

WHV – The Contemporary Translation of Dong Cultural Heritage

Dong Villages, China

Cultural property inscribed on the Tentative List (2013)

PROJECT DATES

10 July - 20 July 2025

THE SITE - Residing close to the water is the most important settlement pattern of Dong Villages. The houses are distributed on mountain slopes along rivers. The drum tower and Sasui (famous heroine of Dong Nationality) altar are the most important basic elements of a Dong village. The multi-storey drum tower, the symbol of a Dong village, is usually built in the flat or high grounds of the village center. A square is built in front of the drum tower, and provides a venue for the entire village to come together for meetings, festival celebrations, and other public activities. The typical residences of Dong people are called “Diaojiolou”, stilt houses built with Chinese fir wood and consisting of three or four floors. They feature a wood column-tie structure, and a tiled roof, and are surrounded by corridors and railings.

OBJECTIVES - During the previous eight years, the project’s main aim was to map out the Dong building techniques traditionally passed down through word of mouth, with a focus on protection. Starting from last year, the implementing partners have adapted the main work content to the idea of contemporary translation of Dong cultural heritage, shifting the goal from protection to inheritance. This not only expands project participation and allows young people with more professional skills to get involved, but also explores specific paths to integrate cultural heritage into contemporary life. This year, the partner will focus in particular on two specific problems: insufficient public awareness and lack of public interest.

ACTIVITIES - The project mainly revolves around two core contents: Dong building technology and Dong weaving technology. Firstly, the volunteers will learn the basic knowledge of Dong building technology (the main types, construction techniques, and construction customs of Dong architecture) and Dong weaving technology (the main types, production techniques, and patterns of Dong brocade), and making the achievements of introducing them, in any form. Following traditional craftsmen to learn traditional techniques in heritage sites can supplement formal education in terms of learning environment, teaching methods, and other aspects. Secondly, the volunteers will make Ruyi Dongong-a traditional building component of the Dong building, create digital art works on Dong brocade and then record the process and publish the results on social media. Combining the learning process of traditional skills with the creative and dissemination abilities of volunteers themselves is a process of cultivating young people's ability to recognize and disseminate cultural heritage in practice, and also an effective way to enhance public awareness of cultural heritage.

PARTNERS - Gaobu Village Committee; Cofinity Research Centre, UK.

Tongdao Youkuan Cultural Tourism Co., Ltd.

Xuehui Yang

xuehui_young@qq.com



<https://whc.unesco.org/en/whvolunteers>