

Hongcun and Xidi

Hóngcūn hé Xīdì 宏村和西递

Hongcun and Xidi, two villages in Anhui Province, are living museums offering natives and tourist alike a glimpse into the region's past.

Hongcun and Xidi, two ancient villages in southern Anhui Province (east central China), were selected for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Cultural Heritage List in 2000. (World Cultural Heritage sites are considered to have outstanding historical,

educational, and cultural value and belong to the people of the world. UNESCO lists 679 throughout the world, 26 in China.) Hongcun and Xidi and the relics found in them are preserved as national historical treasures, and as a way to interpret China's feudal rural past.

Founded in 1131 by the prominent Wang family, Hongcun thrived during the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1912) dynasties. Shaped like an ox, Hongcun's design emphasizes its waterways.

Approximately 140 historical stone buildings, courtyards, and alleys form a living museum in present-day Hongcun. Lexu Hall, the Wang family ancestral temple, is near a

Hongcun, a village in Anhui Province, dates to the twelfth century. Approximately 140 historical stone buildings, courtyards, and alleys form a living museum in present-day Hongcun. PHOTO BY UDO SHOENE.



Tourism in Hongcun Village

Tourism has become a major source of revenue for many towns in China, making historic buildings, traditional festivals, and local legends of new commercial value. This text comes from a tourist information website:

Stunning delicate woodcarvings were engraved on the beams above the front lounge of the Chenzhi Hall, the house of Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) salt dealer Wang Dinggui in Hongcun Village. One depicts dozens of playful children celebrating the Lantern Festival by setting off firecrackers, beating drums and gongs or blowing trumpets. Another portrays dozens officials playing stringed musical instruments,

painting or doing calligraphy at four tables. Barbers and tea servants are shown working behind them. The memorial archway—built in 1578 and dedicated to Hu Wenguang, a Xidi native who became a high official of the Ming Dynasty—is a masterpiece of stone carving. The best brick carving ever in Xiyuan, or west garden, at the house of another prominent Ming-dynasty official from Xidi. The pine, bamboo, plum blossom and rocks look real. The 13 stone pillars on the north end of the pond are said to be the guardians of the village.

Source: Retrieved March 13, 2009, from http://www.china-guide.de/english/a_profile_of_china/scenic-Spots/hongcun-----xidi.html

pond. Tourists can visit homes and purchase souvenirs related to village and family history. The village was the location for the 2000 movie *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

Xidi was built in the Northern Song dynasty (960–1126). The architectural legacy of the village reveals intricate workmanship, especially carvings, engraved in wooden beams, depicting social activities such as the Lantern Festival. Significant stone masonry includes a memorial archway at built in 1578.

Elizabeth D. SCHAFER

Further Reading

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Hongkai Tan. (2001, September 6). Labyrinth to a distant past. *China Daily*.

