge Platform plays the role of raising the bridge body of Wind and Rain Bridge.

The Bridge Platform of Yongji Bridge is high, and the entire bridge body is elevated through the high-platform Bridge Platform. The main reasons for this setting are: first, due to the large flow, high water level, and serious flooding of Chengyang Bazhai river system in the rainy season, and Yongji Bridge is located at the outlet of Linxi River, it is more affected by rainy season floods, so it was built A high platform type Bridge Platform Space; secondly, since the heights of both sides of the Linxi River where the Yongji Bridge is located are different, the setting of the Bridge Platform can balance the height difference. Therefore, the Bridge Platform Space on both sides of the Yongji Bridge has the function of resisting floods and balancing the height of both sides.

#### Bridge Corridor Space: Rest and Trade

Bridge Corridor Space is composed of railings, benches, columns, and roofs. It has the functions of passage, recreation, and business. It is a part that combines the use of functions based on the structure, making the bridge deck space multi-functional public places.

The wooden strips on both sides of the corridor, known as seats, are facilities for people to rest parallel to the main beams of the bridge span in the bridge deck system. As a related construction of the benches and supports on both sides of the bridge deck and bridge gallery, that is, the beam-column structural system of the bridge house, it is not only an important frame of the bridge deck system, but also a necessary support structure for the roof, forming a complete bridge house with the roof. The middle part of the bridge deck space is composed of the Bridge Corridor Space and the bridge pavilion space intertwined with each other. The number and volume of the Bridge Corridor Space are closely related to the location of the Wind and Rain Bridge, because the Wind and Rain Bridge with an important position often builds more bridge pavilions, so the Bridge Corridor Space is larger.





Figure 41 The corridor space of Yongji Bridge. Where people rest and do business. Elderly Dong people are selling goods while sitting on the seats in the corridor of Yongji Bridge. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. May 1, 2023

Yongji Bridge is the largest wind and rain bridge in Chengyang Bazhai, and its bridge corridor space is larger than other wind and rain bridges. Yongji Bridge has three bridge corridors, with a width of 3 meters and a total length of 48.2 meters. The seats on both sides of the corridor can be used for rest and business. In the covered bridge space, the wooden columns, railings and other wooden structural components used to support the roof have become places for displaying goods. However, when the Yongji Bridge is designated as a national cultural relic, to protect the cultural relics, no merchandise can be placed in the bridge corridor space. But there are often Dong elders sitting on the seats on the bridge corridor selling goods.

#### Bridge Pavilion Space: Sacrifice and Belief

The bridge pavilion space is the space corresponding to each bridge pavilion in the Wind and Rain Bridge. The bridge gallery and bridge pavilion space are connected to form a complete bridge house. Since wind and rain bridges vary in size, generally only large wind and rain bridges have pavilions, while small wind and rain bridges do not have pavilions. For example, among the eight villages in Chengyang, the Yongji Bridge, Helong Bridge and Puji Bridge located on the Linxi River are larger and have bridge pavilions. The Wanshou Bridge, Pin'an Bridge, and Meishao Bridge located on the west branch of the Linxi River are smaller in scale and do not have bridge pavilions.

Therefore, bridge pavilions can only be installed on the more important Wind and Rain Bridge in the village, and they are mainly intertwined with the bridge corridor space. The spaces of bridge pavilions are almost all built into a square or nearly square shape, and temples or shrines are set up along the water system to seal the feng shui, offer sacrifices pray for blessings, and protect the safety and prosperity of the village. It is a space with spiritual attributes. Mainly set up shrines for gods such as Guan Gong and Tudi Gong.





Figure 43 The span of the Yongji Bridge. It uses an outrigger beam structure, which increases the span of the bridge and evenly concentrates gravity on the piers and abutments, increasing the support area. This bridge support method is the local wisdom of the Dong people in building bridges. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. May 1, 2023

Yongji Bridge uses an extended-arm wooden beam structure. An extended-arm wooden beam is also called a cantilever beam. One end of the cantilever beam is a fixed support and the other end is free. The difference between extended-arm wooden beams and a simply supported beam is that there is an additional connection and support system between the main beam and the pier. The span structure of the Yongji Bridge adopts a densely distributed cantilever bracket extended-arm wooden beams system. There are 2 rows of bracket beams on the bridge piers. Each row uses 6-7 logs with a diameter of about 40cm. The two ends are slotted and embedded with thick wooden boards, formed by connection. Cantilever brackets are used on the piers to support the main bridge span structure, which reduces the bending stress of the girder and increases the span of the girder. The girder is usually made of giant fir trees with a diameter of more than 50cm, usually in 2 rows. This structural system allows the gravity to be evenly concentrated on the piers and abutments and increases the support area. Because the wood materials vary in size, wooden piers and sheets are placed between the rows to make them reach horizontal standards (Liu Qiumei, He Mingwei & Liu Huyang. 2022).

Dong craftsmen took advantage of the principles of mechanical balance and leverage to use layers of dense beams cantilevered outwards on the stone piers. This is this kind of outrigger beam structure, which reduced the span of the bridge deck beams to about 10 meters, thus greatly increasing the length of the bridge improve the compression resistance of the bridge deck beams.

#### 4.2.4 Bridge Pier Section: Withstanding Water Flow and Supporting the Bridge Deck

The piers of Wind and Rain Bridge are of various types, most of which are made of stone. Their shapes vary according to the current environment and can be divided into square, boat-shaped, and hexagonal rhombus. The piers of Yongji Bridge are made of bluestone from the mountain and are built with stones in the shape of a six-sided cylinder. The piers of the Yongji Bridge are



built into six-sided cylinders for two reasons: First, from a plan view, the piers of the six-sided cylinders have acute angles in both the downstream and counterflow directions, which can divert water and can Reduce the impact of water flow on the bridge piers; secondly, from a vertical perspective, the bridge piers shrink (shrink) by 2%-3% from bottom to top, increasing the stability of the bridge pier support (Ling Kai & Wei Yujiao. 2019).



Figure 44 The pier of Yongji Bridge. It is a six-sided cylinder made of bluestone. This shape can reduce the impact of water flow and increase the support stability of the pier. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. May 1, 2023

To sum up, the architectural form of Yongji Bridge is the result of adapting to the landscape of Chengyang Bazhai. Each part of the bridge has different functions, which meet the daily life and spiritual beliefs of the Dong people. At the same time, Yongji Bridge also expresses the local wisdom of the Dong people and ethnic culture.

## Conclusion

The Wind and Rain Bridge, in its physical dimension, is an architectural building that aims to connect the banks of the river within the Dong community of Chengyang Bhazhai village. The architecture contains a meaningful relationship between the characteristics of the landscape. Resources in the surrounding physical area and the social and cultural life of the Dong people in this special area. The architecture is a building that must be used for the common public benefit of each community and the entire community group, Wind and Rain Bridge have become a space that is built together in both physical spaces to support functions or duties in people's way of life-related to physical conditions and social networks. Wind and Rain bridges are functioning to support Social Space. However, since Wind and Rain Bridge is a public space, there is a social process that creates regulations for construction, use, ownership, and maintenance as a public space and public property. This physical space was therefore constructed as a residence and roaming place for the gods and sacred things Including building a temple on the bridge area. Which is the residence of the Public mental space of people in society. This phenomenon is



therefore an interesting ‘technology of ethnic culture’ and both Physical Space and Mental Space to support the Social Space mentioned above.

As a result, the Wind and Rain Bridge of Chengyang Bazhai Community is a special place with its own identity that affect the phenomenon of Ethnicity and invention and tradition in the status of public space that the researcher will discuss in the next chapter.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge: Public Space in the Dimension of Ethnic Identity**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter mainly discusses the meaning of Wind and Rain Bridge to the Dong people before China's minority policies. In both dimensions, daily and special life, Wind and Rain Bridge is used by the Dong people as a public space in Chengyang Bazhai, reflecting the ethnicity of the Dong people and building their cultural identity. This chapter compares the meaning of Wind and Rain Bridge in the development process of ethnic minorities in the next chapter and jointly explains the academic issues of the meaning change of public space. This chapter is mainly divided into three parts: first, the daily life of Dong people in Wind and Rain Bridge, including the public use, maintenance, and repair of Wind and Rain Bridge; second, the special life of Dong people in Wind and Rain Bridge, including Rituals and festivals. Third, taking Yongji Bridge as a case, it talks about the establishment of Yongji Bridge and the Special Road-Blocking Rituals of the Yongji Bridge.

#### **Part 1: Conceptual Discussion of Public Space and Ethnic Identity**

Hannah Arendt first defined public space in the book "The Human Condition". The author believes that public spaces are those places where people come together to engage in speech and actions that transcend private interests and concern public matters. The book emphasizes the idea that public space is defined as the opposite of private space. Moreover, Hannah Arendt pointed out in "The Human Condition" that the difference between public and private can be distinguished by the two cognitive categories of "visibility" and "collectivity" (Hannah Arendt. 1958). The "visibility" of public space, as a platform for social activities, is relative to private activities; the "collectivity" of public space, as a platform for public participation, emphasizes the significance of public space as a gathering of individual wishes to form collective cognition. These two concepts of Arendt provide an epistemological basis for analysis and induction in determining public space.

French philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1991) in his book "The Production of Space" emphasized that public space is a place where all members of society live and practice together, and is the product of collective life and collective practice. Public space, he warns, is not simply "a pre-existing, empty, or neutral space, or a space determined entirely by geography, climate, or anthropology," but rather "it encompasses what is produced and contains" He outlines how space is produced and how the production of space privileges specific political and economic relations and actions. More broadly, Lefebvre argued that space is produced as a collective outcome of other social practices and relations that mediate the outcome (Lefebvre, H. 1991). Based on the appeal theory, when discussing the concept of public space, it is not only necessary to define it from the "publicity" that is different from privateness but also to consider the interactive relationship between people in the space. The shared lives and practices of community members in public buildings shape unique public spaces.

Therefore, when considering the shaping of "public space" in this study, it must be considered through the practical phenomena of Dong people's daily and special lives in the public space of Wind and Rain Bridge. When we think about it from this dimension, including sheltering from the wind and rain, walking and doing business, offering sacrifices and praying for blessings, as well as various rituals and traditions, we can understand the unique public space built by the Dong people at Chenyang Bhazai and discover its meaning.

Secondly, there is the concept of ethnic identity. The concept of ethnic identity comes from Anthony D. Smith's book "Ethnic Identity", published by London: The University of London Press in 1991. The focus of this book is the study of ethnic identity as a collective phenomenon, its nature, causes, and consequences. Anthony D. Smith argues that we cannot truly understand nations and ethnic if we view them solely as a form of ideology or political struggle; we must also view them as cultural phenomena. In other words, ethnicity as an ideology and political movement must be closely linked to ethnic identity, a comprehensive concept that includes language, feelings, and symbols. It is worth noting that he introduced the concept of nationalism from the perspective of ideology, language, and emotion, focusing on the symbols, rituals, and customs of national identity (Smith, A. D. 1991). Ethnic identity is a collective cultural phenomenon that is influenced by elements such as the language, symbols, rituals, and customs of the ethnic group. Therefore, the consideration of the concept of ethnic identity must be considered through the practice and life of the Dong people in the public space of Wind and Rain Bridge, especially the various rituals and festival traditions that contain their specific symbols and special language. In this process, individuals shape their perception and identity of their own ethnic identity. This sense of identity is not only an individual's understanding of the ethnicity to which he or she belongs but also includes the sharing and identification of common history, cultural traditions, language, religious beliefs, values, etc.

In addition, ethnic identity is an important factor in an individual's positioning in society. It is a manifestation of "ethnic" self-identity. It tells and shows others "Who are we?" "What is the difference between us and you?". Stephen May (2004) described "ethnicity" in his book "Ethnicity, nationalism, and minority rights", which is a concept used to describe the "self" of variable racial groups in human society. There are two dimensions to each group's self-description. It is to interpret the dimension of one's group to tell oneself, "Who are we?" and to tell others in the dimension of interaction with other racial groups, "Who are we?" "How are we different from you?" is important. is, telling oneself and telling people in other groups (May, S., Modood, T., & Squires, J. 2004).

However, the formation of national identity, that is, the construction of self-identity of "ethnic", constructs meaning through thoughts in daily life. As Patricia Hill Collins argues in "Black Nationalism and African American Race: The Case for Afrocentrism as a Civil Religion": Black Nationalism's Self-Definition, Self-Determination, and self-reliance resonate with the experiences of large numbers of African Americans, with many using these ideas to shape racial identities. He emphasized how people use thoughts to construct meaning in their daily lives (May, S., Modood, T., & Squires, J. 2004).

Therefore, when considering "ethnic identity", it is necessary to consider the various phenomena of Wind and Rain Bridge in this article in daily life and special life including rituals and traditions. For example, through the analysis of ritual processes, meanings, interactions, and other scenes, we can understand the "racial identity" produced by a series of relationships in each scene. This racial identity is constantly emphasized and shaped in the ceremony, becoming a kind of "ethnic" "self-identity", that is, "ethnic identity". In this research, the researcher uses it to describe and analyze the way Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai construct "ethnic identity" through various rituals and festival traditions on their Wind and Rain bridges.

## **Part 2: The Daily Life of Dong Ethnic People Related Wind and Rain**

### **Bridges**

Wind and Rain Bridge is an indispensable public space in Dong villages. The Dong people's common use, maintenance, and repair of Wind and Rain Bridge in their daily life have established a unique relationship between Wind and Rain Bridge and the Dong people. The following will show the daily life of the Dong people in Wind and Rain Bridge, and select representative and characteristic cases for a detailed introduction. Therefore, Wind and Rain Bridge not only displays the unique architectural culture and aesthetic consciousness of the Dong people but more importantly, builds the national identity of the Dong people.

#### **2.1 The Common Uses of Wind and Rain Bridges in Chengyang Bazhai**

As a public space in the village, Wind and Rain Bridge frequently participates in the daily life of the Dong people and produces production in the social and psychological space of the village.

The original function of the Wind and Rain Bridge was based on practicality. The functions of passage and rest were the original intention of the Wind and Rain Bridge. However, due to the different sizes and locations of the Wind and Rain Bridge, its functions are diversified. Because the Wind and Rain Bridge is the entrance to the village's external communication and the main thoroughfare for internal transportation, the large Wind and Rain Bridge has gradually become a public place with practical functions for doing business. In addition, the Dong people chose the location of the large Wind and Rain Bridge at the "water mouth" of the Linxi River, which conforms to the Dong people's view of Feng Shui. They also set up shrines in the bridge temples, so that the Wind and Rain Bridge has the functions of sealing Feng Shui and offering sacrifices and praying for blessings. Wind and Rain Bridge has become a space for Dong people to offer sacrifices and pray for blessings.





Figure 45 Pin'an Bridge, Meishao Bridge, and Hongjun Bridge on the west branch of the Linxi River. They are smaller in scale and are mainly built for practical functions of traffic. Source: <https://image.baidu.com/> (Accessed on March 20, 2024)

Pin'an Bridge, Meishao Bridge and Hongjun Bridge located on the west branch of the Linxi River are small in scale and have single functions, mainly for practical functions. Among them, Pin'an Bridge is located between villages, and Meishao Bridge and Hongjun Bridge are located between farmland. They were mainly built to meet the production and living needs of villagers.



Figure 46 Yongji Bridge, Puji Bridge, Helong Bridge, and Wanshou Bridge are the large wind and rain bridges in Chengyang Bazhai. They not only have practical functions such as passage, rest, and business but also have spiritual functions such as

locking Feng Shui and offering sacrifices, and praying for blessings. Source:  
Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2023

Therefore, the Wind and Rain Bridge is a village public building with both practical and spiritual functions. The Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai mainly use the Wind and Rain Bridge in their daily lives for communication, transportation, business, shelter from wind and rain, and for gatherings to enjoy the cool weather, military defense, and welcoming guests, as well as locking Feng Shui offering sacrifices and praying for blessings.

#### 2.1.1 Connecting Transportation and Commercial Transactions

Chengyang Bazhai is surrounded by mountains, and external transportation is extremely inconvenient. The Linxi River also isolates the village from the outside world and each other. Production work, visiting relatives and friends, and going back and forth require wading. The Wind and Rain Bridge can avoid the pain of wading. It is an indispensable transportation building for the passage of humans and animals. The construction of the Wind and Rain Bridge has facilitated the connection between villages. For example, the famous Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge is called the "Chengyang Bazhai Bridge" by the local Dong people because it connects Ma'an, Pingzhai, Yanzhai, Pingzhai, and Dazhai, Dongzhai, Pingpuzhai, and Jichangzhai eight villages (Yang Yi. 2023).

In ancient China, itinerant merchants were called merchants. In addition to its basic traffic function, Wind and Rain Bridge was also a place for merchant activities. Due to the complex topography of Chengyang Bazhai and limited land use, there are few public spaces except the Drum Tower Square. The Wind and Rain Bridge was built as the only way for villagers to travel, and the Wind and Rain Bridge is also the door to external exchanges. Wind and Rain Bridge serves as a place for traders to do business. Today, on Helong Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai, villagers still use Wind and Rain Bridge as a shop to sell goods. The bridge corridor is covered with Dong cloth, Dong embroidery, and other handicrafts made by villagers.



Figure 47 Dong people do business on Helong Bridge. The Helong Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai connects Yanzhai and Hepingzhai, and is the only way to communicate between the two villages. At the same time, Dong women hang the Dong cloth and Dong embroidery made by the villagers on the bridge corridor handicrafts, buying and selling goods. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2023

### 2.1.2 Shelter from Wind and Rain, and Cooling Gatherings

Chengyang Bazhai is located in the subtropical zone, with high temperatures, high humidity, and frequent rains. Therefore, the Wind and Rain Bridge has corridors and pavilions, so passers-by can take shelter from the wind in time. In addition, long wooden seats are set up on both sides of the Wind and Rain Bridge corridor to facilitate the Dong people to rest and take a rest.

Due to the unique architectural structure of Wind and Rain Bridge, the wind passes through the bridge in summer, making people feel cool. Therefore, Dong people often come to Wind and Rain Bridge to enjoy the cool air and gather during farm breaks or leisure time. In particular, some elderly people in the village will play chess and chat here. Wind and Rain Bridge has become a public space for villagers to rest and communicate.



Figure 48 Dong people gather on Puji Bridge. On the Puji Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai, the Dong elders are enjoying the cool air, playing chess, and chatting on the bridge. Wind and Rain Bridge has become a space for public communication.

Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2022

### 2.1.3 Military Defense and Welcoming Guests

Among the eight villages in Chengyang Baizhai, the bridge gates of some Wind and Rain Bridges also serve as village gates. As the gateway to a village, it naturally has the function of military defense. In an interview with Mr. Yang Siyu, the intangible inheritor of Dong wooden architecture, he described that the biggest function of Wind and Rain Bridge, in the beginning, was a building with defensive functions. Wind and Rain Bridge served as the only entrance for their people to enter the village, naturally became the first line of defense outside the village, and also to enhance the people's sense of security. Moreover, they also have a second line of defense. The village gate is the second line of defense after Wind and Rain Bridge. If enemies are discovered on Wind and Rain Bridge, they can go to the village gate to notify the tribesmen and buy time for others. Therefore, they believe that their ancestors also valued the natural geographical advantages and defense capabilities here, and built the settlement in this depression surrounded by mountains on three sides, conforming to the terrain.

As a gateway, Wind and Rain Bridge is often used as a place where a village receives guests and sends them off. In the past, when visiting



relatives, the Dong people usually entered the village at dusk to show respect for their hosts. Before dark, they usually rest and wait at Wind and Rain Bridge, and are received by the bridgekeeper. During festivals, when guests from other villages come to visit, the residents of this village dress up in festive costumes, gather at the bridge to greet them, sing "roadblocking songs" and serve "wine to the guests" to show the friendship between the villages (Ma Qizhen. 2022).

#### 2.1.4 Wind and Rain Bridge as Fengshui for Preserve Fortune of the Village

In traditional Chinese culture, water is regarded as a symbol of "wealth", and there is a saying that "water surrounds sentient beings, piling up gold and jade". The Wind and Rain Bridge is located at the water outlet at the end of the village, where the water flows out. The Wind and Rain Bridge is set up here to form a building standing on the water river at the end of the village, which is to "As Feng Shui" and prevent wealth from flowing out. Wind and Rain Bridge is also called "Fortune Gas Bridge". In the Ming Dynasty, there was a covered bridge called the "Fortune Gas Bridge" in the Han area. Wind and Rain Bridge is a covered bridge that was recreated by the Dong people, which means to hope that the village will have good weather and to "collect and store good fortune gas".

From a psychological perspective, since the bridge at the water mouth is related to the fate of the village, it is generally necessary to avoid some bad days to build the bridge and record the construction of the bridge in the family tree. The Dong people believe that the bridge built at the water mouth can be easily repaired even if it is damaged. After the so-called Feng Shui rhetoric of "households are closed", from a landscape perspective, setting up a bridge at the water entrance not only constructs a static landscape in Chengyang Bazhai but also improves the dynamic circulation of the village (Zhu Yongchun. 2015).

#### 2.1.5 Ritual Space to Pray for Blessings

At the end of the Ming Dynasty and the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, in order to consolidate the rule of the southwest region, the cultural "assimilation" policy was adopted to promote the integration of the original Dong culture and the Han culture, and the religious beliefs of the Han area were also introduced into the Dong area. As a building formed by the spread of Han culture, Wind and Rain Bridge is not only reflected in its "temple-bridge-in-one" form but also in the temples and shrines inside. Temples and shrines complement each other with the location of lock Feng Shui. Lock Feng Shui is mainly intended to prevent the loss of "wealth". The temples and shrines set up in Wind and Rain Bridge are not only for the villagers to lock 's wealth but also for this purpose. As a medium for blessing, it protects ethnic groups and villages (Ma Qizhen. 2022).

Among the Chengyang Bazhai, the larger and more complete wind and rain bridges such as Yongji Bridge, Helong Bridge, and Puji Bridge generally have shrines dedicated to Guan Gong, Emperor Wenchang, and Tudi Gong. In the smaller wind and rain bridges, there is Generally, a shrine set up to worship the Lord of Tudi Gong. It can be seen that the ancestors and ethnic gods in Dong primitive religions such as Sa Sui and Yang Zaisi do not appear in Wind and



Rain Bridge. Instead, the gods believed in Han areas are mainly used, making it a place for worship and blessing with functions such as ancestral halls and temples.



Figure 49 Bridge Temple and statue of Puji Bridge. The bridge temple of Puji Bridge houses shrines dedicated to Tudi Gong, Guan Gong, and Emperor Wenchang, making Wind and Rain Bridge a place for worship and prayer by the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2022

In Chengyang Bazhai, the Dong people use the Wind and Rain Bridge differently in their daily lives, which makes the Dong people have relationships with each other and with society. The Wind and Rain Bridge becomes the connection between individuals and groups.

## 2.2 The Common Maintenance of Wind and Rain Bridges: The Legend of the Blue Dragon and the Creation of Ghost

Because the Dong people base their daily social life and spiritual needs on the Wind and Rain Bridge, which is a public space in the village, the maintenance of the Wind and Rain Bridge has become an important thing for the village. Chengyang Bazhai uses legends and created ghosts to jointly discipline people's thoughts to achieve the purpose of maintaining the Wind and Rain Bridge.

The ancient legend of the blue dragon of the Dong people tells the story of the birth of Wind and Rain Bridge. According to the Dong elders, a long time ago, a blue dragon and a black python lived in the river of the Dong village. black python coveted the beauty of Yin Gu, a Dong girl, and wanted to kidnap Yin Gu while she was washing clothes by the river. Upon seeing this, the blue dragon turned into a young man, jumped out of the water, slashed at the black python with his sword, and rescued Yingu. The frightened Yin Gu returned home and lay ill in bed, thinking deeply about the young man who saved her. Blue Dragon pretended to be a carpenter and brought pearls to the village. He used pearl powder to cure Yin Gu's disease and helped the villagers build drum towers and pavilions. The Spring Festival is here, and just as the Dong people are singing and dancing to celebrate the festival, the black python stirs up the river and destroys the village with floods. In times of crisis, the blue dragon turned into a long bridge and rescued the Dong people. The unwilling black python decided to have a showdown with the blue dragon. After a fierce fight, the blue dragon finally executed the black python and died of exhaustion himself. To commemorate the kind and brave blue dragon, and to show the Dong family's desire to hate and worship kindness, the Dong villagers built a solemn and strong bridge on the river beside the village. The bridge body is like a blue dragon,

expressing the Dong people's memory and respect for the green dragon. At the same time, the bridge is also the guardian of the village. Dong people call it "Huילong Bridge", also known as "Wind and Rain Bridge" (Wang Guanyi, 2009). This story shows that the Dong people constructed the sacred status of Wind and Rain Bridge in the community through legends to achieve the purpose of joint maintenance.

In addition, the Dong people protect the Wind and Rain Bridge by creating ghosts. Just like many sacred things in the world that require public maintenance by the community, people often create gods or ghosts to restrict behavior to achieve the purpose of common maintenance.

This is the process of creating space conceptually. On a visible level, it makes the bridge sacred. Because this is the way everyone will go to hell or heaven after death. But on a coded level, it's about preserving and valuing the bridge as a public space for everyone.

The Dong people have a unique outlook on life. They believe that the bridge is a passage between the "Yinjian" and the "Yanjian". The human soul needs to pass through the bridge to the "yang world" or return to the "underworld". When the human soul comes to the bridge, it needs the ghosts guarding the bridge to guide the way and help the human soul move in the right direction.

The ghosts guarding the bridge are often people who died unexpectedly in the village during the period when the bridge was built. The Dong people say that after this person dies, he will become the ghost guarding the bridge. In this way, the Wind and Rain Bridge has life, instead of being a dead thing.

The ghosts who guard the bridge are with the bridge. When the bridge is the channel of life, he must guide people's souls. Therefore, when a Dong woman becomes infertile after being married for a long time, people think that the child is blocked by the river and cannot be reincarnated. At this time, she needs to go to the bridge to induce soul reincarnation. Moreover, whenever the Wind and Rain Bridge is built or repaired and opened to traffic, a grand "stepping on the bridge" ceremony will be held to induce the soul to reincarnate and obtain an heir. The lives of Dong people are closely connected with Wind and Rain Bridge.

The ghosts who guard the bridge are also closely related to the condition of the bridge. When the wind and rain bridge are damaged, the ghosts will also feel unhappy. The Dong people will also repair the Wind and Rain Bridge as soon as possible to gain the blessing of the village and the reproduction of their children.

Through legends and the creation of ghosts, Wind and Rain Bridge has an imaginary level of spiritual space, thus realizing the protection and preservation of Wind and Rain Bridge as a public space in the overall dimension of Dong society.

### 2.3 The Common Repair of Wind and Rain Bridges: The Bridgekeeper and Donations

The Dong people have a professional "bridge keeper" and a systematic fundraising method to repair the Wind and Rain Bridge. To a certain extent, it has built the social system and ethics of the Dong people.

The geographical environment and climatic conditions of Chengyang Bazhai determine that there is heavy rainfall in summer and flash floods

are prone to occur. During this period every year, neighboring villages will spontaneously take time to inspect and care for the Wind and Rain Bridge, which is commonly known as "Bridge Exploration Day". For possible dangers should be repaired and reinforced and for larger wind and rain bridges with more pedestrians, residents of nearby villages take turns to maintain them or raise funds to hire special personnel to guard them. The person who protects the Wind and Rain Bridge is called "bridge keeper".



Figure 50 The bridge keeper of Puji Bridge. He is usually responsible for sweeping and cleaning the Yongji Bridge and is also responsible for extending incense to the gods and managing the merit box for pedestrians' donations to the Wind and Rain Bridge. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2022

The bridge keeper is mainly responsible for guarding, cleaning, and repairing the Wind and Rain Bridge, and keeping the bridge clean and intact all year round. In the Wind and Rain Bridge with a shrine, he is also responsible for extending incense to the gods. The village that invites the bridge keeper will give him "public land" or appropriate monetary rewards.

The Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai jointly repaired the Wind and Rain Bridge through fundraising. Most of the structures of the Dong Wind and Rain Bridge are wooden structures. When walking and resting every day, part of the bridge deck or railings will always be damaged. The bridge corridors or balconies of the Wind and Rain Bridge are made of stacked tiles. They have also been damaged after being exposed to the sun and rain for a long time. In Chengyang Bazhai, village elders from eight villages organize villagers to raise donations. There is no limit to the amount of donations, including donations of money, materials, and labor.



Figure 51 The railings of Helong Bridge with the name of the fundraiser engraved on it. The railings of the bridge corridor of Helong Bridge are engraved with the names of Dong people from Chengyang Bazhai who donated money, materials, and work when rebuilding and repairing Helong Bridge to express your gratitude to them.

Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2022

The eight natural villages in Chengyang Bazhai all have their own village elders, who are usually responsible for managing the village's affairs. In addition to the village elders, each village will also select 3-4 elderly people with high moral character in the village to assist the village elders in handling village affairs. According to Chen Nengxiu, an old man from Ma'anzhai, Helong Bridge is a wind and rain bridge belonging to Ma'anzhai, and Ma'anzhai is responsible for its daily maintenance and repairs.



Figure 52 Donation notices and donation boxes are installed on Helong Bridge. The notice states that the money will be used to repair the Helong Bridge. The old man in the blue T-shirt in the picture is the person in Ma'anzhai who is responsible for collecting donations. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2022

There is an old man in Ma'an Village who is responsible for collecting donations, and then the village elder organizes Dong craftsmen in the village to repair the Wind and Rain Bridge. Yang Qiushi, a Dong craftsman from Yanzhai, is the inheritor of the national Dong wooden structure construction skills. He often repairs the Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai and repairs it for free. He believes that repairing the Wind and Rain Bridge is a good deed and a good deed, which will benefit future generations.





donation. Among them are also the names of tourists from Europe, America, and Japan. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2022

On the stone tablet next to the head of Helong Bridge, the names of tourists from all over the world are engraved. Like the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai, they became the common guardians of the Wind and Rain Bridge.

The Dong people's use, maintenance, and repair of Wind and Rain Bridge together constitute their daily life in Wind and Rain Bridge. They build their culture and beliefs on Wind and Rain Bridge and gradually form their unique values. The Dong people do not have writing, but this daily life in the Wind and Rain Bridge has become a form of self-construction for them. As a public space, Wind and Rain Bridge has also become a theater for the formation of Dong culture, in which the Dong people interpret their national character.

### **Part 3: The Special Life of the Dong Ethnic People in the Wind and Rain Bridges**

The purpose of this section is to systematically explore the application of wind and rain bridges in specific socio-cultural fields, especially rituals and festivals, and to further analyze its role in the construction of ethnic identity. As a public space in Chengyang Bazhai, Wind and Rain Bridge not only has important value in daily use but also becomes a more important cultural carrier and identity theater in various festivals and ceremonies under the social and cultural background. The following is a case analysis of several representative Dong rituals and festivals, revealing that the Wind and Rain Bridge is endowed with multi-layered meanings on specific social and cultural occasions. This analysis helps us understand the role of the Wind and Rain Bridge in the construction of Dong culture and national identity an indispensable position in.

#### **3.1 The Unique and Elaborate Bridge-Building Rituals of Wind and Rain Bridges**

In the traditional Dong society, the Wind and Rain Bridge is closely related to important rituals of the Dong people, especially the ceremony of building the Wind and Rain Bridge, which is a process that closely connects the Wind and Rain Bridge with the village. In the unique and complicated bridge-building ceremony, the Wind and Rain Bridge serves as a connection between people and gods, and between people, and builds the spiritual temperament and worldview of the Dong people, which is of rich significance.

Dong villages regard the construction of Wind and Rain Bridge as a very important collective activity, and the entire process from foundation laying to completion includes a large number of ceremonies. According to an interview with Yang Hengjin, a Dong carpenter, there are a total of four ceremonies in the construction process of Wind and Rain Bridge.

##### **3.1.1 Foundation Laying Ritual**

After the construction foundation site of Wind and Rain Bridge is determined, a foundation laying ceremony for the bridge construction needs to be held, and the foundation laying ceremony needs to be carried out before the piers and abutments are built. The specific process is as follows: the elderly in the

village discuss together and invite geography master to jointly choose an auspicious day, prepare pig heads, chickens, grass carp, grain handles, wine glasses, chopsticks, and other sacrifices, and place the sacrifices on the altar. geography master poured wine and incense and recited sacrificial inscriptions to pray to the gods. Then a blast of firecrackers is set off, and then the eldest person in the village lays the first stone to lay the foundation. During the foundation-laying process, some auspicious objects need to be placed at the footings of the bridge piers to pray for the smooth construction of the bridge and long-term safety and stability.



Figure 55 Photo of geography master Mr. Chen Jize. The researcher was talking with Mr. Chen Jize. Mr. Chen was describing how to use the compass tool to estimate the direction of Liangji when building bridges or houses. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. July 15, 2023

The geography master of Chengyang Bazhai is proficient in Feng Shui knowledge and can make geographical judgments on the topography of residences, cemeteries, and villages, select auspicious days and places, and handle funerals, disaster relief, and other related matters. They were influenced by Buddhism and Taoism. They used books such as "Xunlong Dingxue", "Three Dong Books", "Wangyue Tower", etc., and their props and rituals were similar to those of Buddhism and Taoism. In Dong villages, whenever bridges or houses need to be built, the village elders, as the traditional authority of the Dong villages, must first ask a geography master to conduct a deduction and select an auspicious day and a favorable Feng Shui location before proceeding with the construction work. And geography master should be invited to preside over the sacrificial ceremony to obtain blessings and protection.

### 3.1.2 Beam Setting Ritual

The part above the bridge deck of the Dong Wind and Rain Bridge integrates all the craftsmanship of the Dong Wood art structure. It does not require iron nails for connection and fixation. It only relies on beams, columns, wooden canons, and other components for mortise and tenon joints to form the main frame. After the main frame of the Wind and Rain Bridge is completed, a "Beam Setting Ritual" needs to be held. According to Mr. Yang Hengjin: "The "Beam Setting Ritual" is the most solemn and very complicated ceremony in the Wind and Rain

Bridge construction. Because in the eyes of our Dong people, the beam is the most important and sacred part."

The specific process is as follows: The beam is installed after the main structure of the wooden frame is built. The beam should be made from the larger twin fir trees and processed immediately after felling. Its golden color after peeling symbolizes money. After the beams are peeled, eight characters "Guotai Minan, Fengtiao Yushun" are written on them, and the date of the beam is engraved. Then two copper coins and a silver coin are nailed into the middle of the beams, and then wrapped in red cloth and tied. Put on a new language pen, ink block, inkstone, calendar, and a pair of chun wood chopsticks, tie them with needlework red, pay attention to the auspicious flowers and grains, and finally the ink master will worship and glue on the rooster's blood. The copper coins and silver coins here mainly represent attracting wealth, the wolf-moon pen and inkstone represent scholars, and the chopsticks and ears of grain represent the abundance of food and clothing. After tying these things, tie the two ends of the beam with ropes, and then use the ropes to pull the beams up to the top of the frame.



Figure 56 The researcher interviews Mr. Yang Hengjin. A Dong "Zhangmo" Master Mr. Yang Hengjin recalled to the researcher the relevant details of the reconstruction of Pin'an Bridge in 1986 and the ceremony in which he presided over the beam installation. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 2, 2022

According to the memories of Mr. Yang Hengjin, a craftsman of the Dong ethnic group in Dong Village, Pin'an Bridge of Chengyang Bazhai was rebuilt in November 1986, and Mr. Chen, a geography master, chose the auspicious time for the Beam Setting Ritual. Mr. Yang Hengjin, "Zhangmo" Master of Pin'an Bridge, and the highly respected elders in the village presided over the Ritual.

After the geography master used a compass to survey the auspicious directions at the auspicious time, the elders began to hold a ceremony to worship Luban. As the ancestor of all carpenters, Lu Ban is a figure who must be mentioned before the groundbreaking ceremony. On the prepared black rectangular wooden table, the commonly used traditional carpentry tools such as ink fountains and saws are placed in sequence, as well as pig head meat, glutinous rice, fish, a dozen pieces of papyrus with coin symbols, and six wine glasses. The Lu Ban invitation ceremony requires "three animals", five feet of green cloth, three wells of white rice, Li Shi, a



handful of grain, and a bowl of water, which symbolize good luck and good luck. The elder poured wine into the six wine groves, put the home-woven indigo-dyed cloth on the raw glutinous rice, put a red envelope in the middle, then lit the incense, put the incense stick on the glutinous rice, took three steps back, and began to recite the prayer of Lu Ban's master etiquette. In this process, we must also express our gratitude to our ancestors. The elders read the ancestors who passed away in turn to express their feelings about the patriarch's inheritance. After offering sacrifices to express our gratitude to our ancestors, we should continue to offer sacrifices to express our gratitude to other azimuth gods and successors: "The sky is not taboo, the earth is not taboo, the year is not taboo, the moon is not taboo, the time is not taboo, Luban disciples have no taboos. Dongfang Anshen God, South the God of Anshen is in the West, the God in the North is in the God of Anshen, the God of the East is the God of peace, the God of the South is the God of the West, the God of the West is the Master, the God of the North is the Master, the five directions are the God of peace. All Souls."



Figure 57 The Beam Setting Ritual of Pin'an Bridge. Mr. Yang Hengjin, the Dong "Zhangmo" Master, is presiding over the Beam Setting Ritual of Pin'an Bridge, offering sacrifices to other azimuth gods and hand-shielding masters. Source: Photographed by Yang Yundong. November 17, 1986

When the auspicious time comes, the "Zhangmo" Master Yang Hengjin presides over the ceremony of setting the beam. On the beam during the Beam Setting Ritual, he wrote from left to right, "The country is peaceful and the people are safe, the weather is smooth, and the craftsman Yang Hengjin stands on November 30, 1986, Bingyin year, Jihai month, Wuyin day". Master Yang used a hammer to nail a silver dollar vertically into the middle of the beam. After nailing it in, he placed a writing brush wrapped with a perpetual calendar and talisman paper on it, and covered it with a square Dong blue indigo-dyed cloth. Four coins were nailed to the four corners of the dyed cloth. Then use colorful silk threads and glutinous grains to fix the wood on the dyed cloth. The wood is cut from toon branches into the shape of chopsticks. Three glutinous grains are wrapped around each other, and three colorful silk threads are wrapped around them. After wrapping the leadwood, hang

five auspicious feather flowers on the beam. Flip the beam to the back and cover with red silk cloth. When the auspicious time arrives, Master Yang Hengjin, the "Zhangmo" Master, reads a prayer to the upper beam. The content of the prayer is to wish that the beam can be good and bring blessings. After the prayer is finished, the two ends of the beam are tied with ropes, and then the beams are pulled up to the top of the frame through the ropes.

### 3.1.3 Stepping on the Beams Ritual

After the beams are installed, a "Stepping on the Beams Ritual" needs to be performed. The "Stepping on the Beams Ritual" usually requires a "Zhangmo" Master to complete it. The specific process is as follows: Install two wooden boards on both sides of the newly installed beam to facilitate the "Zhangmo" Master from one end of the beam to the other. The master who steps on the beam needs to say an auspicious word every time he steps on the beam. Since the entire village, men, women, old and children will watch when the beam is stepped on, the crowd will echo and cheer every time the master says an auspicious word. Amidst the sound of firecrackers, the master sprinkled various candies prepared in advance from the top of the shelf, and the onlookers picked up the candies one after another. The Dong people think this is a grab for good luck. They believe that the master who steps on the beam is the messenger of beam, and he passes the blessings of beam to people through the master who steps on the beam.



Figure 58 Stepping on the Beams Ritual. A promotional video for the construction of new houses in Chengyang Bazhai. Source: <http://www.sjcybz.com/> (Accessed on March 2, 2024)

During the beam-stepping ceremony, the Dong carpenter threw down candies that symbolized good fortune, and onlookers picked up the candies. Whether it is the construction of a wind and rain bridge or a house, after the beams are installed, the "Zhangmo" Master will perform a beam stepping ceremony and throw candies.

### 3.1.4 Stepping on the Bridge Ritual

After the Wind and Rain Bridge is completed, a "Stepping on the Bridge Ritual" needs to be held. This is a completion Ritual. The specific process is as follows: the Dong blue-dyed cloth is spread on the bridge. Geography Master set up an altar on the bridge to worship the gods, and then the respected old man in the village led the rest of the elderly over 60 years old to step onto the bridge wearing hundreds of bird clothes. The bird clothes are embroidered with cranes and phoenixes.

When the old people walk across the bridge, they represent leading the cranes and phoenixes to fly onto the bridge. When the old people walked to the altar in the middle of the bridge, the leading old man began to recite the bridge-stepping blessings. These blessings were all auspicious words. Every time you take a step, recite the evidence and put down a silver coin. The old people behind need to pick up the silver coins and objects placed when setting up the altar after the leading old man recites the congratulations, and follow the leading old man across the bridge.



Figure 59 "Stepping on the Bridge Ritual" in Tongdao County, China. When the new Wind and Rain Bridge is built, the Dong people will hold a huge "Stepping on the Bridge Ritual". They spread indigo Dong cloth on the bridge, and the Geography Master led other Dong people to cross the bridge on the Dong cloth. Source: <http://www.tongdao.gov.cn/> (Accessed on March 2, 2024)

To celebrate the completion of the Wind and Rain Bridge, the Dong people will perform Lusheng activities. Young Dong people played the Lusheng to celebrate the completion of the new bridge and came to the bridge to perform a "Stepping on the Bridge Ritual".



Figure 60 Dong Lusheng Team in Chengyang Bazhai. Dong people play the Lusheng to celebrate the completion of the Wind and Rain Bridge. Source: Books on Dong customs (Accessed on March 4, 2024)

Ritual is not only a simple pattern but also an interaction. Through ritual, people can better understand their spiritual temperament and worldview. Wind and Rain Bridge is a special space that is both sacred and secular.



Through a series of rituals, the Dong people directly participated in the entire process and deified the Wind and Rain Bridge. During the entire process, the Dong people gained psychological satisfaction and promoted social development and Internal unity.

### 3.2 Connected with the soul of the Sacrificial Bridge Ritual, Addition Bridge Ritual, and Settle Bridge Ritual

In real life, Wind and Rain Bridge is a transitional tool Village in Chengyang Bazhai. In the “Sacrificial Bridge Ritual”, “Addition Bridge Ritual” and “Settle Bridge Ritual”, the actual transitional function of the Wind and Rain Bridge was naturally extended to become a symbol that connects the worlds of life and death and yin and yang. The “Sacrificial Bridge Ritual” related to the individual soul, the “Addition Bridge Ritual” to protect the child's safety, and the “Settle Bridge Ritual” to guide the child's soul to the world of the world all express people's hope for the transition from one state or situation to another. The bridges and bridge spaces surrounding the birth, treatment, and fertility rituals of the Dong people, constitute the intermediary between the dualistic framework of "disease, disaster and rehabilitation, peace, ghost world, and human world, and the world on the other side and the world on this shore" (Huang Jie, 2019).

Sociologist Émile Durkheim proposed that the "theory of ritual" is characterized by "the transition from one situation to another, from one world to another." “Sacrificial Bridge Ritual”, “Addition Bridge Ritual” and “Settle Bridge Ritual” of the Dong people are all state transformation processes based on the separation, transition, and aggregation of the original state, and have the characteristics of the "theory of ritual" defined and revealed by Émile Durkheim.

#### 3.2.1 Sacrificial Bridge Ritual Associated with Individual Souls

“Sacrificial Bridge Ritual” is the Dong people's tribute to their souls. The Dong people believe that the bridge is a passage for souls to come and go.

The Dong people have a saying that when everyone comes to the world, they must cross a bridge. When a person is born, the wizard will calculate which bridge he or she came to the earth. Once the bridge is determined, the person's life will be connected with the fate of this bridge.

Therefore, every one of the Dong people has a soul bridge of their own in the Yang world. This bridge is the only bridge that people must pass through when they are reincarnated from the “Yinjian” to the “Yangjian”. After death, they return to the “Yinjian” through this bridge. Without this bridge of life, we would lose the way forward, we would not be able to find the direction of life, and we would not be able to reincarnate between Yin and Yang. If your soul bridge is broken, repair it; The Soul Bridge was destroyed and has to be rebuilt (Huang Jie. 2019).

"Sacrificial Bridge Ritual" is divided into public Sacrificial Bridge and individual Sacrificial Bridge. The public "Bridge Sacrifice Festival" is held on the second day of the second month of the lunar calendar every year. The Dong people jointly worship their bridge of life. This ceremony is affectionately called "Warming Bridge" by the Dong people. They brought a skein of



cotton thread, a small bag of tea, and a little salt from the clothes they wore and placed them under their bridge to show that their lives (souls) were always with the bridge.

The timing of individual Sacrificial Bridge is different. In Dong villages, when a person is born, his destiny is already linked to his bridge, so every year on birthdays, weddings, and funerals, everyone must hold a ceremony to worship his bridge.

On June 30, 2023, Chengyang Bazhai held a grand public "Sacrificial Bridge Ritual" for the 111th anniversary of the "Chengyang Wind and Rain Bridge" and a folk event for the Guan Gong Knife Sharpening Festival. Next to the Yongji Bridge, the Dong people paid homage to the Yongji Bridge with colorful and characteristic folk performances such as folk parades, Dong songs, lectures, Duoye, and Dong Lusheng. Although this memorial ceremony is full of performances in today's tourist areas, it proves that Wind and Rain Bridge's importance meaning to the Dong people has continued from the past to the present.



Figure 61 Sacrificial Bridge Ritual. On June 30, 2023, the Dong people held a grand public "Sacrificial Bridge Ritual" next to the Yongji Bridge. Source: <http://www.sjcybz.com/> (Accessed on April 2, 2024)

### 3.2.2 Addition Bridge Ritual to Bless Children with Safety

"Addition Bridge Ritual" is also called "Help Bridge", which means helping the bridge. The Dong people associate the bridge with life, which means helping people's lives. "Addition Bridge Ritual" is generally used for children. Addition Bridge is when the elders add a new fir tree next to the bridge belonging to the child, and tie a piece of home-woven red cloth on the fir tree to invite the child's soul to return home from the bridge with the red cloth sign and pray to the Bridge ghost at the bridge. May the children be safe and sound. When a child becomes seriously ill, his soul mistakenly steps on someone else's bridge. At this time, a wizard

needs to be asked to cut off the bridge that the child accidentally stepped on. The method is: the wizard places a pair of chopsticks on the mouth of a bowl filled with water, and cuts it with a knife. The wooden chopsticks are broken into two pieces, but the water in the bowl does not move at all, which means that the child's soul is safe and will not accidentally cross someone else's bridge again (Xu Jiesun, Yang Xiunan, Xu Guilan. 1992).

### 3.2.3 Settle Bridge Ritual to Guide Children's Souls to the Mortal World

The "Settle Bridge Ritual" is a ritual closely related to the fertility and reproduction of the Dong people. It is designed to welcome the souls of a group of children to the world for reincarnation. The Dong people regard the Wind and Rain Bridge as a passage for souls to enter the "Yangjian". This ceremony carries the Dong people's awe and expectation for life.

Before the "Settle Bridge Ritual" begins, the elders of the Dong village will carefully select an auspicious day and gather the villagers to make joint preparations. Villagers will prepare offerings and sacrificial items according to traditional customs. On the day of the ceremony, according to the auspicious time selected by the Geography Master people will worship and recite scriptures to pray for the blessing of the gods and guide the soul of the child to cross the bridge smoothly. The villagers knelt devoutly, offered offerings, and prayed silently.

## 3.3 Crossing the Bridge Rituals in Dong Ethnic Weddings: Transformation of Identity and Display of New Identity

Zhou Xing believes in "Realm and Symbol: Bridges and Folklore" that bridges symbolize the transition between two states, scenes, or situations, and play an important role in the etiquette of people acquiring new identities and states (Zhou Xing. 1998).

The Dong wedding is the transformation of the bride's identity from daughter to wife, and the Wind and Rain Bridge plays an important role in the entire wedding process. Weddings of Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai usually last for four days, usually from the Chinese Spring Festival to the third day of the Lunar New Year.

### 3.3.1 Crossing the Bridge Ritual in "Bride Stealing" on New Year's Eve

The first day of the wedding in Chengyang Bazhai is to pick up the bride on the eve of the New Year. The Dong family's marriage tradition is to steal the bride's home on the night of New Year's Eve, so the Dong people call picking up the bride on New Year's Eve "stealing a bride". On this night, the groom brings several well-spoken groomsmen to the bride's house to eat oil tea. During this period, the bride's family will ask various questions to test the groom. As long as the groom can move the bride and family with enough sincerity that night, the bride and family will pass smoothly "Interview" can bring the bride home at the right time.



Figure 62 The Dong people steal the bride during the New Year's Eve wedding. Bride stealing means that the groom comes to the bride's parents in the middle of the night and secretly marries the bride. Source: <https://weibo.com/> (Accessed on April 4, 2024)

Another special thing about the "Bride Stealing" wedding custom is that the bride and groom must set foot on the Wind and Rain Bridge after ten o'clock in the evening and before three o'clock in the morning. The louder the sound of stepping on the bridge, the better, because this is the time for ghosts to reincarnate, and the Wind and Rain Bridge is the only way to reincarnate. The louder the footsteps, the more likely it is to attract the attention of the ghosts guarding the bridge and attract the reincarnated souls. To the footsteps, so that the soul can be attached to the bride, and the bride will give birth to a son soon.

After arriving at the groom's house, the groom will place a Carrying pole under the threshold of his house, symbolizing a bridge. When the bride arrives at the groom's house, she must cross this "bridge" made of poles before she can enter the groom's house. This ritual is called the "Crossing the Bridge Ritual" by the Dong people, symbolizing that the bride's soul passes through the bridge and officially becomes a member of the groom's family.

When the bride crosses the "bridge" made of a Carrying pole and enters, the groom's family will set off a string of firecrackers to indicate that the groom has successfully married the bride. When relatives and friends from all over the place hear the sound of firecrackers, they will get up in the middle of the night and go to the groom's house to drink oil tea to congratulate him. This night's event is commonly known as "Bride Stealing."

### 3.3.2 Crossing the Wind and Rain Bridge by the "Bride carrying Water" on Lunar New Year's Day

On the early morning of the first day of the Lunar New Year, the bride, accompanied by her husband's sisters, should carry water to show the bride's good character of being diligent and thrifty, and to inform the whole village that the family has found a new bride. The bride took the Carrying pole and bucket passed by her mother-in-law to the well water in the village to carry water tour stockade.





Figure 63 "Bride carrying Water" during the Dong wedding on the first day of the Lunar New Year. The bride carries water across the Wind and Rain Bridge to reveal her new identity to others in the village. And get the blessing of a happy marriage by crossing the Wind and Rain Bridge. Source: <http://www.sjcybz.com/> (Accessed on April 4, 2024)

Mr. Chen Yuetiao from Ma'anzhai told researchers that when the bride tours the stockade to village, you will cross the Wind and Rain Bridge, even if this is not a necessary route from the well to the groom's home, because the Wind and Rain Bridge symbolizes blessings, and only by crossing the Wind and Rain Bridge can you be happy after marriage.

The ritual of "Bride carrying Water" indicates that from now on she will be the mistress of the family and will shoulder the burden of the family. The well water picked up will be used to make oil tea as soon as possible, and the neighbors will be invited to the home to taste the bride's first meal of oil tea. In the evening, young men from the village will come to the house to make oil tea.

### 3.3.3 Dong Ethnic Wedding Banquet on the second day of the Lunar New Year

On the second day of the Lunar New Year, a big banquet will be held at the groom's home, and relatives and friends will be invited to attend the wedding. After the dinner, there will be a bridal chamber ceremony. Sometimes there are too many relatives and friends to hold a banquet at the groom's house, so the groom's family holds a "Hundred Family Banquet" in the small square in front of the Drum Tower, and all the Dong people in the village can come to the wedding banquet.

### 3.3.4 "The Bride Returns Home" through the Wind and Rain Bridge on the Third Day of the Lunar New Year to Obtain Blessings and Showcase the New Identity

On the morning of the third day of the Lunar New Year, the most solemn part of the Dong family's wedding custom is "the bride returns home". "The bride returns home", is the groom's family sends the bride back to her mother's home.



Early on this day, the groom's family will choose the best day to send the bride to her mother's home with the grandest escort team. The bride's family will assign their strong relatives and friends with gold and silver jewelry, and new bridal clothes to the man's home, after the bride is dressed beautifully, by the groom's brothers and sisters and relatives and friends, as few as dozens of people, more than hundreds of people of the formation of a great and mighty escort team with the bride price set out from the groom's home on time.



Figure 64 The bride's return home on the third day of the Lunar New Year. They depart from the groom's home on time, carrying the bride's price. At about 9 a.m., we first crossed Puji Bridge, arrived at Dazhai from Yanzhai, and then passed through Dazhai to Pingzhai. Source: <http://www.sjcybz.com/> (Accessed on April 4, 2024)



Figure 65 The procession crosses the Helong Bridge. The procession for the bride returning home on the third day of the Lunar New Year crossed the Helong Bridge again at 10:30 in the morning and arrived at Yanzhai from Pingzhai. Source: <http://www.sjcybz.com/> (Accessed on April 4, 2024)



Figure 66 The procession crosses the Yongji Bridge. The procession of brides returning home on the third day of the Lunar New Year crossed the Yongji Bridge and arrived at Pingzhai from Yanzhai around 11 a.m. Source: <http://www.sjcybz.com/> (Accessed on April 4, 2024)

A mighty procession of relatives and friends of the groom carries red pigs and picks sour fish, sour duck, rice, candies, rice wine, and other gifts across the Wind and Rain Bridge. The longer and longer the procession is, the stronger the family fortune of the groom's family is. On the way to see off the bride, to show others that the groom's family is a great family and business, the procession passes through many wind and rain bridges and passes through many villages along the way, and firecrackers are set off in each village.

In the procession of sending off the bride, the most eye-catching thing was the big red pig carried by several young men on thick green bamboo poles. The pig's body was covered with red pig blood and had red paper-cut words Double Happiness on it. The young people holding the big red pig shouted from time to time. The young girls in the groom's village dress up and walk in the procession as bridesmaids, while the bride follows at the end of the procession of bridesmaids, with a piece of cloth wrapped around her arm cuffs so that outsiders can identify her, while the groom follows closely behind the bride.





Figure 67 The bride and groom in procession. The dressed-up bride follows the bridesmaids at the end, and the groom follows the bride. They present their new identities to other Dong people through the process of "The Bride Returns Home".

Source: <http://www.sjcybz.com/> (Accessed on April 4, 2024)

After the bride is sent back to her natal home, the bridesmaids are not allowed to enter the bride's home and must return to the groom's home immediately. The mother-in-law's family immediately served each guest a bowl of oil tea with sugar, which was called "happy tea". On the evening of the same day, relatives and friends of the groom's family will come to the bride's house to drink wedding wine. The bride's family will send a strong "bridesmaid toast team" to lock the door in advance and toast one by one with wine buckets.

In the unique wedding process of the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai, the "Crossing the Bridge Ritual" on the night of New Year's Eve is a change of status, and the bride "Bride carrying Water" on the first day of the new year and the "The Bride Returns Home" across the Wind and Rain Bridge walks around the Wind and Rain Bridge. It is a unique belief of the Dong people. They hope to gain blessings and show a new identity to other people in the village through this procedure.

Wind and Rain Bridge is a space closely related to the travel of the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai. In addition to its function as a public building, it also has multiple symbolic meanings in the Dong people and Dong culture. The study of rituals related to Wind and Rain Bridge helps deepen the understanding of the Dong people and culture's unique views and values on souls and diseases and confirms the ethnic identity and self-identity of the Dong people in the rituals.

### 3.4 Dong Ethnic Festivals Associated with the Wind and Rain Bridges

In the ritual mentioned above, the Wind and Rain Bridge represents the soul of the Dong people, and the Dong festivals related to the Wind and Rain Bridge are more of an interactive ritual of an ethnic group. Interaction Ritual mainly comes from American sociologist Goleman. Goleman believes that interaction ritual refers to a programmed activity that expresses meaning; micro-sociologist Collins pointed out in the book "Interaction Ritual Chain" "Interaction rituals are daily routine activities performed by encounters' based on the exchange of capital and emotions" (Randall and Collins. 2009).



In other words, interactive rituals are regular, repeated, and programmed social behaviors that are rich in symbolic meaning. Interactive rituals construct people's perception, connection, and communication with the outside world, and they maintain people's specific social relationships. In human life, "with the help of rituals, people can overcome social differences and construct social order and a common sense of belonging. Rituals make it possible for people to meet, know each other, and integrate into common actions (Lorellis Singer Hoff. 2009).

The interactive ritual of ethnic festivals is a purposeful construction that attracts people within the ethnic group to participate in the festival ceremony. Through the holding of the ceremony, a community with cohesiveness and common self-identity within the ethnic group is built. Dong people interact and socialize through Dong festivals related to Wind and Rain Bridge, and in the process further confirm that "we are Dong people."

#### 3.4.1 Bridge Worship Festival on the Second Day of the Second Lunar Month

The Bridge Worship Festival is also called the Bridge Repairing and Road Repairing Festival. The Dong people celebrate the "Bridge Respecting Festival" on February 2 of the lunar calendar every year. In the eyes of the Dong people, the Wind and Rain Bridge is not only a physical structure but also a symbol and a sign of good deeds.

Regarding the origin of the Bridge Worship Festival, there is a story that has been passed down orally by the Dong people. Once upon a time, there was a couple who had been married for a long time and had no children. They were very anxious. One day, while they were working by the stream, they saw an old man with a white beard and white hair limping over, trying to wade across the stream. The water rose in spring, and the old man couldn't get through it three times. He sat by the stream and sighed. When the couple met, they cut down three long fir trees to build a bridge for the old man to cross the stream. The old man walked from the bridge to the other side without saying a word of thanks and disappeared in the blink of an eye. A year later, the couple gave birth to a boy, who was white and fat. The couple was very happy and went to the bridge where the elderly passed by the stream. This day happened to be the second day of February. The story of them being married for a long time without children, building a bridge to have a child, and being grateful to the bridge spread quickly. People followed suit and built bridges on the second day of February, and when they had children, they chose this day to honor the bridge. Passed down from generation to generation, it became a custom and has remained until today (Zhang Di. 2024).

The difference now is that some people are not building real Bridges, but symbolic ones. For example, ask the Taoist priest to choose a place to put it on the ground, or simply put it on the door from the main room to the back room. The material used is three small fir trees, cut to a square length of about one foot two inches, arranged together, and nailed to the ground or near the main door of the back room (often people step on it). When building the bridge, the Taoist monks recite, praying on behalf of the master, realizing their wishes, and asking for gifts from the ghosts and gods. The gifts used are meat, rice balls, vegetables, incense paper, and so on.



On the day of the "Bridge Worship Festival", the local Dong people, regardless of gender, old or young, all dress up in costumes and go to "Worship the Bridge". The Dong people took their cakes and sour frozen fish to the bridge to pay homage to the bridge.

In addition to offering Worship to bridges, some Dong people also offer wine, meat, and red eggs as tribute to ancient trees, well water, ancient stones, etc. Children are dressed up on this day, and some have mesh bags with colored eggs hanging on their chests. On this day, every family in the village makes red eggs for their children to wear. During the banquet to pay homage to the bridge, any passers-by who come to step on the bridge for the first time are considered to be auspicious omens. The owner of the bridge should keep the meal, warm table treats, and send eggs and glutinous rice.



Figure 68 Bridge Worship Festival. February 22, 2023, is the second day of the second lunar month. In a village in Guizhou where Dong and Miao people live together, the Bridge Worship Festival is being held. Men, and women, old and young all dressed up in costumes and went to the bridge to pay homage to the bridge with their cakes and sour frozen fish. Source: <https://www.gzstv.com/> (Accessed on 22 February 2023)



Figure 69 Pay tribute to old trees. February 22, 2023, is the second day of the second lunar month. In a village in Guizhou where Dong and Miao people live together, the Bridge Worship Festival is being held. Some villagers offered wine, meat, and red eggs as tribute to the ancient trees. Source: <https://www.gzstv.com/> (Accessed on 22 February 2023)

Some women have to set up symbolic "guideposts" and "bridges" for pedestrians to walk because they are childless or have children without children, or because there are many disasters at home. A rooster's head is stuck on a wooden stick and three red eggs are buried at the head of the "bridge" or the foot of the "guidance monument" to express the accumulation of merit and avoid disasters and give birth to a child early. On this day, you can cut down other people's trees to build bridges at will, and others will not scold you. If you want to scold you, the more you scold, the richer the tree cutter will be.

People who don't need a son also actively build bridges and Worship bridges. Dong people believe that building bridges and worshipping them can cultivate yin power, accumulate yin virtues, and eliminate disasters. Therefore, people are willing to participate in erecting, repairing, and Worshipping bridges. The difference is that some of them build bridges for people to walk on, and some build bridges for people to connect their hearts. For example, in daily life, exchanging information with others, and matching businesses, so that both families benefit, is a bridge for people; Acting as a love introducer for young people is also a way to build Bridges.

As an important festival in Dong culture, the Bridge Worship Festival is not only the inheritance of national traditions and customs but also has social functions such as promoting interpersonal communication and maintaining the stability of the social structure.

For all ethnicities in the world, the ultimate goal of "human reproduction" is to hope for "population prosperity and racial continuation". In this context, the Worship to Wind and Rain Bridge has become of great significance for the reproduction of heirs. The Bridge Worship Festival on February 2 has become a symbol of culture and identity. Although in modern times this festival has included performances under the gaze of tourists, the continuation of the festival still reflects the Dong people's worship of primitiveness and cultural values. In this festival, Wind and Rain Bridge builds a communication space between individuals and groups and meets people's spiritual needs.

### 3.4.2 Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival

Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival is a Chinese folk culture project and is also included in the national intangible cultural heritage list.

Guan Gong is a historical hero and the supreme and holy god who is highly worshiped by Chinese civil society. In Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and the religious temples of the imperial court and the people, Guan Gong has a lofty status of "unparalleled among the best". In China, people regard Guan Gong as a spiritual totem who is upright and just, responds to requests, and protects the country and the people. Every May 13th of the lunar calendar, lively and grand folk activities to commemorate Guan Gong will be held in China and even overseas Chinese gathering areas. It is called the "Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival", and in some places, it is also called "Guandi's Birthday".

The Dong people are an indivisible ethnic group in China and were influenced by Han culture during the feudal period. Therefore, every year on May 13th, the Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival is celebrated with performances such as "sacrificial knife", reed playing in the hall, pipa dance, and spring ox dance. Celebrations are carried out in the form of folk activities such as reunion dances and family banquets, expressing the good wishes of punishing evil and promoting good, upholding justice, and praying for peace, harmony, good weather, and a good harvest. The Dong people are a traditional farming society. The pursuit of good weather and abundant grain is a common psychological appeal of the Dong people. The folk custom of praying for rain has been around for a long time. The 13th day of the fifth lunar month is the wheat-filling period and the rice grain-filling period. At this time, the fields need rainwater irrigation to ensure full grains and high grain yields, otherwise the yield will be reduced. A farmer's proverb goes: "Not afraid of May 13 flood water, but afraid of May 13 no rain." According to folklore, Guan Gong is the reincarnation of the Dragon King, so he has the priesthood of rain.

On May 13th every year, the Dong people pray to Emperor Guan through various sacrificial ceremonies, asking him to sharpen their knives in the sky. The water from sharpening the knife becomes rainfall on earth and nourishes the fields. Guan Gong's Grinding Knife is a sign of "good weather and good harvests", which is the Dong people's expectation for a good harvest and a prosperous life. During the "Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival", the Dong people imitate and practice one of the most important rituals of the festival - knife sharpening - by performing "Knife Sacrifice", further emphasizing the continued importance of culture and tradition in modern society.

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Figure 70 Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival "sacrificial knife" performance. On June 7, 2017 (the 13th day of the fifth lunar month), the Dong Baoxi Village in Longsheng Autonomous County, Guangxi held the annual "Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival". Several Dong men are performing "sacrificial knife". Source: <https://www.sohu.com/> (Accessed on 8 June 2023)

During the "Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival", the Dong people often perform Lusheng playing at the end of Wind and Rain Bridge. Playing the Lusheng in the Hall is an important activity for the Dong people in festivals. The main thing is that the young men play the Lusheng in the Lusheng Team, and the girls wearing silver jewelry and pleated skirts dance around the Lusheng Team to express their joy for the harvest and their expectations for good weather.



Figure 71 Dong people play Lusheng next to Wind and Rain Bridge to celebrate the "Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival". On June 7, 2017 (the 13th day of the fifth lunar month), the Dong Baoxi Village in Longsheng Autonomous County, Guangxi held the annual "Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival". The young men in the Lusheng



Team played the Lusheng, and the girls wearing silver jewelry and pleated skirts danced the hall dance. Source: <https://www.sohu.com/> (Accessed on 8 June 2023)

After the Dong people perform various folk activities such as "Knife Sacrifice" and Lusheng Festival, they usually eat a Hundred Feast Banquet as the last activity of the Guan Gong Knife Sharpening Festival. The Hundred Feast is a unique and ancient traditional folk culture of the Dong people. It is a prayer ceremony held by the Dong people. Its purpose is to "gather relatives, conduct business, pray for a good harvest, and ensure peace." The Dong people often hold hundreds of family banquets.

The Hundred Feast of the Dong people is usually held in front of the Drum Tower, but the Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival will be held at Wind and Rain Bridge. Because the statue of Guan Gong is enshrined in the bridge temple of Wind and Rain Bridge, Dong people often come here to burn incense and pay homage. Dong people will bring glutinous rice, fish, sour meat, and other traditional foods prepared at home, take them to the Wind and Rain Bridge, and share them with other people in the village.



Figure 72 Dong people hold a hundred banquet on the Wind and Rain Bridge to celebrate the "Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival". On June 7, 2017 (the 13th day of the fifth lunar month), the Dong Baoxi Village in Longsheng Autonomous County, Guangxi held the annual "Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival". Dong people hold a Hundred Feast Banquet on Wind and Rain Bridge. Dong people bring glutinous rice, fish, sour meat, and other traditional foods prepared at home, take them to Wind and Rain Bridge, and share them with other people in the village. Source: <https://www.sohu.com/> (Accessed on 8 June 2023)

The Dong people's belief and worship of Guan Gong is the spiritual driving force behind the Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival which has lasted for thousands of years. The Dong people celebrate the Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival through rich folk customs, showing strong social cohesion and affinity, inspiring the Dong people to unite as one and build a beautiful homeland.

During the Guan Gong Grinding Knife Festival, Wind and Rain Bridge became the theater of the festival, showing the ethnic and unique culture of the Dong people.

For the Dong people, the ethnic identity, religion, customs, etc. are all reflected by ethnic culture. To a certain extent, ethnic identity is also an ethnic cultural identity. Those within the ethnic group, generally have a strong identification with the culture of their ethnic group after living in it for a long time, being immersed in it, and having festivals and other events to strengthen their memory. Ethnic culture is always reflected through a series of activities. In the theater, Dong people wear Dong costumes to attend festivals, and through language, rituals, songs and dances, folk performances, and other forms, meaningful presentation of behaviors, customs, and spiritual beliefs to the outside world is sufficient to fully demonstrate the ethnic culture (Luo Ji, Liang Qinchao. 2016).

In Dong festivals year after year, Dong people present and convey Dong culture in various forms such as rituals, songs, dances, and folk activities, awakening and deepening ethnic memory and continuing and inheriting ethnic culture. Through festivals, they strengthen the belonging, unity, and cultural self-identity of the ethnic group. Between the self and others, using ethnic festivals as a platform, through ritual interaction and cultural memory, we can internally confirm "who I am" and externally distinguish "they are Dong people".

Importantly, during the Dong festival, the Dong people bring food from home to share with each other, or do the rituals, performances and customs of the festival together, which is part of the process of creating a public space for the bridge.

#### **Part 4: Ethnic Identity of the Yongji Bridge**

##### **4.1 Construction Process and Rituals of the Yongji Bridge**

Wind and Rain Bridge is a public space jointly built by the Dong people, showing the specific history and identity of the Dong village.

##### **4.1.1 The 12-Year History of Hardship in the Construction of the Yongji Bridge**

The construction of Wind and Rain Bridge in Dong villages is a large-scale, long-lasting, and expensive project. The construction of a wind and rain bridge often requires the mobilization of public funds and efforts from two to three villages. According to the Republic of China, version of "Sanjiang County Chronicles", the construction of Yongji Bridge was the result of the unity and mutual assistance of eight villages in Sanjiang County, including Ma'an, Yanzhai, and Pingzhai, as well as the unity and mutual assistance of the Dong compatriots in Sanjiang County and the Hunan corridor.

Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge was built in 1912 and was completed in 1924 after 12 years. During the Qing Dynasty, the place where Yongji Bridge was located was originally a stone bridge built by Yang Jinhua and others

from Ma'anzhai. Due to the low deck of the stone slab bridge, river water often overflows the bridge deck, causing inconvenience to pedestrians. Work across the river and up the mountain is sometimes delayed. If there is a flash flood, you can only look at the river and sigh, but cannot cross the river.

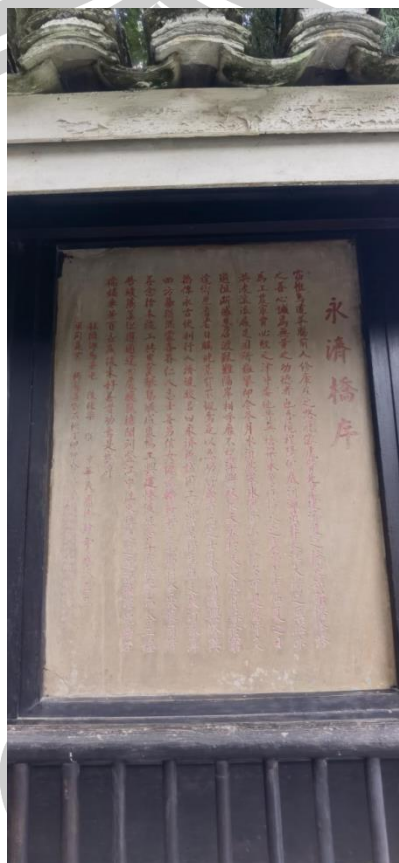


Figure 73 A stone monument erected at the head of Yongji Bridge. On it is engraved the reason and history of the birth of Yongji Bridge. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2023

The inscription "Preface to Yongji Bridge" erected at the head of Yongji Bridge clearly records the reason for the establishment of Yongji Bridge. The general meaning of the inscription above is that the Linxi River is flowing rapidly and it is difficult to cross the river, so people with lofty ideals from all over are called on to donate funds, and the Dong people help each other to finally complete this huge project.

Based on inscriptions and interviews, researchers collected the following history about the establishment of Yongji Bridge:

In 1911, Chen Dongcai and others from Ma'an Village, Chengyang Township, initiated the initiative to build a Wind and Rain Bridge here. In 1912, the people of Ma'an, Yanzhai, and Pintan villages elected fifty-two village elders as "Chief Leaders" (leaders of bridge construction) and officially prepared materials to start construction.

Mr. Yang Tangfu of Yanzhai is one of these fifty-two “Chief Leaders”. During the 12 years of construction of Yongji Bridge, he united other “Chief Leaders”, raised craftsmen and reserved materials, and became one of the important figures in the completion of Yongji Bridge. Because Mr. Yang Tangfu has passed away, the researcher interviewed Mr. Yang Tangfu’s grandson Yang Siyu, and learned about the situation at that time based on his oral account. Around 1911, Yang Tangfu, together with Chen Dongcai from Ma'an Village and Liang Changzong from Yanzhai, initiated the initiative to build the Wind and Rain Bridge, becoming the earliest initiator of bridge construction. Among the six people, only Mr. Yang Tangfu was a carpenter, so he served as the leader in building the bridge. These six people went door to door to persuade everyone to actively participate in building the bridge. Fifty-two old people responded positively, took the lead in setting an example, and became the first “Chief Leaders”. To raise the necessary funds, these elderly people visited nearby Dong villages and mobilized thousands of households to donate money, wood, food, and labor.

Through three gatherings, the “Chief Leaders” drew up thirty donation books and began to raise funds from various villages. After two years of fundraising, a lot of money was raised and construction started. On August 16 of the lunar calendar in 1914, Chengyang Bazhai held a foundation-laying ceremony for the Chengyang Bridge. During the process of building the bridge, the “Chief Leaders” continued to expand the scope of fundraising, soliciting donations from passing merchants and even Dong villages in Jingxian County, Hunan, and Tongdong.

Halfway through the construction of the bridge, some people wanted to quit midway for various reasons. Faced with this dilemma, Yang Tangfu suggested that each “Chief Leader” take out his land as collateral. If you no longer want to be the “Chief Leader”, you can stop doing this project, but the mortgaged land will not be returned. Under the leadership of Yang Tangfu, the “Chief Leader” signed the treaty one after another and pressed their fingerprints.



Figure 74 The first certificate of the Yongji Bridge. In the Timber Craftsmanship Museum in Chengyang Bazhai, there is a collection of the first certificate of the Yongji Bridge. On the “Chief Leaders” certificate are the signatures and fingerprints of the “Chief Leaders”. This represents the commitment made by the “Chief Leaders” headed by Yang Tangfu that they will never withdraw from the Yongji Bridge until it is completed. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2023



In order to ensure the smooth completion of the Yongji Bridge, the "Chief Leaders" formulated the treaty to mortgage the land. The treaty stipulates that if the application for building a bridge fails halfway, the agreed land will be mortgaged to the village and left to the village to deal with it.

In the end, no one quit halfway until the bridge was completed. When the bridge was built, the number of people at most reached about 200, with an average of two to three laborers per household. After four years of cutting stones and preparing materials, three years of pulling wood and erecting beams, five years of erecting pavilions, building tiles, and decorations, and going through twelve spring, autumn, cold, and summer seasons, the Yongji Bridge was finally completed. What is touching is that during the process of building the bridge, several old people passed away, and their descendants bravely took up the heavy responsibility and continued to complete the unfinished work of the old people.

Dong villagers completed the decoration of Yongji Bridge in 1924 and held a completion ceremony in 1925. The Yongji Bridge took 12 years from the time of fundraising to completion, using 160 cubic meters of stone, more than 400 cubic meters of Chinese fir wood, 220,000 pieces of green tiles, and a total of more than 50,000 silver dollars (Liu Hongbo. 2016).

In the end, this great project was realized with the joint efforts of the Dong people. Now, at the head of Yongji Bridge, you can see the stone tablet inscribed with this special history. Those Dong people whose names are engraved on the stone tablets enjoy a special status in the village, whether they are alive or dead. When the Dong people use this public space, they will be grateful to these people, such as Yang Tangfu, and form the Dong people's unique values of benevolence and solidarity in their behavior patterns in public life. The materiality of public space is seen as a socio-spatial realm that facilitates and regulates interpersonal relationships, where individuals present their ideal selves, their beliefs, and the behavioral patterns they follow. Public space provides a "participatory space" in which the public recognizes itself (Tali Hatuka. 2023).

#### 4.1.2 Construction Rituals of the Yongji Bridge

During the construction of the Yongji Bridge, the Dong people used rituals to give the Wind and Rain Bridge more meaning.

##### Beam Setting Ritual

In the construction of the Wind and Rain Bridge, the beam is a sacred thing that is different from the secular space. In the Dong society, the beam in the middle of the building is regarded by the Dong people as the master of the entire building and has sacred meaning. Randomly cut wood cannot be used as beams. In Dong society, only those who have certain prestige and are supported by the masses are eligible to donate the girder. And it must be a blessed man with healthy parents, sons and daughters, who can cut the fir trees that make the beams. When cutting the fir tree, the tree cannot fall, and when cutting it, we must try to make it fall to the east, and after carrying it on the shoulder, it is not allowed to land. Felled beams, ordinary people cannot approach, nor allow people to cross.

Before holding the Beam Setting Ritual, the geography master will choose an auspicious day and time. The entire Beam Setting Ritual is hosted by a master carpenter. The carpenter must first pay homage to his ancestor, Lu

Ban. The offerings on the offering table must have "three animals", one is without legs, the second is with two legs, and the third is with four legs, namely fish, chicken or duck, and pork. These three must be complete and indispensable. Usually, a big red rooster, a grass carp, and one or two pounds of pork are prepared. The offerings must also include uncooked rice, with the custom of "three tubes and three grasps" in terms of quantity. Raw rice is more expensive than glutinous rice; a big red envelope containing thirty-six cents; and a one-foot-two piece of Dong cloth.

On the main beam of the middle pavilion of Yongji Bridge is written "The weather is good; the country is peaceful and the people are safe. In the 26th year of the Republic of China, Ding Chou year, Yang Yin Bridge, the master of the beam, was established on an auspicious day." When you're ready to mount the beam, the Dong people put the beam on a wooden horse, with the bottom edge facing up, and inserted a copper coin with a dragon mark and a face value of two cents in the middle. Or insert the silver dollar of the Republic of China period, meaning "dragon raises its head". A new wolf-hair brush, an almanac, and a piece of ink must also be placed on the beam. After that, it was covered diagonally with a piece of home-woven black Dong cloth measuring one foot two, and a copper coin was driven into each corner to pin it. On the outside of the black cloth, a pair of chopsticks made of Chun wood are tied with several five-color silk threads. Several plump rice ears hang down from both ends of the chopsticks. Finally, the Dong cloth is tied with five-color silk thread. In addition to being wrapped in Dong cloth, the beams will also be hung with auspicious flowers made by local Dong women.



Figure 75 Dong women holding auspicious flowers. To celebrate the completion of the new Wind and Rain Bridge, Dong women will make auspicious flowers with their own hands. If the auspicious flower in your hand can be selected by craftsmen and hung in the middle of the beam, it is an honor and luck in Dong society. And this will bring blessings. Source: Books on Dong customs (Accessed on March 4, 2024)

Auspicious flowers are a kind of exquisite embroidery. If the village has buildings such as drum towers, pavilions, and wind and rain bridges, women will spontaneously make auspicious flowers, hydrangeas, and other embroidery products. Everyone secretly hopes that the auspicious flowers they made can be selected by the master craftsman and hung in the middle of the beam. This is an honor for them and a blessing for the family. Unmarried young Dong women will each embroider a Dong brocade flower and hang it on the bridge, wishing good weather and finding a good husband.

#### Stepping on the Beams Ritual

Beam Setting Ritual is followed by Stepping on the Beams Ritual. Most of the people who step on the beam are master carpenters, and they have to walk from one end of the new beam to the other. Cooked pork, grass carp, and a few glasses of wine should be placed on the beam, commonly known as "Daotou". The master who steps on the beam wears new cloth shoes, takes a step on the beam, and utters an auspicious word, and the Dong people below will cheer loudly in response. For example, when building a new house in some Dong areas, the master who steps on the beam should chant: "Step on the beam with one step, it will sparkle, suppress evil and straighten...", "Step on the beam with two steps, the beam will be stable, and it will attract wealth and treasure. "My children and grandchildren are all strong...", people loudly echoed "Okay" and "Yes". At this time, the beam-treading master is the messenger of the beam, just like an immortal descending to earth, passing on all the good blessings attached to the beam to the people who built it. of the Dong people. With the sound of firecrackers, the beam master raked the strips in the dustpan on the beam and scattered some glutinous rice food, candies, and so on, and everyone rushed to catch and eat them.

During the ceremony, Wind and Rain Bridge is a special space where the sacred and the secular are compatible. Geertz believed that ritual is a cultural performance that has both sacred and secular meanings. While studying funerals in small Javanese towns, he ultimately concluded that "those who came to the courtyard to attend the funeral, including themselves, could not be sure whether they came to participate in the weighing of religious matters or the struggle for secular power." Via Beam Setting Ritual, stepping on the Beams Ritual, on the one hand, the Dong people deify the beams, and on the other hand, they simulate scenes in rituals to obtain utilitarian rewards. Behind this logic, ritual actors can relive the comfort and spiritual needs that these meanings bring to their hearts through the Wind and Rain Bridge, and can also benefit their descendants.

#### Stepping on the Bridge Ritual

When the Wind and Rain Bridge is completed, the Dong villages will hold a grand "Stepping on the Bridge Ritual" similar to a ribbon-cutting ceremony. When the Yongji Bridge was built, the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai arranged a "dojo" for five days and five nights. The so-called "dojo" is to ask Taoist priests to chant sutras and meditate, and read all the names of those who donated money, work, wood, and other good deeds to Cheng Yang Bridge to show their gratitude and blessings to them. During this period, the entire village is not allowed to eat meat, and can only eat tofu, vegetables, and other vegetarian dishes.

After five days of fasting, everyone can eat meat, perform "Duoye" and sing Dong opera. When Yongji Bridge was built, there was also a

"Longhua Shenghui". Not only are there four gates in the central pavilion of the bridge, southeast, and northwest, with flags hung on the gates and people walking through the Eight Diagrams inside the gates, but also a "stepping on hot coals" ceremony is held at the sandbank square by the river under the bridge. "Stepping on the charcoal" means digging a trench and placing the charcoal. The Taoist priests will walk barefoot on the charcoal, and the people will follow the Qianjing people and walk across the charcoal. Everything will be fine. It indicates that the newly built bridge will go smoothly and auspiciously after going through some hardships.

Yongji Bridge also has a unique "Stepping on the Bridge Ritual" different from other wind and rain Bridges. When Yongji Bridge was built, the two ends of the bridge were first sealed, and a person who had grandchildren at the age of 36 was asked to cross the bridge first before letting people through, so that the children and grandchildren could prosper and express the hope of the Dong people for their children and heirs. But at that time, people searched all over Chengyang Bazhai and did not find a person who had grandchildren so young. Finally, such a person was found in Hunan Province, and he was carried to Yongji Bridge in a large sedan chair carried by eight people. Local also spread such a song "Bridge wood help on both sides, on both sides of the flowers and trees, after stepping on myself, good luck and happiness. Next year to give birth to your son, is a reading Lang on the gold list, a good name everywhere." This is a confirmation and celebration of the unique "ribbon cutting" ceremony, where Yongji Bridge has become a symbol of prosperity for future generations.

Yongji Bridge's unique "Beam Setting Ritual", "Stepping on the Beams Ritual" and "Stepping on the Bridge Ritual" transform the bridge from a mere material to a culture, linking the Wind and Rain Bridge with the breeding and development of the Dong people. During the ceremony, the Dong people identify themselves and construct a unique culture related to Wind and Rain Bridge.

## 4.2 Special Road-Blocking Rituals at the Yongji Bridge

### 4.2.1 Origin of the Road-Blocking Rituals from the Dong Ethnic

#### "Weikuan" Folk Tradition

"Road-Blocking Ritual" is a ritual of welcoming visitors during interactions in Dong villages. Because Yongji Bridge is an important channel connecting Chengyang Bazhai with the outside world, it can be said to be the gateway for the outside world to enter the village. Therefore, the Dong people of Chengyang Bazhai have arranged the "road blocking" ceremony here since ancient times.

The traditional way of welcoming guests in Dong Village is to intercept to achieve the purpose of passage and communication. When guests enter the Dong Village, they must go through a road-blocking Ritual. In the road-blocking Ritual, the way to open the door and enter the village is sung by the blocking ritual song.

Any cultural model and folk custom matter are generated, developed, inherited, and evolved under a certain social and cultural background and folk custom context, and the same is true for the Dong "Road-Blocking Ritual". In traditional Dong society, there is a custom of holding collective outings to the countryside for social gatherings during slack seasons, annual festivals, etc. This is called "Weikuan" in Dong language. In the social activities of collective travel to the



countryside, a "Road-Blocking Ritual" must be held. The collective travel to the countryside is also the folk context in which the "Road-Blocking Ritual" comes into being.

#### 4.2.2 Purpose and Function of the Road-Blocking Rituals

Because the most critical link of "Weikuan" is the "Road-Blocking Ritual", the "Road-Blocking Ritual" transforms the guests from dangerous outsiders into familiar and distinguished guests. This transformation process of recognition and acceptance not only has an entertainment function but more importantly, has a deep social metaphor function. This determines that the most important part of a group visit is the "Road-Blocking Ritual" and the duet of road-blocking ritual songs in the ceremony. It can be said that without the "Road-Blocking Ritual", Group guest fellowship loses the deeper, serious social metaphorical function of direct communication, entertaining the gods, and stopping people. This metaphorical function is to intercept some "pollution" and other unlucky things that guests may encounter during the journey. "Road-Blocking Ritual" also embodies its understanding of the traditional taboos and spiritual beliefs of the Dong people.

On the other hand, "Road-Blocking Ritual" not only brings together the functions of entertainment, belief, and taboo, but also allows both the host and the guest to meet their needs for psychological pleasure in the antiphonal song of blocking and clearing the road, and find a ritual to reasonably overcome the taboo psychology. But in the entire process of folk activities, the "Road-Blocking Ritual" is just an incision and entry node. The purpose of interception is to enter and for better cultural and emotional exchanges after the "Road-Blocking Ritual".

#### 4.2.3 Ritual Process of the Road-Blocking Rituals

In the traditional Dong society, "Weikuan" includes collective guesting between villages, collective guesting and socializing between different clans who can intermarry, collective guesting and socializing among women such as sisters-in-law, and collective visiting among unmarried young men and women situation. Below, the researcher will use the case of a group trip between unmarried young men and women to visit the countryside as a case study to describe the process of the "Road-Blocking Ritual".

Young people from Pingzhai usually need to pass Yongji Bridge to visit Ma'anzhai. Whenever young people from Pingzhai visit, Ma'anzhai will arrange a grand "Road-Blocking Ritual" at Yongji Bridge to welcome the guests. The Dong people in Ma'an Village set up benches, bamboo poles, branches, ropes, and other obstacles in front of the gatehouse at the intersection to block the road. The girls from Ma'an Village stopped the young men who came to Pingzhai and first sang "Blocking Song", singing various "reasons" for blocking the road. For example: "We are guarding the village. Last night a cat was born in the village. No one can enter the village after the cat is born. Go back today and come back tomorrow".

Then the young men from Pingzhai sang "Song of Opening the Road", one by one overthrowing the opponent's excuses for blocking the road. They sang: "Don't be jealous of the village, there will be no cat kittens this month; if you do have cat kits, you will be lucky, don't be shy and open the gate of the village quickly".

Then the girls from Ma'anzhai continued to sing the "Blocking Song" and used other reasons to block the road. The young men from Pingzhai then

sang the "Song of Opening the Road" to overturn the other party's excuses for blocking the road one by one. Through singing and answering, the atmosphere of the meeting between the host and the guests becomes very warm. Whenever a young man from Pingzhai responded to a question and tease raised by a girl from Ma'anzhai with a song, the girl from Ma'anzhai removed one obstacle blocking the road until the obstacles were completely removed and welcomed the young man from Pingzhai until entering the village (Wu Wenxian. 2014).

#### 4.2.4 Symbols in the Road-Blocking Rituals (Including Tools of Production and Ritual Songs) as Symbols of Ethnic Identity

In the road-blocking ritual, production, and daily utensils are placed in the "field" of the "Road-Blocking Ritual" as road-blocking markers. On the one hand, these roadblocking markers play a role in intercepting pollution and unclean things that directly impact people; on the other hand, these folk custom markers also play a role in distinguishing between internal and external ethnic groups.

Only when the guests understand the actual functions and working principles of these roadblocks and can use roadblock ritual songs to describe the actual functions and working principles of these roadblocks can they be considered to be Dong people. Because knowing these folk symbols can prove that the guests and themselves have common knowledge of production and life. Only with a common lifestyle can we understand and recognize the metaphors of these folk symbols in reality, and only then can we know these folk symbols as roadblocks to working principles and process flow.

Therefore, in "Road-Blocking Ritual", markers (including production tools and ritual songs) become symbols of whether we are Dong people.

The Dong people built a "Road-Blocking Ritual" on the Yongji Bridge to overcome the crisis through rituals, and used road-blocking rituals to get rid of possible pollution that guests may have brought before entering the village. Moreover, this kind of pollution cannot be directly touched by humans. It must be blocked by symbolic and inanimate production and daily utensils. Moreover, in the process of ritual interaction, each other identifies each other's racial identity. This "Road-Blocking Ritual" is an important practice for the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai to distinguish between the inside and outside of the race.

### 4.3 The Yongji Bridge: Ethnic Identity of the Dong Ethnic People in Chengyang Bazhai

#### 4.3.1 The Yongji Bridge Clearly Defines the Identity and Heritage of the Dong Ethnic People, Passing on Collective Memories

Yongji Bridge is a constructive resource for the identity construction of the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai. It is not only a resource for confirming individual identity, but also an important basis for awakening the ethnic identity of the Dong people.

The 12-year history of Yongji Bridge's arduous construction allows all individuals who are interested in their ancestors, lineage, family and other information to know who they are and who they belong to. Whether

it is the memories and narratives of those who have experienced it, or the inscriptions on stone tablets, they all carry the original material of the collective memory and identity of an ethnic. The microscopic and multidimensional diffusion trend of memory writing enables the current Dong people to participate in the construction of collective memory through their micronarratives. For example, the oral interview with the grandson of Yang Tangfu, the first person to build the Yongji Bridge, is a typical example of restoring historical scenes, supplementing historical details, and enriching the collective memory of the Dong people in the form of oral narratives.

Dong people use the Yongji Bridge to participate in public activities and realize their identity. Yongji Bridge has become a place where the Dong people of Chengyang Bazhai participate in the construction, reconstruction, and strengthening of collective memory to realize their identity. The construction and strengthening of identity are closely related to the generation and continuation of collective memory.

#### 4.3.2 The Yongji Bridge Constructs a Shared Imagination of the Ethnic Group Through Rituals

The memories of collective members are obtained through interactive communication and social communication. Individuals conduct interactive communication and memory ritual performances among social members in the mainstream discourse space and experience the existence of collectivity, sociality, and identity (Li Yaling. 2021).

The Dong people's sense of belonging to their self-identity is rooted in the collective memory of the Dong people. Through ritual participation, they can connect members to share memories and emotions and firmly establish their ethnic identity.

First, the unique bridge-building ceremony of Yongji Bridge becomes a representation of the Dong culture. By establishing the connection between the wind and rain bridge and the Dong people, the emotion of the race is condensed, to realize for construct the relation of the Dong ethnic group's imagination. Cultural representation is a symbol that maintains the boundary of ethnic groups. Individuals or groups define "Who I am?" and "the other " through cultural representation, to express their Collective identity of 'Self-identity'.

Second, Yongji Bridge becomes a theater for ritual performance, and Dong people transfer their identity through personal practice into profound "episodic memory" to complete the transmission of ethnic identity. In various ceremonies and festival activities in Yongji Bridge, Dong people externalize their joint production knowledge, cultural beliefs, and collective memory into real scenes, and build an "imaginary community" of Dong culture.

Once you know where you are from, you will know where you are going. As a representative of the Dong culture in Chengyang Bazhai, Yongji Bridge carries the collective memory and ritual life of the Dong people. It helps the Dong people explain their identity and self-identity of "who am I" and "who do I belong to", and also embodies the ethnic culture and values of the Dong people.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, Wind and Rain Bridge is something that is used in two ways: in everyday life, which emphasizes utility in normal life in which they used both the village bridge and the main Yongji bridge. But in human life, there is also a normal daily life. There is still life and society on special occasions, in this case, rituals and festivals. And the Dong people used the Wind and Rain Bridge for activities on special occasions as presented. However, the operations of life and society in both cases. Those related to the Wind and Rain Bridge actually have meanings that are related to each other. In particular, the rituals have played an important role in making everyone see the importance of the Wind and Rain Bridge in their lives and society in a dimension beyond reason, such as creating it as an imaginary space for portals to heaven or the afterlife, weddings, and other important activities, especially those performed together. It is a phenomenon that the Dong people have created meaning for Wind and Rain Bridge as a public space. And at the same time, the Wind and Rain Bridge has served to imprint its meaning to say that "How the Dong people of Chengyang Bazhai Village are different from others." Let's go together? Let's go together. "





## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Wind and Rain Bridges: Public Space and Meaning Change in the Context of Minority Development**

#### **Introduction**

Since 1949 the founding of the People's Republic of China, the state divided the Dong people into minorities and used minority policies to organize their development. At the same time, The Dong people have two identities, in culture they are ethnic but politically they are a minority in China. Tong's identity thus alternates between Ethnicity and Nationality. Importantly, in the context of the development of ethnic minorities, it has resulted in changes in the original meaning of the Wind and Rain Bridge as well. This chapter will use the Yongji Bridge representing Wind and Rain Bridge, this chapter is divided into four parts. First, the impact of policies over time. After the founding of New China on Chengyang Bazhai shows the development process of ethnic minorities. Second, the meaning of the Wind and Rain Bridge as a material shows the meaning of the Yongji Bridge in the national context. Third, the meaning of the symbolic Wind and Rain Bridge represents the meaning of the symbolic Yongji Bridge in the outside world. Fourth, the maintenance of the public space of the Yongji Bridge in modern society.

#### **part1: Conceptual Discussion of the Evolution of State Policies and the Meaning of Public Space**

Max Weber explored the concept of state policy in his classic work "Politics as a Vocation". He regarded national policy as the general term for the actions and strategies of the state apparatus, which aims to maintain and consolidate the power and territorial scope of the state. It also involves tasks such as maintaining social order, protecting citizens' rights, and managing economic affairs. At the same time, Max Weber deeply analyzed the impact of national policies on society and personal life in this work (Weber, M. 1946).

The development process of China's ethnic minorities began with the implementation of ethnic minority policies after the founding of the People's Republic of China and continues until now. Ethnic minority policy is a national policy of China targeting ethnic minority groups. Through this national policy, the state manages ethnic minority affairs and thereby maintains and consolidates the country's unity. In the context of national policies, the Dong people changed from an ethnic to a minority, and their political identity changed. Moreover, national policies have also affected the use and maintenance of public spaces in Dong communities, and these changes have caused changes in the meaning of public spaces.

Henri Lefebvre (1991) showed the production of three spaces: material space, social space, and mental space in his book "The Production of Space". He emphasized that social space is a social product. In addition to being a means of production, it is also a means of control and therefore a means of domination and

power (Lefebvre. 1991). The state uses national policies as a rights technology to influence and change the way public space in Wind and Rain Bridge is used and maintained in the Dong community, thereby affecting the meaning of public space. In the traditional Dong community in the past, the meaning of Wind and Rain Bridge's public space was to build national identity; but now, in the multiple contexts of modern society, the meaning of Wind and Rain Bridge's public space has become complex and diverse, and this meaning spans the community. The interior is widely integrated with the external world and constantly generates new meanings in the dimension of 'negotiating of ethnic identity'.

## **part2: The Influence of China's Minority Policies in Different Periods on Chengyang Bazhai**

The Dong people have always identified themselves as a race with a unique culture in the past. When the People's Republic of China was founded, it became a member of China's multi-ethnic country. The Chinese government assigned ethnic minorities to them and formulated corresponding ethnic minority policies to manage and help them. These ethnic minority policies in different periods had an impact on Chengyang Bazhai and Wind and Rain Bridge.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the social culture of ethnic minorities has experienced two major changes: the first was the democratic reform in the early stage of socialism, which established a socialist political and economic system in ethnic minority areas; the second was the economic reform since 1978. Opening up, especially the establishment of a market economic system. Both changes had a huge impact, such as identifying ethnic groups, regional ethnic autonomy, changes in the financial system, etc. Changes in the political and economic systems have directly or indirectly affected or even changed various cultural traditions such as the social structure, lifestyle, family system, etc. of ethnic minorities.

### **2.1 The Influence of Early Socialist Minority Policies on Chengyang Bazhai**

The founding of New China in 1949 brought about major changes in the social structure. The People's Republic of China is a unified multi-ethnic country jointly created by people of all ethnic groups in the country. Through the "Common Program" policy, the Chinese government has achieved equality for all ethnic groups; it has also carried out ethnic identification, determined ethnic composition, and defined "ethnic minorities."

#### **2.1.1 Issuance of the "Common Program" Altering the Class Status of the Dong Ethnic Group**

China is a multi-ethnic country, and the relationship between ethnic groups is very complex. However, what has remained unchanged for thousands of years is the unequal relationship between ethnic groups. During this period of history, China has gone through many political dynasties and the dominant ethnic group has changed many times, but the relationship of ethnic oppression of ethnic groups has not changed. It was not until the early years of the 20th century when the feudal dynasty collapsed and the Republic of China entered the Republic of China, that Mr. Sun Yat-sen began to promote the idea of a five-ethnic republic. It

took almost half a century after the founding of the People's Republic of China before the fact that all ethnic groups were equal emerged and was stipulated in the country's constitution.



Figure 76 The establishment meeting of the "Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference". On September 21, 1949, the first plenary session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference was grandly held in Peiping (today's Beijing). The "Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference" adopted at the meeting stipulates: "All ethnic groups within the territory of the People's Republic of China are equal." Pictured is the conference venue. Source: <https://cn.bing.com/> (Accessed on March 25, 2024)

In September 1949, the first plenary session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference was held. There were 662 representatives, alternate representatives, and specially invited persons, including 33 ethnic minorities. The meeting assumes the functions and powers of the National People's Congress and adopts the "Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference" (referred to as the "Common Program"), which serves as a provisional constitution based on the common will of all ethnic groups, democratic classes, democratic parties and people's organizations in the country. ), made major decisions on the state structure, political system, and basic policies of New China: establishing a unitary, unified multi-ethnic country by China's national conditions, confirming the implementation of regional ethnic autonomy as the basic policy to solve domestic ethnic issues, and using legal forms to Determine the equal status and equal rights of all ethnic groups in China (Ye Zhangyu. 2010).

The promulgation of the "Common Program" was a major change in the relationship between races in China, from an unequal relationship to an equal relationship. This policy eliminated the problem of ethnic discrimination and changed the class status of the Dong people.

#### 2.1.2 Initiation of Ethnic Identification, Determination of Ethnic Identity, and Definition of "Minority Ethnicity"

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, to formulate and implement ethnic policies and help all ethnic groups realize equal rights, the party and the government organized efforts to identify ethnic composition and ethnic names and carried out large-scale surveys on the social history and language of ethnic minorities. The ethnic identification work began at the beginning of the founding of the People's Republic of China and ended in the late 1980s, which lasted more than 30 years. Based on the principle of national characteristics and equal emphasis on national aspirations, my country has officially recognized 56 ethnic groups, of which the Han population accounts for the majority. The other 55 ethnic groups have relatively small populations and are customarily called "minorities." Through the constitution and laws, the state gives all ethnic groups equal rights in all fields such as politics, economy, and culture, and jointly manages national affairs.



1954年，林耀华（左三）、施联珠（左一）、黄淑端（左五）等民族学家在云南文山进行民族识别调查。

Figure 77 Initiation of Ethnic Identification work and define "ethnic minorities". In 1954, ethnologists such as Lin Yaohua (third from left), Shi Lianzhu (first from left), and Huang Zhibo (fifth from left) conducted ethnic identification surveys in Wenshan, Yunnan, to determine the ethnic composition and define "ethnic minorities" for New China. prepare for. Source: <https://cn.bing.com/> (Accessed on March 25, 2024)

### 2.1.3 Implementation of Ethnic Regional Autonomy in Guangxi, Empowering People of Various Ethnic Groups

The Chinese government implements regional ethnic autonomy and enables ethnic minorities to independently manage their internal affairs under the unified leadership of the state. In 1958, the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region was established, making the people of the ethnic minorities in Guangxi the masters of their affairs.





Figure 78 Guangxi Tong Autonomous Region was established. From March 5 to March 13, 1958, the first session of the First People's Congress of the Guangxi Tong Autonomous Region (renamed Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in 1965) was held in Nanning. The establishment of the Guangxi Tong Autonomous Region was announced. The picture shows the venue of the first meeting of the First People's Congress of Guangxi Tong Autonomous Region. Source: <https://cn.bing.com/> (Accessed on March 25, 2024)

#### 2.1.4 The Reflection on the Ethnic Regional Autonomy Institution on Chengyang Bazhai

The system of regional ethnic autonomy is a basic policy adopted by the Chinese government in light of China's actual conditions, and it is also an important political system in China. In 1952, China launched the work of regional ethnic autonomy. On December 3, Sanjiang County, where Chengyang Bazhai is located, established the county-level Sanjiang Dong Autonomous Region People's Government and established the county-level autonomous region government, marking the country's first county-level Dong autonomous local government declared established (Li Chu, & Wu Yongchun. 2013).

After the implementation of regional ethnic autonomy, members of the People's Government and leaders of governments at all levels will be elected by outstanding representatives of each ethnic group. In 1952, 31 members of the Sanjiang Dong Autonomous Region government elected Dong representative Qin Zhenwu as county magistrate. Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County fully implements the country's ethnic policy of "ethnic equality, ethnic unity, and common prosperity" in all its work ("Overview of Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County" writing team. 2005).

The system of regional ethnic autonomy has broken the social management structure of the Dong people's original "Kuan" organization in Chengyang Bazhai and fully realized the management of Chengyang Bazhai by grassroots organizations under the leadership of the Chinese government. To

strengthen the communication and contact between Chengyang Bazhai and the outside world, with the strong support of the Sanjiang County Government, Chengyang built a road in 1965, thus breaking the barrier brought by nature.

#### 2.1.5 To Strengthen Ethnic Unity, the Dong People as a Minority Have Been Given Great Importance by the State of China

To eliminate historical barriers and smoothen ethnic relations. By the relevant spirit of the "Common Program", the Chinese government has successively adopted a series of measures in ethnic work. To strengthen the trust of ethnic minorities in the Chinese government and the unity among various ethnic groups, and to promote ethnic minority policies, the Chinese central government sent condolence groups, visiting groups, and delegations to ethnic minority areas on many occasions between 1949 and at the same time, in 1964 various ethnic groups Ethnic minorities also organize visiting groups to visit the capital and inland construction. These measures have promoted understanding and friendship among various ethnic groups and closely strengthened the ties between border ethnic areas and the central government.

In August 1951, the Central Ethnic Visiting Delegation headed by Professor Fei Xiaotong and Wu Yanxiu (deputy county magistrate, Dong ethnic group) as deputy leader came to Sanjiang County, where Chengyang Bazhai is located, to express condolences to the Dong people and establish the relationship between the country and the Dong people. The Central Ethnic Group visited the Xueyi area and traveled over the mountains to Chengyang Bazhai, delivering salt, cloth, cotton yarn, etc. to the extremely poor ethnic minority people. They also brought a red-embellished banner written by Chairman Mao Zedong with the inscription: "All ethnic groups in the People's Republic of China unite!" (Li Chu, & Wu Yongchun. 2013)



Figure 79 Dong young women to Chairman Mao Zedong send flowers. In 1958, Wu Yinghua, a young woman from the Dong ethnic group, presented flowers to Chairman Mao Zedong on behalf of the Dong ethnic group. Further connect the Dong minority with the country. Source: Photographed by Yang Shengliang. November 8, 1958

Through the exchanges between the central ethnic delegation and the Dong people, ethnic and national ties were established. In 1958, President Mao Zedong visited Guangxi. Wu Yinghua, a young Dong woman, presented flowers to him on behalf of all the Dong people, further promoting the relationship between the Dong people and the country.



Figure 80 Yongji Bridge is printed as a design on stamps. On May 15, 1965, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications of China printed the Yongji Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai as a stamp and issued it nationwide. Source: <https://image.baidu.com/> (Accessed on March 25, 2024)

To develop a multi-ethnic and united country, the Dong people, as a minority, have received national attention. In 1965, Guo Moruo, vice chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, wrote a poem for the Yongji Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai, and inscribed the words "Chengyang Bridge". In the same year, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications of China printed the Yongji Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai as a pattern on stamps and issued them nationwide.

By paying attention to the Wind and Rain Bridge, the country has expressed its importance to Dong culture and Dong people. The Wind and Rain Bridge connects ethnicities and countries.

#### 2.1.6 The Cultural Revolution and the Destruction of Wind and Rain Bridge Temples and the Suppression of Dong Ethnic Identity

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, China has been facing a severe external environment for a long time, such as long-term imperialist hostility and blockade, and the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations. Such an external environment makes it very difficult for the Chinese Communist Party to scientifically judge the domestic political situation and determine whether national development principles and policies had a great impact. The Chinese government uses the successful class struggle experience accumulated during the past revolutionary wars to deal with many new problems in socialist construction. Treating issues that were not class struggle as class struggle eventually led to China's comprehensive Cultural Revolution.

In May 1966, the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee passed the "May 16th Notice", stating: "The representatives

of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the party, the government, the army, and various cultural circles are a group of counter-revolutionary revisionists, once the time is right, they will seize power and transform the dictatorship of the proletariat into the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie." In August, the 11th Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Party adopted the "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution", which was proposed. "The focus of this movement is to rectify those in power within the party who are taking the capitalist road." The convening of these two meetings marked the full launch of the "Cultural Revolution". Starting from January 1967, the "Cultural Revolution" entered the stage of "comprehensive seizure of power" and soon developed into a serious situation of "overthrowing everything" (Chen Jin. 2016).

As a minority, the Dong people are forced to change their national customs and beliefs. Dong people are not allowed to wear their ethnic costumes or celebrate their ethnic festivals, otherwise, they will be identified as the capitalist class. The Cultural Revolution equated national issues with class issues, equated the differences between ethnic groups with class differences, and did not allow for differences.

The Don's Wind and Rain Bridge Temple in Chengyang Bazhai enshrines the wooden statues of Guan Gong, Wenchang, Kuixing, Judge, Di Tu, Zhou Lun, and other gods. People usually go to the bridge to burn incense and worship the gods on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of the lunar calendar, or the first and fifteenth day of the first lunar month. The ethnic beliefs of the Dong people since ancient times were defined as feudal superstitious activities and were curbed during this period. The statues of gods believed by the Dong people on Wind and Rain Bridges were all destroyed during this period.

During this period, due to the influence of Chinese government policies, the Dong people changed from an ethnic to an ethnic minority. Chengyang Bazhai transformed from a traditional autonomous farming society into a member of the multi-ethnic Chinese state. These policies targeting ethnic minorities have had an impact on the social life and spiritual beliefs of the Dong society in Bazhai, Chengyang, and have further affected the ethnicity of the Dong people. The Dong people are required to integrate more into the country and show that they are part of the country.

## 2.2 The Influence of Minority Policies After the Reform and Opening Up From 1978 to the Present (2023)

During this period, China carried out economic reform and opening up, and economic development and foreign exchange became important goals of Chengyang Bazhai. During this period, Wind and Rain Bridge changed from a public space shared by the Dong people to a public space shared with external groups, and became a cultural symbol of the Dong people, conveying Chinese culture to the world.

### 2.2.1 At the beginning of the Economic Reform and Opening Up Policy, Chengyang Bazhai Began to Communicate with the Outside World



In the late 1970s, China experienced ten years of civil strife during the Cultural Revolution, which resulted in the slow development of social productivity, insufficient food and clothing for the people, and backward science and technology education. However, the new technological revolution that is booming around the world is pushing the world economy forward at a faster speed of development, there is a clear gap between China's economic strength, scientific and technological strength, and the international advanced level. To get rid of this situation, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping proposed the "economic reform and opening up policy."



Figure 81 Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping put forward "economic reform and opening up policy". In December 1978, Deng Xiaoping decided to shift the focus of the Chinese government's work to modernization at the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. This meeting established that China has begun to fully implement the "economic reform and opening up policy." Source: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/> (Accessed on March 25, 2024)

In December 1978, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping convened the Third Plenary Session of the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, establishing China's comprehensive implementation of the "economic reform and opening up policy." Reform, that is, internal reform, is to consciously adjust and reform aspects and links that are incompatible with the relations of production and productive forces, and between the superstructure and the economic base on the premise of adhering to the socialist system, to promote the development of productive forces and various undertakings comprehensive progress and better realize the fundamental interests of the broad masses of the people. Opening up, that is, opening to the outside world, is to accelerate China's modernization construction and make China conform to the characteristics of the current era and the general trend of world development (Chen Lipeng, 2008).

This policy brought China into a new era of reform, opening up, and socialist modernization. Through the state's promotion and support of this policy, in July 1979, the Chinese government officially approved the implementation of special policies and flexible measures in foreign economic activities by Guangdong and Fujian provinces. Xiamen City established a special

economic zone, attracting a large amount of foreign investment, causing Guangdong and Fujian provinces to become richer first.

The Guangxi government began to explore reform and open up measures to adapt to local development. To break the obstacles to economic development caused by Guangxi's mountainous terrain, the government decided to "get rich first by building roads." The Zhiliu Railway was fully opened to traffic on December 26, 1978, running through 89 kilometers from north to south of Sanjiang County, with ten stations within the territory. Chengyang Bazhai is connected to Zhiliu Railway through the Chengyang Highway, and the communication channel between the Dong people and the outside world has finally been opened.

During this period, the national culture of the Dong people formed an "imaginary space" for outsiders through the publication of literary books. In 1978, Dong Wu Jujing, director of the Sanjiang County Cultural Center, composed the Dong pipa song "The Long Iron Dragon Enters Dong Township", which was published in the journal "Guangxi Literature and Art". Dong writer Yang Tongshan compiled "Selected Dong Folk Songs" in 1980, "Selected Dong Folk Stories" in 1982, "Selected Dong Love Stories" and "Dong Township Customs Record" in 1983. These unique and mysterious Dong cultures have attracted the attention of the outside world for Chengyang Bazhai.

In the early 1980s, through China's opening up to the outside world, some foreign businessmen who entered China through China's special economic zones were attracted by Dong literature and came to Chengyang Bazhai. After visiting the Fengyu Bridge, foreign friends publicized the Chengyang Fengyu Bridge on TV stations, newspapers, and magazines after returning to China. As a result, more and more foreigners traveled across thousands of mountains and rivers to come to Chengyang Bazhai and Sanjiang for "Mysterious Journey to the East". In the early days of the economic reform and opening-up policy, Chengyang Bazhai broke down geographical barriers, and the exchanges between Dong society and external society became more frequent and expanded than ever before.

#### 2.2.2 Issuance of the "Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Autonomy for National Minorities," Providing Support and Assistance to Chengyang Bazhai by the State

After China began its reform and opening up, the special economic zones in Guangdong and Fujian and cities such as Xiamen and Shanghai developed rapidly. However, ethnic minorities and ethnic minority areas were unable to quickly adapt to the development of the market economy due to their low start in development. During this period, the Chinese government formulated and promulgated the "Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law of the People's Republic of China" to safeguard the political rights and economic development of ethnic minorities in many aspects.



Figure 82 Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy. In 1984, the Chinese government promulgated and implemented the "Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy", which legally stipulated the state's obligation to assist ethnic minorities. Source: <https://cn.bing.com/> (Accessed on March 25, 2024)

In 1984, the Chinese government promulgated and implemented the Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy, which stipulates the state's obligations to help the development of ethnic autonomous areas. Thirteen articles of this law describe that when formulating national economic and social development plans, the state should arrange some key projects in minority areas in a planned manner, adjust the economic structure of minority areas, develop a variety of industries, and improve comprehensive economic strength. With the encouragement of the government, Chengyang Bazhai began to develop tea planting. They used the terraces of the mountains to grow tea and sell it to other places to develop the economy.

Based on the actual conditions of ethnic minority areas, the Chinese government has formulated and adopted a series of special policies and measures to help and support the development of ethnic minority areas. In 1982, the Chinese government listed Chengyang Bazhai Yongji Bridge as a national "Cultural relics protection unit" due to its unique architectural form and the Dong culture it contained. In 1982, the Yongji Bridge encountered a flood and swept across two piers. The government immediately organized scientific researchers and Dong craftsmen to jointly repair it. After 20 months and a cost of 300,000 yuan, the Yongji Bridge in Chengyang was finally restored to its original appearance.

In 1987, as the reputation of Chengyang Bazhai Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge began to spread to the outside world, the local government began to formulate policies to create an ethnic tourism area. Since the Chengyang Wind and Rain Bridge at that time had been listed as a national key cultural relic protection unit, had a certain degree of popularity, and was an outstanding representative of Dong architectural culture, it naturally became the core attraction of the tourist attraction, and the tourist area was also named It is called "Chengyang Bridge Scenic Area". Tourists need to buy a ticket for 0.5 yuan when passing through Chengyang Bridge.

Due to the limited modern knowledge of the Dong people who have always been in a traditional society, they are unable to lead and adapt to the establishment of the "Chengyang Bridge Scenic Area" in the village. The local government plays a leading role and plays a de facto guiding and construction role in the transformation of Chengyang Bazhai. In 1994, despite very difficult financial circumstances, the Sanjiang County Government allocated part of the funds to build the Chengyang Bridge Guest House to meet the needs of tourists. In 1997, funds allocated by the Guangxi government were used to build 19 kilometers of asphalt roads from Guyi Town, the county seat, to the Chengyang Bridge Scenic Area, which improved traffic conditions. Tourists can easily take the special bus "Guyi to ChengyanBaizhai to Linxi" in the county town to go to Chengyang Bridge Scenic Area.

In this early stage, under the leadership of the government, Chengyang Bazhai began to explore ways to develop its economy. The traditional Dong people began to accept modern knowledge. During this period, Wind and Rain Bridge became something jointly maintained by the state and the Dong people. The public space of Wind and Rain Bridge was also enjoyed by the Dong people and became a space that outsiders could consume and enjoy.

### 2.2.3 Implementation of the "Western Development Policy," Setting the Tone for Chengyang Bazhai by the Government

In the process of continuous advancement of reform and opening up, China's eastern region has far surpassed the western ethnic minority areas economically due to its geographical advantage and priority development time advantage. To achieve common prosperity and narrow the gap between ethnic minority areas and developed eastern regions, the Chinese government has implemented the "Western Development Policy."

"Western Development" is a policy of the central government of the People's Republic of China, which aims to "use the remaining economic development capacity of the eastern coastal areas to improve the economic and social development level of the western region and consolidate national defense." In January 2000, The State Council established a leading group for the development of the western region and announced several measures through the "Notice of the General Office of the State Council forwarding the Opinions of the Western Development Office of the State Council on the Implementation of Several Policies and Measures for the Development of the Western Region" and established the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in the scope of development, Tibet Autonomous Region and other ethnic areas have also explained preferential policies such as capital investment, land and taxation (Wang Luolin, Wei Houkai. 2003).

Under the guidance of the Western Development Policy, the Guangxi government is vigorously developing its economy. For Chengyang Bazhai, which has excellent Dong cultural resources, the government has begun to vigorously implement tourism as the main means of economic development. In April 2000, the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Tourism Bureau invited Haikou Urban Design Co., Ltd. to compile and design the planning and design of the Chengyang Scenic Area "Towering Chengyang Bridge, Quiet Dong Nostalgia"; in August 2003, it also invited Beijing Guozhi Landscape Tourism Consulting Co., Ltd.



The company has completed the preparation of the "Sanjiang Chengyang Bazhai Tourism Project Development Planning Plan". In 2006, the Liuzhou Municipal Government commissioned the Guangxi Comprehensive Architectural Design Institute to compile the "Chengyang Bazhai Protection Planning and Tourism Landscape Design" (Que Yueping. 2007). These studies and planning designs effectively guided the protection and development of the Chengyang Bridge Scenic Area and set the main tone for the development of Chengyang Bazhai.

In 2006, after Chengyang Bazhai was listed as a demonstration site for the construction of a new socialist countryside in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Liuzhou City, infrastructure and various cultural constructions were increased, and many conditions were improved, making it more attractive. Driven by tourism, some villagers set up folk hotels and family hotels.

With the increase in overseas tourists, poor language communication has affected the communication and economic income between villagers and foreign guests. To facilitate communication and communication with foreign tourists, the Sanjiang County Government used the new rural construction funds to hold two "Sunshine Project" tourism management training courses in Chengyang Bazhai on August 7 and August 14, 2006. Courses such as tourism management, hotel services, and common English have trained about 150 students. The villagers actively participated. After training, these Dong people mastered English daily conversation, which assisted in the construction of the Chengyang Bazhai tourist area (Que Yueping. 2007).

Whether the government invites a design company to formulate a scenic spot planning plan for Chengyang Bazhai or improves the village's infrastructure and trains Dong people in foreign languages, this is all to serve the creation of the Chengyang Bazhai Scenic Area. The government has set the main tone for building Chengyang Bazhai into a tourist area.

#### 2.2.4 Implementation of the "Opinions on the Protection of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage," Making Wind and Rain Bridges Cultural Intermediaries

According to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, "intangible cultural heritage" refers to various social practices, conceptual expressions, and expressions that are regarded by communities, groups, and sometimes individuals as part of their cultural heritage, expressions, knowledge, skills, and related tools, objects, artifacts, and cultural places. This intangible cultural heritage is passed down from generation to generation and is constantly recreated as communities and groups adapt to their surroundings and interact with nature and history, providing these communities and groups with a sense of identity and continuity, thereby enhancing their appreciation of cultural diversity and respect for human creativity.

In 2005, the General Office of the State Council of China issued the "Opinions on Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage in my Country", gradually forming an intangible cultural heritage protection system with Chinese characteristics. Under the guidance of this policy, China has established a list of representative items of intangible cultural heritage, confirmed the protection objects, and carried out key protection for intangible cultural heritage items that

embody the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation and have historical, literary, artistic, and scientific values.

China is a multi-ethnic country, and the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation includes the excellent cultures of 56 ethnic groups. The skills used by the Dong people to build wind and rain bridges, that is, the Dong people's wooden building construction skills, are excellent Dong culture and also belong to the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation. This technology was included in the first batch of national non-governmental organizations on May 20, 2006 Inventory of tangible cultural heritage.

Most areas of intangible cultural heritage, such as oral literature, folk paintings, performing arts, handicrafts, folk knowledge, etc., are generally passed down, continued, and developed from generation to generation through the oral and heart-to-heart teachings of inheritors. Therefore, if the Chinese government wants to protect and inherit China's intangible cultural heritage, it must pay attention to the inheritors. Therefore, China has formed a complete system for the application, selection, recording, and archiving, economic subsidies, and learning and exchange of inheritors of intangible cultural heritage.



Figure 83 Yang Yundong, "inheritor of intangible cultural heritage", demonstrates the wooden construction skills of the Dong ethnic group to China's central leadership. In

December 2018, at the achievement exhibition site for the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Yang Yundong, a Dong ethnic wood structure craftsman who is the "inheritor of intangible cultural heritage", was demonstrating Dong wood structure building construction skills to Chinese central leaders. Source: Photographed by Yang Yundong. December 11, 2023

Yang Yundong, a Dong wood structure craftsman from Chengyang Bazhai, obtained the status of "Inheritor of Intangible Cultural Heritage" through application and selection. In December 2018, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Yang Yundong demonstrated the construction skills of the Wind and Rain Bridge to the central leaders of China. In November 2019, Yang Yundong participated in the 2nd Maritime Silk Road Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition as an intangible cultural heritage inheritor, showing the Dong people's wooden structure construction skills to the world. Yang Yundong's identity has changed from a Dong wood structure

craftsman in Chengyang Bazhai to a disseminator of Dong culture and Chinese culture. He uses the artistic works of Wind and Rain Bridge to showcase Chinese culture to countries around the world. Wind and Rain Bridge artworks reflect China's cultural and spiritual characteristics in the world's diverse cultures. The Chinese government is trying to convey China's cultural identity to the world.

After the Dong wooden structure construction skills became China's intangible cultural heritage, the Wind and Rain Bridge and Chengyang Bazhai built with this technology were also endowed with cultural significance. Wind and Rain Bridge and Chengyang Bazhai became a cultural intermediary and began to be disseminated to the outside world through digital media, whether in international films or commercial short films.

The Sino-French co-production film "Nightingale", written and directed by French director Philippe Millet and shot in Chengyang Bazhai in 2015, represented Chinese films in the competition for the 87th Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. It showcased Dong's architecture and culture to the world and won honors for Chinese films on the international stage.



Figure 84 Wind and Rain Bridge shown in the movie "Skiptace". In 2016, the action-comedy movie "Skiptace" starring international superstar Jackie Chan was released globally. The unique Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai was shown to the world in the movie. It became a representative of Chinese culture in the imaginary community constructed by the movie. Source: <https://m.film.qq.com/> (Accessed on March 25, 2024)

In 2016, an action-comedy movie "Skiptace" starring international superstar Jackie Chan was filmed in Chengyang Bazhai, Guangxi, China. This film conveys the rich connotation of Chinese culture to the world through exquisite Dong village scenes and unique elements such as the Wind and Rain Bridge. Through the global cultural medium of film, Wind and Rain Bridge has become an intermediary for Chinese culture, allowing Chinese culture to go global, and allowing more people to understand and appreciate China's diverse culture and unique charm. When Chengyang Bazhai, Wind and Rain Bridge, and the Dong wooden craftsmen are given cultural significance, they are no longer a small local village or ethnic, they communicate with and are connected with the world.

After the economic reform and opening up, China's ethnic minority policy gradually transformed from ethnic equality to ethnic unity and common prosperity. The Chinese government vigorously supports and helps ethnic

minorities develop their economy and attaches great importance to ethnic minority culture. In the process of ethnic minority policies, Chengyang Bazhai gradually transformed to adapt to modernity and communicated frequently with the outside world. As a public space in the village, Wind and Rain Bridge has transformed from an internal public space in the village into a commodity, and then into a culture.

### **Part3: Multi-Meaning of ‘Yongji Bridge’ in the Context of Minority**

#### **Development**

Analyzing and interpreting various cultural phenomena from the dimension of meaning is a topic widely studied in academic circles. This kind of analysis and interpretation is usually demonstrated through the creative activities embodied by people. In this dimension of meaning, different contexts usually have an important impact on the generation of meaning. The construction of meaning in different contexts is complex and multi-dimensional. It is not only related to the construction object but also social development, Group belonging is related to cultural inheritance.

In Chengyang Bazhai, Yongji Bridge has become the representative of the wind and rain bridge in the village due to its unique social experience and development process. The meaning of Yongji Bridge in different contexts shows remarkable characteristics. After in-depth research, the author selected three representative contexts as examples for detailed description and analysis. The following discusses the importance and significance of Chengyang Yongji Bridge in different contexts, covering its symbolic significance at the national level, its economic development role in the tourism environment, and its cultural export and international connection functions in the context of globalization.

#### **3.1 ‘Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge’ and Nation-State**

In the national context, the Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge plays an important symbolic role. It is more than a simple transportation facility. It has become a concrete expression of national equality and common prosperity under the pluralistic unity of the Chinese nation. From an anthropological perspective, the bridge is seen as a symbol of national identity and national identity. The cultural relic identification and careful restoration of Yongji Bridge highlights the policy orientation of the Chinese government's commitment to promoting the equal and harmonious development of multi-ethnic groups. Within the theoretical framework of sociology, this symbolic meaning profoundly reflects the complex and subtle interaction between nationalism and national identity. Yongji Bridge not only plays a connecting role in geographical space but also builds a bridge of emotional resonance and collective identity between different ethnic groups on a spiritual level.

##### **3.1.1 Yongji Bridge: A Representative Image of Ethnicity in the National Social Space**

Anthony D. Smith defines a nation in his book "National Identity" as a nation can be defined as a named population whose members share a historical territory and have a common myth, historical memory, and popular character public culture coexists in the same economic system and shares a set of



general legal rights and obligations that apply to all members (Anthony D. Smith. 1991).

The Dong people living in Chengyang Bazhai share common beliefs, memories, and values, and have a unique set of social organizational structures and management methods of "Dou" and "Kuan" to constrain group members and can be identified as an "Ethnic". Historically, China has a vast land and numerous ethnic groups. The Han people, the majority of the population, have long been in a dominant position and enslaved and exploited other ethnic minorities. From the area where the Dong people live, it can be proved that the Dong people have been a low-level race for a long time in Chinese history. To avoid the enslavement of the Han people and the competition with the Yao and Zhuang people for survival resources, they chose to live among the mountains and use natural defenses to thrive.

The founding of New China transformed China into a unified multi-ethnic country. The Chinese government has redefined the Dong people. The Dong people are part of the country and are a minority race compared to the Han people, so they are defined as an ethnic minority. Through ethnic minority policies, the Chinese government builds an ethnic community with a sense of unity among all ethnic groups and a variety of different cultures and promotes national identity in this ethnic community.

As an important cultural symbol of the Dong people, Yongji Bridge's political importance has continued to increase after the founding of New China. Only when this cultural symbol of the Dong people was given identifiable significance, the class status of the Dong people as a race was objectively recognized.

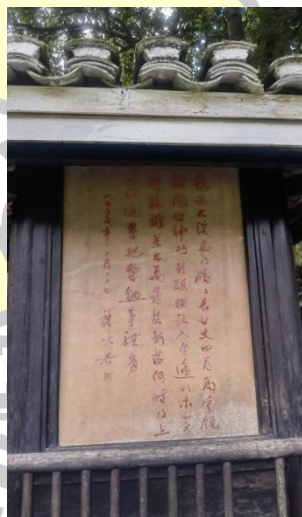


Figure 85 The stone tablet at the head of Yongji Bridge. It is engraved with poems written by national leader Guo Moruo for Yongji Bridge. The inscription by the national leaders not only praises the Wind and Rain Bridge but also affirms the Dong people. This confirms the harmonious relationship between the state and the nation.

Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2022

In October 1965, Guo Moruo, vice chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, lamented the beauty of Yongji Bridge in Bazhai, Chengyang, and wrote a poem praising its grace:

The rain and wind bridge of Linxi is praised as a beauty, Stretching twenty zhangs with four xun in height. The double eaves and linked pavilions are designed with finesse, Delighting the spirit, making one's heart leap. The waters flow beneath, into the distance, a magnificent sight. Built of bamboo and wood, stronger than iron, it stands proud. And in the tea groves, beside ancient trees, new seedlings thrive. When will I traverse the Sanjiang path, To learn the ways of plowing and hoeing, and experience the joy of labor? This poem not only praises Yongji Bridge but also praises the hardworking spirit of the Dong people.



Figure 86 Yongji Bridge plaque. The three characters "Chengyang Bridge" inscribed by the national leader Guo Moruo are engraved on it. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2022

Moreover, Mr. Guo Moruo also inscribed a three-character plaque with "Chengyang Bridge" for Yongji Bridge. This phenomenon shows that China's national leaders have given the cultural symbols of the Dong people a recognizable and important meaning through the power of a soft culture.

The recognition of the cultural symbols of a race or an ethnic minority is the state's recognition of the Dong people. It recognizes that the Dong people are a type of ethnic minority in China and enjoy equal class status and cultural rights like other ethnic groups. Yongji Bridge has become a representative image of ethnicity to national social space.

### 3.1.2 The Yongji Bridge as a Bridge to Link Ethnicity and the Nation

In the national context, Yongji Bridge is regarded as the link connecting the nation and the country. From an anthropological point of view, Wind and Rain Bridge, as a kind of material culture, is not only a building connecting the two sides of the strait but also a network of relationships between various ethnic groups and state power. Through the cultural relic identification of Yongji Bridge and its careful restoration after the flood, the state implemented the concept of unity and diverse coexistence, reflecting the diversity of national culture and the unity of national identity. The following will deeply explore the role of Wind and Rain Bridge

in national governance and the regulation of ethnic relations, and how Wind and Rain Bridge builds a bond of emotional resonance between the country and the Dong people.

#### (1) Identification of the Yongji Bridge as a Cultural Relic

Professor Li Xiaodong defines cultural relics in his book "Cultural Relics": Cultural relics are relics and relics with historical, artistic, and scientific value left behind by human beings in social activities. It is a precious historical and cultural heritage of mankind and a human cultural relic left in society or buried underground (Li Xiaodong, 2015). From the definition of appeal, we can know the importance of cultural relics to human society.

To this end, the Chinese government has established a national cultural relics administrative department to coordinate and handle the relationship between cultural relics protection and various state departments, social groups, and the people through legal, administrative, economic, educational, scientific, and technological means, and through comprehensive planning, Comprehensive management, stop and prevent the destruction and damage of cultural relics by man-made and natural forces, and achieve the purpose of protecting cultural relics.

The National Cultural Relics Administrative Department conducts investigation and confirmation of cultural relics based on their basic characteristics. In March 1982, the National Cultural Relics administrative department surveyed the basic characteristics of cultural relics at the Yongji Bridge in Bazhai, Chengyang. Yongji Bridge is a relic and relic left over by the Dong people during their historical development. It also reflects the Dong people's social activities, social relations, ideologies, utilization of nature, transformation of nature, and the ecological environment at that time in various historical periods. It meets the two basic characteristics of being recognized as a cultural relic. First, Yongji Bridge was created by humans and is related to human activities; second, Yongji Bridge has become a historical past and cannot be recreated. Therefore, the national cultural relics administrative department reported the investigation to the State Council of China for approval, and Yongji Bridge was recognized as a national cultural relic.

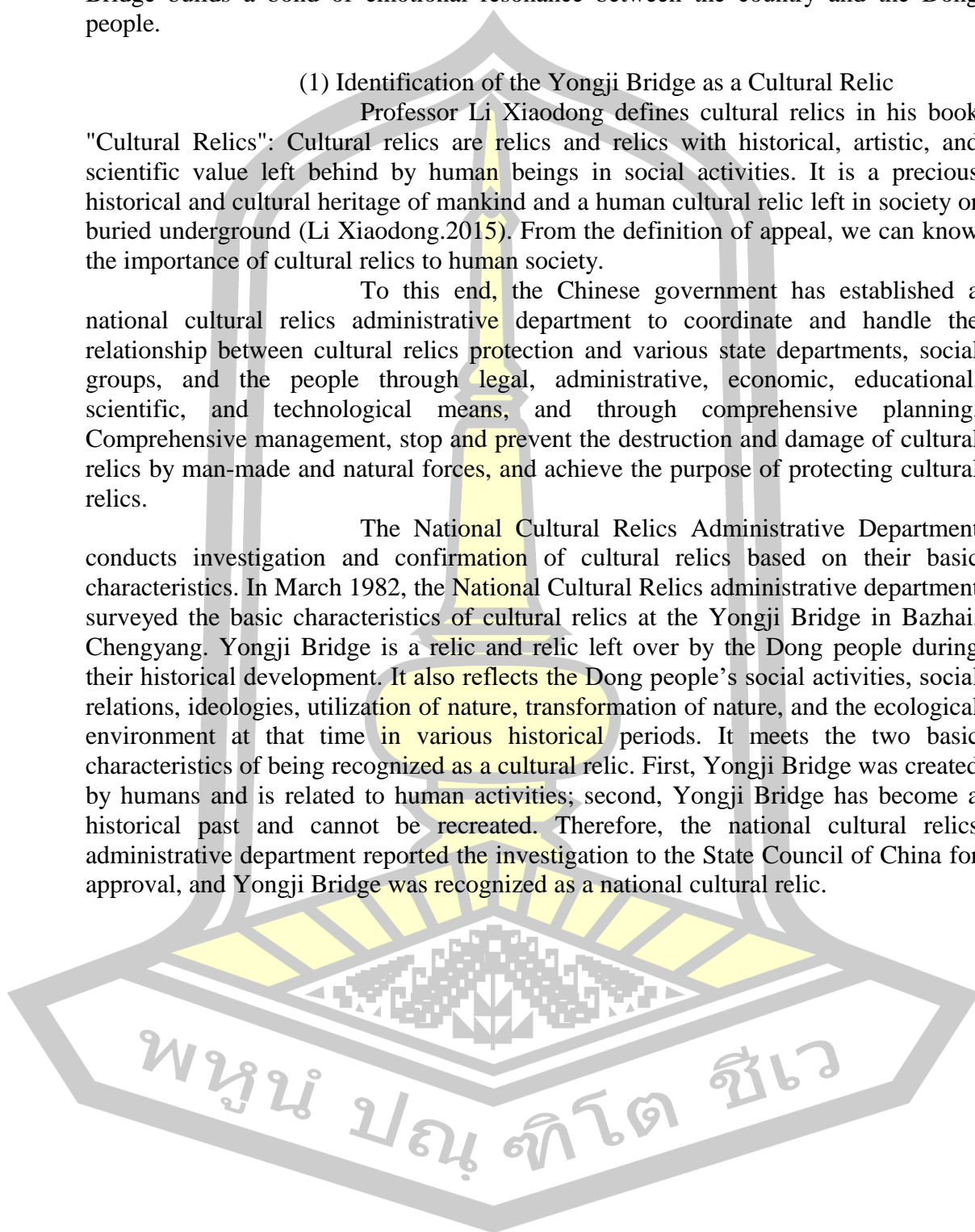




Figure 87 National key cultural relic plaque. It is engraved the message that the State Council of the People's Republic of China has designated Chengyang Yongji Bridge as a national key cultural relic. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 3, 2022

The identification of Yongji Bridge as a national cultural relic is essentially an operation of cultural power. It strengthens the connection between Dong culture and national culture by incorporating the Yongji Bridge into the national cultural symbol system. This connection is not a one-way assimilation, but a two-way, interactive process of cultural identification. In this process, Yongji Bridge was not only recognized by the country as a representative of Dong culture but also became a symbol of the country's cultural diversity and national unity. On the other hand, for the country, Yongji Bridge has become an important cultural link. Through it, the country can more effectively convey its concept of multicultural coexistence and harmonious development, thereby promoting mutual understanding between different ethnic groups and recognition.

## (2) The State and Carefully Restoration of Yongji Bridge

In July 1982, due to continuous heavy rains, floods broke out in the Linxi River, and two piers of the Yongji Bridge were washed away. The State Administration of Cultural Heritage attaches great importance to it. Professor Qin Si, Vice Chairman of the CPPCC of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, led Zhou Lin, Associate Professor of the Department of Civil Engineering of Guangxi University, and others to form a working group, which rushed to the site to investigate, conduct in-depth research, carefully plan, and propose a complete set of restoration plans. After the plan was drawn up, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage immediately approved it and allocated funds for emergency repairs. Mr. Zhou Lin was entrusted by the People's Government of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region to take charge of the Yongji Bridge restoration engineering technology. The project was rolled out, and the Dong people praised it. The old people in Chengyang Bazhai donated the wood used to make coffins as beams, and the young people volunteered to work. They strengthened the piers, raised the bridge deck, cleaned the river to keep water flowing, and soaked the bridge wood in preservatives to extend the life of the bridge. Mr. Zhou Lin and the local Dong craftsmen worked together and worked hard to restore the Yongji Bridge to its original appearance after 20 months and a cost of 300,000 yuan (Jin Kaicheng, 2010).



The fact that the country has carefully repaired the Yongji Bridge which was destroyed by floods shows that the country respects and values the cultural traditions of the Dong people and is willing to devote efforts and resources to it. As an important cultural symbol of the Dong region, the restoration of the Yongji Bridge is not only the reconstruction of a physical bridge but also the care and inheritance of the Dong culture and historical memory. The intervention and investment at the national level convey the high importance and respect for Dong culture, which helps strengthen the Dong people's sense of identity and belonging to the country. Through this event, the country showed its respect and support for national culture to all ethnic groups, conveyed the concept of common development between the country and the nation, and further strengthened the emotional bond between the country and the Dong people.

### 3.2 Yongji Bridge in the Process of National Cultural Tourism

In the tourism environment, Yongji Bridge stands out from its mere transportation function and becomes an important representative of tourist attractions. The meaning of Yongji Bridge's public space has evolved during the tourism promotion process, reflecting the reconstruction and expansion of community space by the tourism industry; and the evolution of the Dong's traditional road-blocking ceremony to performances brought under the gaze of tourists shows the importance of tourism. Ritualization of the transformation of community interests and Dong people show the dual impact of tourism development on the community economy and culture. As a tourist destination, Yongji Bridge not only plays the role of a bridge but also serves as a link between the community and the world. The following content will help us understand the role of Wind and Rain Bridge in the development of tourism, and how the evolution of public space has shaped ritual meanings and affected the socio-economics of communities.

#### 3.2.1 Yongji Bridge: Sharing Public Space between Dong and Outsiders

In the past, Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge was a public space shared by the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai, where they shaped their national character and constructed their cultural identity. In the context of tourism, Yongji Bridge was opened to external sharing to develop the economy. As an external shared public space, Yongji Bridge triggers changes in community identity and belonging social interaction, and social change. The influence of this tourism economy has changed the original meaning of Wind and Rain Bridge, becoming the connection and integration between the community and the outside world.

#### **Changes in Community Identity and Sense of Belonging**

The change in the role of Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge has prompted village residents to re-examine the status and significance of Wind and Rain Bridge in the village, which in turn affects their sense of identity and belonging to the village. The Dong people have long regarded the Yongji Bridge as a part of their lives, a link connecting the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, and a convenient and fast means of transportation for production and life. However, as Wind and Rain Bridge has become a tourist attraction, it is no longer just for the convenience of residents but has become a place to attract external tourists and showcase local culture and history. As a result, the Dong people feel that the meaning and value of the bridge have changed.

According to the author's interviews with Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai during fieldwork, there are mainly two views.

The first view is that some villagers have reaffirmed their national identity in the evolution of Wind and Rain Bridge's public space. For example, Ms. Wu Aixian is proud that Yongji Bridge has become an important tourist attraction. She believes that Yongji Bridge is the cultural building that best reflects the Dong people. After Chengyang Bazhai became a scenic spot, she participated in the song and dance performance team in the village and performed at Yongji bridgehead, Yueye Songtang, and other places every holiday. Some villagers like Ms. Wu Aixian will actively participate in cultural activities and exhibitions in Wind and Rain Bridge, thereby strengthening their sense of identity with the village.

A counter-argument is that some villagers may be struggling with their traditional community identity. External groups represented by tourists have invaded the public space of Wind and Rain Bridge, making them feel disconnected from the past community environment and lifestyle, resulting in a sense of ambivalence and loss of community identity. Chen Yuetiao, an old man from Ma'an zhai, cannot adapt to the changes in the space of Yongji Bridge. He believes that outsiders have disrupted their original lives. Some people went to the village to open B&Bs or do other businesses to gain economic benefits, which made the village no longer plain, the state of unity was broken, and these outsiders used the fame of Yongji Bridge to make money in their villages. This made him wonder: is Dong village still the same village as before, and he struggled with his own identity?

### **Social Interaction under the Social Changes in Public Space**

As a tourist attraction, Yongji Bridge attracts more external tourists, and daily social interactions and social patterns change in public spaces. Dong people have more contact and communication with tourists. This new form of social interaction has an impact on the social structure and daily life within the community.



Figure 88 Tourists wearing national costumes take photos at Yongji Bridge.  
Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. May 3, 2023



Figure 89 A Dong grandmother sells her own Dong embroidery crafts or auspicious pendants to tourists at Yongji Bridge. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 1, 2022

Tourists will have different expectations and behaviors when they come to Yongji Bridge. They took photos, went shopping, and other activities, thereby changing the bridge's original daily function. During fieldwork, the author discovered that it is a very common phenomenon for tourists to wear national costumes and take photos at the head of Yongji Bridge. This phenomenon occurs in the public space of Yongji Bridge and changes the original meaning of Wind and Rain Bridge. In addition, some Dong grandmothers bring their own Dong embroidery crafts or auspicious pendants to Yongji Bridge to sell to tourists. The public space of Yongji Bridge generates more social interaction and communication.



Figure 90 Hotels and restaurants opened by Dong people next to Yongji Bridge. Under the influence of tourism, they changed their original production methods. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 1, 2022

The obvious tourist characteristics of Yongji Bridge have changed the daily production and life of the Dong people. The phenomenon of increased tourist stay time and increased consumption behavior around Wind and Rain Bridge in Yongji has led to the development of surrounding commercial and

service facilities. Some Dong people in Ma'an Village have used their houses to open hotels and restaurants. This new production method has completely changed the original farming lifestyle of the village.

In the process of Yongji Bridge moving from community sharing to external sharing, it is not only the changes in the scenic spots themselves, but also the interactions and changes at the social, cultural, and economic levels. With the deepening of tourism, Yongji Bridge will become a link between the community and the outside world, while also presenting the image of a diverse and dynamic tourist destination.

### 3.2.2 Tourist Gaze and Transformation Ritual Practice in Yongji Bridge

French sociologist Jean Viard proposed the concept of tourism ritualization in his book "The new era of Tourism". He believed that tourism is not only a simple travel experience but also a ritualized experience in which participants gain identity and cultural experience through tourist activities (Jean Viard 1999).

The tourism ritualization of Yongji Bridge elevates tourists' experience to a ritual level. Visitors not only come to appreciate its beautiful scenery but also to participate in its ritual activities and experience its history, culture, and tradition. This sense of ritual is reflected in the special visual, auditory, tactile, and other sensory experiences of tourists, making Yongji Bridge a symbolic cultural experience place.

Under the gaze of tourists, to satisfy the ritual experience of tourists, the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai took out the traditional road-blocking ceremony and changed it into a performance to communicate and interact with tourists. The following is the process of this performance that the author experienced at Yongji Bridge:

May 1, 2023, is Labor Day, a statutory holiday in China, and many tourists come to Chengyang Bazhai. At 9:30 in the morning, about a dozen women wearing Dong costumes and holding red umbrellas lined up at the head of Yongji Bridge. Two Dong ladies at the front of the queue pulled up red cloth strips to block tourists who wanted to enter the village through Yongji Bridge. Then two leading Dong women walked out of the team. They asked the tourists whether they wanted to enter the village. When they received a positive answer, they asked the tourists to use antiphonal singing to unblock them to enter the village. Then, the two leading Dong women led other Dong women to start singing. After singing, it was the tourists' turn to sing. After several rounds of repetition, the tourists were qualified to enter the village. Then the red cloth that had been pulled up to block the road was untied, and the two leading Dong women served their unique rice wine to the tourists. After the tourists drank this bowl of wine, they became good friends with the Dong people, and this bowl of wine represented welcome.





Figure 91 The welcome performance at Yongji Bridge. Under the gaze of tourists, the road-blocking ceremony of Yongji Bridge transformed into a road-blocking welcome performance, changing the meaning of the public space of Yongji Bridge from a functional defensive space to a tourist experience space. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. May 1, 2023

This performance is called Yongji Bridge to welcome guests on the tourist advertising flyer of Chengyang Bazhai. By comparing it with the traditional road-blocking ceremony, we can see that it has adapted to the ritual transformation under the gaze of tourists. In the past, the road-blocking ceremony used Yongji Bridge as a defensive space for the village. To enter, one must verify one's identity through antiphonal singing. Through the songs sung in Dong language and the questions and answers about Dong customs and culture in the songs, people who want to enter the village can prove their identity and obtain the qualifications to enter the village. Nowadays, the road-blocking ceremony has a strong meaning. The Dong people still sing Dong songs, but tourists only need to sing the songs. The ritual is no longer for defense and identity verification but becomes a performance that serves tourists' cultural experience.

The Yongji Bridge road-blocking ceremony has been transformed from a traditional ceremony into a performance, which not only meets the needs of tourists but also makes Yongji Bridge a more dynamic and attractive cultural landscape. This transformation has given Yongji Bridge new meaning, allowing it to play a more important role in the tourism environment.

### 3.2.3 Benefits and Sharing under the Process of Cultural Tourism

The tourism development of Yongji Bridge has brought economic benefits but also triggered the adjustment of community interests and the transformation of Dong people's values. The rise of tourism has caused communities

to face new economic opportunities and challenges, thus affecting the lives and economic models of community residents. The reconstruction of cultural identity, social identity, and values involved in this change process demonstrates the importance of Chengyang Yongji Bridge as a link between the community and the outside world.

### **(1) Sharing of Village Benefits from the Tourism Development of the Yongji Bridge**

Chengyang Bazhai Tourist Area, with Yongji Bridge as its core attraction, was rated as a national AAAAA tourist attraction in February 2024 under the management and construction of Guangxi Tourism Development Group. Tourists can enter the Chengyang Bazhai Tourist Area by purchasing a ticket worth 80 yuan. Ticket revenue is the main benefit of Chengyang Bazhai Scenic Area.



Figure 92 The welcome gate of Chengyang Bazhai Tourist Area. It built by Guangxi Tourism Development Group. Tourists can enter Chengyang Eight villages after purchasing tickets here. Source: <http://www.sjcybz.com/> (accessed on 25 March 2024)

Because the construction of Chengyang Bazhai into a modern tourist area was mainly invested and constructed by the Guangxi Tourism Development Group, the Guangxi Tourism Development Group occupies most of the interests of the scenic spot. The remaining portion will be allocated based on the radiation capabilities of core attractions and the tourism resources of each village. Ma'an Village is the closest to Yongji Bridge and only gets a small share of the profits from tourist ticket revenue, while the other seven villages receive even less. According to interviews conducted by the author, each villager in Chengyang Bazhai only receives tens to hundreds of RMB worth of scenic spot benefits every year. In addition, the scenic spot management office does not provide many jobs, causing conflicts between villagers and the scenic spot operating company.

From the perspective of the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai, they were dissatisfied. Yongji Bridge is a public welfare undertaking built with great pains by their ancestors. It is owned by Chengyang Bazhai. It is a good deed that

benefits future generations and is praised by thousands of people. But now that it has been developed as a scenic spot, people's benefits are not ideal, and many villagers have complained. Although on the surface it is a dissatisfaction among the villagers with the distribution of benefits, in essence, it reflects their incompatibility in facing the tourism economy. This mentality reflects a wait-and-see attitude toward new things and a lack of confidence in the dominant position a crisis of confidence in the power of reform. The consequence of waiting and watching is that except for a very small number of direct tourism practitioners, most villagers have not improved their lives from the development of tourism.

## **(2) Transformation of the Dong People: From Simple Farmers to Astute Businesspeople**

To better adapt to and enjoy the benefits of Chengyang Bazhai Tourist Area, some Dong people in the village have transformed from simple farmers into savvy businessmen and engaged in commercial activities to obtain profits. Some of these Dong people who make a living from tourism use their own houses to start special B&Bs, some open restaurants for tourists, and some use Dong's traditional Hundred Family Banquet to carry out tourist experience activities. They have reshaped their social identities and values. The following is an interesting phenomenon discovered by the author during fieldwork.

In May 2023, the Dong people in Yanzhai started operating a raft tour project on the Linxi River to adapt to the needs of tourists. The Dong people decorate the raft with gauze curtains and flowers and put stools on it for tourists to ride on. This novel tourism project has attracted many tourists and generated tourism benefits for the Dong people. It can be seen that in the tourism environment, to obtain economic benefits, the Dong people have reshaped their social identity and adopted a business mindset.



Figure 93 Rafting tour on Linxi River. In May 2023, the Dong people started operating a raft tour project on the Linxi River. This project demonstrates the changing role of the Dong people from simple farmers to astute businessmen to adapt to the development of tourism. Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. May 1, 2023



In July 2023, when the author came to Chengyang Bazhai again, I found that this tourism project had been canceled. The reason was that the management office of the scenic spot believed that the Linxi River sightseeing project privately operated by the Dong people did not have safety qualifications and did not meet national laws' requirements for prescribed water business projects. In the public space of Chengyang Bazhai, the game of space rights between space owners and managers affects and changes the function and meaning of space use.

In the tourism development of Yongji Bridge, the sharing of village benefits reflects the importance of social and economic impact. This sharing mechanism incorporates tourism revenue into the village economic system, promoting the prosperity of the local economy and increasing community income. However, this also triggered a series of social changes, especially the changing role of the Dong people. From simple farmers to savvy businessmen, the Dong people began to actively participate in the tourism industry, actively develop tourism resources, improve service levels, and obtain more economic benefits. This transformation not only enriches the economic resources of the Dong people but also strengthens their status and influence in the community. As a link between the community and the outside world, Yongji Bridge played an important role in this process, not only promoting the development of the community economy but also promoting the change of the role of community residents in the tourism industry, achieving a win-win situation for society and the economy.

In the tourism environment, the development of Yongji Bridge is not only the evolution of a bridge but also a symbol of the connection between the community and the world. The evolution of public space reflects the reconstruction and expansion of community space by tourism. The ritualization of tourism elevates tourists' experience to a ritual level. The changes in community interests and Dong people show the impact of tourism development on the community economy and society and the dual influence of culture. As a tourist destination, Chengyang Yongji Bridge not only plays the role of a bridge but also serves as a link between the community and the world. It develops the economy, expands public space, shapes ritual significance, and affects the social economy of the community, reflecting the important role of tourism in local development and cultural exchanges.

### 3.3 Yongji Bridge and Global World

In the context of globalization, Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge, as a carrier of cultural export, has successfully connected the road of cultural exchange between China and the world by participating in international cultural exhibitions and receiving international academic attention. Its display and research are not only the introduction of a bridge but also the display and inheritance of China's rich intangible cultural heritage. Yongji Bridge has become a representative of traditional Chinese culture and provides the world with a window to understand Chinese culture. This kind of cultural export not only deepens the international community's understanding of Chinese culture but also enriches the connotation and significance of Wind and Rain Bridge. In this process, the Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge plays an important link between the community and the outside world, building a bridge for the interconnection and integration of Chinese culture and world civilization.



### 3.3.1 The Yongji Bridge as a Carrier of Cultural Export at the 2nd International Maritime Silk Road Cultural Exhibition

In the context of globalization, Yongji Bridge has become one of the important carriers of Chinese cultural exports. From an anthropological perspective, Wind and Rain Bridge, as a cultural carrier, demonstrates the charm of traditional Chinese culture on the international stage. The following will use the case of the Second International Maritime Silk Road's Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition to analyze the role of Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge in the Second International Maritime Silk Road's Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition, and how to strengthen the cultural connections between China and the world.

The researcher interviewed Mr. Yang Yundong, a wood structure craftsman from Chengyang Bazhai and an inheritor of intangible cultural heritage. He is the Chinese representative participating in this exhibition. He told the researchers that the Second International Maritime Silk Road Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition was a national exhibition participated by 11 countries including China, Italy, Thailand, India, and South Africa. This exhibition is divided into three contents: intangible cultural heritage protection achievements, product development innovation, and project live display.



Figure 94 Yang Yundong attended the second International Maritime Silk Road Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition. Yang Yundong, the inheritor of the intangible cultural heritage of the Dong people's wooden structure construction skills in Chengyang Bazhai, participated in the 2nd International Maritime Silk Road Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition as a representative of China in 2019. At the exhibition, he demonstrated the construction skills of the Wind and Rain Bridge and the Dong wooden architectural model of the Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge. Source: Photographed by Yang Yundong. November 17, 2019

On behalf of China, he demonstrated the construction skills of the Wind and Rain Bridge at the 2nd International Maritime Silk Road Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition in 2019, and displayed the 1:1 restored model of the Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge at the international exhibition, attracting visitors from all over the world. The audience all praised the exquisite craftsmanship of Wind and Rain Bridge. Yang Yundong showed the Wind and Rain Bridge, a representative

Dong wooden architectural model, to help audiences from all over the world learn about China's traditional bridge architecture, Dong culture, and folk crafts.

Under the platform of this international exhibition, Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge represents the essence and wisdom of traditional Chinese architecture, as well as Chinese culture, carrying profound historical and cultural connotations. Through this exhibition, China has demonstrated Chinese intangible culture to the world the unique charm of heritage.

It can be seen that in the context of globalization, the Wind and Rain Bridge has become a bridge for cultural exchanges between China and the world. It not only conveys the essence of Chinese traditional architecture and national culture to the outside world but also promotes the exchange and integration of Chinese and foreign cultures. By participating in international exhibitions, Wind and Rain Bridge not only deepen the international community's recognition and understanding of Chinese culture but also makes positive contributions to the improvement of China's cultural soft power.

### 3.3.2 International Academic Attention and Cultural Exchange on the Yongji Bridge Case of Japanese Researchers

In the context of globalization, Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge has attracted the attention of international researchers and has become an important node for cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries.



Figure 95 A group photo of Professor Tsunichi Matsuo from the National Museum of History and Folklore of Japan and Dong craftsman Yang Hengjin. On July 29, 2018, Professor Tsuneichi Matsuo from the National Museum of History and Folklore of Japan came to Chengyang Bazhai to research the wooden construction techniques and unique culture of Wind and Rain Bridge. During this period, he had in-depth exchanges with Yang Hengjin, the wooden craftsman who built the Wind and Rain Bridge. Source: Photographed by Yang Yundong. July 29, 2018

On July 29, 2018, Professor Tsuneichi Matsuo from the National Museum of History and Folklore of Japan traveled thousands of miles to Chengyang Bazhai in China to research the wooden construction techniques of the local famous Wind and Rain Bridge and the unique culture it carries with in-depth and detailed research. This action not only reflects Professor Tsuneichi Matsuo's deep interest in traditional architectural techniques and cultural connotations but also demonstrates

the exchanges and cooperation between China and Japan in the field of cultural heritage protection and inheritance.

During the inspection in Chengyang Bazhai, Professor Matsuo Tsuneichi had many in-depth exchanges with local wood structure craftsman Yang Hengjin. As a representative craftsman in the construction of Wind and Rain Bridge, Yang Hengjin has rich practical experience and exquisite wood structure skills. He introduced in detail the design principles, construction process, and Dong cultural elements contained in Wind and Rain Bridge to Professor Matsuo Tsuneichi.

Through this exchange, Professor Matsuo Tsuneichi not only gained an in-depth understanding of the wooden structure construction techniques and cultural connotations of Wind and Rain Bridge but also established a profound friendship with local craftsmen such as Yang Hengjin. This kind of cross-cultural exchange and cooperation not only helps promote the common progress of China and Japan in the field of cultural heritage protection but also provides valuable cases and materials for cultural diversity research in anthropology and community interaction research in sociology.

The arrival of Japanese researchers marks Chengyang Yongjiqiao's attention and recognition in the international academic field. As one of the representatives of traditional Chinese architecture, Yongji Bridge has attracted the attention of Japanese scholars. Their research on Yongji Bridge is not only an understanding of Chinese traditional architectural culture but also an important part of Sino-Japanese cultural exchanges. The arrival of Japanese researchers not only promotes academic exchanges and cooperation between Chinese and Japanese scholars but also creates new opportunities for Yongji Bridge to enhance its status and influence on the international academic stage. Through international academic attention and exchanges, Yongji Bridge not only connects the cultures of China and the world in the context of globalization but also promotes mutual understanding and respect between the cultures of China and Japan.

As a carrier of cultural export, Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge displayed China's rich intangible cultural heritage at the Second International Maritime Silk Road Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition, connecting the cultural ties between China and the world. At the same time, the academic attention and cultural exchanges of Japanese researchers on Chengyang Yongji Bridge have also built a bridge for cultural mutual learning and exchanges between China and Japan. In the context of globalization, Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge is not only a symbol of a bridge, but also a cultural link connecting China and Japan, connecting China and the world, promoting cultural exchange and integration, and demonstrating the role of Yongji Bridge as a bridge of the value and significance of important cultural heritage.

#### **part4: Wind and Rain Bridges as Cultural Symbols of Guangxi Zhuang**

##### **Autonomous Regional**

In today's society, Wind and Rain Bridge are not only used as a public space in Chengyang Bazhai, it is condensed into a cultural symbol and displayed in the outside world by different people and for different purposes. As a national gift, it mainly demonstrates its value and significance in national and historical dimensions. The continuous construction of the Wind and Rain Bridge in

the external world of Chengyang Bazhai has become a cultural symbol. With the help of this symbol, the Wind and Rain Bridge's cultural connotation is displayed to the outside world, forming a unique regional construction in Guangxi.

In the book "The Symbolization of People: Culture and Symbolism", Ernst Cassirer discussed the theory of meaning in depth. He proposed that the theory of symbols shifts from epistemology to meaning theory, and discussed how human cultural activities are structured by systems of symbols, and how these symbols shape our understanding of the world. Ernst Cassirer believed that human symbolic activity is a creative and constructive cultural activity. Through symbolic activities, humans transform from the passive state of nature to the active state of culture. In the "meaning change" from passive to active Construct a world of meaning belonging to human beings (Cassirer, E. 1923).

In today's society, people use wind and rain bridge symbols to convey meaning, which can be understood using Ernst Cassirer's "cultural symbol" theory.

First, the "cultural symbol" theory emphasizes that symbols are used to construct cultural meaning. Symbols are not just simple expression tools but give meaning through people's common understanding and use. As a symbol, Wind and Rain Bridge is spread by different people, expressed in different contexts, and conveys different meanings. The significance of choosing Wind and Rain Bridge to spread is that the government or individuals are trying to construct Dong culture or minority culture as a regional identity.

Secondly, "cultural symbols" are tools for cultural transmission and communication. Through symbols, people can convey and share cultural values, traditional knowledge, emotional experiences, and social norms, thereby forming a common cultural identity. Choosing the Wind and Rain Bridge as a national gift was a result of careful consideration and the belief that this way can better express common cultural values and emotional experiences. This is not only a choice of communication, but also a giving and expression of meaning.

Furthermore, Ernst Cassirer's theory of cultural symbols is dynamic, their meaning and use change with time and circumstances. Symbols can be reinterpreted, reconstructed, or redefined to suit changing cultural needs and social situations.

In the external society of Chengyang Bazhai, the Wind and Rain Bridge as a cultural symbol has been given different meanings. The following will be described through two cases:

1. Tongxin Bridge as a national gift: Gifts are used to express meaning;

2. Modern Wind and Rain Bridge in Guangxi: Wind and Rain Bridge has evolved from the Dong culture to the minority culture of Guangxi, transcending ethnic boundaries and building a common regional meaning.

Different groups in society use Wind and Rain Bridges in various ways and assign meaning to Wind and Rain Bridges, forming a unique cultural symbol of Wind and Rain Bridge. By understanding the role and significance of Wind and Rain Bridge cultural symbols, we can gain a deeper understanding of the nature of human culture and promote cross-cultural communication and understanding.



Under the guidance of the national policy of "the Chinese nation is one family and works together to build the Chinese dream" proposed by Xi Jinping in the new era, unity and integration among multi-ethnic groups have become the ideals and goals pursued by China. This is not only out of consideration for the unity and stability of a multi-ethnic country, but also the need for innovation and reinvention of Chinese culture. Outsiders may not have a deep understanding of the culture of the Dong people's Wind and Rain Bridge, but they try to spread and express a new culture and meaning through the Wind and Rain Bridge symbol.

#### 4.1 The Tongxin Bridge as a State Gift: Linking Mainland China and Hong Kong as Cultural Symbols

Discussions about gifts have always attracted academic attention, whether it is the "spirit of gifts" emphasized by Mauss, Malinowski's discovery of "Kula exchange", or the "flow of gifts" focused on by Yan Yunxiang, etc. It can be seen that a gift is not only a pure object but also an important medium that connects people. Its cultural significance is to symbolize the emotional interaction between the gift giver and the gift recipient. In other words, in the gift-giving behavior, what people care about is not the economic value and use value of the gift itself, but the special emotion and symbolic meaning contained in the gift (Liao Mingjun and Li Ni. 2023).

##### 4.1.1 Background of the Gift of the Tongxin Bridge

Gifts have played an important role in society for a long time. The cultural meanings and emotional expressions condensed in gifts are the most fundamental elements for society to maintain vitality. People in society need to use them to complete important transition rituals and convey certain important information through them. This is because it is determined by the social background at the time when the gift was given.

The meaning of a gift is always closely linked to the context in which it is given. Hong Kong returned to China on July 1, 1997. This was an important moment for the Chinese government, society, and people. On this day, the government of the People's Republic of China resumed the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong, and the British government handed Hong Kong back to the People's Republic of China. Hong Kong ended its 100-year colonial period and returned to the embrace of China. This is a shining moment in the history of New China. On August 29, 1842, the first Opium War broke out between China and the United Kingdom in China. The Qing government at that time was defeated and the Treaty of Nanjing signed with the United Kingdom ceded Hong Kong Island and Ap Lei Chau to the United Kingdom. In October 1860, the Qing government was defeated again during the Second Opium War and was forced to sign the Treaty of Beijing, handing over the south of Boundary Street and Stonecutters Island on the Kowloon Peninsula (then known as the Kowloon Division District 1) to British administration. In 1898, the Qing government signed the "Special Treaty to Expand the Boundary Site of Hong Kong" with the United Kingdom, leasing 230 large and small islands south of the Shenzhen River and north of Boundary Street to the United Kingdom, totaling 975.1 square kilometers of land, and calling the leased land the "New Territories" "The lease

term is 99 years. From then on, Britain began its colonial rule over Hong Kong, which lasted for 100 years from July 1, 1898, to June 30, 1997 (Shen Qingli. 2016).

#### 4.1.2 Meaning of the Tongxin Bridge in Important Returning Ceremonies in Hong Kong and Mainland China

In this important returning ceremony for Hong Kong and mainland China, gifts play the role of ending the past and opening up a new future. Hong Kong's return to China is like a child returning to its mother's arms, and the child's brothers and sisters all send gifts to welcome it home. To celebrate Hong Kong's return, every province in mainland China sent Hong Kong gifts to celebrate the return.

Yunnan Province presented a bronze vase "Auspicious" to Hong Kong. The vase is composed of two lifelike peacocks, which represents the Yunnan people's blessings for Hong Kong's return: the peacocks from the land of colorful clouds, carrying the fragrance of camellia, fly to Wherever the bauhinia blooms, send auspicious blessings to Hong Kong compatriots.

The Tibet Autonomous Region presented to Hong Kong Tibet's most expensive pure wool tapestry, "High Mountains and Long Waters," which was also embroidered with the words "Congratulations on the return of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" in Tibetan and Chinese. The Potala Palace held up by auspicious colorful clouds on the woolen carpet echoes the vast expanse of blue waves in the South China Sea. The beautiful rainbow builds a bridge of friendship between Tibet and Hong Kong: the flying white crane sends blessings to the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet.

There is also a sculpture "The Return of the Yellow Crane" presented by Hubei Province. The lifelike yellow crane's feet are stepping on the golden turtle, which symbolizes the welcome to Hong Kong and never parting. Hainan Province, which borders the ocean, presented carefully prepared large-scale shell sculptures such as "We Are Together at the End of the World" and so on. Each province in mainland China has condensed its most distinctive and representative scenery, animals, jewelry, and skills into gifts, giving them meaning to Hong Kong to complete this final transition ceremony.

In this ceremony, the People's Government of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region presented a large-scale wood carving "Tongxin Bridge" based on the Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai and made of red beech, a precious wood in Guangxi. This gift is 2.5 meters long, about 2 meters high, and weighs about 2 tons. The base is made of mahogany and is carved with 9 dragon boats and 9 Zhuang hydrangea, which are full of the local ethnic characteristics of Guangxi.

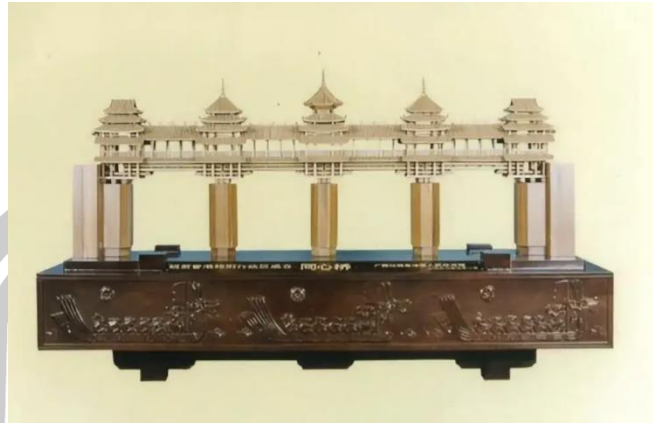


Figure 96 National gift " Tongxin Bridge ". To celebrate Hong Kong's return to China, the "Tongxin Bridge" gift was presented by the Guangxi Autonomous Region Government. This gift is made based on the Yongji Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai and gives the meaning of a heart-to-heart connection. Source: <https://baike.baidu.com/> (Accessed on March 2, 2024)

This gift expresses several aspects of meaning. First of all, the Guangxi government chose this wooden carved wind and rain bridge called "Tongxin Bridge" to convey its blessings for Hong Kong's return. The name of the gift "Tongxin" expresses the connection between hearts. Through the name of the gift, I hope that mainland China and Hong Kong will be connected heart to heart in the future.

Secondly, bridges have been used to bridge obstacles to achieve communication since ancient times. The Guangxi government chose the symbol of the bridge to imply that after Hong Kong's return to China, it can bridge obstacles and achieve unlimited communication.

Another noteworthy meaning is the expression of identity. Gifts from various provinces in mainland China express their identity. The Guangxi Autonomous Region is no exception. Through the gift of Tongxin Bridge, the Guangxi government demonstrates its unique national identity through the most distinctive Dong Wind and Rain Bridge.

After careful consideration, the Guangxi government chose to use the cultural symbol of Wind and Rain Bridge to express common cultural values and emotional experiences. This symbol has been reinterpreted, reconstructed, or redefined in response to changing cultural needs and social situations.

Under the historical background of national importance, Wind and Rain Bridge has undergone fundamental changes for the Chinese people. The message it carries is no longer mainly about reflecting the culture and status of ethnic minorities but aims to express the Chinese people's support for the country a long-cherished wish for reunification. From this perspective, the "ritual" conveyed by the Wind and Rain Bridge symbol today is more of a memory of China's painful history and a better vision for the future. Although such memories and vision are inseparable from the Chinese people, as objects Wind and Rain Bridge creates more meanings

from the continuous social practice of human beings. This also confirms from the side that the use of meaning changes with time and environment.

#### 4.1.3 Production of the Tongxin Bridge and Its Meaning for the Dong Ethnic People

Yan Yunxiang pointed out that "the word 'gift' consists of two characters: the first character 'li' means ritual, etiquette, and ritual expression of moral concepts such as loyalty and filial piety; the second character 'wu' means material. It is worth noting that etymologically speaking, this Chinese word implies that gifts are not just material gifts, but they carry cultural rules (etiquette) and involve rituals. Therefore, rude things are just objects and not rituals. Object" (Marcel Mauss. 2002).

This concept of "gift" is also applicable here, but as far as Tongxin Bridge is concerned, the meaning of "ritual" it has is not only ritual, etiquette, and moral concepts, but more importantly, it should also contain rich human emotions, this emotion is not only reflected in the behavior and items of "gift giving", but also in the process of the gift giver personally making the gift.

In 1997, the Guangxi Autonomous Region government commissioned the Yangtangfu family, a Dong carpenter family in Chengyang Bazhai, to make the "Tongxin Bridge" as a gift. Yang Tangfu's son Yang Yinqiao and grandson Yang Siyu jointly used ancestral skills and spent two months replicating the Chengyang Wind and Rain Bridge, which is 2.5 meters long, 2 meters high, and weighs about two tons, using 9,800 redwoods abundant in southern China Model.



Figure 97 Dong craftsman Yang Siyu and his brothers jointly made the "Tongxin Bridge". Source: <https://baike.baidu.com/> (Accessed on March 2, 2024)

Yang Siyu once said that after receiving a commission from the Guangxi Autonomous Region Government, the whole family convened to study how to make this unique wind and rain bridge. Several brothers worked together and worked day and night, and finally completed it on time. And everyone's unified belief at that time was that this gift must be made well because to them it represented the skills and culture of the Dong people, which could be spread to the outside world through this gift. It can be seen that this wind and rain bridge as a gift is an



intermediary for the Dong people to spread their culture and embody their ethnicity. The same gift means different things to different people.

In the current context, the Wind and Rain Bridge is made into a gift and becomes a cultural symbol. The Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai has not been removed, but the culture of the bridge has been displayed to the outside world. The meaning of Wind and Rain Bridge has also been reconstructed in different contexts and reinterpreted by different people, showing the diversity of meanings of Wind and Rain Bridge as a cultural symbol. This also reflects the complex interactive relationship between Wind and Rain Bridge and the outside world in the modern context.

#### 4.2 Modern Wind and Rain Bridges in Guangxi: Symbols of Inter-ethnic Sharing

In the context of modern society, Wind and Rain Bridges were built in various places in Guangxi to showcase the unique minority culture of Guangxi. This display reinforces the uniqueness and identity of the Guangxi region as an autonomous region for ethnic minorities in China. Through the spatial construction of Wind and Rain Bridge, insiders and outsiders of ethnic minority groups can confirm their identities in this public space. The Wind and Rain Bridge has transcended the meaning of the Dong culture itself and has become a symbol of Guangxi's minority culture. The 12 ethnic minorities in Guangxi have used the Wind and Rain Bridge as a symbol shared among ethnic groups to construct their own minority identity and cultural identity in today's society.

##### 4.2.1 Real Scenes of Wind and Rain Bridges in Museums

Generally speaking, museums are spaces that showcase local characteristics and culture and are the most important display of local culture and identity. The two most important museums used to display national culture in Guangxi, Wind and Rain Bridge were built here to display the culture of Guangxi's ethnic minorities.

##### Wind and Rain Bridge in 'Guangxi Autonomous Region Museum'

The Guangxi Autonomous Region Museum was established in 1934. It is a provincial-level comprehensive museum of history and art and one of the first national first-level museums in China. The Guangxi Autonomous Region Museum is different from other museums in that it has a cultural relic garden featuring Guangxi minority architecture behind the museum exhibition building, forming a "combination of museum and garden" form.

พหุวัฒนธรรม  
ปณ ภัต ชีเว



Figure 98 Wind and Rain Bridge in the Cultural Relics Garden of the Guangxi Autonomous Region Museum. It became a theater showcasing minority culture.  
Source: Photographed by Chen Lu. October 16, 2023

The cultural relics garden consists of a Dong wind and rain bridge, a Dong drum tower, several Miao stilted buildings, and Zhuang gamelan dwellings. Real-life buildings with Guangxi minority characteristics are gathered in the Cultural Relics Garden to showcase minority culture to the public.



Figure 99 Guangxi ethnic minority folk performances in the Cultural Relics Garden of the Guangxi Autonomous Region Museum. Wind and Rain Bridge and other buildings became theaters for displaying minority culture. Source: <https://www.gxmuseum.cn/> (Accessed on March 25, 2024)

At the same time, the museum holds folk activities such as Dong oil tea, Zhuang batik, Zhuang hydrangea, and Zhuang winemaking in this space during festivals, turning the cultural relics garden into a theater for Guangxi ethnic minorities, where the audience can understand and appreciate these ethnic groups culture and craftsmanship.

For example, the 2016 "March 3rd" festival is a good example. This "March 3" festival kicked off in Nanning City, and the District Museum Ethnic Cultural Relics Garden was designated by the conference as the performance venue. Next to the Wind and Rain Bridge in the Cultural Relics Garden, various ethnic minorities in Guangxi presented songs and dance performances to the audience. This event also included performances of Guangxi Zhuang's brocade and Taiwan's Taroko's textiles. The ingenious, hard-working, and simple ethnic minority women inherited and promoted excellent traditional weaving craftsmanship, presenting to the public magnificent patterns with exquisite patterns and bright colors Jin and Taroko Clan Jin.

The audience also enjoyed the wonderful Zhuang Tianqin and Taroko xylophone; personally experienced ethnic games such as "Bumping Eggs", Nixing Pottery, and "Pottery Niwan", and personally learned how to make "Five-Colored Glutinous Rice" and "Pounding Rice Cake" ", "Oleifera tea" and other ethnic folk crafts, allowing the public to taste a variety of Guangxi's characteristic ethnic delicacies and appreciate the colorful traditional customs and ethnic customs of various ethnic groups in Guangxi.



Figure 100 Thai Thai Pu folk song and dance cultural relics Park next to the wind and rain bridge performance. The 2016 "March 3rd" festival was held next to the Wind and Rain Bridge in the Heritage Garden. The invited Thai cultural exchange group performed Thai folk songs and dances of the Thai Pu ethnic group. Source: <https://www.gxmuseum.cn/> (Accessed on March 25, 2024)

At the same time, the Thai cultural inspection and exchange group participated in the March 3rd activities of the Zhuang people in Guangxi for the first time. The Thai cultural exchange group was invited to participate in this colorful and distinctive folk cultural activity and perform Thai folk songs and dances for the public on site. Wind and Rain Bridge has become a space that further expands the breadth and depth of people-to-people exchanges between China and Thailand.

### Wind and Rain Bridge in ‘Guangxi Nationalities Museum’

The Guangxi Ethnology Museum is a special museum on ethnic culture and an international and modern museum. The main mission of the museum is to collect, research, and display the traditional culture of Guangxi's 12 living ethnic groups. There is an open-air exhibition park with an area of about 30 acres in the Ethnic Museum, which is a dynamic extension of the museum's display function outdoors. Currently, there are 11 traditional landmark buildings of Guangxi ethnic minorities with strong ethnic styles and outstanding features, including the Dong Wind and Rain Bridge, Drum towers, Hakka enclosed houses Zhuang ganlan dwellings, etc. The exhibition park is a window for displaying the architectural culture of ethnic minorities and is the most influential exhibition venue for ethnic culture in Guangxi.



Figure 101 The Dong Wind and Rain Bridge in the open-air exhibition garden of the Guangxi Ethnology Museum. It displays the Dong culture to the outside world and becomes a space for the inheritance of Dong culture. Source: <https://www.amgx.org/> (Accessed on March 25, 2024)

The Dong Wind and Rain Bridge is located in the center of the open-air exhibition garden of the Guangxi Ethnology Museum and is the most prominent building in the open-air exhibition garden. It displays Dong culture to tourists and researchers and assumes the responsibility of inheritance. On April 27, 2021, Mr. Yang Yundong, a craftsman of the Dong wooden structure construction skills and an inheritor of the intangible heritage project, demonstrated the construction skills of the Wind and Rain Bridge in Wind and Rain Bridge for Chinese national leader Xi Jinping.

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Figure 102 Chinese President Xi Jinping at the wind and rain bridge with the people of all ethnic groups cordial exchanges. On the morning of April 27, 2021, Chinese President Xi Jinping inspected Guangxi. Outside the Guangxi Ethnology Museum in Nanning, he had cordial exchanges with people of all ethnic groups participating in the ethnic cultural activities of the March 3 "Song Fair Festival". Source: Photographed by Xinhua News Agency reporter Xie Huanchi. April 27, 2021

The various ethnic buildings in the open-air exhibition garden of the Guangxi Ethnology Museum are like a stage. Through professional display and interpretation, people can identify and express themselves in China's multi-ethnic unified country and complex cultural background. This not only strengthens the national culture Its uniqueness also promotes the exchange and integration of ethnic minority cultures. As Xi Jinping said in the open-air exhibition garden of the Guangxi Ethnology Museum when he inspected Guangxi, the Chinese nation is a national community composed of the integration of 56 ethnic groups.

The real-life Wind and Rain Bridge built in the museum has become a public space for ethnic groups and villages to display their own culture. In this space, individuals, villages, ethnic groups, and countries are all confirming their identities. This has helped the characteristic groups of China's ethnic minorities to be recognized in China today. Find balance and status in the social environment, and also provide space for promoting multicultural exchanges and integration among ethnic minorities and ethnic groups.

#### 4.2.2 Wind and Rain Bridges in Several Universities

In the development process of China's ethnic minorities, ethnic minority education and the training of ethnic minority cadres and talents have become a very important part of China's ethnic minority policies. Accordingly, by the policies of the "Trial Plan for Training Ethnic Minority Cadres" and the "Trial Plan for Preparing the Central University for Nationalities", the Chinese government has built several universities to develop education for ethnic minorities Guangxi University for Nationalities one of them in Guangxi.



Figure 103 Acacia Wind and Rain Bridge on the campus of Guangxi University for Nationalities. The establishment of the Wind and Rain Bridge within the university is an obvious symbol that distinguishes the unique identity of Guangxi University for Nationalities. It represents minorities. Source: <https://www.gxmzu.edu.cn/> (Accessed on March 26, 2024)

In 2010, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the school and the wishes of the alumni, Guangxi University for Nationalities built a 40-meter-long and 5.6-meter-wide Wind and Rain Bridge on the Xiangsi Lake. The Wind and Rain Bridge consists of 3 tower pavilions and 12 bridge corridors.

The establishment of Wind and Rain Bridge in Guangxi University for Nationalities has a lot to do with the purpose of the university itself. This university established to serve the educational development of ethnic minorities adheres to the belief: "Guangxi University for Nationalities gathers students from all over the world to inherit and carry forward the excellence of all ethnic groups culture is our responsibility." The establishment of Wind and Rain Bridge on campus is a manifestation of promoting the culture of ethnic minorities and shaping the cultural landscape of ethnic minorities on campus. At the same time, Wind and Rain Bridge proves the uniqueness of Guangxi University for Nationalities that is different from other universities, giving the university a unique ethnic minority identity.

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Figure 104 Professor Yang Zaiyan and his students take a photo on the wind and rain Bridge in the university. On the morning of April 25, 2022, Professor Yang Zaiyan of Guangxi University for Nationalities gave a lecture on "The Display of Dong Culture and the Symbol of National Unity", taking the establishment of a wind and rain bridge on campus as an example, and led students to Wuming Campus Wind and Rain Bridge had an in-depth understanding and took a group photo. Source: <https://www.gxmzu.edu.cn/> (Accessed on March 26, 2024)

The significance of the construction of the Wind and Rain Bridge on campus was once again analyzed in the lecture given by Professor Yang Zaiyan of Guangxi University for Nationalities. On the morning of April 25, 2022, the "Xiangsi Lake Forum" organized by Guangxi University for Nationalities invited Yang Zaiyan, former deputy secretary of the Party Committee of Guangxi University for Nationalities, to introduce the display of Dong culture and the symbol of national unity. Yang Zaiyan led the students to the Wind and Rain Bridge on campus to talk about the significance of the establishment of the Acacia Wind and Rain Bridge in the school. He pointed out that in addition to its practical functions such as facilitating the passage of teachers and students of all ethnic groups, reading, leisure, and dating, its cultural significance lies in highlighting national characteristics and implying national unity. The construction of Xiangsi Wind and Rain Bridge not only adds new scenery to the campus but also highlights the ethnic characteristics of the campus. The Xiangsi Wind and Rain Bridge was jointly funded by our school and the five-county party committees and governments of Liuzhou City and was built by bringing together intellectual, financial, human, and material resources from all parties. It is the result of collaboration from all parties. The eight words "National Unity, National Destiny" are engraved on the bridge, giving Wind and Rain Bridge the symbolic meaning of witnessing the unity, friendship, and cohesion between teachers, students, and alumni of all ethnic groups in the school.

The University's Acacia Wind and Rain Bridge is a gift project for the 60th anniversary of Guangxi University for Nationalities. It is also an important part of the school's campus cultural connotation construction. The opening



of the Xiangsi Wind and Rain Bridge not only facilitates the travel of teachers and students but also adds a characteristic landscape with unique ethnic customs to the school. It is a wonderful way to gather the strength of alumni, build a characteristic campus, display national customs, and enhance cultural taste. Teachers and students use the Acacia Wind and Rain Bridge as a platform to inherit and carry forward the excellent traditional culture of all ethnic groups and write a new chapter for the construction of a cultural campus, a harmonious campus, and a beautiful campus.

The main purpose of establishing the Wind and Rain Bridge in the university is to reflect the national characteristics of the campus and to serve as a medium for education, academic research, and cultural exchanges. Wind and Rain Bridge has become a witness to the mutual exchange and integration of the multi-ethnic cultures of China's ethnic minorities on campus, and students from various ethnic minorities are also influencing and innovating each other in the collision and integration of cultures. These influences and innovations have enriched the connotation of Chinese culture.

#### 4.2.3 The World's Largest Longji Wind and Rain Bridge in Sanjiang County

In an environment where China is building cultural confidence, various regions and governments have begun to pay attention to the development of local wisdom, and local characteristics or craft traditions are constantly emerging and being revived. As a representative of the Dong culture, the Wind and Rain Bridge was rebuilt in the county by the Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County government. It closely integrated the local wisdom of in past and science and technology in the present to create the world's largest Longji Wind and Rain Bridge.



Figure 105 Longji Wind and Rain Bridge in Sanjiang County. It is the longest wind and rain bridge in the world in terms of length and scale. It can be used for traffic in the middle and pedestrians on both sides. It is a model of a modern wind and rain bridge. Source: <https://travel.sohu.com/> (Accessed on March 26, 2024)

Sanjiang County Longji Wind and Rain Bridge is located on the Xunjiang River in Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, Liuzhou, Guangxi. It is a reinforced concrete crescent-shaped single-arch bridge that integrates the essence of Dong's characteristic wooden construction techniques. Its length and scale are the



longest in the world. The entire bridge is 368 meters long and 16 meters wide. There are 284 bridge corridors and 7 pavilions and towers built on the bridge. It can be used for traffic in the middle and pedestrians on both sides. It is a model of a modern wind and rain bridge.

The Sanjiang County Government spent a huge amount of money to build the Sanjiang Longji Wind and Rain Bridge as one of the symbols of Sanjiang and a symbol of its Dong Autonomous County identity.

Sanjiang Longji Wind and Rain Bridge is a traditional reinvention of Wind and Rain bridge construction and a reflection of local wisdom. In the past, the Wind and Rain Bridge mostly used fir as the support of the bridge. This structure made the Wind and Rain Bridge unable to drive modern cars. The Longji Wind and Rain Bridge uses concrete and cement to build the bridge's base, giving it a double-sided driveway and then builds corridors and pavilions on top. This reinvention makes the Wind and Rain Bridge adapt to the needs of modern life.

The construction of the bridge deck of Longji Wind and Rain Bridge is a reflection of local wisdom. The building decoration materials of the bridge deck are based on fir trees. During the construction, the Dong wooden craftsmen did not have drawings or instructions, only a model, and used building blocks to build the bridge. The form finally completed the construction of the bridge. No iron nails were used in the entire bridge deck. There were countless small holes in the tree pillars, which were made diagonally through the mortise and tenon structure. The cornices and bucket arches, cantilevered columns, and warped beams were stacked with colorful greenery.



*Figure 106 The beam-raising ceremony for the fifth pavilion of Longji Wind and Rain Bridge. On July 3, 2010, ink master Yang Hengjin performed the beam-raising ceremony for the fifth pavilion of Longji Wind and Rain Bridge in Sanjiang County.*

Source: Photographed by Yang Yundong. July 3, 2010

It is worth noting that even with such a modern Wind and Rain Bridge, during various periods of its construction, the Dong people still built rituals on it to seek blessings. In July 2010, the Longji Wind and Rain Bridge held a Beam Setting Ritual. Yang Hengjin, the ink master responsible for the construction of the fifth pavilion, wrote his name and prayers on the beams and performed the Beam Setting Ritual.

The upper part of Longji Wind and Rain Bridge is a wooden structure, and the lower part is a reinforced concrete structure. It spans the Xunjiang River, like a long dragon flying in the sky, and like a rainbow. This is the connection between the present and the past. Longji Wind and Rain Bridge has become a landmark in Sanjiang County, just like the Eiffel Tower is in Paris.

In the context of modernity, Wind and Rain Bridge has become a powerful expression of local national identity. The reinvention of the Wind and Rain Bridge form demonstrates the innovation and development of national culture, while the reproduction of local wisdom and the persistence of tradition are the embodiment of national character. Wind and Rain Bridge connects It depicts the past traditions and modern life of the Dong people.

In addition to the three examples mentioned above, Wind and Rain Bridges are increasingly being built in various places in Guangxi, in parks, scenic spots and on highways, such as the Wind and Rain Bridge in Shishan Park in Nanning City, the Wind and Rain Bridge in the Xiangsi Lake Park Scenic Area in Nanning City the Wind and Rain Bridge, Liuzhou City Longtan Park Wind and Rain Bridge, Nanning City Keli Avenue Wind and Rain Bridge, etc. These wind and rain bridges have transcended the significance of Dong culture itself, crossed ethnic groups, and become the culture of Guangxi's ethnic minorities, constructed Guangxi's regional identity, and become symbols shared among ethnic groups.

People carry out creative and constructive cultural activities in the public space of Wind and Rain Bridge. This kind of activity constructs a world of meaning belonging to human beings. The Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai has not been moved to the outside world, but people's activities to recreate the Wind and Rain Bridge in the outside world have transferred the meaning of the Wind and Rain Bridge. Whether it is the Wind and Rain Bridge as a gift or the modern Wind and Rain Bridges across Guangxi, they are human creations that use Wind and Rain Bridges as symbols and transform from the passive state of nature to the active state of culture through symbolic activities.

#### **part5: Maintenance of Public Space in Yongji Bridge in Modern Society**

The maintenance of the public space of Yongji Bridge is a unique case in the control of public space or public domain. It confirms the importance of public space for theoretical research in sociology and anthropology. In the past, the Dong people used their belief in ghosts and gods to restrain human behavior and maintain the order and dignity of the public space of Yongji Bridge. This belief in ghosts and gods is not only a social control of individual behavior but also a spiritual maintenance and protection of public spaces. In modern society, the maintenance of Yongji Bridge relies on specific laws and regulations, such as the "Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China" and the "Cultural Relics Protection Law of the People's Republic of China". These legal controls are not only the material

maintenance of public space but also the legal guarantee of social order and cultural inheritance. Through the study of these laws, it can be seen how the public space of Yongji Bridge is maintained in modern society.

#### 5.1 The Yongji Bridge as a Public Space of the Past Chengyang Bazhai, Maintained Through the Dong People's Beliefs in Spirits and Ghosts

Sociologist Jürgen Habermas made a systematic study of the formation of the public sphere or public space in modern society in his book "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere" published in 1962. Research. He pointed out that the public sphere is a social sphere that is independent of the government and the market. It is a space for citizens to engage in rational public discussions and exchange of opinions, and it is characterized by openness, equality, and inclusiveness.

As a public space in the past Chengyang Bazhai, Yongji Bridge represents the importance of the public realm in society. This public sphere is not only an extension of personal life but also a place for people to participate in social life and exchange ideas. The formation and maintenance of this public realm enables communities to reach a consensus in a common space and maintain the order of this space through social control mechanisms.

In the past, Yongji Bridge was used as a public space for the community. The Dong people used their belief in ghosts and gods to restrain people's behavior and maintain the order and dignity of the public space. As a cultural phenomenon, this belief in ghosts and gods is not only a social control of individual behavior but also a spiritual maintenance and protection of public space.

#### 5.2 Maintenance of Public Space of the Yongji Bridge in Modern Society Relies on Legal Regulations

In modern society, Yongji Bridge has become a public space shared by insiders and outsiders, and the country has given it cultural relic status. Therefore, its maintenance began to use the legal control theory of sociologist Frederick Hodgkinson. In modern society, the maintenance of public space relies more on specific laws and norms.

This specific law is the "Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China" and the "Cultural Relics Protection Law of the People's Republic of China". As a legal control mechanism, they regulate the protection and management of Yongji Bridge as a cultural relic. This kind of legal control is not only the material maintenance of public space but also the legal guarantee of social order and cultural inheritance. Through the study of these two laws, it can be seen how the public space of Yongji Bridge is maintained in modern society.

Article 324, paragraph 1, of the Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China, clearly stipulates the crime of intentional damage to cultural relics. The crime of intentional damage to cultural relics refers to the act of violating cultural relics protection laws and intentionally damaging cultural relics knowing that they are precious cultural relics protected by the state or recognized as national key cultural relics protection units or provincial cultural relics protection units. Yongji Bridge is recognized by the state as a national key cultural relic protection unit. If you intentionally damage it, you will be sentenced to fixed-term imprisonment of not more than three years or criminal detention, and also or solely a fine; if the

circumstances are serious, you will be sentenced to fixed-term imprisonment of not less than three years but not more than 10 years. and impose a fine.

Chapter 7, Article 66 of the "Cultural Relics Protection Law of the People's Republic of China" clearly stipulates relevant acts and penalties for damaging immovable cultural relics. This article clearly stipulates the regulations on vandalism and punishment for immovable cultures such as Yongji Bridge.

It stipulates that acts of destroying cultural relics include unauthorized construction projects or blasting, drilling, excavation and other operations within the protection scope of cultural relics protection units; construction projects within the construction control zone of cultural relics protection units, and their engineering design plans Without the consent of the cultural relics administrative department and the approval of the urban and rural construction planning department, causing damage to the historical features of cultural relics protection units; moving or dismantling immovable cultural relics without authorization; repairing immovable cultural relics without authorization, significantly changing the original state of the cultural relics; rebuilding at the original site without authorization Immovable cultural relics that have been completely destroyed, causing damage to cultural relics; the construction unit has not obtained the qualification certificate for cultural relics protection projects and engages in the repair, relocation, and reconstruction of cultural relics without authorization. Anyone who commits any of the above acts and does not constitute a crime shall be ordered to make corrections by the Cultural Relics administrative department of the people's government at or above the county level. If serious consequences are caused, a fine of not less than RMB 50,000 but not more than RMB 500,000 shall be imposed; if the circumstances are serious, the person who issued the certificate shall have the authority to revoke the qualification certificate.

In addition, if the cultural relics are scratched, defaced, or damaged but not seriously, or damaged, the national public security organ or the unit where the cultural relics are located will give a warning and may also impose a fine.

As a public space, Yongji Bridge has shown different maintenance methods in the past and present, reflecting the evolution of public space theory and changes in adapting to social development. Public space is not only a place for social interaction but also a carrier of social norms and cultural inheritance. The maintenance of public space relying on legal control reflects the importance and regulation of the public domain in modern society. At the same time, this change also reflects the changing role of the Dong people in social and cultural changes. From social control that relied on belief in ghosts and gods in the past to rely on legal norms in the modern era, the lives and concepts of the Dong people have also gradually evolved. This transformation is not only a challenge to traditional culture but also an adaptation to social development and modernization.

## Conclusion

Although the Wind and Rain Bridge is a physical architectural space that is a public space in the former location of a minority community. But in a different context, new people's relationships and interactions with the same public space continually changed the meaning of the Wind and Rain Bridge. Therefore, the Wind and Rain Bridge as a public space reflects important aspects of the relationship between ethnic groups and outsiders, different groups and at different levels, such as



nation-state relations in the context of Minority development policy. As a result, the Wind and Rain Bridge became a Cultural Relic of China and its maintenance at the same time, the same Wind and Rain Bridge has also been used as a public space in the context of ethnic cultural tourism at the same time. Meanwhile, the Dong people still use the Wind and Rain Bridge in their ethnicity as before.

Therefore, in the context of Minority Development, the Wind and Rain Bridge is constantly and continuously producing new meanings superimposed on the old meanings. Affecting the area multi-interaction of social space in a complex current situation.



## CHAPTER 6

### Summary, Discussion, and Suggestions

"Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai Village at Liuzhou, China: Public Space and Meaning Change in the Process of Minority Development" is basic research, using qualitative research methods. Important research problems are to interpret the changing meaning of public space of Dong Wind and Rain Bridge. The meaning of the Dong Wind and Rain Bridge continues to change in different contexts of social development, especially in the Process of Minority Development of China. It is closely related to the ethnic identity of the Dong people and their connection with the country and the world. How does this change the meaning of the public space of the wind and rain bridge?

This research aims to study the "Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai Village at Liuzhou, China" in the issues of "Public Space" and "Changes in Meaning". Gather information from fieldwork in Chengyang Bazhai Dong Community Area and document information from research and other related documents.

Researcher Summary, Discussion, and Suggestion as follows:

#### Summary of Research Results

This research consists of 4 important objectives 1) To study the history, social and cultural development of Chengyang Bazhai related to the Wind and Rain Bridge(960-2023A.D.), 2) To Study the Wind and Rain Bridge in the dimension of Cultural Landscape and Architectural Culture, 3) To study the Meaning of the public space of Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai before the Minority Development Policy (960-1948 AD), and 4) To study the Meaning Change of the public space of Wind and Rain Bridge in the development process of the Minority Development (1949-2023A.D.). Summary of research results according to research objectives as follows.

#### 1. Historical and Social Development of Chengyang Bazhai about Wind and Rain Bridge

The influence of the geographical environment on social life and the birth of architecture is obvious. Chengyang Bazhai village is located in the north of Sanjiang County, Liuzhou City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China, in a narrow strip at the intersection of the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, Hunan Hills, and Guangxi Hills. It consists of eight adjacent Dong villages: Ma'anzhai, Pingzhai, Yanzhai, Dongzhai, Dazhai, Pingpingzhai, Pingpuzhai, and Jichangzhai, so it is called "Chengyang Bazhai". Its unique geographical environment features are mainly hilly landforms, rivers, abundant water resources, and mountain forests. The unique geographical environment breeds a humid climate, distinct seasons of cold and hot, as well as climate characteristics of abundant precipitation and shrouded clouds and mist. In order to adapt to the geographical environment and climate characteristics of Chengyang Bazhai, the Dong people have developed a unique farming life and

production method of planting glutinous rice on mountain terraces, raising fish and ducks in paddy fields, and planting trees on the mountains. This farming life and production method requires frequent crossing of rivers due to its uniqueness. This adaptation and utilization of the natural environment provided a social foundation for the creation of bridges, which in turn gave rise to the wind and rain bridge as an indispensable component of the lifestyle part of Dong people at Chengyang Bazhai.

At the same time, the history and culture of Chengyang Bazhai played an important role in the formation and development of the Wind and Rain Bridge. Before founding New China in 1949, the Dong people were an independent ethnic group and continued to preserve their traditional farming society. Factors such as its origin and migration, social organizational structure, traditional communication methods, and customs directly affected the construction and use of Wind and Rain Bridge, laying the foundation for local wisdom in its construction techniques. However, after 1949, the Dong people became part of the country, were given the identification of a "minority", and received corresponding minority development policies. This dual identity makes Dong an "ethnicity" in terms of cultural identity and a "minority" within the framework of the national government. Through this identity transformation, the Dong community uses Minority Identification to obtain support and help from the state, while at the same time transforming its unique culture into commodities to obtain economic benefits and other values for Dong and the local government of Guangxi and China.

Therefore, from the above analysis of the landscape and historical and social development of Chengyang Bazhai, we can see a complex and close relationship between the production of things or buildings and the local physical environment. The birth of Wind and Rain Bridge is the result of adapting to the local physical environment, climate, and local people's way of life and production. Therefore, the overall phenomenon above as a result, the wind and rain bridge has become an important component of the Chengyang Bazhai community. At the same time, the construction, use and development of Wind and Rain Bridge are closely related to the social environment. In the past, the Dong people were an "ethnic", and their internal social structure, communication methods, and cultural beliefs affected the construction and use of Wind and Rain Bridge. Wind and Rain Bridge was a space for them to express their nationality and build their self-identity. Under the influence of national policies, the Dong people have added the meaning of "minority". As the Dong people's identity changes, the Dong people's society and culture have changed, which in turn affects the interactions of the Dong people in Wind and Rain Bridge. When considered from the national dimension, we can see the complex and close internal relationship between ethnic development and national policies. National policies affect the lives of different ethnic groups. At the same time ethnic life and society also depend on the country's environment.

## 2. Dong's Wind and Rain Bridges in the Dimensions of Cultural Landscape and Architectural Culture of Ethnic-Minority

Considering the Dimensions of the Cultural Landscape: The formation of Wind and Rain Bridges in the Bazhai Community of Chengyang is a special cultural landscape formed by the influence of natural factors and cultural factors. This is a unique interaction and blending phenomenon of human culture and

the natural environment. From the understanding and utilization of the environment to the social and historical process to the concept of belief, the Dong Wind and Rain Bridge has become a unique cultural landscape of Chengyang Bazhai and displays the "tradition" and "culture" of the Dong people.

The formation of Wind and Rain Bridges is affected by the natural factors of the village. The natural landscape of Chengyang Bazhai, which is "close to mountains, close to water and close to forests", has prompted the Dong people to form a unique production and lifestyle adapted to the landscape. They crossed rivers to plant cedar trees in the mountains and forests and planted rice beside the rivers. Frequent crossing of rivers became a necessity in daily life. Moreover, Chengyang Bazhai is divided into several plots by Linxi River and its tributaries. In order to facilitate walking and communication between villages, the Dong people built 7 wind and rain bridges on the river. Wind and Rain Bridges play different roles in the village. Some are portals, some are roads, and some are connections to connect the village. Wind and Rain Bridges form an interactive relationship with other buildings in the village.

In addition, the formation of Wind and Rain Bridges is also affected by cultural factors, including the influence of social history, Han-covered bridges, Dong drum towers, and the influence of Dong Fengshui Beliefs and Soul Concepts. First, the emergence of Wind and Rain Bridges has gone through a long social process, from the Tang Dynasty when the Dong people learned the Han people's method of making bridges, to the further improvement of the Dong people's artificial bridge technology brought about by cultural migration in the Song and Yuan dynasties, and then to During the Ming Dynasty, the Dong people were influenced by the belief and culture of the Han people, and eventually gradually formed the "local wisdom" of building Wind and Rain Bridges, and built a large number of Wind and Rain Bridges during the Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China. Second, the Dong people's Wind and Rain Bridge was built by learning and imitating the style of Han covered bridges, and integrating the Dong drum tower architecture into the Wind and Rain Bridge. Third, Fengshui Beliefs, the ancestor of the Dong people, show that the bridge can penetrate the dragon's energy and protect wealth. Dong Soul Concepts believes that the bridge is the passage for the soul. All of which is the process of producing a public space for the wind and rain bridge of the Dong people at the same time.

Consider the dimensions of architectural culture: The unique construction style of Wind and Rain Bridges is the form of public space in the Dong community, and each part carries the function of adapting to social activities in a unique landscape environment. In addition, the construction skills of Wind and Rain Bridges are a kind of "local wisdom", which is regarded as a reflection of cultural heritage and self-identity.

In the dimension of architecture, Wind and Rain Bridge are adapted to the geographical environment and climatic conditions of Chengyang Bazhai, Wind and Rain Bridges form a unique construction style. There are "boat-shaped" piers made of bluestone below to reduce the resistance of the water flow; there are simply supported beams or outrigger wooden beam spans in the middle to support the bridge; there are pavilions and corridors above to provide shelter from wind and rain. There is also a unique "Bridge Temple" structure that carries the traditions and rituals of the



Dong people, and the unique architectural decoration shows national worship. The construction technique of Wind and Rain Bridges is a kind of "local wisdom". In this technique, the Dong people invented specific measurement tools and systems and created the "moshi" Character in practice.

From the case of Yongji Wind and Rain Bridge, it can be clearly shown that Wind and Rain Bridge has become a unique "cultural landscape", carrying the collective memory and emotions of the Dong people, and a symbol and crystallization of group life.

In addition, although the formation of Wind and Rain Bridge was influenced by Han culture, including Han knowledge of bridge building and Han cultural beliefs, it still maintains its own identity and strengthens nationality through constant practice. The emergence of the Dong Wind and Rain Bridge provides us with a meaningful case to help us understand how to shape and maintain national identity in the process of cultural integration.

### 3. Ethnic-Minority Identity and the Meaning of Public Space of Wind and Rain Bridges

In the ethnic dimension, it demonstrates the "self-identity" of the Dong people. The Wind and Rain Bridge is produced for use as a "public space" in the community. It considers the relationships and interactions of ethnic life and society in the lived dimensions of everyday life and traditional and ritual situations. The academic issues raised in this section are as follows:

#### 3.1 The Daily Life of Dong Ethnic People in Wind and Rain Bridges

The Dong people jointly use Wind and Rain Bridges in their daily lives. Therefore, Wind and Rain Bridges can indicate the characteristics of the landscape-related production and lifestyle of the Dong people, as well as the national beliefs and values. For example, the Dong people connect Transportation and Commercial Transactions, Shelter from Wind and Rain, and Cooling Gatherings, Military Defense, and Welcoming Guests in Wind and Rain Bridge. It shows that the Dong people interact closely and build social relationships in the Wind and Rain Bridge. Life in public spaces shapes meaning between people, individuals, and groups. It is worth noting that the Dong people use Wind and Rain Bridges to Lock Fengshui to Preserve Fortune for the Village and Holding Rituals and Prayers for Blessings to establish a collective religious and cultural symbol in public space, indicating that the meaning of public space unites ethnic groups and cultural identity. The Dong people use legends and create ghosts to give the Wind and Rain Bridges an imaginative dimension of spiritual space, thereby realizing the protection and preservation of Wind and Rain Bridges as public spaces in the overall dimension of Dong society. In terms of using legends, the blue dragon rescued the Dong people by transforming into a bridge during the flood, and the Wind and Rain Bridge is meant to be the incarnation of the blue dragon. In addition, ghosts guarding the bridge are created on the Wind and Rain Bridge, which is associated with the reproduction of offspring and the good fortune of the village.

The Dong people have a social system for managing the wind and rain bridge as a public space in the village. That is the Dong people have a professional "Bridgekeeper" and a systematic fundraising method to repair the Wind and Rain Bridge. To a certain extent, it has built the social system, ethics, and

morality of the Dong people. The bridgekeeper is responsible for guarding and cleaning the bridge, as well as extending incense to the gods, and the village gives the bridgekeeper "public land" or appropriate monetary compensation. This is a complete and systematic method of fundraising. First, the village elders organize the villagers to collect donations, and then specific elders collect and record the donations. Then the wooden craftsmen carry out repairs, and finally, the use of funds is announced.

### 3.2 The Special Life of the Dong Ethnic People in the Wind and Rain Bridges

The special life of the Dong people is an abnormal situation in daily life, which mainly includes rituals and traditional festivals. The Dong people have established rituals and traditions in the public space of Wind and Rain Bridges. The spatial practice and production embody "ethnic" and also construct their "self-identity". This is the important significance of Wind and Rain Bridges as a community public space in traditional Dong society. Various rituals and traditions are established in or related to the Wind and Rain Bridges Bridge. Therefore, in the rituals it maintains beliefs, display ethnic identity, and inherits culture, including important festivals of various Dong ethnic groups.

#### 3.2.1 The Unique and Elaborate Bridge-Building Rituals of Wind and Rain Bridges

In the traditional Dong society, the ritual of building Wind and Rain Bridges is a process that closely connects the Wind and Rain Bridges with the village. In the unique and complicated bridge-building ritual, the Wind and Rain Bridge serves as a connection between people and gods, and between people, and builds the spiritual temperament and worldview of the Dong people. From the Foundation Laying Ritual to Beam Setting Ritual, to Stepping on the Beams Ritual, and finally Stepping on the Bridge Ritual, each ritual has a unique meaning and is accompanied by different role activities in the ritual. Dong people confirm their ethnic identity in ritual.

#### 3.2.2 Connected with the soul of the Sacrificial Bridge Ritual, Addition Bridge Ritual, and Settle Bridge Ritual

In the Dong belief, the Wind and Rain Bridge serves as a passage for souls, separating and transitioning the original state of the Dong people. This is considered a "rite of passage." In Sacrificial Bridge Ritual, Addition Bridge Ritual, and Settle Bridge Ritual, the actual transitional function of the Wind and Rain Bridge is naturally extended to become a symbol that connects the worlds of life and death and yin and yang. Take the Sacrificial Bridge Ritual Associated with Individual Souls, the Addition Bridge Ritual to Bless Children with Safety, and the Settle Bridge Ritual to Guide Children's Souls to the Mortal World as examples, all of which express people's hope of moving from one state or situation to another or a change of circumstances. In this transformation, the "cultural identity" of the Dong people is expressed.

#### 3.2.3 Crossing the Bridge Rituals in Dong Ethnic Weddings

In the wedding ceremony, the Dong people obtain and display a new identity through the bridge-crossing ritual and the practice of crossing the Wind and Rain Bridge, maintaining their "national character". Weddings of the Dong people usually last for four days. During the "Bride Stealing" ceremony

on New Year's Eve, the bride crosses a "bridge" made of poles at the door of the groom's house, symbolizing the bride's transformation from daughter to wife. On the first day of the Lunar New Year, the bride carries water across the Wind and Rain Bridge, and on the third day of the Lunar New Year, the bride takes a detour through the Wind and Rain Bridge, both of which are processes of showing off her new identity. Therefore, Wind and Rain Bridge plays an important role in this process. The bride crosses the "bridge" and crosses the Wind and Rain Bridge. This ritual behavior not only represents the process of marriage and family formation, but also the inheritance of Dong national traditions. It also demonstrates the participation and dedication of social members to the community and family. Therefore, the Wind and Rain Bridge plays an important role in the Dong people's acquisition of a new identity and the display of their new identity. Currently, the bridge and the wedding ceremony of Dong people are "the theater for creating self-ethnic identity", in addition to reproducing the identity of Dong people. It is also a stage that is toured and caught up in the context of others commoditization.

#### 3.2.4 Dong Ethnic Festivals Related to the Wind and Rain Bridge and Their Meaning

The interactive ritual of ethnic festivals is a purposeful construction that attracts people within the ethnic group to participate in the festival ceremony. Through the holding of rituals, a community with cohesiveness and common self-identity within the ethnic group is built. Wind and Rain Bridge constructs a communication space between individuals and groups during the festival, and in the process, the Dong people further confirm that "we are Dong people." For example, the Dong people celebrate the "Bridge Worship Festival" on February 2 of the lunar calendar every year. This festival associates repairing bridges and repairing roads with the accumulation of good deeds, and at the same time associates paying homage to bridges with the prosperity of the population and the continuation of the race. The festival has become a symbol of culture and identity, reflecting the Dong people's worship of primitiveness and cultural values.

Therefore, the important characteristics of tradition and ritual are the key conditions for giving special meaning to the Dong Wind and Rain Bridge. This bridge has become a public space for important rituals such as life transition rituals and wedding rituals. Social life and belief culture interact and interweave in this space, giving it important meanings such as life reproduction and identity transformation. More importantly, as a public space, the Wind and Rain Bridge has become a theater for the Dong people to construct their identity, an important mechanism for gathering the collective memory and cohesion of the ethnic group and maintaining their ethnic identity.

#### 4. Wind and Rain Bridge and Meaning Change of Public Space of in the Process of Minority Development

The changing meaning of public space is an important phenomenon that points to major ethnic and national issues related to national policy. Public spaces exist all over the world and are in different social environments. Political and cultural policies directly affect the use and maintenance of public spaces. In the context of the national minority development policy, the Dong people have a dual identity. Culturally, they are still an independent "ethnic", but under the national framework

they have become a "minority". This allows the Dong people to use these two identities to interact more with the community and beyond in the public space of Wind and Rain Bridge, and the Wind and Rain Bridge therefore takes on new meaning. In the process of the development of China's ethnic minorities, the phenomenon of new meaning presented by the Wind and Rain Bridge occurs in two ways: first, the meaning of the Wind and Rain Bridge as a material, and second, the meaning of the Wind and Rain Bridge as a cultural symbol. The conclusions are as follows:

#### 4.1 Multi-Meaning of 'Yongji Bridge' in the Context of Minority Development

Wind and Rain Bridge constructs a complex and multi-dimensional meaning in different contexts, and is related to ethnic belonging, social development, economic development, cultural inheritance and other aspects. For example, the case of Yongji Bridge:

In the national context, Yongji Bridge symbolizes ethnic equality and connects minority and nation. Nation highlights the policy orientation of multi-ethnic equality and harmonious development through the cultural relic identification and careful restoration of Yongji Bridge. This symbolic meaning profoundly reflects the complex and subtle interaction between ethnicism and national identity. At the spiritual level, it builds a bridge of emotional resonance and collective identity between different ethnic groups.

In the context of tourism, Yongji Bridge develops the economy and connects the community with the world. The meaning of Yongji Bridge's public space has evolved during the tourism promotion process, reflecting the reconstruction and expansion of community space by the tourism industry; and the evolution of the Dong's traditional Road-Blocking Ritual to performance under Tourist Gaze has shown the ritualization of tourism; the transformation of community interests and Dong people show the dual impact of tourism development on community economy and culture. The above phenomena illustrate that the evolution of public space shapes ritual meanings and affects the socioeconomics of communities.

In the context of globalization, Yongji Bridge has become a carrier of cultural export, connecting China and the world. Yongji Bridge has successfully connected the road of cultural exchange between China and the world by participating in international cultural exhibitions and receiving international academic attention. The display and research of Wind and Rain Bridge show that as a representative of traditional Chinese culture, it builds a bridge for the interconnection and integration of Chinese culture and world civilization, and plays an important link in connecting the community and the world.

#### 4.2 Wind and Rain Bridges as Cultural Symbols of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Regional

Meaning as a culture. The Chengyang Bazhai Wind and Rain Bridge has not been moved, but its meaning has become a cultural symbol, which is widely used in the outside world and has formed new meanings. As a cultural symbol, the Wind and Rain Bridge plays an important role in diverse occasions and displays in museums, universities, and highways.



For example: as a national gift, the Wind and Rain Bridge mainly shows its value and significance in the national and historical latitudes. At the important moment of Hong Kong's return to China, the Tongxin Bridge as a gift was intended to express the Chinese people's long-cherished wish for national reunification. There is also the continuous construction of the Wind and Rain Bridge in various parts of Guangxi, including museums, university campuses, and highways. This kind of display elevates the significance of Dong culture to Guangxi minority culture, forming a unique regional construction in Guangxi. Wind and Rain Bridge creates more meanings in the continuous social practice of human beings. It also shows that the use of meaning changes with time and circumstances.

It is worth noting that in the Process of Minority Development, the maintenance method of the Wind and Rain Bridge public space has changed, that is, from the belief in ghosts and gods to the maintenance method of national law. This phenomenon reflects the evolution of public space theory and changes in adaptation to social development and shows the identity transformation of the Dong people in social and cultural changes.

## Discussion

The research is titled "Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai Village at Liuzhou, China: Public Space and Meaning Change in the Process of Minority Development". The researcher has also gained an understanding of the phenomenon "Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai Village at Liuzhou, China". Academic issues: Public Space and Meaning Change. Key concepts include Cultural Landscapes, Public Spaces, Ethnic Identity, and National Policies. The cultural landscape is a complex relationship between humans and nature. Carl O. Sauer described the cultural landscape. He explained that cultural landscape should be the result of a certain group using nature and transforming nature. The researcher used this concept to explain how Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge was formed in Chengyang Bazhai.

The book of Hannah Arendt (1958) "The Human Condition" emphasizes the idea that public space is defined as the opposite of private space. In his book "The Production of Space", Henri Lefebvre (1991) emphasized that public space is a place where all members of society live and practice together, and is the product of collective life and collective practice. The researcher used the concept of public space to explain the phenomenon of the Dong people in Chengyang Bazhai jointly building, using, and maintaining the Wind and Rain Bridge. At the same time, the researchers used the concept of ethnic identity from Anthony D. Smith's book "ethnic identity" (Anthony D. Smith, 1991). Ethnic identity is a collective cultural phenomenon that is influenced by the language, symbols, rituals, and customs of the ethnic group. This book considers the daily life and ritual traditions of the Dong people in the Wind and Rain Bridge as an important guide to the construction of their ethnic identity.

In addition, the researchers used the concept of state policy from Max Weber's classic work "Politics as a Vocation". It also discusses the meaning of change and representation of Wind and Rain Bridge in the context of the development of minority development policies and points out that the meaning of change is affected by national policies and the external environment.

Important concepts above have helped the researcher to look at the phenomenon of “Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai Village at Liuzhou, China” and see new academic findings in the research text and academic issues in related concepts as follows.

1. The Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge is a unique Architectural Culture interwoven with Cultural Landscapes, Ethnic Identity, and the External World, known as 'Wind and Rain Bridge Culture.' That changes meaning according to the social and cultural context.

In the past academic circles, architectural culture was used to indicate the characteristics, history, aesthetics, or characteristics of a certain region. This is culture created to reflect the identity and character of a region. for example: Sarah Ksiazek wrote in the article "Architectural Culture of the Fifties: Louis Kahn and the National Assembly Building in Dhaka" that the National Assembly Building was a response to the architectural culture of the 1950s, which was characterized by neo-monumental architecture, to respond to key architectural features such as humanism and regionalism (Ksiazek, S. 1993). In addition, Chinese scholars Hou Shufang and Li Daoxian also pointed out in the article "Regional Cultural Characteristics of Huizhou Ancient Residential Architecture" that Huizhou ancient residences are the embodiment of local regional culture and the unique cultural character and artistic aesthetics of Huizhou people (Hou Shufang, Li Daoxian.2006). Therefore, in past research, the connotation of architectural culture mainly included the characteristics, history, aesthetics, or characteristics of a certain region represented by the building itself.

However, in this research, under the national policy, the "Wind and Rain Bridge Culture" presents an architectural culture that is different from the past. Wind and Rain Bridge culture was created by the Dong community by adapting to the environment and is continuously enriched through rituals, beliefs, and traditions, forming a unique culture that embodies the "Ethnic" of the Dong people. Moreover, it constantly adapts to the influence and changes of the environment and becomes a culture related to the country and the world. It represents the local while transcending the local, an expansion of architectural culture.

In the context of China's minority development policy, Wind and Rain Bridge interacts with the nation and the world. At the same time, it also strengthened the life and social culture of the Dong people of Chengyang Bazhai interacting with the outside world. This causes the meaning of the wind and rain bridge to change according to the series of interactions with the people involved.

It is not only a display of the ethnic identity of the Dong people, but also transcends this identity and becomes a representative of the common identity of multiple ethnic groups or the national identity. In the context of China's ethnic minority development policy, the phenomenon of Wind and Rain Bridge culture in the architectural cultural dimension occurs in two ways: 1) The ethnic identity displayed by the Dong people to the outside world and the nation, which is a display of architecture and the local culture of the area in which they are located; 2) The reproduction of Wind and Rain Bridge has become the common identity of the twelve ethnic minorities living in Guangxi, and more importantly, it has become the identity of China in the world, which has led to the "Wind and Rain Bridge Culture" that

transcends the original architectural culture formation. That is, the meaning of architectural culture migrated, and then the Wind and Rain Bridge became a representative phenomenon of multiple ethnic minorities and the Nation-State of China.

## 2. Sacred space: The process of creating cultural technology of power for protecting public space

In the past academic circles, it was generally believed that law was a method for maintaining public space. For example: Kailey Austin Luzbetak in the article of "Whose Streets? the Fight for Public Space: Salt Lake City's Main Street", it is argued that the maintenance of public space is to regulate citizens' behavioral patterns through laws (Luzbetak, K. A. 2017). He describes the government's use of the First Amendment to change behavior patterns and restrict people's behavior on Main Street in Salt Lake City. In addition, Chinese scholar Pei Yingying believed in the article "A Brief Discussion on Legal Regulation of Conflicts of Rights in Public Spaces" that law is an important means to restrict public behavior in public spaces. He described a case: using the "Environmental Noise Law" to restrict and solve public squares the noise problem of square dancing in China (Pei Yingying, 2014). Therefore, in the maintenance of public space, academic circles believe that legal means are often used to maintain public space. Governments or officials use rights technology to formulate laws or rules to restrict the behavior of users of public spaces.

But in the research, people already had this way of protecting their beliefs before the law came into being. It is actually a technique of using power technologies to create sacred objects in public spaces to protect things. In the traditional Dong society, before there were modern legal regulations, there were two ways for the Dong people to maintain the Wind and Rain Bridge as a public space: One is the belief that the Wind and Rain Bridge is endowed with gods. Dong people give Wind and Rain bridge as the embodiment of the blue dragon through the legend of the Blue Dragon, the blue dragon is the god who rescues the Dong people from floods, and the bridge is sacred; On the other hand, the Dong people create ghosts to guide and restrain people's behavior. They create bridge-keeping ghosts who are with the bridge. The bridge-keeping ghosts guide the way for the Dong people's souls of birth and death, and regard the Wind and Rain Bridge as the birth of life and passage to death. Both of these methods are non-legal means used by the Dong people to maintain public space.

## 3. Wind and Rain Bridges are Integrated between Physical Space, Social Space, and Mental Spaces

In the past academic session, research on public space generally believed that public space is the integration of the place itself and the activities carried out in the place, that is, it includes physical space and social space. In past research, public spaces have been used for demonstrations or as sites of refuge, negotiation, and debate. For example: Gregory Smithsimon mentioned the "Occupy Wall Street" movement, which emphasized the argument that without social elements, public space would not exist (Gregory Smithsimon. 2012). In the current research, public space is a place for public activities, which is used to emphasize the

relationship between individuals, groups and space possession, use and rights. For example: Peter Rogers describes the use and potential domination of this public space by young people Impact on social tensions in the article "Youth Participation and Revanchist Regimes: Rebuilding Old Eldon Square, Newcastle Upon Tyne" (Madanipour, A. (Ed.). 2013). It can be seen that public space is widely believed in academic circles to be the production of physical and social space.

However, in this research, public space integrates the production of physical, social, and mental spaces. Wind and Rain Bridge, as a public space in Chengyang Bazhai, includes the production of physical, social, and mental space. In the physical space, the Wind and Rain Bridge adapts to the local landscape characteristics and builds a community public space that is convenient for life and production. In the social space, the Dong people build their daily life and ritual traditions here, showing their ethnicity and constructing their self-identity. What is important is that in the mental space, the Dong people construct ethnic beliefs and values by offering sacrifices in bridge temples, and creating legends and ghosts. The above phenomenon shows that mental space is also an indispensable part of the study of public space. The production of physical, social, and mental spaces jointly integrates and intersects to form a unique public space for the Dong people.

#### 4. Ethnicity and Nation-State Citizenship can Coexist and Complement Each Other

In the past academic circles, it was generally believed that the nation would be challenged by minority nationalism and that the nation must use political means to accept the legitimacy of minorities or regard them as illegitimate. Minorities are left to choose between citizenship and ethnic identity. T.K. Oommen pointed out in the article "New Nationalism and Collective Rights: The Case of South Asia" that ethnic minorities can only seek limited political autonomy and cultural identity as a nation within the federal government, or insist on retaining their cultural identity as a race without seeking any political status (Stephen May, Tariq Modood, and Judith Squires. 2004). Additionally, in "Two Concepts of Self-Determination," Iris Marion Young argues that people can achieve self-determination only if their relationships with others are non-dominating. that is, ethnic minorities are not controlled by the government and can make their own decisions. Therefore, these research results all believe that the citizenship of ethnic minorities will curb ethnic identity and restrict the development of ethnic minorities.

However, in this research, ethnic minorities enjoy dual identities of citizenship and ethnic identity, as well as political and cultural rights, and these two identities promote each other and bring about the development of ethnic minorities. In multi-ethnic countries, ethnic minorities not only are not restricted but developed. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the state entrusts Minority identity to the Dong people, and the Minority identity is the citizenship granted by the state to the Dong people. At the same time, China manages the Dong people through minority policies, gives the Dong people the right to political autonomy, and encourages the development and inheritance of Dong culture. The Dong people are a minority politically, which is their special citizenship status, and they are ethnic culturally. As an ethnic minority in China, the Dong people have dual identities of special citizenship and ethnic identity, and receive more support and help



from the state through their special citizenship (Minority identity), which in turn promotes the development of the Dong people.

#### 5. Wind and Rain Bridge in the Process of Minority Development is the Theater of Interaction between Tradition and Invention of Tradition

In the past academic circles, it was generally believed that maintaining tradition was one of the conditions for ethnic inheritance. When rituals are replaced by performances, they are no longer an activity to build ethnic identity, and the practice in space loses its meaning. If people think that their traditional culture is threatened, they will take some measures to seriously protect it. For example, ethnic minorities in rural Guizhou, China, try to resist Hanization, so they make demands on themselves and their villages and restore traditions (Oakes, T. 1997). Therefore, it is considered meaningful to project tradition into the public space of the national community.

In this research, both ritual and performance are used to project the nation into a public space, in this case into the public space of the Wind and Rain Bridge, and to construct the ethnic identity of the Dong people. For example: in the traditional Dong society, the road-blocking ritual is practiced in the public space of the Wind and Rain Bridge, and the Dong people construct their identity and cultural identity through ritual; in the modern society of the tourism context, the road-blocking ritual is replaced by performance under the gaze of tourists, and it becomes a commercialized phenomenon. The rituals of the past and the performances of the present are functions that adapt to different times and societies, are produced for different groups of people and needs, and constantly generate new meanings superimposed on the old meanings. The public space of the Wind and Rain Bridge has become a theater for the interaction between tradition and traditional inventions.

Therefore, the Wind and Rain Bridge in the development process of ethnic minorities is a theater for the interaction between tradition and traditional inventions.

#### 6. In the Process of Minority Development, the Meaning of the Wind and Rain Bridge is Represented by a Large and Complex Relationship System

The research clearly shows that in the development process of China's ethnic minorities, ethnic minorities are no longer inferior races. They build a large and complex relationship system through representatives of ethnic cultures like Wind and Rain Bridge. These relationships are characterized through the meaning of the Wind and Rain Bridge in different environmental contexts.

In the context of the country, the Wind and Rain Bridge is the country's political and cultural recognition of ethnic minorities, and the meaning of the Wind and Rain Bridge is the connection between the country and the nation. In the context of tourism, Wind and Rain Bridge is an interaction between the Dong people's internal world and the external world, which includes doubts about ethnic identity confirmation, ritualization of tourism, and competition for economic interests. These phenomena demonstrate the complex relationship between Wind and Rain Bridge as a community public space in many aspects such as identity, culture, tradition, social

structure, and life. In the context of globalization, Wind and Rain Bridge, as a representative of cultural export, connects China and the world.

In addition, the meaning of Wind and Rain Bridge has been separated from the ontology and reproduced externally, made into national gifts, or constructed in various places in Guangxi. Wind and Rain Bridge interacts with various groups in the outside world to reconstruct new meanings. This is a huge and complex relationship system composed of the representation of the meaning of Wind and Rain Bridge. Therefore, under relations with the state and outsiders these bridges Therefore, it is not only the public space of the Dong people. But it's been controlled. and seek benefits in the community in new ways, such as attracting and welcoming tourists that want to consume. The identity of the tourists that passes over the bridge and becomes a public space, or the public space of the Wind and Rain Bridge, is constantly changing.

## **Suggestions**

### **1. Suggestion to Academic Circle**

1.1 This Research can be used as the Basis for Theoretical Research on Public Space and an Architectural or Spatial Research Model.

The research of "Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge in Chengyang Bazhai Village at Liuzhou, China: Public Space and Meaning Change in the Process of Minority Development" is basic research and can serve as the basis for theoretical research on public space. Moreover, this study adopted interdisciplinary research methods from anthropology, sociology, and art to open up a new research perspective. The design model of the paper can provide a learning reference for related architectural or space research.

### **1.2 Research Suggestions on the Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge**

For the study of the Dong's Wind and Rain Bridge, the academic community should conduct more interdisciplinary collaborative research. Wind and Rain Bridge is not just an Architectural, it is related to ethics, culture, society, memory and other aspects. Interdisciplinary collaborative research will help to comprehensively understand Wind and Rain Bridge culture and discover new research perspectives. At the same time, we will deeply explore the relationship and interaction between architecture, community and race, focusing on space practice and cultural construction. Study the complex relationship between nationalism and national identity, and pay attention to the protection, inheritance and sustainable development of ethnic culture. The relationship between ecological environment and cultural landscape can also be studied in depth. This will create more research cases and research models for the study of cultural landscapes.

### **2. Suggestions to the Chengyang Bazhai Dong Community and Local Government**

2.1 The Results of This Research Can Be Used as a Reference for the Development Planning of Chengyang Bazhai and the Formulation of Relevant Dong Minority Policies.

The research discusses in detail how the Wind and Rain Bridge builds ethnicity and cultural identity in the traditional Dong society, as well as the impact of

current ethnic minority development policies on the community, which all provide reference for policy formulation.

## 2.2 Suggestions for the Chengyang Bazhai Dong Community: Community Participation and Cultural Inheritance Should Be Strengthened.

Encourage the Dong people of Chengyang Bazhai to actively participate in the maintenance and management of Wind and Rain Bridge and the community, and at the same time strengthen the inheritance of local wisdom in the wooden construction techniques of Wind and Rain Bridge. In modern society, new collective memory and cultural identity are constructed through the public life of Dong people in Wind and Rain Bridges. In addition, we promote cultural education within the community: carry out cultural and educational activities in the Dong community to strengthen publicity and education on the history, meaning, and traditional culture of Wind and Rain Bridge.

## 3. Suggestions for Future Researchers

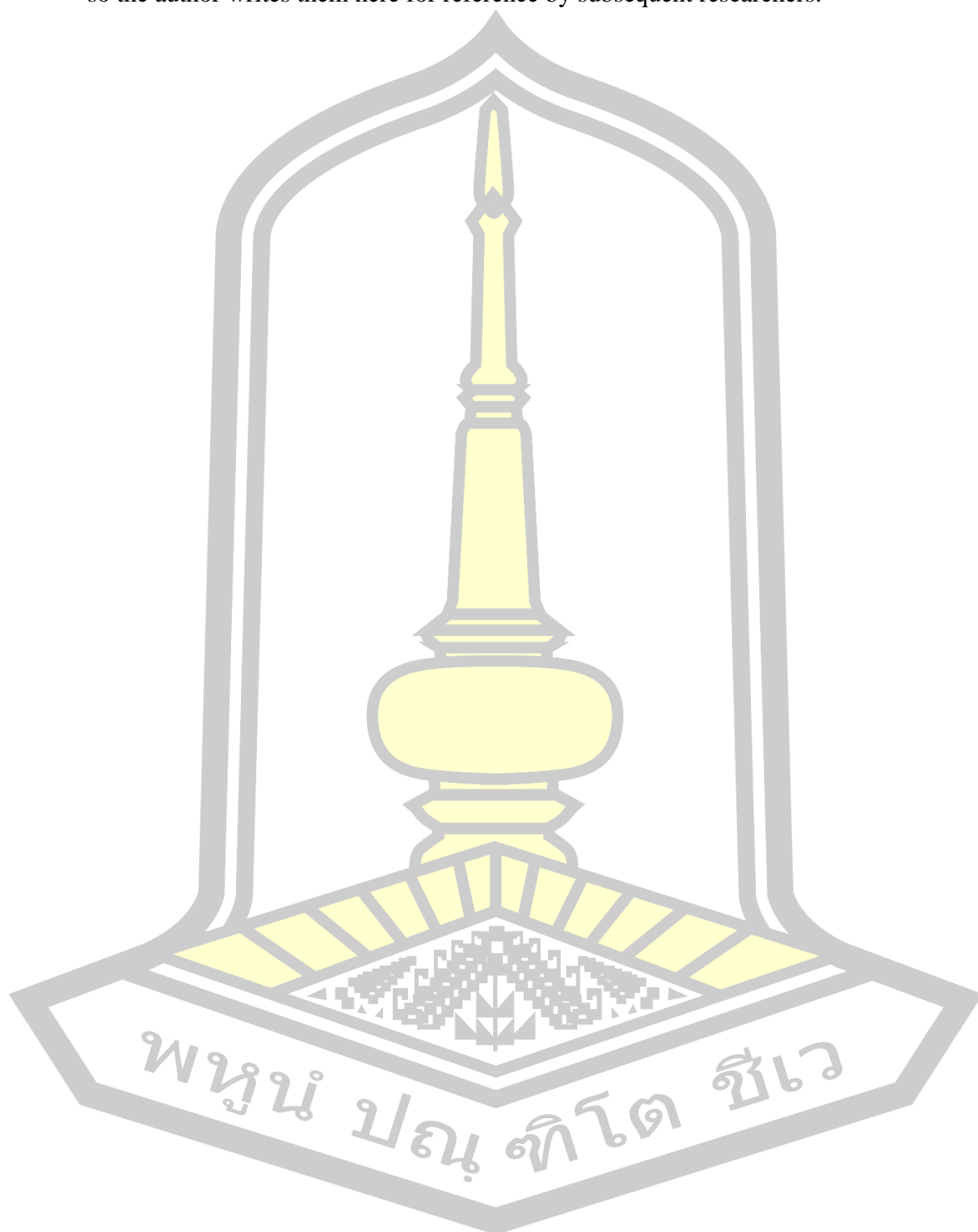
### 3.1 The Phenomenon of Wind and Rain Bridge Can Be Studied from the Perspective of Constructing Social Gender.

This study found that men and women have different relationships and roles in Wind and Rain Bridge. The beam-raising and bridge-sacrifice rites must be completed by men, while the auspicious flowers and indigo-dyed cloth used in the beam-raising ceremony are made by women. Moreover, the construction and repair of the Wind and Rain Bridge must be completed by Dong wooden craftsmen, and this wooden construction technique is only passed down to men and not to women. These phenomena show that the Wind and Rain Bridge is related to the social gender construction in their society. Through the relationship with the Wind and Rain Bridge, people are given certain gender-specific obligations. Men are responsible for construction and repair, while women are responsible for decoration. Therefore, the bridge becomes a means of constructing social gender.

### 3.2 The Inheritance Phenomenon of Wind and Rain Bridge's Wooden Construction Skills Can Be Studied from the Perspective of Building and Maintaining Social Networks.

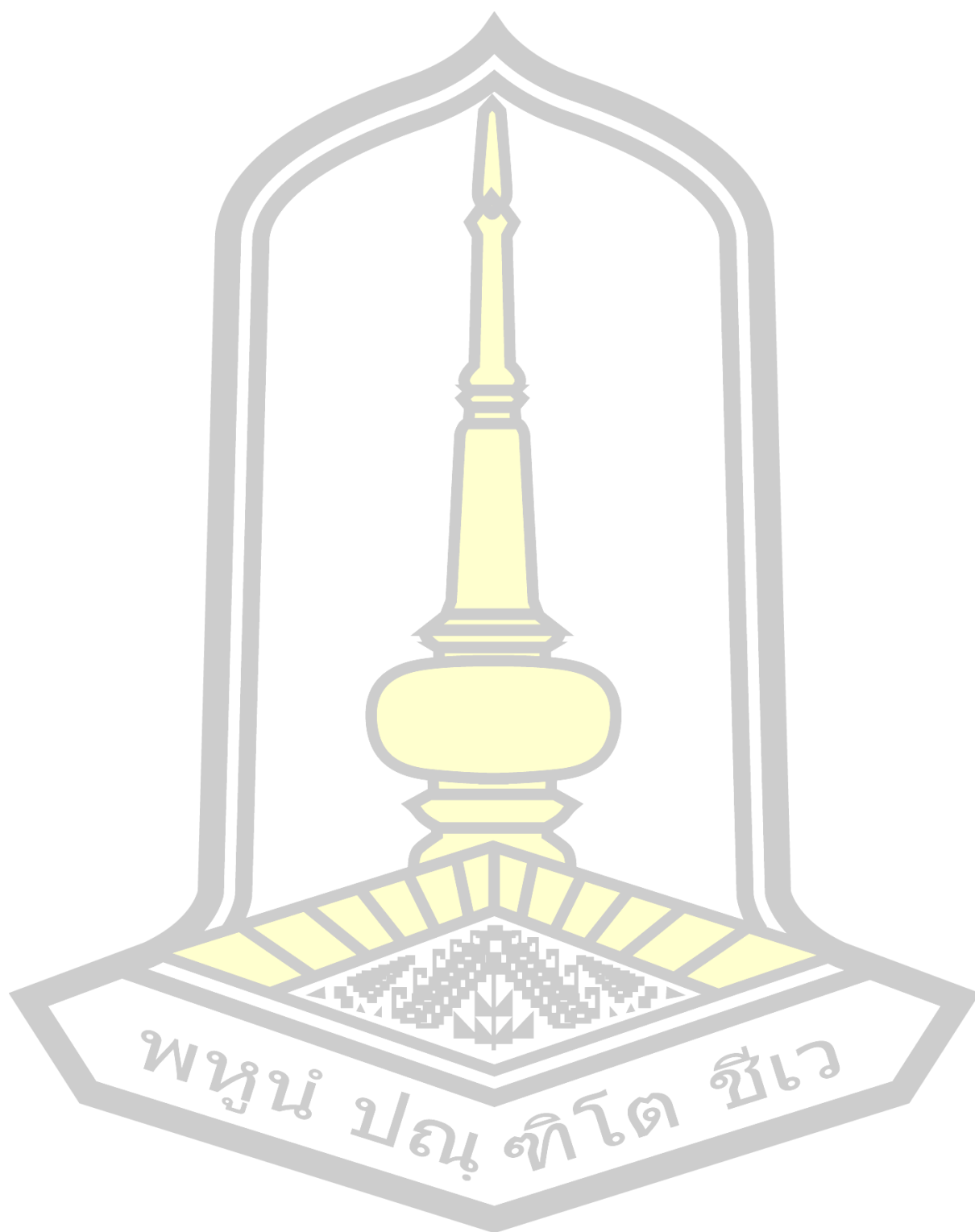
This study found that the unique wooden construction skills of building the Wind and Rain Bridge built and maintained a unique social network during the inheritance process. In the Dong community, the inheritance of traditional wooden structure construction skills often relies on the social network within the community. The inheritance based on family blood relationships and the social relationship formed by apprenticeship have realized the continuation of skills, built close social ties and trust relationships, and gained a certain amount of social capital. Timber craftsmen often play important roles in villages and gain respect. In the social network of the Dong community, there is not only a master-apprentice relationship between skill inheritors and apprentices, but also the transmission of cultural values, beliefs, and customs. This cultural identity is strengthened and spread through social networks, forming the cultural characteristics and cohesion of the Dong community. As a result, the inheritance of wooden structure construction skills of Wind and Rain Bridge has become a carrier for the construction and maintenance of the social network of the Dong community.

The above two suggestions are not discussed in the research objectives of this study, so the author writes them here for reference by subsequent researchers.





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