



# Diaolou Revitalization——Inheritance and Innovation of Kaiping Diaolou From the Perspective of Rural Revitalization

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**Abstract.** The rebirth of blockhouses means the formation of new things, achieved through inheritance and innovation in the context of revitalizing rural areas. The emergence of Kaiping Diaolou has a history of over a hundred years, and it has important research significance for inheriting the culture of Diaolou. With the influence of various factors such as historical changes and era changes, Diaolou Village has moved towards the edge of unmanned villages. Therefore, it is urgent to revitalize rural areas and revitalize Diaolou Village. This design practice analyzes and designs the architectural characteristics of the Diaolou itself and the missing points in the location of the Diaolou village.

**Keywords:** Rural revitalization; Kaiping Diaolou; Inherit; Innovate

## 1 Introduction

Kaiping City, Guangdong Province, known as the "hometown of Diaolou" and "hometown of overseas Chinese," with the impact of various factors, many villages gradually affixed the "unmanned village" label.<sup>[1]</sup> Now it is "empty buildings, weeds," no longer like before that "noisy streets, laughter," and again when you return to the "lonely city, cold sun and other leisure oblique." Therefore, facing various problems, such as inconvenient transport, inadequate infrastructure, and brain drain, Diaolou culture still needs to be inherited, and many issues still need to be solved. In addition, "cultural confidence" in the country, the party and the people have been determined to move towards "cultural power" necessary support. Kaiping Municipal Party Committee comprehensive deep reform leading group held a general meeting in May 2018 and finally considered and passed the "Kaiping City Township vibration to change the trial program." The revitalization of unmanned villages drives the rural economy towards the beautiful Kaiping Diaolou Village.

To better understand the architectural features of Kaiping Diaolou, its history, and culture, as well as respondents to the degree of understanding of the Kaiping Diaolou, etc., to clarify the direction of my graduation design.

cultural heritage and innovation in today's society, the party, and the country towards "cultural power" of the road to take, in which the Diaolou of cultural heritage and innovation is particularly important to drive the people of Kaiping City "cultural self-confidence.

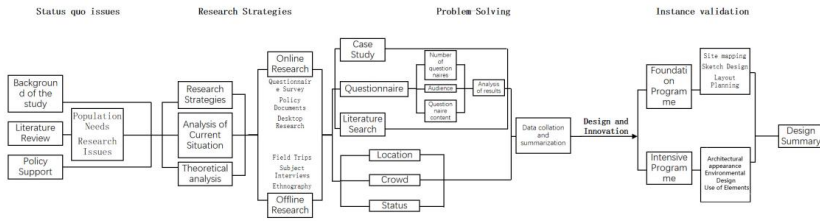


Fig. 1. Framework diagram of the survey content

**Questionnaire analysis.** The online questionnaire was sent to the general public through the "Questionnaire Star" platform to launch a survey and issue and return a valid questionnaire for 301. Survey results show that the survey respondents who visited the Kaiping Diaolou accounted for less than half of the total; most people need understanding the state of Kaiping Diaolou, so there is still to be improved in the publicity. Respondents for the protection and development of Kaiping Diaolou attitude of their views, close to half of the people believe that in the process of protecting the towers, you can repair the damaged parts and regular maintenance, more than half of the people believe that the building can adequately develop based on no damage, a few people said that the demolition of the seriously damaged Diaolou. At the same time, we screened out some of the survey respondents on protecting the Diaolou of the proposal (as shown in table 1).

Table 1. Chart analyzing the recommendations of some respondents to the questionnaire survey

	Recommendation
Government	I hope that tourists know the Kaiping Chinese overseas business in the history of hardships and struggles.
	Increase the publicity efforts for Kaiping Diaolou.
	Reasonable ticket prices are essential for better development of the tourism industry.
Diaolou Park	improve the service facilities, and strengthen the service aspects of the work.
	Strengthening public security management can be shared on social media platforms.
	pay attention to the natural environment.
People's	government should strengthen the protection of Diaolou.
	Appropriate development retains the original architectural style.
Activation	In terms of revitalizing Diaolou, we can combine tradition with modernity.
	Related workers should regularly maintain Diaolou and carry out red tourism.
	The government should also create knowledge tourism attractions.
	Create knowledge tourism attractions.
	Refrain from overdevelopment and avoid excessive commercialization.
	Kaiping Diaolou, should be well protected and can develop artistic and creative products.
	The development plan should be as detailed as possible, Overdevelopment should not be allowed.

Suggestions from the interviewees can be seen: Kaiping Diaolou in the publicity work and the degree of revitalization needs to increase. Therefore, we can improve the relevant infrastructure, publicity, and renewal of local culture, as well as the appropriate protection and development of Diaolou and the formation of their own cultural and creative peripheral products.

This field research shows that the revitalization degree of other research sites has improved except for the selected area that has yet to develop and Diaozhuang, which is semi-deserted. They use their advantages, according to local conditions, through repair and renovation to achieve cultural heritage and innovation.

**Table 2.** Analysis of the results of the interviews at the project site

Interviewee Information	Interview content
Tourist, female, 40 years old	"I don't know where the main entrance to this village is. Going to the toilet is inconvenient; you must go to the next village to find a toilet. Also, the place is very sunny; there is no shade."
Auntie runs a stall in Qiling village. 60 years old, Zili village villager	"I live in the village of Zili and usually come out to set up my stall; more people come on holidays, and if I choose to take the bus, I have to walk for about ten minutes before I can reach the bus stop. The nearby Diaozhuang used to be a school, which has since been converted into a temple."
Da'anju Building Owner's Nephew. 65 years old, lives in the city	"This Diaolou was built in 1926, and relatives moved to the United States in the Republic of China. Materials in the building, such as cement, steel, etc.. The old objects in the building are well preserved, and the third floor has a wide view for sightseeing. Now the village population is small, most of them migrated abroad, the village still left a few families, now see the house are outsiders to build."
Brothers, owners of the Giling Village building, aged 55 years old, live near Kaiping Changsha Park	"This is the eye of the gun Diaolou, the village's oldest Diaolou, the Republic of China, four years built, and then the owner moved abroad. The lettering and patterns left on the walls and doors are from the Cultural Revolution period, and the small sliding door at the back corner of the gunnel is made of steel. The staircase is made of wood, the staircase's handrail is made of teak, and the tread is made of Kunding."

Collating the results of the interviews shows that the attractiveness of a tourist place lies in the tourists' experience of the site and its popularity (as shown in table 2). The results of the field research played a supporting role in the subsequent design practice. Through the interviewees' answers, it is possible to understand the history of the place, the flow of tourists, the story of the Diaolou themselves, and the local characteristics of the culture from different levels. It reflects that the villagers in the site maintain a good social and blood relationship, and the village has been in a state of natural and harmonious coexistence. Therefore, the site selection should make use of its own advantages, adapt measures to local conditions, maintain its own "original authenticity",<sup>[2]</sup> respect the local culture, and achieve cultural inheritance and innovation through repair and transformation.

**Table 3.** Existing Problems and Countermeasures in the Site Selection Area

	Existing problems	Countermeasures
Project Overview	Low publicity	Publicize the village through online channels.
	Low level of Villagers' participation	The government can introduce relevant policies to enable village names to participate in village construction.
	Inadequate infrastructure	Add street lights, rubbish bins, etc.
	Serious littering and selling	The relevant departments can set up stalls to create a unique commercial area.
	Vacant land is unused, with low vegetation cover	Planning of vacant land around the Diaolou.
	Lack of rest and shade	Use of vacant areas in the village to design shade and add benches.

The site is a relatively weak foundation; the later design should take into account the current problems; revitalization of the village is the focus, revitalization of the Diaolou is the root, the use of local advantages, the use of "local conditions" method, to create a new and retain the original characteristics of the village (as shown in table 3).

## 2 Diaolou new life: a rural revitalisation under the perspective of Kaiping Watchtower heritage and innovation theory overview

### 2.1 Conceptual definition

The history behind the birth and development of a city should be traced and features revealed in order to retain, amend and transform implicit values. This analysis of society and this understanding of an area lead to a social perception of the kind of place people wish to live in, and to the realisation that the "whole" city is our 'heritage'<sup>[4, 5]</sup>, The concept of cultural heritage has clearly meant different things to different groups of scholars and the public interested in reclaiming traditions – and landscapes – presented as part of shared, remembered pasts<sup>[6]</sup>.

Diaolou newborn: what is a newborn? That is the birth of new or old things through the preservation, transformation, and innovation of formation. Someone once said: "The fundamental reason for the emergence of a new thing lies in our cultural self-confidence, cultural self-improvement, and cultural self-awareness."

Rural revitalization: Rural revitalization is generally called "revitalization of the rural development strategy." The countryside's so-called revival means the country is prosperous and strong. Still, revitalization does not mean that the countryside is flourishing as it has traditionally done, but rather that it is transforming from one form into another, i.e., that it promotes the progress and development of the "Three Rural Areas" and that it builds a comprehensive system of villages that are beautiful, affluent and livable.

Field of view: The term "field of view" was first used as a philosophical term by the Austro-Hungarian philosopher Husserl and the German philosopher Nietzsche, followed by a detailed explanation of the meaning of "field of view" by the German philosopher Gadamer. The word "horizon" means field of vision, field of view.

**Rural revitalization and the Marxist political economy theory.** rural revitalization development cannot be separated from the masses and is the root of Marxist political economy. It could not be separated from the time and historical background in which Marx and Engels lived at that time. In the same way, it could not separate the creation of the development strategy of rural revitalization from the current background; that is, in the new era of the unique countryside development situation, the country's top priority lies in the development of the countryside economy, focusing on the "Three Rural Issues."

**Rural revitalization and the theory of regional development.** the world experienced the emergence of regional development in Europe after the Second World War. The idea originated in the current context, and each country has changed its regional development theory according to its own development needs. For example, in the 1970s, some developing countries, according to their national conditions, changed from the initial regional theory to the rural school of a regional approach, replacing the city as the center, breaking the spatial imbalance, and changing from the traditional regional development type to the modern development type.

**The dialectical unity of rural revitalization and cultural inheritance and innovation.** in rural regeneration and development, it is essential not to pursue modernization and urbanization at the expense of the original flavor of the countryside. In the final analysis, cultural heritage is the recognition of excellent culture, while innovation is putting forward one's ideas based on the original things and forming new things in line with the trends and needs of the times.

### 3 Domestic and international research methods

In 2023, to improve the participation of villagers in rural construction, the countryside will be revitalized from "Beautiful countryside" to "Hemei Rural Construction." Although the expression is only a word difference, presentation of the meaning of the difference, the scholar, He Bin, put forward their views, the overall description of the "Harmony and beauty of the countryside" is to do both inside and outside. As for the protection of World Heritage sites, the number of World Heritage sites in China has been increasing yearly. As the first World Heritage site in China to be declared successful, the Great Wall, the relevant departments of the state introduced applicable policies to protect and study the Great Wall in 2019, and at the same time, attracted a large number of tourists, boosting the development of the local economy and tourism, and increasing the cultural confidence of the Chinese people.

Relevant information shows that in the late 19th century, Howard, a British social activist, put forward the "idyllic city" in his writings. In the author's ideal country, an "idyllic city" is like a beautiful combination of pearls and jewels, with urban and rural areas complementing each other's deficiencies and transforming the traditional social structure into a new social system that can eventually achieve the ideal state. In the middle of the 20th century, Britain issued a bill on the protection of the countryside, which explicitly supported the participation of the general public in the construction of the countryside. Each country is looking for a development model that suits its own national conditions in many foreign cases. It has finally formed its economic development model through much practice, research, and exploration. There are different degrees of changes in the protection and study of world heritage in foreign countries, such as the reading of the Charter for the Protection and Restoration of International Types of Monuments at the Venice Congress in 1964, which can be regarded as a summary of the concept of protection of Western cultural relics in foreign countries.

collate relevant information at home and abroad, research existing cases from shallow to deep form, and combine with the points to find materials suitable for their research direction, such as landscape, planning, etc. Timely grasp of current issues, grasp the latest trends and prospects for development, make corresponding adjustments, and apply to subsequent research.













Medium-term field research method: in-depth field visits to Qiling village to obtain helpful information through looking, asking, and remembering. Seeing, that is, observing the humanities and infrastructure of the selected site. Ask, that is, with the local villagers and visitors to communicate with tourists to understand their views on the site. Record, through electronic equipment, what we have seen and ask to consolidate the information obtained for follow-up work.

Late empirical analysis method: according to the existing research results, gradually analyzing the current conditions of the selected site, and later combining the results of the previous research with the hand-drawn sketches, three-dimensional renderings, and other forms, applying them to the design practice to create a new type of space.

#### **4 Towers culture, overseas Chinese culture in the Qiling village environmental landscape design practice**

Qiling Village is in Tangkou Town, Kaiping City, Guangdong Province. The village is sparsely populated, in a hilly area with many fields. Surrounding tourism resources are abundant, adjacent to the Zili Village towers cluster, Liyuan, etc.; the surrounding water resources are plentiful, close to the Zhenhai Reservoir. The village contains six Diaolou (relevant analyses shown in Table 4), two open to the public, i.e., the D'anju Building and the Qiling Village Building.

**Table 4.** Analysis of towers at the site selection  
(Table source: author's collation)

	Daanju Building	Qiling Village Building	Qia Cheng Building	Kwong Chiu House	Hui Bao Villa	Ao Loo. Yongxin Building
Research Photos						
Time (year)	1926	1915	1924			1932
Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	112.52	126.33	231.37			190.19
Mountain flower						
Architectural features	Baroque	Renaissance	Traditional			Baroque
Function	Residence and defense					
Fee	10 per person (private)					
Neighbourhood Status	Vegetable garden, grassland, residential	Grassland, houses, and bamboo forest	Qiling village building, park, residential area	Bamboo forest	Residence, grassland, bamboo forest	Vegetable Garden, Bamboo Forest

This project covers an area of 3424.41m<sup>2</sup> formed by the Qia Cheng building, Guangzhao building, Hui Bao villa, and Ao Lu-Yongxin residence to form a half-ring package of open space. The open space was originally a gentle grass. Given the existing problems in the village combined with the village development plan - to retain the bamboo forest and the layout of the "Watch Diaolou" channel, you can enjoy the beauty of the Watch Diaolou close-up. Near the road, the construction of a functional and ornamental building, buildings for the villagers to provide stalls, for tourists to offer leisure and observation, etc., while the use of the corridor of the wall for the exhibition of grey carving works can also be called "grey carving exhibition gallery," the rest of the place is arranged for the water features and plants.

1. Grey sculpture display gallery: The grey sculpture gallery appearance design is divided into three parts: the top with decorative flowers, the middle of the grey sculpture process, and the lower part of the ancient Roman columns to play a supporting role. The design of the grey sculpture promenade about the towers of the arched coupon parts and the mountain flower parts, the semicircle of the arched coupon design extracted from the main outline of the shell, and the semicircle of the arched coupon fusion played a decorative role. The entire grey sculpture display gallery is in the form of columns combined while giving visitors shade and sun. The interior design of the grey sculpture gallery, designed on the thick wall, combines modern patterns with traditional grey sculpture patterns to display the ways in three-dimensional form. The display cabinets are embedded to integrate them with the thick wall, forming a section of the outdoor open-type exhibition hall.

2. Auspicious building - Ruyi building: due to historical factors, the lack of connectivity between the Diaolou, but found in the field research, Qiling Village, Ao Lu - Yongxinju to break the traditional way of distribution, according to the building of the

existing information shows that the two floors of the first floor of the staircase connected, the overall shape of the "Gong" type show, unique profiling and connectivity. Concerning this feature, in this design scheme, the Auspicious Building and Ruyi Building with connectivity created, and the continuity of the grey sculpture corridor is used to connect the Auspicious Building and the Ruyi Building, forming a solid "H" shaped building. Auspicious building - Ruyi building focuses on architectural appearance and decorative design, retaining the overall appearance of the traditional Diaolou, towers on the decorative re-match, that is, the classic Chinese pattern and Western architectural pattern fusion<sup>[7]</sup>.

3. Artificial lotus pond: The lines in the area connected to the lotus pond expand in a radioactive form in all directions and are built along the bank of the building, bounded by piles of stones. On both sides of the pool, open-air platforms facilitate viewing water and plants and provide a venue for tourists who need to fish, which invariably brings an economic effect to the local area. The two sides of the pool connect a line - a bridge that connects the leisure and commercial space with the landscaped meadow recreation area. The willow planted around the lotus pond beautifies the surrounding area of the pond, and the willow gives people a sense of ease and comfort, making the whole area more vibrant and energetic and giving the lotus pond some interest.

## 5 Conclusion

Through preliminary research and design practice, it can be found that Qiling Village has a particular development potential; land, fields, and other resources are abundant, can be combined with their advantages to create planting industrial parks, at the same time, can be processed through the processing of finished products for resale, but also for tourists to provide on-site picking, to drive the development of the village industry chain. The surrounding tourism resources are abundant, combined with the advantages and the surrounding attractions to form a group with the tourism line through the surrounding attractions to stimulate the village's potential and benefits. Revitalising Qiling Village provides villagers with opportunities for employment development and driving local growth. In addition, more important is that the development of Qiling village is based on protection, and the transitional development will eventually lead to the worse protection level of the Diaolou.<sup>[8]</sup>

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