

# Chinese Bridges: Living Architecture From China's Past

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Bridges are essential to any society, providing a means to cross rivers, ravines, and other obstacles. In China, bridges have been built for centuries, and they have evolved into a unique form of architecture. Chinese bridges are not only functional, but they are also beautiful works of art.



## Chinese Bridges: Living Architecture From China's Past

by Ronald G. Knapp

★★★★☆ 4.9 out of 5

Language : English  
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Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 272 pages



This book is a comprehensive exploration of the history, design, and construction of Chinese bridges. With over 300 stunning photographs, it is a must-have for anyone interested in Chinese architecture or engineering.

## The History of Chinese Bridges

The earliest known Chinese bridges were built during the Shang dynasty (1600-1046 BC). These bridges were simple structures made of wood or stone. Over time, Chinese bridges became more elaborate, and they began to incorporate features such as arches, piers, and towers.

By the Song dynasty (960-1279), Chinese bridges had reached their peak of development. During this period, some of the most famous Chinese bridges were built, including the Zhaozhou Bridge, the Lugou Bridge, and the Wan'an Bridge.

## **The Design of Chinese Bridges**

Chinese bridges are typically designed with a single arch or a series of arches. The arches are usually made of stone or brick, and they are often decorated with carvings and other ornamentation. The piers and towers that support the arches are also often decorated, and they may be used as lookout points or for other purposes.

The design of Chinese bridges is often influenced by the surrounding landscape. For example, bridges that are built in mountainous areas may have steep arches and narrow spans, while bridges that are built in flat areas may have low arches and wide spans.

## **The Construction of Chinese Bridges**

Chinese bridges are built using a variety of techniques. The most common technique is to use stone or brick to build the arches and piers. The arches are typically built using a technique called voussoir construction, in which each stone is cut to fit perfectly with the next. The piers are typically built using a technique called rubble masonry, in which large blocks of stone are stacked together without the use of mortar.

Once the arches and piers are complete, the bridge deck is built. The bridge deck is typically made of wood or stone, and it may be covered with a layer of asphalt or concrete.

## **The Cultural Significance of Chinese Bridges**

Chinese bridges are more than just functional structures. They are also important cultural symbols. Bridges have been used in Chinese art and literature for centuries, and they often represent the connection between different worlds.

For example, the Zhaozhou Bridge is often seen as a symbol of the connection between the living and the dead. The Lugou Bridge is often seen as a symbol of the connection between China and the rest of the world. And the Wan'an Bridge is often seen as a symbol of the connection between the past and the present.

Chinese bridges are a testament to the ingenuity and creativity of the Chinese people. They are beautiful, functional, and culturally significant structures that have stood the test of time. This book is a comprehensive exploration of these amazing structures, and it is a must-have for anyone interested in Chinese architecture or engineering.



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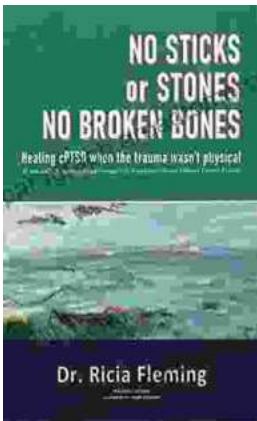
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