



#8656

## BRIDGE OF WINDS

Grade Levels: 7-12

58 minutes

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### DESCRIPTION

The Lisu people of Yunnan province in China live in a village carved out of a steep mountain gorge. Their only bridge to the outside world is a rope and pulley attached to a cable which crosses a raging river. One young family typifies their hard, cyclical, yet cheerful existence. Shows their family life, housing, terrace farming, market, school, and communal support.

### ACADEMIC STANDARDS

#### Subject Area: Geography

- ◆ Standard: Understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics
  - Benchmark: Knows the basic components of culture
  - Benchmark: Knows the similarities and differences in characteristics of culture in different regions
  - Benchmark: Understands cultural change

### INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To examine the lives of the Lisu people in the Yunnan province of China.
2. To depict one families life within the Lisu village.
3. To introduce life in another culture.

### VOCABULARY

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. cable      | 8. paddy     |
| 2. cultivate  | 9. primeval  |
| 3. gorge      | 10. province |
| 4. harvest    | 11. pulley   |
| 5. intertwine | 12. remote   |
| 6. nickname   | 13. slope    |
| 7. nomad      | 14. traverse |



## BEFORE SHOWING

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1. Locate the following places on a map of Asia: China, the Yunnan province of China, Tibet, the Nuijang River, and the Shidi village.
2. Discuss what a culture consists of by describing the local culture. Consider: transportation, housing, food, gender roles, family life, work, shopping and neighborhood.

## AFTER SHOWING

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### Discussion Items and Questions

1. Discuss the bridge of winds.
  - a. How is the bridge of winds literally a lifeline?
  - b. Why do villagers cross the bridge of winds?
  - c. What is the bridge of winds?
  - d. How do villagers use the bridge of winds?
  - e. How is cargo transported? What kind of cargo is transported?
  - f. Why is part of the trip a slide while part of the trip requires hand over hand strength?
  - g. How has the bridge changed over time?
  - h. What do the villagers do after the rain stops? Why is this critical to them and the bridge?
  - i. Why is the bridge more precious than the path?
2. Discuss the Shidi village.
  - a. What did the Lisu people do prior to establishing the village three centuries ago?
  - b. What is the population in the village?
  - c. What is the terrain like around the village?
  - d. What is the value of the houses sticking out of the slope?
  - e. What is the most important aspect of the daily routine?
  - f. How is each family in the village differentiated?
  - g. How is this a harsh and unpredictable area to live?
  - h. How must the villagers battle nature?
  - i. What does a morning look like in the village?
  - j. How are houses constructed?
  - k. Why is bamboo an essential part of daily life?
  - l. What is the significance of cultivation of bamboo by the villagers?
  - m. Why has it taken the Lisu people centuries to develop this land? How have they built the village, paths, water supply system and fields?
  - n. Why is the October rice harvest the most enjoyable season to the villagers?
  - o. What role does electricity play in village life?
  - p. What marks the border between autumn and winter in the Shidi village?
  - q. How are their lives a blend of traditional and modern life?
  - r. Why is it good if the mountain is covered in deep snow?
3. Discuss Yemosa



- a. Why is his nickname Monkey?
  - b. Why are the soles of his feet hard as the sole of shoes?
  - c. How has having the run of the forest all of his life benefited him?
  - d. Why does he love to live in the Shidi village?
  - e. Where is he really in his element?
  - f. What is his most important tool?
  - g. How does he weave a bamboo basket?
  - h. Why was the October rice harvest not good for Yemosa? Why is he the last to complete harvesting his rice crop?
  - i. Why must he cut down trees this year?
  - j. What is his chief ambition?
  - k. What will Yemosa have to do to get a cow?
4. Discuss the family's corn harvest.
    - a. Why are his cornfields a greater challenge?
    - b. What is the typical primary use of corn?
    - c. How is corn harvested?
    - d. What's wrong with the corn harvest?
    - e. Why will the family eat most of the harvest this year?
    - f. How does this year's harvest compare with previous years' harvests?
  5. Discuss Nachuhei, his wife.
    - a. What does breakfast preparation include?
    - b. Why did she come to live in this house?
    - c. How old is she in relation to her husband?
    - d. What are her roles in their household?
    - e. How long had she known Yemosa before marrying him?
  6. Discuss the children, Apo and Ado.
    - a. In what ways do the children imitate their father?
    - b. In what ways are the children's most important teachers their father, grandfather, mother and the mountain?
  7. Discuss Jimeishang, the grandfather.
    - a. How did he live prior to Nachuhei and Yemosa's marriage?
    - b. Why may Jimeishang make the following comments regarding his grandson, Yemosa?
      - 1) "Still like a child."
      - 2) "Just after he got married all he thought about was himself."
  8. Discuss the family's home and life.
    - a. What is grown in the family garden?
    - b. What is the purpose of the platform next to their house?
    - c. Why does the family spend their evening shelling polonian nuts?
    - d. How are straw and wood transported on the mountain?
    - e. How much clothing does the family own?
  9. Discuss food for the Lisu's.
    - a. What must a person know before they eat nuts and roots from the forest?

- b. How does cold, moisture, pigs and rodents influence the success of the village rice crop?
10. Discuss the village's religious beliefs.
    - a. What is the Lisu creation story? Why was earth made?
    - b. How does it explain the gorge?
  11. Discuss how the family earns a living.
  12. Discuss the Shidi village's school.
    - a. How does the schoolteacher get to work?
    - b. What is unusual about the language of instruction in the school?
    - c. How does the Lisu school compare with the one room school's of early America?
    - d. What do the Lisu children do after school?
  13. Discuss the showing of a video in the village.
    - a. Why is the showing of the video such a special event?
    - b. How is the video brought in and shown?
    - c. What is included in the video? What kind of response do the Lisu have to the video?
  14. Discuss quotes from the video.
    - a. Each happiness is cultivated in its time.
    - b. You cannot live without salt. Neither can you live without sadness.
    - c. I sweat so we can live. We young men must work hard to live.
    - d. After the corn harvest: "Heaven has given us this food. We must be grateful."
    - e. I like being kind to my neighbors and family.
    - f. We enjoy each day together. That makes us happy.
  15. Discuss the hunt for sweet maple.
    - a. Why must Yemosa cut down a tree earlier than usual this year?
    - b. Why does he sharpen his treasured knife carefully before leaving?
    - c. Why are they going to the forest above the clouds? What difficulty do they have in getting there?
    - d. Why is the sweet maple scarce?
    - e. How is the tree cut down? What problems do they have? What danger was involved?
    - f. How does Yemosa's monkey nickname come in handy?
    - g. Why do the men chop the wood into rectangular blocks on the spot? Why do they cut them into one meter sections?
    - h. Why do the men not use gas operated chain saws?
    - i. What skills do the three men display?
    - j. Why is sweet maple so commercially valuable?
  16. Discuss Yemosa and Nachuhei's trip to town.
    - a. What are typical sights, sounds and smells in the market area?
    - b. What are reasons to go to town?
    - c. What are the dangers of traveling to market in rainy weather?
    - d. Why has Nachuhei not been to town in five years?
    - e. How is the market a mixture of traditional and modern?

## Applications and Activities

1. Compare local life with life in a Shidi village. Consider the following: mornings, terrain, lifestyle, creation beliefs, transportation, food, clothing, shelter, family life and gender roles.
2. Compare the Lisu creation story with creation stories from other religions and cultures.
3. Imagine living with the Lisu people. Debate life in the Shidi village.
  - a. What would be the pros? The cons?
  - b. What adjustments would have to be made?
4. Write a fictionalized account of a first crossing over the bridge of winds. Include information about the process of crossing, feelings and physical sensations.
5. Devise another means of crossing the gorge. Write editorials encouraging the villagers to make a change in their means of transportation, and staying with the status quo.
6. Imagine how the introduction of computers might change life in the Shidi village. Write a newspaper account of the arrival of the first computers and computer literate Lisu.
7. Create a video of local life. Consider family life, shopping, cooking, earning a living, entertainment, gender roles and home life.
8. Investigate anthropological studies.
  - a. How does the presence of an investigator influence a situation that is being studied?
  - b. Could the presence of the cameraman have influenced the family featured in the video?
  - c. What is participant-observation? How does it differ from the way the video was made?
  - d. What nationality were the people on the production crew of the video? How do racial, cultural and gender stereotypes influence an anthropological study?

## RELATED RESOURCES

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### Captioned Media Program

- China: A History #2366



## World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and “kid-safe” sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **ASIAN WWW VIRTUAL LIBRARY**

<http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVL-AsianStudies.html>

Comprehensive and fully searchable with an alphabetical and categorical browsing.

- **WORLD HISTORY: HYPER HISTORY**

<http://www.hyperhistory.com>

HyperHistory presents 3,000 years of world history with a combination of colorful graphics, lifelines, timelines, and maps.

- **ASK ASIA**

<http://www.askasia.org/>

Includes specific information geared for students and teachers with an incredible overview of Asia.

- **E-CONFLICT WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA  
COUNTRY INFORMATION**

<http://www.emulateme.com/>

Allows selection of a country to link with information regarding the geography, flag, history and current information.

