

Stonework of Fukian Province, China

Fukian Province on the southeast coast of mainland China just across the Formosa Strait from Taiwan is home to some distinctive forms of vernacular architecture. It is an area defined by its geography. Mountain ranges, the highest in Southeast China, set it off from the rest of the country; but its coast with deep water ports open it to foreign influences. The mountain ranges behind the coast running roughly east-west are cut through by rivers running from the interior south to the sea, carving the terrain into separate areas and making communication between them difficult. This led to the development of a variety of distinctive cultural—and architectural—traditions. Among the most remarkable of these are the huge, complex unitary structures, many of them round as pictured here, which provided safe habitations for entire villages within their stone and earthen walls.

The province is rich in stone, principally granite and basalt with some marble and limestone. Historically it has been known for its skilled stone craftsmen, both carvers and builders, who have a tradition which has survived into the present. Stonework today is a major industry with hundreds of thousands of tons of carved stone products being exported to Japan, Singapore, Europe and the United States. It was through my association with an American importer of carved stone that I traveled to and through Fukian Province. On my last trip there I discovered the books from which the following photographs are taken. —TL





老房子

福建民居(下册) 江苏美術出版社

Old Fukian Houses by Huang Han-ming. Photographs by Lee Yu-chuen.
Published in two volumes by Quangshou Art Publishing, Quangshou, China

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