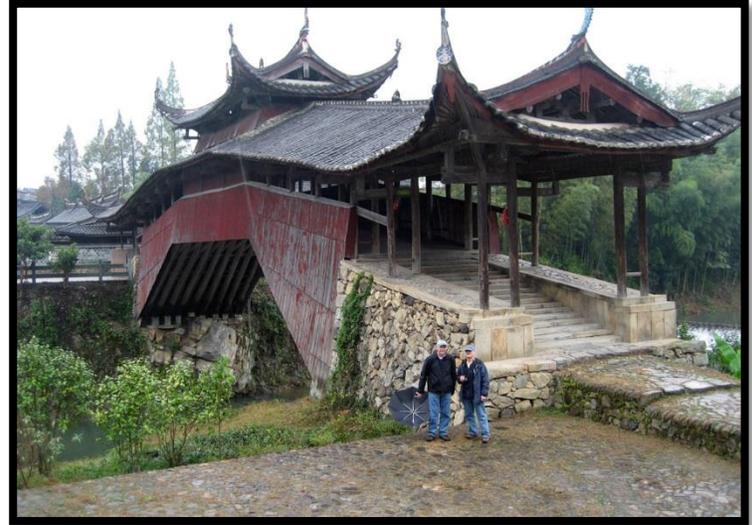


Nan Jackson and Vern Mesler were invited to attend the 2013 China TaiShun Covered Bridge Culture Seminar in Taishun County of Zhejiang Province, China.



Vern Mesler and Nan Jackson at the Beijian Bridge in Sixi China



Mesler and David Simmons at the Xidong Bridge in Sixi China



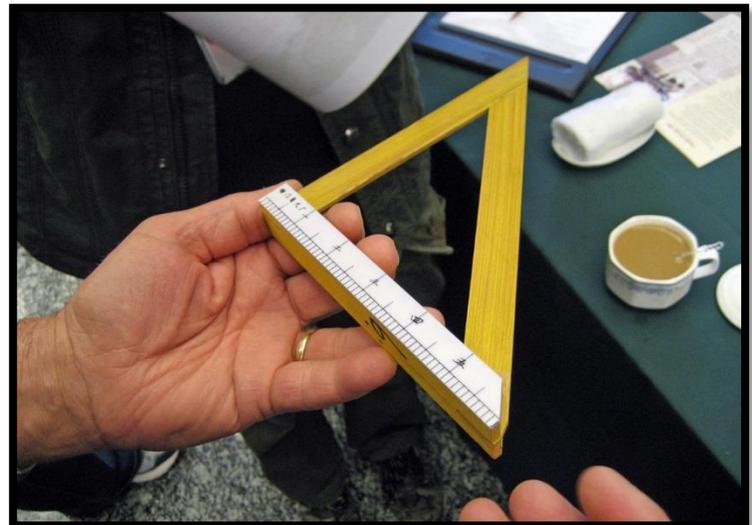
Liu Yan, an architectural historian from the Technical University of Munich, translates Mesler's remarks (see text below).



Mesler presents Zhong Xiaobo, President of the Wenzhou Covered Bridge Culture Society, with wrought iron from an 1888 Michigan bridge.



Liu Yan describes tools used in the construction of China's covered timber arch bridges.



Liu Yan presents Mesler with a finely crafted wood square of the type used in the construction of timber arch bridges.

Remarks made by Vern Mesler at the Taishun Covered Bridge Culture Seminar

*I'm a craftsman and have worked in iron and steel for over fifty years, the last eighteen years in the preservation of historic metal truss bridges. Through my work training and leading a crew in the restoration of five historic iron and steel truss bridges for the Calhoun County Historic Bridge Park in Calhoun County Michigan, I've developed a greater appreciation for the work of a craftsman.*

*Books are written about and by the great engineers who design bridges and buildings, but few books are written about the people who built these structures, the individual craftsmen and their skills with tools. The craftsmen's words are in the structure itself, in the wood they select, cut, and fabricate into structures that can last for centuries.*

*Our delegation led by David Simmons from the United States has had the opportunity to read the words of those craftsmen who built the magnificent handcrafted TaiShun bridges.*

*My wife, Nan Jackson, and I would like to show our appreciation for those responsible for making it possible to attend the annual China TaiShun Covered Bridge Culture Tourism Festival. I have brought wrought iron from the Maple Rapids Road Bridge, a Pratt through truss built by the Variety Iron Works, Cleveland, Ohio, in 1888. It spanned the Maple Rapids River in Clinton County, Michigan, and we lost this wrought truss bridge to spring flooding this year.*

*These wrought iron gifts for you were prepared by a craftsman with metal cutting equipment he built at his shop in Michigan; they were polished by a young lady who works as the welding lab technician at Lansing Community College, in Lansing, Michigan, while completing her degree in welding.*