

WHV- Dong Building Technology

Dong Villages, China

Site inscribed on a Tentative List since 2013

04/07/2016 – 17/07/2016



The nominated Dong Villages are located in southwest China. Residing close to the water is the most important settlement pattern of Dong Villages, and 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 "Diaojaolou", 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. In some regions, the corridors and the eaves are respectively connected between houses.

Project objectives: The project will continue for the second consecutive year its work aiming at making the Dong building technologies better documented and understood both by the local population and a wider public, in order to conserve and renew among the new generation the knowledge and skills needed for their preservation.

Project activities: Moshis (Dong architects) will guide the volunteers to visit the traditional buildings in the village, including the traditional drum tower, Fengyu Bridge and dwelling houses, and will explain about the building materials, methods and processes. The volunteers will then participate in the restoration of a traditional dwelling house, from finalizing the housing designing to participate in the restoration work using traditional materials, tools and techniques under the supervision of the Dong architects. The volunteers will also video and photo-document the whole process, and transcribe the building instructions in different languages to help preserve the traditional techniques, as well as the invaluable symbolic and cultural heritage associated to them.

Partners: World Heritage Office of Tongdao County, Village Committees of Gaoshang Village, and Gaosheng Village and Kezhong Village.

*Beijing Tsinghua Tongheng Urban Planning & Design Institute,
Institute for Historic and Cultural Cities*
Ms Xiaobin Zhang
bean_zhang@126.com