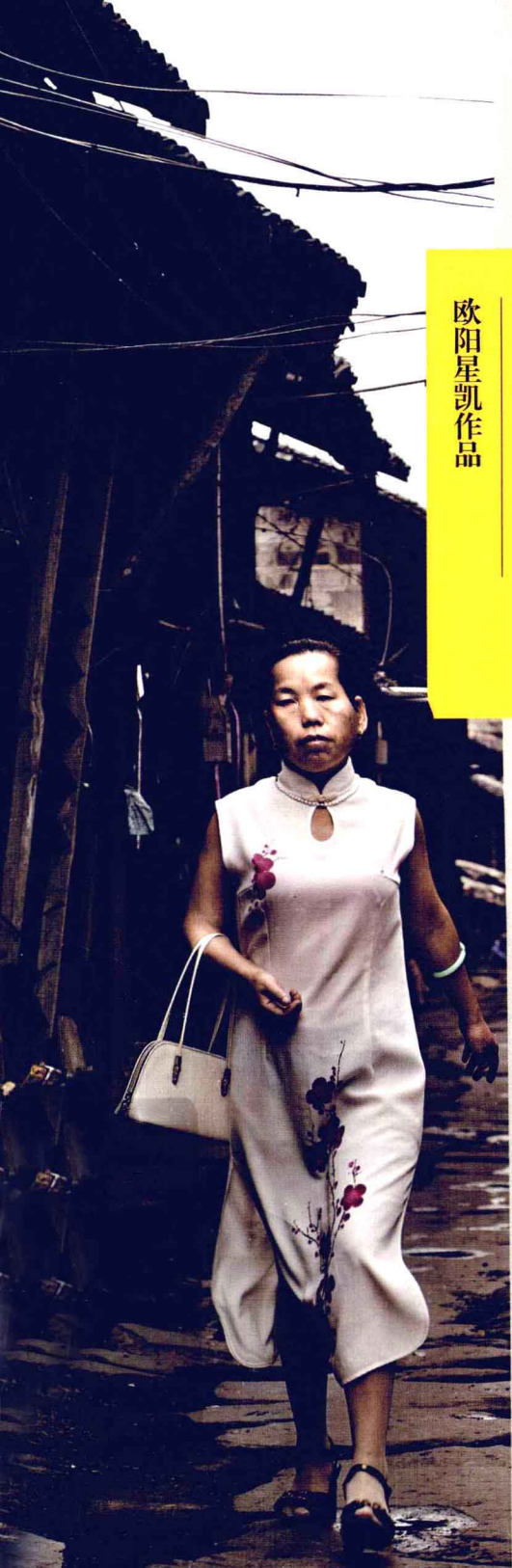




欧阳星凯作品

HONG JIANG:  
A CULTURAL SAMPLE  
标本洪江

洪江



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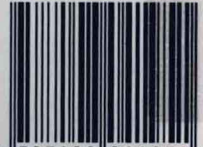
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许多老洪江人仍然居住在那些历经百年风雨的老窰子屋内，每天在这座顺着山势而建的小城里爬上爬下。这情景和发达都市的华堂高厦林立、交通车水马龙形成了鲜明的对比，洪江于是成为一个文化考古的标本。



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光绪十五年(1889)印制的洪江市区全景地图。该图体现了洪江古商城“七冲、八巷、九条街”的商城格局。

The panoramic map of downtown Hong Jiang printed in the 15<sup>th</sup> Year of the rule of the Qing Dynasty's Guangxu Emperor (1889). The map illustrates the structure of the ancient Trading Town of Hong Jiang, with "seven chongs, eight alleys, and nine streets."

# 洪江街市全境圖

光緒十五年己丑秋月

天柱歐陽鍾伯呂繪







## 标本洪江

地处湘西的洪江市，因其在沅水、巫水交汇的独特地理位置，在宋代开始就成了湘、滇、黔、桂、蜀五地物资交流的集散地。明清以来，因商业经济的繁荣，更成为“商贾骈集、货财辐辏、万屋鳞次、帆樯云聚”的西南重要商城。在古代交通不发达的条件下，水路运输是非常重要的。水运的特点是运货量大，以及可以沿着江河水系的流向达到四面八方。所以，水运是古代运输的“高速公路”和“国道”，大宗的货物往往是由水运完成。由江河构成的网络，就是古代的运输系统中的干线，沿河而串接分布的大小码头，则是这个运输网的端点和集散地，尤其是在物产丰富的大生产区和重要物产区的位置上。洪江城的地理位置就有这个特点。清末以来，中国的现代经济已见端倪。到民国初年，洪江码头达到它历史的鼎盛时期，货栈商号、钱庄银行、青楼酒肆将洪江挤得满满的，一时洪江成为湘西的“小南京”。最近几十年来，由于沈从文小说《边城》的缘故，湘西的凤凰古城名声传至海内外。上世纪80年代，电影导演凌子风又根据沈从文的小说把《边城》搬上银幕，凤凰再次声名大噪，给人们的印象仿佛民国期间湘西最热闹的城市是凤凰。其实真正的湘西重镇是洪江。沈从文个人的经历成就了凤凰今天的热闹，却掩盖了洪江在湘西历史上的地位，这不能不说是现代传播的魔力。

现代以来，传统的水运遭到新兴的更有效率的公路和铁路运输的冲击，水运渐渐从运输的主角变成现代运输方式的附庸。交通方式的转变，让许多曾经喧闹的码头重镇渐渐被历史遗忘，因为它们不再是新交通方式下的枢纽了。它们不但失去了功能上的作用，甚至还被新交通体系摒弃在外，由人们趋之若鹜的“福地”变成无人问津的偏僻之处。洪江恰好赶上了这一历史巨变的潮流。昔日商业流转枢纽的辉煌随着现代化的脚步而渐渐失落，就像一出流光溢彩的戏剧，渐渐拉上帷幕，最后曲终人散，归于落寂。无情的历史，兴衰无常，不过是一个流动的剧场。观众散了，只剩下看场子的人，还在回味着曾经的热闹，他们随着剧场的冷寂被世人遗忘，枯守着没落。

后来，商业的洪江被快速前行的现代化彻底遗忘了，只是成为大中华地图上一个并不显眼的地名标志。再后来，它被旁边一个因火车站而兴起的叫怀化的新兴城市所覆盖，成为这个城市下面的类似区镇的县级小市。现代化改变了地区兴衰的格局，将青春和荣誉赋予了更能带来财富的新式交通端点，作为文化的洪江也因此得以很好地保存。没有人再关注洪江，商人们走了，带走了繁荣，也带走了总是旋转的时间。一切都戛然而止，时钟似乎停止在大半个世纪以前。洪江由喧嚣转入平静，码头不再“帆樯云聚”，沅江又像千百年前那样静静地流淌，只有渔翁和两岸交通的渡船还能显示人世的活力。那些作为商业交易场所的商号、银行等房屋，因失去原有的功能，成为普通洪江人的起居场所，柴灶的烟火和街巷之中的孩童嬉戏之声也就成了洪江最基本的气息和声调。由于长期没有现代资本的关注，洪江目前还有相当一部分保持了一百多年前的城镇模样。虽然 1949 年之后社会主义建设的现代化改造对洪江也有所波及，但其能量上的局限，并未能真正改变洪江小城的基本格局。在老洪江格局之上的人们的生活方式也并无太大的变化，许多老洪江人仍然居住在这些历经百年风雨的老屋子屋内，每天在这些顺着山势而建的小城里爬上爬下。这情景和发达都市的华堂高厦林立、交通车水马龙形成了鲜明的对比，洪江于是成为一个文化考古的标本。



湖南摄影家欧阳星凯近年来一直以一种文化观察的眼光摄影洪江，记录了这座偶然幸存的小镇的建筑、人和他们的生活方式。值得重视的是，他的摄影不是简单的文献式的记录，也不是时下风行的那种夸张式的媒体报道摄影描述。欧阳星凯以一种温暖和平和的眼光来表述他对洪江和洪江人的印象。欧阳星凯在摄影中仔细地打量这一标本，他注意镜头中出现的各种能够真正反映洪江历史文化的细节，注意空间和人们之间的关系，注意构成洪江独特生活的那些带有历史色彩的生活物件。我们在他的摄影中，可以看到这座小城内上下起伏的道路，家庭中的灶台、门扉、防火的石质水缸以及门窗上悬挂的腊肉。欧阳星凯在铺垫这些生活场景时，紧紧抓住了人们在这样一个湘西小城中的各种生活样貌。老人、孩子、年轻夫妇，他们好像生活在过去的历史之中，和环境和谐地成为一体。他们仍然保持着这个环境下的文化习惯，年节的祭祀，婚丧典礼，邻里的交往，一切都和现代都市那种貌似开放却真正封闭的生活方式形成鲜明的对照。洪江在欧阳星凯的镜头中充满了人间生活的烟火气息。可以感受到，欧阳星凯的洪江摄影，是他在追忆他自己幼年生活所体验的生活印象，重温那段早已被现代生活所驱除的情感。欧阳星凯在对洪江的摄影中，同时潜意识地表达了自己对真正生活本质的评价。这个评价也是一种叹息，在现代化的滚滚红尘中显得那么无奈和绝望，因为洪江古城周边正在崛起的现代水泥丛林早晚要淹没这块目前还被遗忘的孤岛。

对一个历史文化遗存地区的摄影，是摄影家们热衷的一个拍摄方向。但是以摄影的方式将历史与现实真实地反映出来，并非是一件十分容易的事情。绝大多数的摄影人，都是利用现代摄影技术的便利，快速地对对象进行扫描式的短暂摄影，而且只注意那些吸引眼球的生活表征，并不耐心地去观察真正能反映生活本质特征的那些细节，比如人们在平静生活中的表情和交往细节，结果就会显得草率粗陋，甚至暴力。这种态度一定会让选题显得表面化和符号化。欧阳星凯在长达几年的洪江摄影中，也曾经历过这种阶段，但他的耐心和摸索让他获得了经验。他在与洪江的长期接触中，慢慢理解了洪江的生活，捕捉

到了洪江小城深厚绵长的韵味。现在那里的人们都十分熟悉他，也不再对他的镜头感到陌生和避讳，与他没有任何的距离感。这方便了欧阳星凯走近他们，让他的摄影从容不迫。状态的平和，给了欧阳星凯更多的观看机会。他也尽量采用温和平静的方式，以平稳端正的镜头感来摄影洪江的一切，避免了一般此类摄影的镜头暴力倾向。于是，我们在欧阳星凯的摄影中，看到了一个具有历史感的洪江和庄重尊严的洪江人群像。

无论今后的洪江古城是否会得到保护，今天的洪江和洪江人都会走进历史。现代社会的条件可以保持古城建筑的样貌，却无法保持今天洪江人的表情和生活方式。当今天的洪江在未来的历史中渐行渐远的时候，欧阳星凯所记录的今天的洪江，一定成为一个我们后代解读湘西历史的读本。他的这些摄影作品，就是一个历史的标本。



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**鲍昆** 1953年生，著名摄影家、视觉文化评论家、策展人。

## Hong Jiang: A Cultural Sample

Hong Jiang is located in Xiangxi at the confluence of the Yuan River and Wu River. It first became a commercial hub during the Song Dynasty (960-1022) for five provinces, Hunan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi and Hubei. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368-1911), it flourished and became one of the most important trading towns in southwestern China, a place where “business people all gathered, goods and wealth poured in like through spokes to a hub, houses were crowded like fish scales, and sails and masts were like clouds building up,” to quote a historical document. Because transportation infrastructure was still underdeveloped, water transportation dominated at the time because the well-connected river system could handle a large volume of goods. Therefore, the major rivers were like expressways and national routes which transported many commercial goods. This network of rivers was the main “road,” connected by ports of various sizes that functioned as the starting and ending points and also as hubs. This was especially true in large and important production areas like Hong Jiang. China’s modern economy began to emerge towards the end of the Qing Dynasty. In the beginning of the Republic of China (the early 1910s, which followed the Qing Dynasty), Hong Jiang reached its peak as a port city and was crowded with storehouses, businesses, banks, Qinglou (entertainment houses), and restaurants (which usually sold alcohol). It was called Xiangxi’s “Little Nanjing.” More recently Phoenix, an old town in Xiangxi, received widespread attention in China and abroad because of the novel *Bian Cheng* (The Bordering City) by Shen Congwen (a famous Chinese writer); and in the 1980s, director Ling Zifeng made a film based on *Bian Cheng*,



which increased the city's fame. Most people think that Phoenix was the city in Xiangxi that flourished the most during the Republic of China; in fact, at the time the most prominent town was Hong Jiang. The true historical importance of Hong Jiang has been overshadowed by Phoenix due in part to Shen Congwen's novel. We have to acknowledge the magic power exerted by modern media.

In modern times, the traditional mode of waterway has been overtaken by highways and railways, and now plays a supporting role in modern transportation system. This shift has meant that many port towns, which once flourished, are now forgotten by history, as they are now bypassed in the new transportation system. Abandoned, this former "fortune land" has become backward, attracting few to the region. Hong Jiang has been caught in the historical trend of dramatic changes. Its glory is fast fading under the unyielding march of modernization, just as in a show where, when the play ends, the moving lights and overflowing colors are turned off, the curtains slowly closes, the music stops and the crowd disappears, leaving just an empty theatre in lonely silence. Merciless history, filled with unpredictable ups and downs, is like a mobile theatre: after the audience leaves, only those who manage the theatre stay, lingering over the glorious moments that have disappeared. Forgotten by the world, they guard the declined glory of the abandoned theatre with little hope.

As time passes by, Hong Jiang's former status as commercial hub has been completely forgotten amidst the ever-quickenning pace of modernization. It is just the name of an obscure little town on the map of an immense China. As time continues to pass, it has been completely overshadowed by its neighboring city Huaihua, which has prospered because it boasts a new train station; Hong Jiang has ever since fallen under Huaihua's administration. Modernization has reshaped the regional landscapes of prosperity through the creation of new transportation hubs, but has also left Hong Jiang's rich culture intact. Hong Jiang gets no more attention. Its merchants left, along with the prosperity, and its time seems to have stopped at the time of more than half of a century ago. Hong Jiang's clamor is replaced by a calmness, without any "sails and masts gathering like clouds," and the Yuan River once again flows quietly as it did thousands of years ago, with only the fishermen and the ferry boats commuting between the two sides and offering a hint of human liveliness. The banking houses that used to host business deals are now residencies for the ordinary people in Hong Jiang and the smoke of firewood stoves and the clamor of children playing in the

streets and alleys form the basic life norm. Due to prolonged neglect by modern capital, the town mostly looks as it did over one hundred years ago. Though the post-1949 socialist modernization touched Hong Jiang, the impact was limited, creating no real changes to Hong Jiang's infrastructure and the old lifestyle. Many residents still live in the centuries old Yinzi Houses, which were built into the side of a mountain. This stands in stark contrast to newly modernized cities of tall buildings and clogged streets. Hong Jiang can thus be thought of as an "archaeological" site for studying traditional culture.

Photographer Ouyang Xingkai has spent the last few years photographing Hong Jiang through his cultural observational viewpoint. He has recorded the architecture, people and a way of life that have fortuitously survived to this day. His photographs are neither simple documentation nor those photo illustrations that are currently popular in glamorous media reporting, but rather his impression of the town and its people through a warm and peaceful observation. Through his lens, he carefully observes this "archaeological" sample, with exquisite attention to the details that truly capture the local history and culture, the relationship between space and people, and those objects that speak to Hong Jiang's unique history. His photographs depict the roads that wind through this little town, a stove in a household, a door, a water tank for fire prevention, home-cured meat hanging on a door or in windows. Ouyang Xingkai captures not only the environment in which the Hong Jiang people live, but also the various facets of life in this little town in Xiangxi. Time has stood still, with children, young couples and the elderly harmoniously integrated with this environment. They have maintained such cultural customs as festival ritual offerings, wedding ceremonies and funeral rites, and congenial bonds among neighbors. These attributes all stand in sharp contrast to modern cities, which appear open but are in fact closed. In Ouyang Xingkai's photos, Hong Jiang is full of ordinary living aspects in this world. We sense that Ouyang's photography is his way of retracing his childhood experiences and reliving those emotions that have long been driven out by modern life. In fact, Ouyang has also expressed his subconscious evaluation of the true essence of life with a sigh. So helpless and desperate in the "rolling red dust" (the clamorous worldly life) of modernization, sooner or later, the ancient town of Hong Jiang, a currently neglected "island", will be submerged by the modern concrete "forests" around it.

Photographing a region that retains historical and cultural elements is popular, but it is difficult indeed to use photography to accurately capture the essence of history and

reality. Most photographers take advantage of the convenience of modern technology to create some snapshots of objects, only glancing over the surface of life that appeals to the public, instead of patiently observing those details that reflect the essential attributes of life, such as people's expressions and interactions, and the results often tend to be rushed, rough, and even "rude." This attitude inevitably produces superficial and rigid photographs. Ouyang Xingkai himself experienced this during his years of photographing in Hong Jiang, but through trial and error, and with persistence, he gained valuable experience that would set his photographs apart from others. In his years of interacting with Hong Jiang, he gradually understood the town's life so that he has captured the profound subtlety of this small town. Now the residents there are all acquainted with him and no longer feel awkward or offended by his camera. The distance between subject and photographer thus bridged, Ouyang Xingkai was able to enter their lives without intrusion, hence creating more room to observe. He prefers smooth and peaceful photographing executed with a steady level shot to record everything about Hong Jiang, thus avoiding the "rude" tendency in photography. Through Ouyang Xingkai's lens we see Hong Jiang as a town with an important historical legacy and its people as a solemn and dignified group.

Regardless of whether or not the ancient Trading Town of Hong Jiang is protected, today's Hong Jiang and its people will become history. Modern technology may be able to preserve the look of the old architecture, but it cannot preserve the people's expressions and lifestyle. As today's Hong Jiang marches towards the future, further and further, Ouyang Xingkai's photographic records of Hong Jiang will certainly become significant material for future generations to understand Xiangxi's history. His photographs of Hong Jiang are historical records, indeed.

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**Bao Kun**, born in 1953, photographer,  
visual culture critic, and curator.