

Kaiping Diaolou and Villages (China)

No 1112

*Official name as proposed
by the State Party:*

Kaiping Diaolou and Villages

Location:

Guangdong Province

Brief description:

The Diaolou, or multi-storied defensive villages houses of Kaiping, mainly constructed in the 1920s and 1930s, display a complex and flamboyant fusion of Chinese and Western structural and decorative forms, and reflect the significant role played by émigré Kaiping people in the development of several countries in South Asia, Australasia, and North America, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the close links between overseas Kaiping and their ancestral homes.

The four selected groups of Diaolou in their landscape represent some 1,800 remaining tower houses still surviving in their village settings, reflecting the culmination of almost five centuries of tower-house building and still strong links between Kaiping and the Chinese Diaspora.

Category of property:

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of several *sites*.

1. BASIC DATA

Included in the Tentative List: 31 January 2002

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination: No

*Date received by the
World Heritage Centre:* 13 January 2006

Background: This is a new nomination.

Consultations: ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committees on Vernacular Architecture and Historic Towns and Villages.

Literature consulted (selection):

Hu Shujiong, translated Shirley Xie, *Kaiping Diaolou*, Beijing 2002

Lung, David, *Chinese Traditional Vernacular Architecture*, Hong Kong, 1991

Knapp, Ronald, *Chinese Houses: The Architectural Heritage Of A Nation*, 2005

Technical Evaluation Mission: 15-17 September 2006

*Additional information requested and received from the
State Party:* None

*Date of ICOMOS approval
of this report:* 21 January 2007

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

Kaiping lies in the southern part of Guangdong Province, south-west of Guangzhou, near to the coast. The undulating landscape of many hills and low mountains is well watered by rivers flowing into the wide Pearl River Delta to the east. The warm tropical monsoon climate and good soil encourage prosperous mixed farming with two rice harvests a year on the low ground and ample pasture for animals on the hills. In between are the Kaiping villages with Diaolou houses mostly strung along parallel streets. This comparatively prosperous area has for many centuries attracted bandits from the north and it was as a defence against these intruders that farmers began to construct fortified tower houses, some individual, some communal, during the Ming Dynasty. The final development of these towers was in the 1920s and 1930s when people from Kaiping, who had migrated to South Asia, Australia or North America, prospered and returned to build towers which reflected their wealth and connections. Built of reinforced concrete, these latest towers display a complex and flamboyant fusion of Chinese and 'Western' structural and decorative forms – all set within traditional spatial arrangements of the villages – and were built as much for comfortable living as for defence. Today in most villages the farming community has relatives living overseas and many of the Diaolou are looked after by caretakers for absentee owners.

The villages consist of groups of scattered buildings, mostly aligned along parallel lanes and with formal entrance gates. Immediately outside the gates are areas for communal activity such as rice drying. Usually in line with Feng Shui principles, the villages have a pond or river in front and are fringed by bamboo groves. Within the village, in accordance with a traditional saying 'to the right an ancestral shrine, to the left a shrine to the earth gods', the villages usually have a hall for worship of the ancestors on one side of the village and on the other an altar to the local gods of grain and fertility.

Beyond the bamboo groves on the slightly lower ground are the rice paddy fields with tracks and roads running through and above lightly wooded hills providing grazing for livestock.

Towers take three forms: communal towers built by several families and used as temporary refuge, of which 473 remain; residential towers built by individual rich families and used as residences and for defence, of which 1,149 survive; and watch towers, the latest development, which account for 221 of the towers.

Towers are built of stone, pise (compressed earth), brick or concrete. The stone construction, of field or dressed stone laid in lime mortar, is rare and found in only 10 towers. Pise, an ancient and widespread technique in China where

pounded earth mixed with ash and river gravel and bound with a type of sugar or glutinous rice paste was laid in courses, is extant in 100 towers. Bricks of various types – red Ming Dynasty bricks, blue from the Qing Dynasty and early republican period and imported red bricks – are found in 249 towers. The most common building material is concrete, used in 1,474 towers. The stone and pise towers have the simplest forms. The use of bricks allowed the development of complex window openings and rounded corner turrets, while the full potential of cement and concrete is displayed in the highly complex forms of the latest towers with their arcades, balustrades, stucco decoration and occasional domes.

The nomination is a serial nomination consisting of four properties that together represent some 1,800 tower houses extant in the area. Each of the properties consists of one or more Diaolou surrounded by village houses. The properties have been chosen to reflect the various types of construction and historical development of the Diaolou, for the completeness of their village settings, for their furnishings and because they have the full support of the village communities. In the nomination details are mainly provided of the Diaolou buildings. The property has been nominated as a cultural landscape.

The nominated properties are:

- Sanmenli Village of 14ha with a Buffer Zone of 691ha;
- Zili Village & the Fang Clan Watch Tower of 252ha with a Buffer Zone of 988ha;
- Majianlong Village Cluster of 103ha with a Buffer Zone of 417ha;
- Jinjiangli Village of 61ha with a Buffer Zone of 584ha.

The boundaries are marked by permanent boundary stones.

These properties are considered in turn:

Sanmenli Village

This village is one of the oldest settlements in the area and reflects the longstanding development of the Guan clan for over 450 years. In contrast to the other villages, the lanes within are narrow and winding and run at right angles to the route in, to deflect bad luck moving straight through the village. Only one Diaolou remains, Yinglong Lou within a settlement of 186 homesteads. Originally built in the reign of the Jiajing Emperor (1522-1566), of red brick and two stories high, a third story of blue brick was added to Yinglong Lou in 1920. It is a plain traditional, defensive structure. Many of the single village houses (around 60%) surrounding the Diaolou were rebuilt with two storeys in the 1980s when the overseas Chinese owners were encouraged to return to help build up the 'new economy'.

Zili Village & the Fang Clan Watch Tower

The village consists of three separate sub-villages, constructed between 1821 and 1920. There is a cluster of nine Diaolou and a group of six western style villas (lower and simpler version of the towers). The remainder of the

houses are single storey of blue brick with tiled roofs, laid out mostly in what is known as 'three-sessions-two-gates' plan. Overall there are 60 households. Both the tower houses and the low village houses are built in rows amongst the paddy fields.

The Diaolou are:

- Longshenglou (Worthy of Dragons Tower);
- Yunhuan Lou (Illusory Clouds Tower);
- Zhulinlou (Bamboo Forest Tower);
- Zhenanlou (Protecting Peace Tower);
- Mingshi Lou (Inscribed Stone Tower);
- Anlu (Peaceful Cottage);
- Yinonglou (Leisurely Farming Tower);
- Qianjulou (The World Lives in Peace Tower);
- Juanlou (Peaceful Life Tower).

They were mostly built around the same time, in the 1920s, and in similar circumstances, their owners being prosperous émigrés from Malaya, Chicago, and elsewhere returning to their roots. Although differing in decorative detail, the Diaolou are all built of reinforced concrete and are similar in concept, of five or six storeys, with a ballustraded terrace at low level, and arcaded loggias at the top level to catch the breeze, and often housing an ancestral shrine. At Mingshi Lou, the upper floors are particularly ornate with the ancestral room carved and gilded with images representing traditional cultural values, while the architectural detail incorporates half-enclosed turrets and pavilions decorated with Ionic columns and green glass.

Several of the Diaolou contain well preserved original furniture and fittings as well as ephemera dating from the time of their construction, altogether presenting a very complete picture of the success and aspirations of returning Kaiping émigrés.

Around 1.5km south of the village on a hill is the Fang Clan Watch Tower built communally by the farmers from Zili and several other villages in 1920. The slender five storey concrete tower, which rises to an arched loggia surmounted by a domed pavilion, is a landmark for the surrounding area. It was fitted with searchlights and a siren and manned by an armed militia group, contributed to by each of the villages; their guns are still in the tower.

Majianlong Village Cluster

This cluster consists of five separate villages, Yong'an, Nan'an, Hedong, Qinglin and Longjiang, all alongside the Tanjiang River and fringed on three sides by bamboo groves. They were constructed between the 17th century and the early 20th century. Together they have 176 homesteads housing people of the Huang and Guan clans. When the area was first settled the villagers employed a Feng Shui geomancer to establish the most auspicious

sites. The villages all have similar grid plan layout and include ancestral halls, ponds, banyan trees, gatehouses and communal drying grounds. The one storey village houses are of three-session-two-gates plan and constructed in blue brick with tile roofs, some of which have boat-shaped gables and dragon's back or phoenix-crest ridges (tilting upwards at either end). Although the street facades of the houses are constructed to a uniform plan, under the eaves are stucco panels of birds, animals, flowers and emblems of the Eight Immortals and below brightly painted calligraphic paintings, which reflect the style of individual owners.

There are seven Diaolou, including a communal watchtower and eight villas (of three to four storeys).

The Diaolou are:

- Tianlu Lou (Heavenly Success Tower);
- Baoanlou (Preserve Peace Tower);
- Huianlou (Gracious Peace Tower);
- Qinglin Nanmenlou (Tower at South gate of Qinglin);
- Qinglin Beimenlou (Tower at the North Gate of Qinglin);
- Baozhanlou (Defending Peace Tower);
- Hedonglou (East of River Tower, Hedong).

The architectural details are very similar to towers in other villages with stucco panels, cantilevered balconies, arcaded loggias and small domed pavilions crowning the tops. Many of the Diaolou in this cluster have traces of a red ochre paint finish to the smooth concrete surfaces and traces of multicoloured paint on the stucco panels. Several of the Diaolou have contemporary furnishings.

The Tianlu Lou tower was built by 29 households in 1925. It is seven storeys high and the lower five floors contain 29 small rooms, one for each contributing household. In 1936, 1965 and 1968 disastrous floods engulfed the surrounding villages, but their households survived in the safety of this tower.

Jinjiangli Village

The village is sited on a small rise near to the Tanjiang River. It was founded by the Huang clan in the Qing Dynasty and laid out to an agreed grid plan. It houses 48 households. There are two entrances to the village, to the east and west, guarded by gatehouses, and the whole is surrounded by groves of bamboo. There are three Diaolou sited in a line amidst the bamboo woods, their upper storeys visible above the green fronds of bamboo.

The Diaolou are:

- Ruishi Lou;
- Shengfeng Lou (Tower Reaching the Heights);
- Jinjiang Lou (Embroidered River Tower).

The Jinjiang Lou was a communal tower built by the villagers with the support of the overseas Chinese community. It is of five storeys with a cantilevered balcony at the top supported by caryatid figures. The Shengfeng tower was designed by a French architect in 1919 and has corner pavilions in 17th century European Baroque style and exterior walls finished in a 'French Blue' colour. The Ruishi Lou tower is of nine stories and the tallest tower in the nominated property. All the material used in its construction was imported from Hong Kong. It is a western style building ornamented with Chinese stucco work and its spacious living quarters were furnished with 19th century Guangdong style furniture which still survives.

History and development

In the Han period (255BC-220AD) Han people from the Central Plains of China began to move into the area along the rivers, and to frequent heavy floods, villagers began to construct fortified towers, known as Diaolou. An example is Yinglong Lou in Sanmenli Village. Following the creation of the Kaiping County in 1649, the security of the area greatly improved and few Diaolou were constructed in the Qing Dynasty: Kaiping means 'Beginning of Peace'.

From the 16th century, in response to increasing raids by bandits from the north coming into the area along the rivers, and to frequent heavy floods, villagers began to construct fortified towers, known as Diaolou. An example is Yinglong Lou in Sanmenli Village. Following the creation of the Kaiping County in 1649, the security of the area greatly improved and few Diaolou were constructed in the Qing Dynasty: Kaiping means 'Beginning of Peace'.

From the mid 16th century, many villagers began to trade from the nearby coast, sailing in wooden junks to south-east Asia. In 1839 a poor farmer left his village and travelled to America. This was the start of a large migration of people drawn on the one hand by work on gold-fields and railroads, and prompted on the other by an increasingly difficult situation at home, brought about by warfare against Hakka migrants from the north and an increase in population which had led to food shortages. Many thousands of Kaiping villagers left the area, travelling to Macao and Hong Kong and then on to USA, Canada or Australia. In North America the immigrants had to take jobs involving hard manual labour. Nevertheless by the end of the 19th century the Chinese community had begun to amass savings, and after the first World War, with rapid economic expansion in many countries, the fortunes of the overseas Chinese steadily improved. What they did not believe they had achieved however, was social recognition for their input into the expansion of the countries they had chosen to live in. Their dreams came to be associated with contributing to the wellbeing of their ancestral villages or returning to live there, and many did just that building conspicuous tower houses.

The influx of wealthy people attracted the attention of the bandits from the north who raided, robbed and kidnapped. Between 1912 and 1930, 71 incidents of banditry were recorded. The new houses needed to be built as defensive towers. The overseas Chinese also contributed to the construction of communal towers and watchtowers in most of the villages. Of the 1833 Diaolou in Kaiping, 1648 were built between 1900 and 1931, just under 90% of the total. In the same period most of the villages were built or rebuilt. In the short space of 30 years the rural landscape of

Kaiping was completely transformed with funds from overseas Chinese.

The Depression of the 1930s, and the war against Japan and the Pacific war of the 1940s brought development to a halt. Between 1943 and 1947 immigration control in the USA and Canada was abolished with the result that many Chinese moved back to North America. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, banditry was halted and flood mitigation measures were introduced: the role of the Diaolou disappeared. In the 1980s following the re-opening of China, many villagers moved away. Now many Diaolou are empty, cared for by caretakers, but still regarded by overseas Chinese as their spiritual home to which they return on family occasions or remit money for prayers to be said to their ancestors. Some still contain all their original furniture and fittings.

The surrounding villages and farmland are still part of an active rural economy. The village houses, rice fields, bamboo groves and surrounding grazed hills reflecting rural landscape patterns and practices that may have persisted for over a millennia.

3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Integrity and Authenticity

Integrity

The wholeness and intactness of the nominated properties are evident insofar as all the elements that express their values are still in place; the size of each of the properties is adequate as the features and processes that convey the significance are fully represented in the towers and their surrounding villages of small houses and farmland.

The nominated Diaolou display well how the returning Chinese displayed their wealth, as well as their allegiance to their home villages, through constructing towers near village houses in a style that reflected both local and Western traditions in a highly flamboyant way. All these elements are present in the nominated property in a highly legible way.

Authenticity

The nominated Diaolou, their surrounding village houses, and the agricultural landscape are all authentic, apart from certain houses in Sanmenli Village. There, only 40% of the original, single-storey, vernacular village houses remain (estimated figure given by the State Party). 60% of the houses were rebuilt with two storeys in the 1980s when the Overseas Chinese owners were encouraged to return to help build up the "New Economy". In terms of colour and materials the new houses blend with the environment, but they are built of modern material and higher than their older neighbours. Generally, the new houses have flat roofs, whilst the single-storey houses have pitched gable roofs.

Although it could be argued that this continues the tradition of expatriate Chinese returning to their homeland and building new, large houses, ICOMOS does not

considers that the houses rebuilt in the 1980s in Sanmenli village demonstrate exceptional qualities.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions for integrity and authenticity of the nominated property are met.

Comparative analysis

The analysis in the nomination dossier considers examples of western style buildings in China, such as the Bund in Shanghai, which are entirely western in concept, and are quite separate from traditional life. In rural areas there are other examples of returning Chinese constructing houses for display, but outside Kaiping, the houses reflect more closely Chinese traditions, being built by people returning from other parts of South East Asia. The Diaolou of Kaiping are unique in being a fusion of Chinese and Western forms from North America and in being built as a continuation of a tower building tradition.

As the nomination dossier points out there are tower houses in many parts of the world, some of which are on the World Heritage List such as San Gimignano, Italy, and parts of Svaneti, Georgia, and many others in China which are not, such as those of the Qiang in Sichuan. However what unites all of these is only the fact that they are towers: their social and economic functions were completely different from each other and from the Kaiping towers.

ICOMOS considers that a case has been made for the exceptional nature of the Diaolou towers as representing the high point of western influence on Chinese traditional architecture of which there are no other comparators.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value

The Outstanding Universal Value of the Diaolou and Villages is said by the State Party to be stem from how the Diaolou:

- represent a charming and fascinating case of development in which different cultures cross-fertilise into a new harmonious ensemble, in a rural countryside, without outside pressure or urban influence;
- demonstrate a confluence of Chinese and overseas cultures;
- form a harmonious whole with the surrounding countryside;
- are a unique example of cultural fusion in construction, planning, land use and landscape design.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The Diaolou are nominated on the basis of criteria ii, iii, iv and v.

Criterion ii: The Diaolou undoubtedly represent in dramatic physical terms an important interchange of

human values - architectural styles brought back from North America by returning Chinese and fused with local rural traditions - within a particular cultural area of the world.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

Criterion iii: The building of defensive towers was a local tradition in the Kaiping areas since Ming times in response to local banditry. The nominated Diaolou represent the final flourishing of this tradition, in which the conspicuous wealth of the returning Chinese contributed to the spread of banditry and their towers were an extreme response.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

Criterion iv: The main towers and their settings, through their flamboyant display of wealth, are a type of building that reflects the significant role played by émigré Kaiping people in the development of several countries in South Asia, Australasia, and North America, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the continuing links between the Kaiping community and Chinese communities in these parts of the world.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

Criterion v: Although the Diaolou were built within traditional villages and are still at the heart of an agricultural landscape that displays long-standing traditions of land management and spatial organisation, their construction in a relatively short time frame did not lead to any new interaction between people and their environment. ICOMOS considers that the value of the towers lies in their architectural structure and stylistic display and that this is enhanced by their visually rural setting.

ICOMOS does not consider that the nominated property is a cultural landscape of outstanding quality or indeed that it is a complete cultural landscape (for reasons outlined below).

ICOMOS does not consider that this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated and that the nominated property meets criteria ii, iii and iv.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

Impact of climate change

Although not mentioned in the dossier, the agricultural landscape around the Diaolou is vulnerable to climate change – either through floods, droughts or more extreme changes in temperature.

Risk preparedness

Natural disasters such as typhoons, floods and lightning strikes are not uncommon in the area. In 1951 the City Government of Kaiping established the “Three Anti” Supervisory Office for defending the area against the three

threats of floods, typhoons and overflow of water from dams. This involved all Government departments. In the intervening years, six reservoirs have been constructed to mitigate flooding and improve irrigation. In 2002 a lightning protection plan was produced by the Kaiping Protection and Management Office of Diaolou and Villages in collaboration with other departments to protect the Diaolou.

Tourism

A tourism development plan has been prepared and pilot studies undertaken in some villages under which Diaolou have been opened to a restricted number of visitors. ICOMOS considers that the full impact of visitors could be difficult to manage once the properties become better known. The value of the Diaolou lies in the particularly untouched nature of their interiors and the current policy is to protect their faded colours as found. Changes in humidity, brought about by large numbers of visitors, and light levels through opening up the towers more than at present, could bring undesirable changes. ICOMOS considers that more work is needed on the carrying capacity of the buildings and of ways of restricting numbers at any one time as well on preventative conservation.

Cement construction

As mentioned below, the massed concrete construction could cause future problems and it is recommended that approaches are developed in advance of being needed.

Development in the landscape

The setting of the selected properties extends beyond the buffer zones to the surrounding agricultural landscape and hills. Both of these could become vulnerable to new development if agricultural land becomes available for building. ICOMOS considers that the protection of this setting should be given high priority.

ICOMOS considers that preventative measures should be reinforced to address the main threats from decay, uncontrolled tourism and development.

5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The boundaries of the nominated properties encompass Diaolou, villages and parts of the surrounding agricultural landscape. ICOMOS considers that these boundaries are adequate to protect the Diaolou as monuments in their immediate setting.

ICOMOS does not consider that the nominated property is a cultural landscape. The agricultural landscape that supported the Diaolou and continues to support the villages extends beyond the buffer zone and includes further rice fields and grazing in the hills. Each of the villages has a defined boundary which separates it socially and economically from its neighbours. To be considered as a cultural landscape, a much larger area would need to be nominated, including the key aspects of the farming system

and sufficient villages to provide a comprehensive and visually cohesive whole.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the core and buffer zone are adequate to protect the Diaolou as monuments in their immediate setting.

Ownership

The land in the nominated area is owned by the Government. The traditional buildings – Diaolou, villas and village houses – are owned privately.

Protection

Legal Protection

Since 2001, all the Diaolou are protected as national monuments under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Relics, 1982 and also covered by Provincial and Municipal Regulations. This protection also extends to cover all contemporary furniture, furnishings, books, archives and ephemera within the buildings that have commemorative, educational or historical value.

The Diaolou and their surrounding villages are protected under Regulations on Local Customs of Cultural Heritage Protection Zones. These regulations are established by the villagers jointly for common endorsement and observance, and agreed by voting at public meetings. These regulations were established in 2003 for each of the villages. They put all buildings, flood defence facilities, trees, bamboo and grassland under protection and official management of village leaders. Management arrangements for all communal elements of the landscape are to be put in place. Any rebuilding or alteration to buildings needs permission in advance and must comply with agreed design guidance. Non-compliance may bring fines or the destruction of buildings.

The nominated areas are surrounded by buffer zones which include large areas of agricultural landscape. The buffer zone does not however extend to cover what might be considered the entire setting of the Diaolou towers which would include the hills surrounding some of the villages which provide forests and grazing for animals. The wider visual setting of the villages (acknowledged in the nomination as being as beautiful as a painting) thus remains to some extent vulnerable. (see discussion on cultural landscape below)

ICOMOS considers that the protective measures for the property are adequate but that consideration should be given to providing protection for the wider visual setting of the Diaolou and their surrounding villages through sustaining their agricultural, pastoral and forestry uses.

Conservation

History of Conservation

Because the reinforced concrete works in the Diaolou built in the early 20th century were over-specified, the structures remain sound, despite attrition from the weather, coupled with the fact that in most of them there has only been slight wear and tear inside.

No extensive conservation works have been undertaken. Nevertheless minor repair works, such as reinstatement of plaster or decorative stucco works is carried out where necessary, and inappropriate building interventions have been reversed by the Management Office since 2000. Those Diaolou that are occupied show signs of basic fabric maintenance.

Where unoccupied buildings have been recently opened up, everything is left intact, from the faded colours on the walls and ceilings to the external paintwork and washed aggregate finishes on the pillars framing the front doors. Iron grillwork and timber finishes are also left untouched. This reflects the current conservation paradigm, to leave things as they are until conservation intervention is required. If visitor numbers increase, preventative conservation methods will need to be introduced.

In time, reinforced concrete restoration is an area where expertise will have to be sought. Although there are currently no serious problems that need addressing within the nominated property, ICOMOS considers that relevant approaches should be researched and put in place for when the need arises. Such research could be developed in association with other World Heritage properties with similar material conservation issues.

No conservation programmes have been developed specifically for village houses or landscape. However, in one or two cases, unsatisfactory recent additions to houses have been reversed.

Present state of conservation

The overall state of conservation of the Diaolou is good. Although some of the 1833 surviving towers have experienced conservation problems, those nominated have been chosen partly because they are in a stable condition. The state of conservation of village houses and the agricultural landscape is reasonable. Considerable effort and funds have recently been injected into each of the respective properties to upgrade services, dismantle overhead cables and site them underground, improve drainage and pathways and carry out basic conservation of building fabric. Interventions and installations, e.g. electrical switch boxes, have been sensitively incorporated into the environment.

Active Conservation measures

Currently the active conservation measures are directed at the Diaolou towers.

In order to ensure that the towers maintain their setting as part of traditional village houses, ICOMOS recommends that supportive measures are considered to ensure appropriate traditional construction methods for walls, roofs and joinery are maintained in village houses and other communal buildings.

ICOMOS further recommends that preventative conservation measures are introduced within Diaolou open to the public in order to control light, humidity and dust.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that conservation measures for the Diaolou should be augmented by a

research project into appropriate repairs for the massed concrete of their construction and the introduction of active preventative conservation measures in towers open to the public. ICOMOS also considers that encouragement should be given to the use of traditional building materials and techniques for village houses.

Management

A Management Plan for the nominated property has been drawn up by Beijing University under the auspices of the People's Government of Kaiping City. It was implemented in 2005. The objectives of the Plan cover the Diaolou, the villages and their setting.

Protective measures are to be put in place for all aspects of the landscape: the spatial layout of the villages, the buildings, rice cultivation, and other agricultural practices, the environment and local customs.

The implementation of the Plan is through the Kaiping Protection and Management Office of Diaolou and Villages established in 2000. It has 15 full-time staff of which 80% are degree holders in the fields of history, architecture, conservation and maintenance. There are 300 Diaolou keepers working in the villages who all received training before starting work. Allied to this Office is the Kaiping Diaolou Research Department established in 2004 to undertake research on the background history and culture of overseas Chinese and to promote the culture of Diaolou and their villages. The Kaiping Protection and Management Office of Diaolou and Villages is fully integrated into, and gets support from, the National protection system through the State Cultural Relics Bureau, the provincial Government through the Cultural Bureau of Guangdong Province, and the city level through the Kaiping Cultural Bureau. It also works closely with Management Offices established at village level who appoint Diaolou Protectors and Security Personnel.

Since 1983, the Cultural Bureau of Kaiping has prepared detailed surveys of all Diaolou and on the state of conservation. In addition data has been collected on environmental, economic and population. Not all village buildings have been surveyed nor the overall cultural landscape patterns.

The Kaiping Protection and Management Office of Diaolou and Villages established in October 2000 is a well-articulated Conservation Unit. There is a very clear understanding of what is envisaged in terms of a heritage-based management system. The State Party is clear that Management will be a key factor in the future, particularly in view of the number of absentee owners and the likelihood of increased tourism. The procedures put in place – and outlined above – are considered by ICOMOS to be adequate to address the needs of building conservation and to encourage sustainable development of the wider landscape.

The Management Plan is visionary, and based on a well thought out analysis of threats and opportunities. It sets out on-going processes to deal with sustaining the villages as living places that reflect local cultural traditions. It is underpinned by a staffing and consultation structure that is already in place and adequately funded.

A separate plan has also just been produced to address the way tourism will be approached for the overall collection of Diaolou. This involves selling farm produce, serving local farm food and making use of under-used traditional buildings. It is also encouraging an appropriate share of tourist income to be gained by local residents.

Training has been offered to civil servants who will be influential in maintaining the villages and buildings. Free training has also been offered to owners of buildings and free teaching material to 130,000 students in schools. Training for local craftsmen and in the value of intangible traditions and recording the memories of those involved in the building of the towers have also all been addressed.

In response to the problems of absentee owners, the Management Office has created a model for "Entrustment of Diaolou" where the owner and the Management Office sign a trust deed assigning the rights to maintain, conserve and operate the Diaolou in question for a period of 50 years, at no cost to the owner. This process has now started. Several documents pertaining to this were shown to the Mission.

Resources

Since January 2000 funding has been provided by the People's Government of Kaiping City as well as from the Provincial and Central Governments. Between 2001 and 2005, the government invested \$8,456,800. The projected investment between 2005 and 2010 is \$2,416,000. Overseas Chinese contribute to a Kaiping Diaolou Protection Fund which currently stands at \$1,812,000. This is managed by the People's Government of Kaiping City.

In conclusion, ICOMOS commends the State Party on its approach to management of the property and considers that the management system for the property and resources made available are both adequate.

6. MONITORING

Monitoring arrangements have been put in place for: cracks (monthly), agricultural land-use and number of visitors (annually), building permits (as needed), and rate of air pollution (constantly).

Although ICOMOS considers that the monitoring measures for the property are adequate, it is recommended that these be expanded to include the capacity to monitor the condition of the building interiors and associated moveable elements, as well as the visual setting of the Diaolou.

7. CONCLUSIONS

ICOMOS does not consider that the nominated property should be inscribed as a cultural landscape as it does not encompass a socio-economic unit of landscape or a geographically coherent entity. Rather what has been nominated is a collection of monuments in their village setting and it is the Diaolou as exceptional building that gives the property its Outstanding Universal Value.

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Kaiping Diaolou and Villages, China, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of ***criteria ii, iii and iv***.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

The Diaolou and their surrounding villages demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value for their:

- complex and confident fusion between Chinese and western architectural styles;
- final flowering of local tower building traditions;
- completeness and unaltered state resulting from their short life span as fortified dwellings and their comparative abandonment; and,
- harmonious relationship with their agricultural landscape.

Criterion ii: The Diaolou represent in dramatic physical terms an important interchange of human values – architectural styles brought back from North America by returning Chinese and fused with local rural traditions - within a particular cultural area of the world.

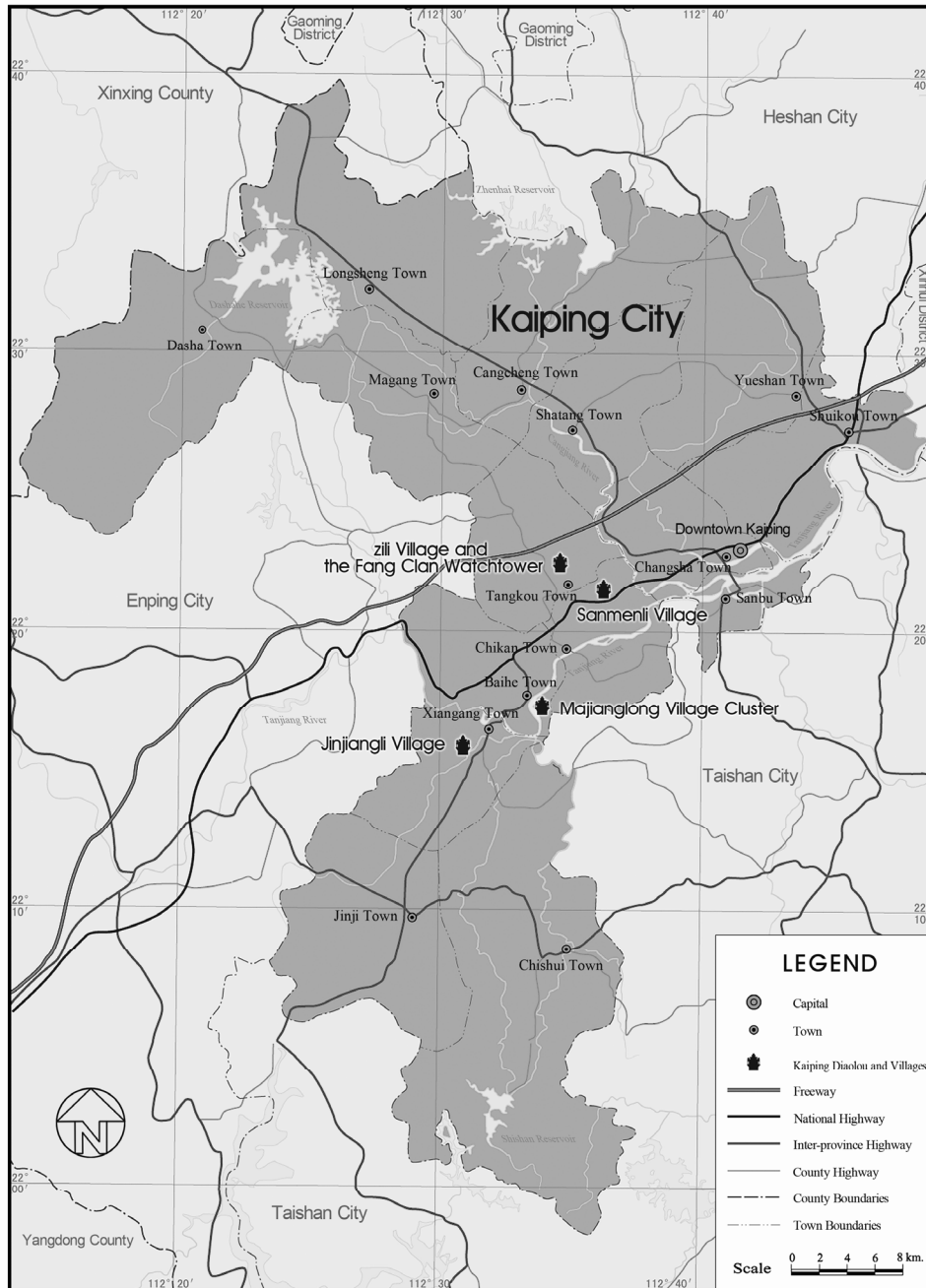
Criterion iii: The building of defensive towers was a local tradition in the Kaiping area since Ming times in response to local banditry. The nominated Diaolou represent the final flourishing of this tradition, in which the conspicuous wealth of the returning Chinese contributed to the spread of banditry and their towers were an extreme response.

Criterion iv: The main towers, with their settings and through their flamboyant display of wealth, are a type of building that reflects the significant role played by émigré Kaiping people in the development of several countries in South Asia, Australasia, and North America, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the continuing links between the Kaiping community and Chinese communities in these parts of the world.

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

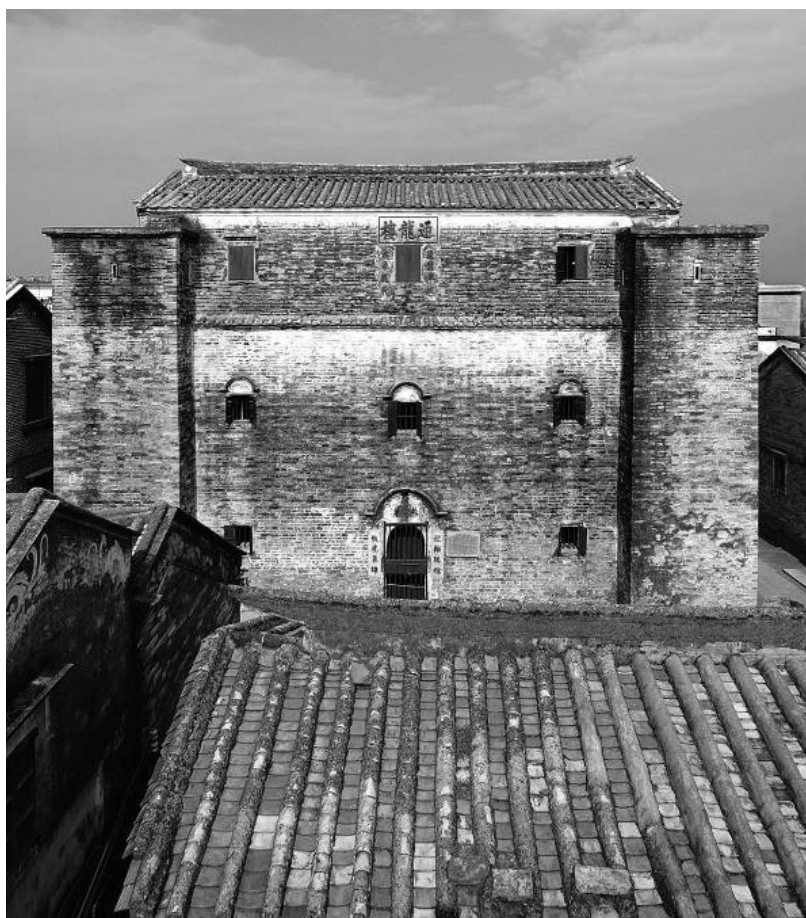
- Reinforced preventative measures to address the main threats from decay, uncontrolled tourism and development.
- Protection for the wider setting of the Diaolou and their surrounding villages through sustaining their agricultural, pastoral and forestry uses.
- Research into appropriate repairs for the massed concrete of their construction.
- Introduction of active preventative conservation measures in towers open to the public.
- Proactive encouragement for the use of traditional building materials and techniques for village houses.

- Monitoring of the condition of building interiors and associated moveable elements as well as the visual setting of the Diaolou.



Feb.18, 2005

Map showing the location of the nominated properties



Yinglonglou Diaolou in Sanmenli village



Diaolou in Zili village



Interior view of the Junlu Villa



Jinjiangli village