

## Field Trip Report for Dali and Lijiang

During the four-week field trip from 14 July to 25 July 2019, I along with other team members from Peking University travelled along the east route of the South-Asia corridor of the Silk Road in the city of Dali and Lijiang.

The main objective of our trip was to retrace and record the path of those ancient roads while also assessing its condition for updating existing information database of cultural relic. Our plan was drafted based on historical documents and literature to pinpoint the locations of ancient towns and cities and draw out a rough ancient traffic route. Then we were divided into teams to conduct more detailed researches on each part by interviewing local senior villagers, revisiting and walking the ancient road ourselves.

My team was in charge of the part from Jianchuan to Lijiang, so we stayed in different towns along the way, each for days. A typical day would be travelling with a guide from local village committee or office of heritage management, making stops to interview senior villagers we met on how they remembered the way and documenting ancient temples, houses, bridges and gates along the way. We would arrange a day or two indoor a week to file the pictures, fill out the forms for each and every heritage spot and draw the path out using Google Earth Pro and InDesign for the final report. Major difficulties were that there were many overlaps between ancient and present roads and that most abandoned roads and cultural heritages were damaged to different degree due to the lack of awareness of protection. I still remember the thrill of everyone when we found what we call “level one road”, which means it was preserved in good condition with its original surface, as others have already been covered by cement or unrecognizable anymore. Additionally, statements given by villagers could be contradictory and incorrect as they were largely memory-based. Speculations of direction, length or function of the road were made in those cases based on the topography and past documents.

This opportunity to work with those from other institutions and disciplines (history, archaeology, architecture and so on), interact with strangers and negotiate with local officials has been much beneficial to me for future research and fieldwork. It also brought me a better understanding of the current situation of cultural heritage preservation in reality and prepared me with both practical and theoretical tools for further studies.



Measuring a surface slate of an ancient path for documenting



Resting by the river at a valley after marching in the mountains for two hours following the ancient path



A robbed tomb from the reign of Emperor Qianlong spotted along our way



Interviewing locals about the history and functions of this road



An abandoned Confucius' temple



Yangtze River's first Bend (長江第一灣)