

The inhabitants of Danba's "Beauty Valley" still don traditional dress in their daily lives

在號稱「美人谷」的丹巴，當地人日常依然穿著傳統服飾

美麗國度 WOMEN'S KINGDOM

Danba County's secluded villages remain steeped in tradition, offering a glimpse into the historic past of a region once ruled by women and still shrouded in mystery

丹巴縣內與世隔絕的村落延續著傳統的生活方式，這個傳說中的女兒國神秘依舊，至今仍吸引遊客前往窺探其歷史底蘊

TEXT/撰文 MARK ANDREWS

HIGH ON THE hillsides above the raging Dadu River, villages cling to precipitous slopes in much the same way as the inhabitants have clung to their traditional lifestyle in the 21st century. This is Danba County, in the Sino-Tibetan marches – once part of the Kham region of Tibet.

“What makes Danba unique is the combination of its deep culture, history, geographical environment and the heritage of its ethnic groups,” says Zhang Tao, secretary of Danba County’s tourism department.

Danba town, which also goes by the name of Zhanggu, is little more than Unity Street and a pedestrianised shopping area. As with much of rural Sichuan, the real attraction for visitors lies away from the dusty town, in the surrounding villages and countryside. Jiaju was named “Best Village in China” by the Chinese *National Geographic* in 2005, but this accolade has done little to spoil it. High in the hills above Danba, the village features traditional Tibetan houses surrounded by terraced fields.

A subgroup of Tibetans, the people of the area are known as *jiarong* in Chinese, and *gyalrong* or *rgyalrong* in Tibetan. Gyalrong houses differ from the more usual Tibetan style in being terraced, turreted and up to four storeys high. Internal ladders link the structures’ floors, with the bottom level often used to house livestock. In the autumn, the flat roofs of Jiaju turn into a sea of yellow, as maize is laid to dry in the warm air.

Compared to other parts of Sichuan, life is good in these villages. Danba lies at an altitude of only about 1,800 metres and, despite the steep slopes, the soil is fertile. “Before the tourists came, they didn’t have beds but they never starved – like in many rural areas; cash poor, crop rich,” says Kimberley Te Winkle, an American woman who spoke to many villagers while researching her PhD on conserving cultural heritage.

Thanks to the boon of tourism, life for the villagers is much better these days. A portion of the RMB30 admission fee to Jiaju is divided equally among the households, explains Te Winkle. While some villagers have opened their houses for home stays, the village is devoid of the hawking so often seen at tourist sites around China.

Central to Gyalrong culture is Mount Molto, also known as Mount Moerduo – one of four sacred mountains, according to Tibetan culture. Danba lies in the shadow of its 5,000-metre peak. Walking around the mountain as an act of pilgrimage is an important annual tradition.

Interestingly, Danba lies in an area remembered for being known at one time in history as the Women’s Kingdom, ruled by the Sumpa – Supi in Chinese – a Qiang tribe. Today, it’s known as Beauty Valley, renowned for the looks of its women. This claim to fame is celebrated in annual beauty contests that feature singing and dancing.

在 漢族及藏族聚居的丹巴縣（以前隸屬於西藏康區），著名的大渡河奔流而下，縣內的村莊沿著陡峭的山坡而建。在21世紀的今天，村民仍然延續傳統的生活方式。

丹巴縣文化旅遊局轄下旅遊股的書記張濤說：「丹巴獨特之處，在於其深厚的文化歷史底蘊、地理環境，及各民族獨有的文化遺產。」

丹巴的縣城章谷鎮是一座小鎮，主要由團結街及一條步行商店街組成。然而，吸引遊客造訪當地的並非塵土飛揚的縣城，而是其周邊盡顯四川鄉郊美景的村落和田野。

丹巴縣的甲居藏寨曾於2005年獲《中國國家地理雜誌》評選為中國最美麗的鄉村之一，慶幸的是，小村莊並未因為贏得此美譽而改變原貌。在丹巴的高山上，甲居的傳統藏寨依舊錯落有致地散佈於梯田間。

甲居居民以嘉絨藏族為主，藏語發音為Gyalrong或Rgyalrong。嘉絨藏寨有別於一般藏族的建築風格，寨房依山而建，設有陽台及角樓，有些樓高四層，房子內部設有貫穿各層的樓梯，最底層通常是畜圈。到了秋收季節，甲居平坦的屋頂成為居民風乾玉米的地方，放眼望去盡是一片黃燦燦的光芒。

與四川其他地區相比，當地村民的生活過得相當不錯。丹巴鎮海拔僅1,800米，雖然地勢陡峭，但土壤非常肥沃。美國學者Kimberley Te Winkle為了撰寫文化遺產保育的博士論文，曾經與當地村民交流。她說：「在旅遊業開放前，村裡面雖然沒有床，卻從來沒有糧食短缺的情況——這是許多農村的共通點，村民們並不富有，農作物卻經常大豐收。」

如今，蓬勃發展的旅遊業令村民的生活大幅改善。Te Winkle表示，參觀甲居的遊客均需要繳付30人民幣，當局從這項收入撥出一部分經費，再由村內住戶平分。雖然部分村民已將居所改成民宿，所幸的是這裡並沒有中國旅遊景點常見的攤販。

海拔5,000米高的墨爾多山庇蔭著丹巴縣，這座高峰不但是嘉絨藏族文化的核心地，也是藏區四大神山之一；每一年，信眾環繞山道進行朝拜是當地重要的傳統宗教儀式。

丹巴還有一段有趣的歷史，據說這裡便是古時女兒國的所在地，隸屬於羌族的「蘇毗」支派。如今，丹巴更因為美女如雲而贏得「美人谷」的稱號，當地更會舉辦每年一度的選美比賽，佳麗們載歌載舞，爭妍鬥麗。

然而，丹巴最獨到之處，卻是矗立於山間的古碉樓；當中以位於大渡河下游兩、三公里處的梭坡鄉交通較為方便，遊客於此可細意欣賞這種獨特建築。

Danba lies at an altitude of about 1,800 metres and, despite its steep slopes, the soil is rich and fertile (right)

丹巴位於海拔1,800米的高地，雖然地勢陡峭，但土地肥沃富饒（右圖）

Up in the mountains, seclusion has preserved much of the local culture and style in Danba’s mountain villages (below left and right)

由於地理位置偏僻，家住丹巴山區的村民得以保留其傳統文化及生活方式（右下圖）

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Photos: Mountain village, local art and woman in traditional dress (previous page); Getty Images. Woman in the window: Keren Su - China Span



Danba's towers are thought to have been part of a vast network that once spread across western Sichuan and south-eastern Tibet

據稱四川西部和西藏東南部曾擁有數目龐大的古碉樓群，丹巴的碉樓是其中一部分

What really makes Danba special, though, are the stone towers standing tall on the mountainsides. Some of the most accessible are in Suopo, a bucolic village located a couple of kilometres down river of the town.

Houses in Suopo are similar to the ones in Jiaju but surrounded by apple orchards or groves of pomegranates. Here, the village centre is at a much lower altitude and terraced fields slope down towards the river.

Dominating the view are a triumvirate of towers amid the main collection of houses, along with numerous others that stretch out into the distance. These towers often reach 40 to 50 metres in height and until recently very little was known about them. This changed largely due to the efforts of French explorer Frederique Darragon, who came across the towers in 1996. "They were a mystery with hardly anything written about them," says Darragon,

梭坡鄉的樓房建築風格與甲居相似，附近還有許多種植了蘋果樹及石榴樹的果園。村子的中心地勢相對較低，梯田沿著河畔拾級而下。

進入村內，最引人注目的是聳立於民居內、鼎足而立的三座古碉樓，遠方的山間亦可見許多碉樓散佈其中。這些高40至50米的碉樓向來鮮為人知，其神秘面紗直到近年才被掀開。這有賴法國探險家Frederique Darragon於1996年偶然發現了碉樓群，她形容：「這些碉樓是個沒有文字記載的謎團。」自此，她孜孜不倦地一步步解開謎底。經過十多年的研究，Darragon累積了足夠資料，出版了《喜馬拉雅的神秘古碉》一書，並協助「探索頻道」拍攝同名紀錄片。

她發現的古碉樓群散落於四川西部及西藏東南部一帶，其數目數以千計，當中以康區境內最為密集，而位於丹巴的碉樓亦隸屬其一部分。她認為碉樓的設計可分為四種，丹巴和嘉絨一帶以方形底座為主，也有一些星型底座採用五角以至13角設計。一般來說，碉樓的入口均高於地面，而不論是建於古代或現代，大部分碉樓均與民居相連。

Darragon透過碳元素年代測定法推斷，丹巴最古老的碉樓約有900年歷史，其他碉樓則大多建於14及15世紀。然而，各地的古碉樓數目所剩不多，Darragon認為這與多次嚴重地

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who dedicated herself to deciphering the mystery of the structures. After more than a decade of research, culminating in the book, *The Secret Towers of the Himalayas*, and a documentary of the same name for the Discovery Channel, Darragon believes she finally has some answers.

The Danba structures are part of a network of towers that once numbered in the thousands and spread across a large area of western Sichuan and south-eastern Tibet – in particular the Kham region. She believes there are four different regional styles of tower; those in Danba and the Gyalrong region are usually square based, although star-shaped bases with between five and 13 corners also exist. The entrance is well above the ground, and large numbers of the towers are, or were, attached to houses.

Carbon dating by Darragon puts Danba’s oldest existing tower at about 900 years of age, with most probably built in the 14th and 15th centuries. However, in many areas, few of these ancient constructions remain. Darragon speculates that this is due to the effects of a few bad earthquakes, “the sticky yellow clay” used in their construction and their deliberate destruction for building materials, with evidence of towers in many other areas having been dynamited. In the Danba region, however, they stand relatively intact.

The towers were likely to have been built as status symbols, as well as for reasons of storage and defence, and often on peaks as strategic structures. Since 2006, the Danba towers have been listed by Sichuan Province as cultural relics and, along with the Tibetan houses in Jiaju, Suopo and Zhonglu, were included on UNESCO World Heritage tentative lists in 2008.

To date, Danba remains largely untouched by mass tourism, though visitors are not uncommon. “The key is to develop the region in a sustainable way and without letting tourists ruin the native culture or beauty,” says Darragon.



震，導致以「黃黏土」蓋成的碉樓崩壞有關；另外，有些村民為了取得建材不惜拆毀碉樓，已有證據顯示部分地區的碉樓曾遭人為炸毀。幸好丹巴地區的碉樓均保留得相當完整。

古人建築碉樓的可能性很多，它除了是社會地位的象徵，也有防禦及倉儲的功用，建於山間的碉樓更可能具備軍事防禦功能。2006年，四川政府已將丹巴古碉群列為文化遺產。而在2008年，丹巴古碉群聯同位於甲居、梭坡和中路的藏寨則同時被納入聯合國教科文組織的世界遺產預備名錄。

到目前為止，丹巴仍未見大量遊客蜂擁而至。Darragon指出：「最重要的是採用可持續發展的方式來開放這個地區，確保當地文化和自然美景不受遊客破壞。」■

Standing as tall as 50 metres, village towers are believed to have been built as status symbols, and for defence or storage

碉樓的高度可達50米，據說它除了顯示屋主的社會地位，另外還有防禦和倉儲用途

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