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## Hidden Heritage - Interpretation of Cultural Landscapes of Hengzhou City in Guangxi

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### *Abstract*

*For those cultural landscapes that are hidden in specific areas, they are cultural heritage resources that need to be explored. The interpretation of these cultural landscapes in unknown areas is an important idea for the expression of regional heritage values and sustainable development. Taking the interpretation of the cultural landscape of Hengzhou City in Guangxi as an example, this paper analyzes the characteristics of its cultural landscape and the current state of interpretation. It discusses the definition of identity of cultural landscape and the methodology of heritage interpretation. In addition, this paper composes the proper interpretation of Hengzhou's cultural landscape as a historical town, with the aim of exploring the value of Hengzhou's cultural heritage. By applying the methodology of heritage interpretation, approach, and meaning, the study of such a practice model will bring a practical reference for the conservation of cultural heritage in similar specific regions and provide new ideas for local cultural, social, and economic development efforts.*

**Keywords:** Cultural Heritage, Cultural Landscape, Value, Interpretation; Conservation, Sustainable Development.

### Introduction

"A joint work of nature and man" is the definition of cultural landscape given by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee at its 16th session.[1] The cultural landscape embodies a variety of manifestations of the interaction between human beings and the natural environment and is rich in diversity and spiritual attributes. The amount of information it conveys is very large. The cultural landscape includes the categories of landscapes intentionally designed and built by humans, organically evolving landscapes (which are still undergoing their process of change and have physical evidence of historical features of the evolutionary process), and connected landscapes (characterized by natural, religious, artistic or cultural connections). It is essential to convey and protect the value of the cultural landscape and to make people aware of its content. Those cultural landscapes that have the potential to be exploited are the types of cultural landscapes that exist in specific areas. The light of a well-known or large cultural landscape often overshadows them. In recent years, the strategies of "cultural revitalization" and "rural revitalization" have been strongly promoted in China. For these rural and urban cultural landscapes, they should become attractive "cultural value areas" that contribute to the ecological, social, cultural, and economic sustainability of the region. Therefore, it is indispensable to interpret the cultural landscape of a specific region and to conduct research on the extraction of characteristics, cultural interpretation, value embodiment, and heritage revitalization.

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"Perception through interpretation, appreciation through perception, and conservation through appreciation"[2]

"Cultural Heritage Interpretation" conveys the human, spiritual, and land significance of a particular area and speaks directly to visitors about why and what makes a site valuable and special. It is a celebration of the culture and nature of the place or thing, the creative activity and local folklore, the great achievements and reflections in history. The interpretation of the cultural landscape is based on this foundation. It can be a variety of connected activities, including site design, publications, textual descriptions, artistic expressions, visual orientations, cabaret displays, multimedia presentations, and virtual presentations that provide a logical way for people to experience the site during their leisure time visits or professional research activities. It includes but is not limited to, interesting and educational forms of expression so as to avoid boring didactic expressions and to stimulate people's interest and curiosity in expanding their knowledge and their desire to actively explore the truths of culture actively, thus achieving the goal of preserving heritage.

## Research Background

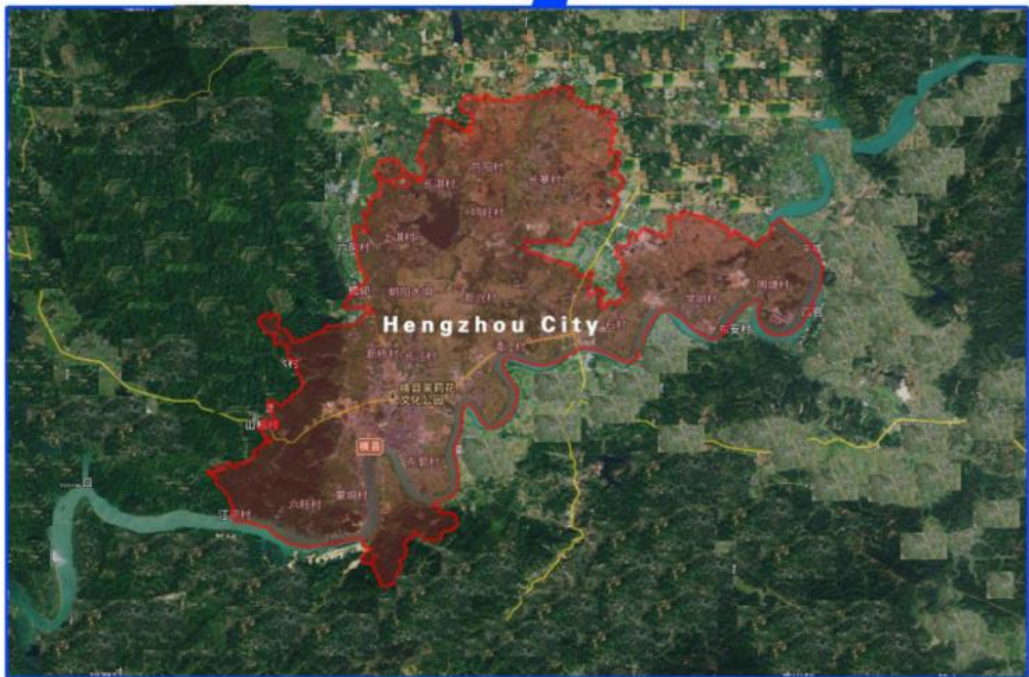
Hengzhou, Guangxi, located in southwest China, was abolished as a county and established as a city in 2021. Before its establishment, it belonged to the area where the aboriginal tribes lived and was a minority group place. During The Han Dynasty (111 B.C.), An Guang County was established as the predecessor of Hengzhou and came under the jurisdiction of the central government. Hengzhou is located on the edge of the sea, and it is situated along the Yu River, which is known as the largest tributary of the Xijiang River. It connects Pubei and Lingshan to the southeast, leading to Qinzhou and Beihai; it connects Guixian (now Guigang City, Guangxi) to the north; it borders Yongning (now Nanning City, the capital of Guangxi) to the west and has been a military stronghold and a commercial post for many generations.[3] Ancient Hengzhou also occupied a familiar and important geographic node - a mandatory stage for commerce on the Han Dynasty Maritime Silk Road from India to Southeast Asia to the Chinese port of Pubei connecting to China's Central Plains hinterland. This shows that it was an important player in the international oceanic economic radiation belt of historical Han Dynasty China. (Figure 1). Since ancient times, Hengzhou's geographical environment has been very advantageous. It has well-developed waterway transportation, lush vegetation, and a flourishing farming economy. Qin Guan, a famous scholar in the Northern Song Dynasty, described the ancient Hengzhou as "Fishing and farming are abundant, just like the fish and rice in Huaiyu. The scenery of the streams and mountains are beautiful, just like the scenery of Jiangnan." (Fishing and farming are like the right side of the Huai River: the central part of what is now Anhui and Jiangsu, which has been a rich area for farmers and merchants in China for generations. The streams and mountains can be compared with those in Jiangnan: the current south of the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, which has been a beautiful and rich water town in China for generations). With such a high rating, it is possible to envisage a rough picture of the geographical conditions and economic production level of ancient Hengzhou. Due to its unique regional location and diverse cultural interactions, ancient Hengzhou is rich in cultural heritage resources. For the cultural landscape, more than 2000 years of historical iterations have left many marks and clues on the expression of Hengzhou's cultural landscape. However, the results of these interactions between humans and nature in the course of history have been shaken by the current wave of urbanization and urban renewal. Hengzhou is not an area that has traditionally been the focus of central authority, so it cannot be compared to well-known historic towns that have preserved their historical layers and cultural heritage intact. The

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local people are not aware of the importance of the city's cultural values, so many unique cultural symbols of heritage are not effectively promoted and passed on and are even neglected and abandoned. Therefore, the interpretation of Hengzhou's cultural landscape is the first step to discovering the hidden value of Hengzhou's cultural heritage.



Traffic map of the Maritime Silk  
-Road in the Han Dynasty



Hengzhou Map Present Day

Figure 1 The Map of the Maritime Silk Road of the Han Dynasty and the Present-Day Map of Hengzhou and Their Geographical Relationship

### **Status of Hengzhou Cultural Landscape**

There are many ways to classify the types of regional landscapes. Among them, according to the definition of the three types of the cultural landscape, combined with the visual characteristics of the Hengzhou cultural landscape, the category of Hengzhou cultural landscape should be divided into landscapes intentionally designed and built by humans and organically evolved landscapes. With this as a reference, the author analyzes the existing status of Hengzhou's immovable cultural relics and man-made and natural landscapes as follows:

#### **Immovable Cultural Relics**

Hengzhou has 19 immovable cultural relics listed as cultural relics protection units (including 1 national cultural relics protection unit, 4 provincial cultural relics protection units, and the rest are local-level protection units)(Figure2) and 72 unclassified immovable cultural relics (Figure3). These tangible cultural assets of great historical value have been identified and inventoried. Although they are numerous, all of the immovable cultural relics are individual buildings or small landscapes and are scattered in fragments across Hengzhou's 3,464 square kilometer area. Currently, there is also no way to conduct integrated communication and an overall visual orientation design (Figure4). Such a situation leads to the fragmentation of cultural heritage and prevents the formation of an organic cultural tour system. First of all, visitors are not able to understand all the historical relics and are not clear about their identity meaning, and historical connection. The distances between the different cultural relics for shuttle visits are too great, and the volume of the visited relics themselves is not enough to attract visitors to travel long distances to visit them. In the long run, the value of cultural relics is not valued and is gradually neglected until degradation.

After conducting field research on 12 units of 19 heritage conservation units in Hengzhou and the remaining 72 unclassified immovable cultural relics, the author found that there are only two types of heritage interpretation of existing immovable cultural relics, namely the neglected interpretation method and the informative label with large textual description. Such didactic texts are stacked on both sides of the entrance or in the passageway of each location and are mostly presented as printed materials on bulletin boards or carved text on stone monuments . The sites where these cultural relics are located are sparsely trafficked, and some are even overgrown, severely damaged, and not properly maintained (Figure 5). The place where all the information about immovable cultural relics is centrally displayed is the Hengzhou City Museum. Hengzhou City Museum has displayed a large number of informational materials in its plaza, unifying all heritage sites with a uniform textual description. However, these informative materials have been gradually damaged due to weather changes.

Hengzhou Cultural Relics Protection List						
Number	Category	Name	Protection Level	Location	Era	Publication Date and Document Number
1	Ancient Building	Fubo Temple	National Key Cultural Relics Protection Unit	Yunbiao Town, Hengzhou, Longmentang Village Committee, southwest of the village, north bank of the Wusan Shoal on the Yujiang River	Qing	2013.03.05 State Council Document [2013] No. 13
2	Modern and Contemporary Significant Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Shi Hengyi Mansion	Province Level	394, East Second Alley, Chengsi Street, Hengzhou City	Republic	2009.05.04 Guangxi Administrative Document [2009] No. 38
3	Ancient Building	Chenglu Pagoda	Province Level	Gaocun Village Committee, Luan Town, Hengzhou, on the northeast side of Jin Gui Ridge on Gaocun	Qing Dynasty, the twelfth year of	2017.12.08 Guangxi Administrative Document [2017] No. 69
4	Ancient Building	Bishan Flower House	Province Level	Bishan Village Committee, Pinglang Town, Hengzhou	Qing Dynasty, Qianlong	2017.12.08 Guangxi Administrative Document [2017] No. 69
5	Ancient Building	Bangqiao Sankuntang	Province Level	Xihan Village Committee, Mashan Town, Hengzhou	Qing Dynasty, Jiaqing	2017.12.08 Guangxi Administrative Document [2017] No. 69
6	Ancient Building	Dragon Mother Temple	City Level	166, Chujiang Road, Hongde Community, Hengzhou City	Qing	1983.05.10
7	Ancient Building	Yingtian Temple	City Level	Liwei Village, Baohua Village Committee, Nanyang Town, Hengzhou, on the mid-slope of Nan Mountain	Late Qing and Early Republic	183.05.10
8	Ancient Building	Haitang Bridge	City Level	Haitang Community, Hengzhou City, Heng County, on the bank of the Yujiang River next to Haitang Park	Qing Dynasty, the seventh year of Qianlong (1742)	1983.05.10
9	Ancient Building	Wanyou Mansion	City Level	West of Tingcha Village, Tingcha Village Committee, Liujing Town, Heng County	Qing Dynasty, Jiaqing	2012.09.19 Hengshui Administrative Document [2012] No. 49
10	Ancient Building	Tingcha Yang's Ancestral House	City Level	Northeast of Tingcha Village, Tingcha Village Committee, Liujing Town, Heng County	Qing Dynasty, Jiaqing	2012.09.19 Hengshui Administrative Document [2012] No. 49
11	Ancient Building	Tiancheng Mansion	City Level	Shengcun, Panyang Village Committee, Nanyang Town, Heng County	Qing Dynasty, the sixteenth year of Jiaqing (1811)	2012.09.19 Hengshui Administrative Document [2012] No. 49
12	Ancient Building	Wangtangkou Su's Mansion	City Level	15, Wangtangkou, Lancheng Community, Lancheng Town, Heng County	Late Qing and Early Republic	2012.09.19 Hengshui Administrative Document [2012] No. 49
13	Ancient Building	Xiulin Academy	City Level	Within Hengxian Middle School, Jiaoyu Road, Hengzhou Town, Heng County	Qing Dynasty	2012.09.19 Hengshui Administrative Document [2012] No. 49
14	Ancient Building	Aoshan Academy (Aoshan Temple)	City Level	Within Baibe Middle School, at the Foot of Aoshan Mountain, Baibe Community, Baibe Town, Heng County	Qing Dynasty	2012.09.19 Hengshui Administrative Document [2012] No. 49
15	Ancient Ruins	Yin House Kiln Site	City Level	Bongao Village, Yiwu Village Committee, Liujing Town, Heng County	Song and Yuan	1990.08.01 Hengshui Administrative Document [1990] No. 170
16	Ancient Ruins	Kaixing Tower Ruins	City Level	On Dengao Ridge, Chengsi Community, Hengzhou Town, Heng County	Qing Dynasty	2012.09.19 Hengshui Administrative Document [2012] No. 49
17	Modern and Contemporary Significant Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Old Site of Guoxi Provincial Committee of the CPC in Hengxian County Meeting	City Level	Zhong of Liuxiu Village, Liuxiu Village Committee, Taoxi Town, Heng County	1947	1983.05.10
18	Modern and Contemporary Significant Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Old Site of the Establishment of the Eighth Detachment of the Yue-Gui Border Column of the Chinese People's Liberation Army and the Hengxian People's Government	City Level	Within Pingma Town Central School, Heng County	1949	2012.09.19 Hengshui Administrative Document [2012] No. 49
19	Other	Qinglong Rock	County Level	North of Qinglong Mountain, Xiewu Village, Hengzhou City	Ming Dynasty	1983.05.10

Figure 2 Hengzhou Immovable Cultural Relics Statistics Table

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 Source: Hengzhou Museum and Author Made

Upgraded immovable cultural relics in Hengzhou					Serial Number	Category	Name	Location	Era
					10	Ancient Building	Liu'er Bridge	Hengzhou Baibe Town Jiangkou Village South	Wang Dynasty
1	Ancient Site	Xijin Shell Mound Site	Hengzhou Town Jiangnan Village Committee Xijin Village	Neolithic Age	38	Ancient Building	Zhenai Bridge	Hengzhou City Shijing Village West	Wang Dynasty
2	Ancient Site	Qiujiang Shell Mound Site	Hengzhou Pinglang Town Qiujiang Village Committee Northeast of Qiujiang Village	Neolithic Age	39	Ancient Building	Shunan Bridge	Hengzhou Xianqi Town Linzei Village Southeast of Shunan River	Late Wang and Early Qing
3	Ancient Site	Duozhuang Shell Mound Site	Hengzhou Lujiang Town Shizhou Village Committee West of Duozhuang Village	Neolithic Age	40	Ancient Building	Longjiao Bridge	Hengzhou Xianqi Town Duzhuang Village Southeast	Qing Dynasty
4	Ancient Site	Pinglang Shell Mound Site	Hengzhou Pinglang Town Pinglang Street South, East of Shili Village on the bank of the Yujiang River	Neolithic Age	41	Ancient Building	Guo Bridge	Hengzhou Xianqi Town Cha Village	Qing • Yongzhou
5	Ancient Site	Jiangkou Shell Mound Site	Hengzhou Baibe Town Jiangkou Village West	Neolithic Age	42	Ancient Building	Yungang Bell	Hengzhou City Song Village Northwest	Qing • Jiaqing Tenth Year (1865)
6	Ancient Site	Dudong Site	Hengzhou Nayong Town Dalin Village Committee Dudong Village	Neolithic Age	43	Ancient Building	Jianguan Bridge	Hengzhou Xianqi Town Potang Village Northwest	Qing • Daoguang
7	Ancient Site	Chongli Shell Mound Site	Hengzhou Pinglang Town Pinglang Community Chongli Village West Bank of the Yujiang River	Neolithic Age	44	Ancient Building	Yunhai Bridge	Hengzhou Baibe Town Potang Village Southeast	Late Qing
8	Ancient Site	Liuw Shell Mound Site	Hengzhou City Taijiao Village Committee Liuw Village	Neolithic Age	45	Ancient Building	Jinmiao Bridge	Hengzhou Xianqi Town Jinchun Village North	18th Year of the Republic of China (1929)
9	Ancient Site	Leshan Ancient City Site	Hengzhou City Buqian Community Gueheng Village Southeast	Southern Dynasties to Tang Dynasty	46	Stone Inscription	Baoren Rock Inscription	Hengzhou Linxiang Town Baoren Village South	Wang and Qing
10	Ancient Site	Wu Sangui's Anti-Qing Campsite	Hengzhou Xianqi Town Tazhu Village Committee Yupo Village South Shiqing Peak	Early Qing	47	Stone Inscription	Shangtan Rock Inscription	Hengzhou Xianqi Town Zhanyou Village (Shangtan Tan South Bank of the Yujiang River)	Qing Dynasty
11	Ancient Tomb	Fengyan Village Southern Dynasties Tomb Group	Hengzhou City Shicun Village Committee Fengyan Village West Side	Southern Dynasties	48	Stone Inscription	Shouhai Rock Inscription	Hengzhou Baibe Town Baibe Community Ba Wumailin Northwest of Gouhai Bank	Qing Dynasty
12	Ancient Tomb	Jinlingling Tang Dynasty Tomb Group	Hengzhou City Linxing Community Northwest Suburbs Jinling Hill	Tang Dynasty	49	Stone Inscription	Sudu Rock Inscription	Hengzhou Xianqi Town Chongbin Village	Qing Dynasty
13	Ancient Building	Pingshan He's House	Hengzhou Nanxing Town Pingshan Village Committee Heshan Village	Wang Dynasty	50	Stone Inscription	Stone Tablet of 'Shi Pu Jin Ji'	Hengzhou Pinglang Town Pinglang Street West	Qing • Daoguang (1855)
14	Ancient Building	Longrou Bi's Flower Hall	Hengzhou Mashan Town Weimin Village Longrou Tan 18, 19, 20	Qing Dynasty	51	Modern and Contemporary Important Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Liaoshan Ridge Early Dynasty Rock Site	Hengzhou Xianqi Town Liaoshan Village	1852
15	Ancient Building	Huangjiang Huang's Flower Hall	Hengzhou Pinglang Town Huangjiang Village Committee Tizhu Village 83, 84	Qing • Jiaqing	52	Modern and Contemporary Important Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Li Wenzai Gravel Road	Hengzhou Pinglang Town Huangjiang Village East Xuzhu Mountain Valley	1852
16	Ancient Building	Xinlong Building	Hengzhou Mashan Town Xinlong Village Committee Xin Village	Qing • Jiaqing	53	Modern and Contemporary Important Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Hengzhou Houshi County Martyrs Memorial	Hengzhou Xianqi Town Linxiang Community Houshi Park Inside Baomai Temple Edge	1964
17	Ancient Building	Gaojia Courtyard	Hengzhou City Jiaozu Road South Second Lane 62	Qing • Xianfeng	54	Modern and Contemporary Important Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Hengzhou Eastern District Martyrs Memorial	Hengzhou Baibe Town Baibe Community Baifei Highway East Ridge Top	1951
18	Ancient Building	Hetang Ning's Flower House	Hengzhou Baibe Town Hetang Village Committee Hetang Village 162	Late Qing	55	Modern and Contemporary Important Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Chen Qingyuan Former Residence	Hengzhou Baibe Town Lou Village	Qing Dynasty
19	Ancient Building	Hetang Ning's Three Halls	Hengzhou Baibe Town Hetang Village Committee Hetang Village 89	Late Qing	56	Modern and Contemporary Important Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Lou Undergrated Commemorative	Hengzhou Baibe Town Lou Village Central North	1943
20	Ancient Building	Hengzhou Qin House	Hengzhou City Dunan Street Middle Section West Side	Late Qing	57	Modern and Contemporary Important Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Bolin Shi Old House	Hengzhou Nayong Town Potang Village Shangtan Tan	Republic
21	Ancient Building	Wazu Temple	Hengzhou City Hongde Community Chaizong Road Hongde Primary School Zhoushanou	Qing Dynasty	58	Modern and Contemporary Important Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Li Sibei Mausoleum	Hengzhou Lujiang Town Baotian Village	Republic
22	Ancient Building	Pingao Yucheng Temple	Hengzhou Pingao Town Pingao Community Banzhu Village South	Qing Dynasty	59	Modern and Contemporary Important Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Lu's Ancestral Hall	Hengzhou City Xiaoling Village	Republic
23	Ancient Building	Gema Huang's Ancestral Hall	Hengzhou Baibe Town Luofeng Village Committee Gema Village	Qing • Jiaqing	60	Modern and Contemporary Important Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Xinmiao	Hengzhou City Xingqiao Village Northwest	1947
24	Ancient Building	Xiaobaihan Huang's Family Ancestral Hall	Hengzhou Zhenlong Township Malan Village Committee Xiaobaihan Village Northwest	Qing • Tongzhi Eighth Year (1869)	61	Modern and Contemporary Important Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Yanhai Ancestral	Hengzhou Baibe Town Potang Village Committee Potang Village	1953
25	Ancient Building	Maping Deng's Ancestral Hall	Hengzhou Baibe Town Maping Village Committee Dongnan Village	Qing Dynasty	62	Modern and Contemporary Important Historical Sites and Representative Buildings	Xijin Redrapour Station	Hengzhou City Sijia Village East	1998
26	Ancient Building	Caocun Meng's Ancestral Hall	Hengzhou City Gao Village North Bank of the Yujiang River	Qing to Republic	63	Other	Liaojing Decentum Standard Section	Hengzhou Linxiang Town Liaojing Community East Baifeng Station Northwest Side	Dezhaon Period
27	Ancient Building	Xuan Village Han's Ancestral Hall	Hengzhou City Song Village Committee Xuan Village	Qing to Republic	64	Ancient Site	Yungang Red Pottery Kilo Site	Hengzhou Luao Town Xuanjiang Village Committee Xuan Village West and South	Qing Dynasty
28	Ancient Building	Wuyang Well	Hengzhou Nayong Town Nayang Village Committee Dongrang Village	Wang Dynasty	65	Ancient Tomb	Longlu General Gao Wan Tomb	Hengzhou Linxiang Town Xianhou Village Committee Xianhou Village Gaohe Ridge	Southern Song
29	Ancient Building	Kongming Well	Hengzhou Baibe Town Baifei Village Committee Shang Village North	Wang Dynasty	66	Ancient Building	Qin Xianou Old House	Hengzhou Luao Town Xuanjiang Village Committee Xuan Village	Qing Republic
30	Ancient Building	Miaozhuang Old Well	Hengzhou Baibe Town Miaozhuang Village Committee Miao Jiao North	Wang Dynasty	67	Ancient Building	Qin Yizhou Old House	Hengzhou Luao Town Xuanjiang Village Committee Xuan Village	Qing Republic
31	Ancient Building	Xuan Village Round Well	Hengzhou City Song Village Committee Xuan Village	Qing Dynasty	68	Ancient Building	Wei Fuyang Old House	Hengzhou Luao Town Xuanjiang Village Committee Xuan Village	Qing Republic
32	Ancient Building	Dulongnan Square Well	Hengzhou Baibe Town Potang Village Committee Potang Village	Qing Dynasty	69	Ancient Building	Wei Fuyang Old House	Hengzhou Luao Town Xuanjiang Village Committee Xuan Village	Qing Republic
33	Ancient Building	Wangou Ancient Well	Hengzhou City Hongde Community Hongde Road 249	Qing Dynasty	70	Ancient Building	Wei Fuyang Old House	Hengzhou Luao Town Xuanjiang Village Committee Xuan Village	Qing Republic
34	Ancient Building	Gaou Ancient Well	Hengzhou City Banqiong West Road East Jijie 502	Qing Dynasty	71	Ancient Building	Naling Kiln Ruins	Hengzhou Luao Town Xuanjiang Village Committee Xuan Village	Qing Dynasty
35	Ancient Building	Huangzuo Bridge	Hengzhou Shitang Town Huangzuo Village North Huangzuo River	Wang Dynasty	72	Modern and Contemporary Important Historical	Shoujing Pool	Hengzhou Luao Town Xuanjiang Village Committee Xuan Village	Early Stages of Founding
36	Ancient Building	Jiangping Bridge	Hengzhou Xianqi Town Jiangping Village South	Wang Dynasty					

Figure 3 Hengzhou Immovable Cultural Relics Statistics Table

Source: Hengzhou Museum and Author Made



Map of Immovable Cultratal relics in Hengzhou

Figure 4 Distribution of Hengzhou Immovable Cultural Relics

Source: Hengzhou Museum



Figure 5 Overgrown Hengzhou Pier Fostress of Dragon Temple (Cultural Relic Protection Unit)

Source: Author photographed on site

## **The Changing Cultural Landscape**

### (1) Settlement landscape emerging from business

With the development and prosperity of the Silk Road in the Han Dynasty, the development of marketplaces and towns along the land and waterways of the Hengzhou Commercial Road was promoted, and the glorious past of many traditional settlements was created. On the same spatial and temporal scale, these settlements and towns present similar conditions, such as the overall pattern, street space, and water network. These settlements were arranged along the Yu River. With the change of time, they also underwent iterative changes and were most prosperous in the Qing Dynasty. The street type, which is dominated by the boat community settlement and commercial streets, is formed by man-made buildings combined with the natural topography, with temples, riding towers, ancestral halls, and residential houses. However, due to today's urbanization and demographic shifts, the original diversity of architectural and landscape types is being threatened and gradually homogenized, and their cultural expression is slowly disappearing. The fostress of the dragon temple at Hengzhou wharf is an example that can be used as a reference for the current state of the local cultural landscape. The fostress of the dragon temple is an important totem of belief in the boating culture of the docks. The boat people believe that praying to the fostress of the dragon can bless them to return safely from their work in the water and avoid disasters. Therefore, wherever there are boat people living, there is always a fostress of dragon temple. The fostress of the dragon temple at Hengzhou Pier is one of the 19 immovable cultural relics listed above. However, its state is not promising and is a cause for concern—The only written explanation of the temple is a stone plaque that stands by the entrance. It is engraved with a prefectural cultural relic protection unit - the fostress of the dragon temple, and that is all. The entrance to the fostress of the dragon temple is always locked and overgrown inside and out, and even the local boat people have overlooked the original purpose of the building. (Uncle Zhou, a 76-year-old boatman, told the author, "In the 1990s, this temple served as a temporary office for the water supervision department. Now it has completely changed its original appearance, and no one has performed rituals here for a long time.") After 2008, the development of the commercial housing economy has intensified the erosion of the historic settlement landscape. On the other hand, the lagging infrastructure development has accelerated the out-migration of settlement residents. The process and reasons for the decline of the settlement in the Hengzhou marina area are not unique among similar towns in China.

### **Agricultural and Industrial Landscapes**

"Hengzhou is the gateway to Yongzhou, Qinzhou and Lianzhou counties, with a dangerous terrain, where troops can be deployed as reinforcements, which can restrain Guangyuan internally and control Cochin externally. -Du Qi, the envoy of Guangnan West Road Transit Press in Song Dynasty, this is his description of Hengzhou as a strategic place when he made a speech to the Song Dynasty court. This shows that the geographical location of Hengzhou has been valued by the central government since ancient times as a key military and commercial location. During this particular period, from the founding of New China to the 1960s and late 1970s, Hengzhou left behind agricultural and industrial landscape resources of historically representative value. In the late 1970s, Hengzhou started to grow jasmine in large quantities, and today, the cultivation area of jasmine in Hengzhou has reached more than 100,000 mu. The production accounts for more than 80% of the total annual production of jasmine in China.[4] The demand for tea is driven by jasmine flowers, and the 2,500 acres of tea plantations and jasmine fields at the top of Baohua Mountain in Hengzhou (Figure 6) form a cultural landscape

unique to Hengzhou's agriculture. Hengzhou was also named the "Hometown of Jasmine in China" by the State Forestry Administration and the China Flower Association. The "Jasmine Cultural Festival" is a means for the local government of Hengzhou to promote the jasmine flower as a cultural totem in the form of a commercial fair and a song and dance performance. Of course, the jasmine plantations and tea gardens are a must-see for visitors during the "Jasmine Cultural Festival." Such events do have a positive impact, bringing some economic revenue to the local coffers and in some ways increasing the cultural visibility of Hengzhou as a city. But on the other hand, it is unsustainable. Homogenized commercial fairs and singing and dancing art forms are not effectively presented for Hengzhou's local culture. "The Jasmine Cultural Festival" is an opportunity to promote Hengzhou culture, but due to its fragmented resources, there is no way to interpret it in an organic way. This has to be considered a great pity. In addition, the Hengzhou Xijin Dam, which flourished in the 1960s, and the former site of the iron and steel mill on the banks of the Yujiang River (Figure 7) are among the industrial landscapes that should be integrated into the cultural landscape of Hengzhou as representatives of the values of the city's recent development history. They are described in terms of cultural landscape and cultural heritage interpretation as an important piece of the puzzle to complete the historical layering of Hengzhou's cultural landscape.

### **Diverse Local Cultures**

Baiyue was the collective name given to the tribes of the ethnic minorities in the Lingnan area during the Qin Dynasty. Before the establishment of Hengzhou during the Han Dynasty, most of the aborigines were from one of the Baiyue tribes, called Bourau. Since the establishment of the Han Dynasty, with political and military involvement and economic contacts, the Han Chinese in the Central Plains gradually managed and settled in Hengzhou. As other minority groups and Hengzhou's Zhuang and Han peoples came and went with each other, after a long period of dynastic development, 12 minority groups such as Miao, Yao, Dong, and Mulam have been living in Hengzhou for a long time, carrying a variety of cultural types. In addition, by combining Taoism, Buddhism, and minority legends, Hengzhou reveals its unique rituals, beliefs, and customs. Multiculturalism constitutes Hengzhou's diverse intangible cultural landscape. For example, the Fubo Temple was built to commemorate General Ma Yuan, who defeated the minority tribes of southern China during The Han Dynasty, and "Fubo" means to subdue the waves. Therefore, General Fubo temples were built on the banks of dangerous rivers. The annual Fubo birthday event held at Fubo Temple (General Fubo's Birthday: the birthday of General Fubo is celebrated on the 14th day of the 4th month of the lunar calendar) is a celebration of the diversity of local beliefs into a traditional cultural expression unique to the region. The Fubo birthday event is a big event (Figure 8). Although Fubo Birthday Event was listed as an intangible cultural heritage of the Guangxi Autonomous Region in 2007, these special cultural manifestations and landscapes freely formed by the local people are not effectively promoted in detail at present. This has resulted in a situation that its influence cannot be radiated to the outside.



Figure 6 Hengzhou Agricultural Cultural Landscape      Figure 7 Hengzhou Industrial Landscapes  
Source: Author's collection      Source: Author photographed on site



Figure 8 People are praying in Fubo Temple.  
Source: Author photographed on site

## Reflections on the Reinterpretation of Hengzhou's Cultural Landscape

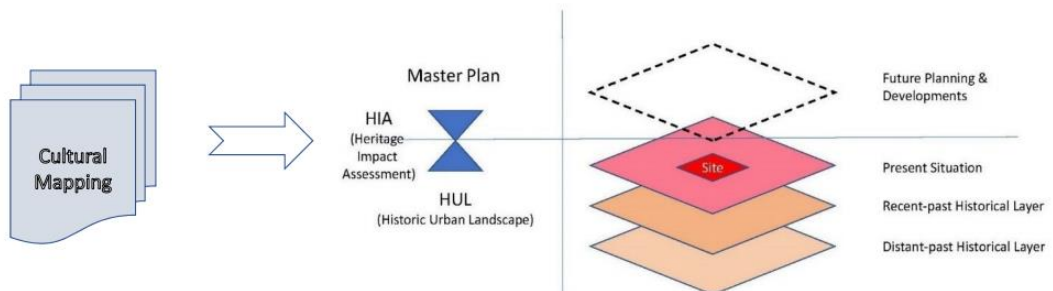
Based on the analysis of the current state of the Hengzhou cultural landscape, this paper better presents the characteristics of its tangible and immaterial cultural landscape. The question of what interpretive tools to use to reinterpret the Hengzhou cultural landscape is an issue that needs to be addressed in this paper. In the selection of specific methodological and management tools, the existing conditions and cultural potential of Hengzhou's landscape resources must be taken as the starting point. This paper starts with telling Hengzhou's story clearly and presenting Hengzhou's unique historical and cultural resources in a more visual and complete way.

It aims to try to awaken people's curiosity and desire to explore places and to spontaneously and deeply understand the spirit of place in order to further inspire more possibilities.

### Cultural Map

In the Hengzhou region, the cultural landscape is a combination of the material cultural landscape and the immaterial cultural landscape. Since ancient Hengzhou became a compulsory land and waterway post on the Maritime Silk Road during the Han Dynasty, transportation has served as a link for cultural and economic incoming traffic, a thread that ties together the fragmented heritage resources of the region. Around these important transportation nodes, there are numerous resources of tangible cultural heritage scattered. At the same time, Hengzhou's diverse ethnic and regional cultures have evolved and developed through changes. To a certain extent, intangible cultural heritage forms tangible cultural heritage. The tangible cultural heritage is the carrier of the intangible cultural heritage. As a tool to help understand and perceive the region, the Cultural Map is a way to address the comprehensive problems that exist in towns and cities, especially historic towns and cities. It is also a channel that enables people to learn about both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. First, the analysis of Hengzhou's historical layers is used as a starting point for the analysis of heritage influences such as archival research, community visits, spatial research, sketching, and image collection. Moreover, its tangible and intangible cultural data are assembled and mapped in a hierarchical manner in combination with historical town methodological tools. Finally, there can be web-based digital maps or map publications where this distilled information is translated into easy-to-read images and text that can be easily understood and appreciated (Figure 9).

### Cultural Mapping > HUL > Heritage Conservation Management Plan



- A comprehensive cultural Mapping is needed for developing official instruments for the conservation and development plans, especially in the formulation of the Heritage Urban Landscape (HUL) instruments.

Source: Prof.Johannes Widodo

### **A Holistic Interpretation of the Cultural Landscape Based on Virtual Reality**

The author has separated the interpretation of cultural landscape by virtual reality. This is because virtual reality emerged decades after the methodology of heritage interpretation tools was proposed for culture. It is a new technology. As the world enters the information age of the 21st century, computer and multimedia technologies are widely used in the field of cultural heritage management. The concept of digital museums and digital cultural heritage are no longer novelties in terms of presentation. These technologies allow for a more visual and flexible depiction of cultural heritage, thus allowing groups of visitors to browse the web for information or access the information they need without having to be on site. To some extent, this reduces the burden of capacity pressure on heritage sites. However, the cultural landscape cannot be interpreted by simply browsing the Internet. This is because cultural landscape interpretation is aimed at a broader target group, with a wider range of interpretations and a greater focus on experience and fun, which is difficult to achieve with traditional digital interpretation models. When faced with the current state of Hengzhou's cultural landscape, on-site restoration and transformation of its fragmented cultural landscape structure is unrealistic given the limited funds available for heritage management. However, this is not without a solution. The "Cloud Countryside" project of the "Digital Rural Construction" team of Xiamen University gives us a good reference and inspiration (Figure 10). To a certain extent, its panoramic roaming and 3D realistic modeling created for Guangxi Cheng Yang Eight Village enables visitors to have a preliminary heritage site experience and overall interpretation of the cultural landscape through the platform. The difficulty of interpreting the fragmented cultural landscape as a whole in an interesting and experiential way can be solved to a certain extent by combining the 3D scanning of tangible cultural heritage with the virtual reality immersion platform created by V.R. panorama Figure. This meets the current needs of the Hengzhou cultural landscape interpretation.

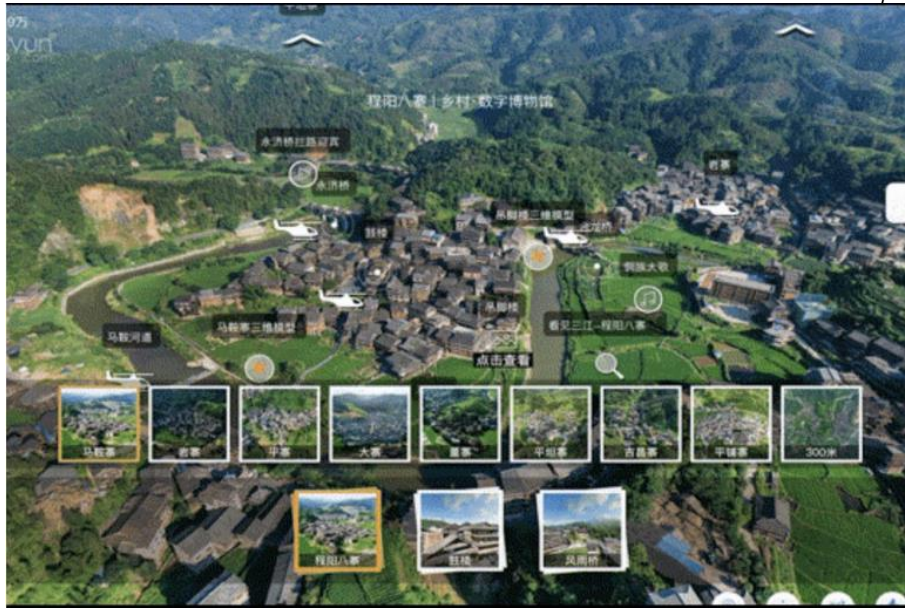


Figure 10 A 360° V.R. Panorama of the Countryside Created by the "Digital Countryside Construction" Team of Xiamen University

Source: Village Digital Museum of Cheng Yang Eight Village'

### Self-Interpretation of the Cultural Landscape Based on the Vision

The Hengzhou cultural landscape nodes are summarized from the poems describing the ancient Hengzhou landscape and *The Travels of Xu Xiake* (1) extracted by later people. They are shown below: The spring of Boling (Boling is the present-day Hengzhou Niang Mountain), the autumn scene of Chaling (the Kui Xing Building was built in the Ming Dynasty and is now a water tower on the hills in the heart of Hengzhou City, which has been abandoned), the morning mist of Baohua Mountain (the present Hengzhou Baohua Mountain Shoufo Temple), the night rain and begonia flowers of Haitang Bridge (the present Hengzhou Haitang Park), The moonlight of the Yu River, the sound of the bell of the Fubo Temple in the Wuban Mountains, combined with the docks that flourished in the Qing Dynasty, make the scene of ancient Hengzhou almost visible to the public. The visual depiction of ancient Hengzhou presents a cultural landscape with a strong identity from a visual point of view. The visual system of the landscape here means that visual elements should be used to interpret the spatial environment through the relationship between space and vision. Humans perceive the world through sight, sound, smell, and touch. As in the case of the impressive treatment of space in Suzhou Gardens, which in turn inspires desire and interest in visitors. As a cultural vehicle itself, the landscape has a self-interpreting function. By referring to the principles of landscape planning, we can manage the content of the visual elements of the cultural landscape so that the cultural landscape can interpret itself visually:

### Landscape View Analysis

The landscape view analysis is an analysis of the landscape location, viewing orientation, focal point settings, and vertical attributes of the landscape from the viewpoint of the visitor; the landscape view analysis is gradually overlaid and refined, and it is a global control of the cultural

### **Landscape Vision Axis**

As an element that connects multiple landscapes, the landscape vision axis includes natural, man-made, and natural combined with man-made forms. It can be a river, a street or a line of mountains, etc. For the role of the landscape vision axis, it is to connect the scattered spatial elements in series so that the spatial elements form a holistic visual expression.

### **Landscape Vision Elements**

As a visual image that attracts and emphasizes, landscape vision elements are presented in an active and open manner. Landscape vision elements can be concrete images of architecture, sculpture, plants, nature, or even words and colors. Landscape vision elements not only emphasize the presentation of an element in the cultural landscape but are also the focus of spatial elements.

### **Landscape Vision Corridor**

A landscape vision corridor is a landscape walkway where the view is continuous and unobstructed. For the establishment of visual corridors, it is a prerequisite for the existence or creation of good relationships between viewpoints and points of interest, which can be formed through the use of naturally existing open spaces and artificially constructed open spaces.

### **Landscape Vision Perception**

Landscape Vision perception refers to the basis of visual evaluation of the landscape. In addition to the natural landscape value, historical and cultural value, and socio-economic value, the cultural landscape should also have the visual value of the landscape. Landscape Vision perception is evaluated by considering the perspective of the public. It is important for the image enhancement of the site that it conforms to the human viewing style and aesthetic appeal of the landscape.

### **Based on the Interpretation of Local Culture**

The author classified Hengzhou native culture into the mainstream native culture and civilian native culture, and the interpretation oriented to these two cultural subjects needs to be distinguished (philosophy treats human beings as the subject of culture because the human being is the creator of culture). The mainstream native culture is expressed in the form of the influence of the behavioral patterns of the government and social elites, which are easy to transmit because they conform to the mainstream social values, such as the native agricultural landscapes formed by the tea culture and the jasmine culture, and the industrial landscapes inherited from a particular era, as mentioned above. As mentioned above, the current interpretation of these cultural landscapes is not comprehensive. It has fallen into the misunderstanding of homogenization because of the improper understanding and use of their historical values. On the other hand, the popularity of the Hengzhou Fubo Birthday Event temple fair reflects the amazing impact that the culture of the common people can have. Since ancient times, the native people of Hengzhou have been known to worship heroes, literary figures and believe in ghosts and gods, and the numerous donated monuments in the Fubo Temple are evidence of the enthusiasm and generosity of the people for this place of blessing. The Fubo Temple gathering is crowded with people coming one after another, and the content of the Temple gathering is mostly spontaneous by the local villagers, including local Zhuang language mountain songs, Shigong opera (2),

fortune telling and witchcraft, and feng shui. They combine local and foreign contents and believe in both Buddhism and Taoism, just for their own happiness and solace. There is a stone tablet inside Fubo Temple inscribed in the year of Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty: " Restored by Grand Secretariat, the Grand Secretariat of the Governor of Guangxi and Guangdong, Jia Yong Gongfu." It is roughly the inscription left by the Grand Secretariat, the governor of Guangxi and Guangdong in those days, who donated to the restoration of the Fubo Temple and was lined up by the crowd to touch it (Figure 11). The author was curious about this phenomenon. The senior citizens around informed that "if you touch it, you will be successful in your studies." It seems that everyone's focus is only on the word "Grand Secretariat." It is also interesting to note that more than half of the people worshipping at Fubo Temple are of Zhuang ethnicity, knowing that General Fubo came to subdue their ancestors, so what is historical hatred in front of spiritual happiness and psychological comfort? These phenomena can be seen as a manifestation of correct heritage interpretation.

The success and sustainability of the Fubo Birthday Event temple gathering in the local area satisfy the needs of the general public, but it has not been more effectively publicized. " Jasmine cultural festival" is in line with the government's direction, but the local characteristics are lost due to homogenization. The decline of the Xijin Dam and the former site of the steel mill is due to the fact that their local cultural values have not received the attention they deserve. There should not be a gap between mainstream native culture and civilian native culture. Their needs and approaches to interpretation are similar, and as long as they find a breakthrough in cooperation, native-based cultural interpretation will play a greater role.



Figure 11 People Take Turns Lining Up to Touch the Monument

Source: Author photographed on site

### **Place Interpretation**

Currently, most cultural heritage sites present themselves as "information" rather than "interpretation." The difference between information and interpretation is that information only

provides facts, while interpretation provides stories. Story links people to heritage and places[5]. Avoid lengthy narratives, didactic presentations, and single presentation methods, focus on the themes and contents contained in the story of the place, develop a quality plan through place assessment, and tell the real and objective situation, not only as a label of textual description but also as a node as a sign to guide the tour. Bringing the visitor into a certain guided activity, combining visual-auditory-touch experiences with sound, light, electricity, and projections, becomes a factor that influences the visitor's behavior and creates curiosity and interest in the spirit and values of the site. As Anatole France says: " Do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people's curiosity. It is enough to open minds; do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good inflammable stuff, it will catch fire."

### **Interpretation As a Public Event for Participation**

"Top-down" is the traditional cultural landscape management and planning approach, which is a highly efficient and centralized operation that can achieve the effect of administrative planning in the short term. Its limitation is the lack of public participation, which makes it difficult to activate the public's sense of self-responsibility and spiritual belonging. Referring to the "bottom-up" model of tactical urbanism, residents can modify, use and manage elements of the cultural landscape through appropriate guidance, with clear advantages in terms of functional, spatial, and temporal flexibility and adaptability[6]. In terms of interpreting the cultural landscape, it is also feasible to organize activities such as planting, art, performance, and cooking based on historical buildings, street nodes, and landscape plots in the community. Local governments support communities in organizing rituals and celebrations for traditional festivals, seek commercial and media partnerships for community-specific festivals, and use these events to bring people closer together, increase public participation, and add to the community's cultural pride. At the same time, it can also provide a way for communities to increase their sources of income and promote their culture. This will not only help to reduce management costs and promote the community's awareness of its own cultural values but also preserve the vitality of the community's cultural heritage and achieve the inheritance and sustainable development of the local cultural landscape.

### **Conclusion**

The cultural landscape interpretation requires consideration of both the material cultural landscape and the non-material cultural landscape, reflecting its integrity and systemic nature. Moreover, telling local stories, historical stories, and cultural stories in an easy-to-understand form, and awakening people's awareness of the value of the cultural landscape, and actively involving the community in its preservation through interpretation is a potent guarantee for the heritage and sustainable development of the regional cultural landscape. Over 5,000 years of civilization have shaped present China. Many of China's towns and cities have the characteristics of historic towns and cities, and their cultural landscapes have changed over thousands of years of iteration, some growing brighter and brighter and receiving public attention and care, while others have declined from prosperity to decline and face the threat of cultural extinction. There are several towns similar to Hengzhou, all of which have their own local cultural expressions and landscape characteristics but are hidden from the flow of urbanization due to their lack of visibility. The exploration of Hengzhou cultural landscape interpretation is only the tip of the iceberg of this huge project, and small steps get us to faraway places. The practice of the methodology of the heritage interpretation system and operational framework is an important cornerstone to ensure the stable development of Chinese heritage conservation.

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The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, author-ship, and/or publication of this article.

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The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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