

Caijiaya earns reputation as destination for red tourism



Local people say village has undergone remarkable growth in the past decade

By YUAN SHENGGAO

In early and mid-February when China celebrated its annual Spring Festival, the village of Caijiaya in Xingxian county in the west of Shanxi province welcomed hundreds of daily visitors.

In many ways, Caijiaya seems to be an ordinary village near the Fenwei River, a branch of the Yellow River, in the heart of the Lyuliang Mountains.

However, more than 80 years ago, it was part of the Jinsui Revolutionary Base, home to the headquarters of the 120th division of the Eighth Route Army led by famed Chinese general He Long (1896-1969). The army was stationed there to protect Yan'an in Shanxi province, the cradle of the Chinese Communist revolution during China's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) and China's War of Liberation (1945-49).

Today, the Jinsui Revolutionary Memorial Hall in Caijiaya remains a silent witness to the past. Red tourism, which focuses on tours exploring the history of the Communist Party of China before the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, has grown tremendously during the past few years.

With tourists flocking to this red



The Jinsui Revolutionary Memorial Hall in the village of Caijiaya is a major red tourism destination in Shanxi province. YAN ZHONGXING / FOR CHINA DAILY

tourism destination, local residents have had opportunities to improve their livelihoods with new sources of revenue.

Ren Jinfeng, 58, is a local resident who works as a street cleaner near the memorial hall.

The woman has had the job for eight years and witnessed great changes in the village since it became a destination for red tourism a decade ago.

"Most of our fellow villagers have benefited from the red tourism industry," Ren said. "Life can be improved if you are willing to work hard."

The woman said street cleaning is not a highly paid job, but "it ensures a stable source of revenue for me".

Ren said the income has helped her support her three children through their education.

"I'm proud that all my children have graduated from universities and found jobs," Ren said.

At the western end of the village, Wen Xi'er, another local resident, sells freshly steamed bean curd at

his small stall.

The vendor said he has been making and selling bean curd for more than 30 years. But his business had renewed prosperity in recent years.

"I used to sell bean curd mainly to locals, with sales standing at tens of kilograms a day," Wen said. "The income was barely enough to support a family and we needed other jobs to make ends meet."

But sales began to increase as more tourists came to his village.

"Now I sell more than 200 kg a day, which means a net income of more than 200 yuan (\$31)," Wen said.

"My bean curd is popular among tourists because it's organic and has a special taste that comes from a rustic kitchen," he explained.

Tourists take the bean curd back to their homes in Taiyuan, Xinzhou and even as far as the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. There have also been orders from afar requiring delivery of dried bean curd.

Wen Feiyue is a Caijiaya native who works as a kindergarten teach-

er in Beijing. She returned to her hometown in late January with several friends she invited to visit the famous red tourism site.

"Travel is much easier now as there is a special train service between Taiyuan and Caijiaya," Wen Feiyue said.

"I come back almost every Spring Festival, and every time I return I see things changing for the better."

According to He Jianjun, head of the Caijiaya Party committee, the village was lifted from poverty in 2015, with per capita annual income reaching 7,200 yuan that year.

"A number of tourism facilities have been built or are under construction in the village, including a recently completed tourist service center and a large car park scheduled to open this May," He said. The projects will help the village accommodate more tourists and bring in more revenue.

Yan Zhongxing contributed to this story.

Tangjiapu farmers cash in on day lily industry

By YUAN SHENGGAO

When farmers in the village of Tangjiapu in Yunzhou district of Datong city, northern Shanxi, were preparing for Spring Festival, they came across an unexpected bonus that added to their Chinese New Year joy.

Shi Wei, Party secretary of the village, directed them on WeChat to collect their dividend at the villagers' committee office.

Each farmer was paid 1,000 yuan (\$155) by a local company called Tangjiapu Economic Development.

The company is a village cooperative that purchases day lily flowers from local growers. It processes and sells finished products in local Shanxi markets as well as across the rest of the country.

Tang Wangao, a local villager, said the dividend was an additional surprise to the 50,000 yuan his family received several months ago when he sold his annual harvest of day lily flowers to the company.

"We had a poorer harvest than usual last year due to natural disasters," Tang said. "But we redeemed the loss when a special insurance fund launched by the district government gave us compensation of 30,000 yuan."

According to Shi, the growers' losses have all been reasonably addressed. Each household received compensation between 10,000 and 50,000 yuan.

"Despite the poorer harvest, our company's sales revenue reached 50 million yuan for the first time last year, thanks to our efforts to diversify purchasing channels as well as the price rise in the markets," said Yang Qi, general manager of Tangjiapu Economic Development. "This makes it possible for us to pay dividends to growers, who are stockholders of the company."

The executive said the company has also set aside a special fund worth 200,000 yuan to help impoverished residents and elderly people in the village.



A Tangjiapu farmer receives dividend from the village's cooperative.

ZHAO ZHICHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Datong's Yunzhou district is a major production base for the organic day lilies, a cash crop with steady profitability.

The flower, which is also called yellow flower, golden needle vegetable, or worry-free grass in China, is a popular food ingredient across the country.

According to the district government, the planting area for day lilies was more than 10,000 hectares in Yunzhou in 2019. There are 109 villages, 95 plantation cooperatives and 15 processing enterprises engaged in the growing and production of day lily products. Revenue from the local industry reached 700 million yuan in the same year.

In Datong as a whole, the city government plans to develop the day lily industry into a major pillar of the rural economy.

According to the city government's development plan for the industry from 2019 to 2023, the total growing area for day lilies is expected to reach 20,000 hectares by 2023.

Zhao Zhicheng, Liu Fuhong and Cao Xuechun contributed to this story.

Relocation helps impoverished resident find prosperity

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Having lived in Gangou, a remote mountainous village in Kelan county in the northwest of Shanxi province, for generations, Lyu Rutang and his family members desperately wanted to move to a new place with better conditions.

Surrounded by the Lyuliang Mountains, Gangou is a barren area with lack of sufficient land for farming and poor access to both roads and electricity.

Lyu's wishes came true in 2017, thanks to a poverty alleviation relocation program launched by the county government.

That year, Lyu and his fellow villagers, all of whom were registered as impoverished residents, moved to a new settlement in the village of Songjiagou some 15 kilometers away.

Located on a riverside plain and neighboring the county seat, Songjiagou has far better conditions for farming, employment and business creation.

The 57-year-old Lyu founded a cattle farm soon after he settled in Songjiagou.

"This is a husbandry cooperative among several villagers, using a spe-

cial loan of 400,000 yuan (\$62,000) for poverty alleviation," Lyu said.

Over the past three years, the cooperative has grown steadily in scale and attracted more farmers. Lyu was recognized by the county government last year as a model worker for his work and leading fellow villagers to prosperity. He was awarded 20,000 yuan for the recognition.

Lei Wenbin, Party secretary of

Songjiagou, spoke highly of Lyu's enterprising spirit in changing people's lives for the better amid adversity.

"Lyu is a hardworking man with strong willpower. He would not have been on the poverty list if not for a tragic accident," Lei said.

Lyu's daughter died and his daughter-in-law was severely injured in a traffic accident in early 2017. His plight was intensified with

his wife confirmed to have cancer, according to Lei.

"The tragedies cost him his fortune," Lei said. "But he never gave up."

Lyu gave special thanks to his fellow villagers and local officials, who donated a total of 40,000 yuan to save the lives of his wife and daughter-in-law. His new residence in Songjiagou was provided by the local government for free.

The charitable gestures motivated Lyu to work even harder in the hope of repaying the caring people as soon as possible, Lei said.

Lyu's business continues to grow and now includes a cattle range in his former village of Gangou. Medical herbs have been planted in Gangou, offering a new source of revenue for the residents now living 15 km away in Songjiagou.

Lyu is not willing to stop working, even during slow seasons. He works part-time jobs at a nearby wind farm and on a construction site.

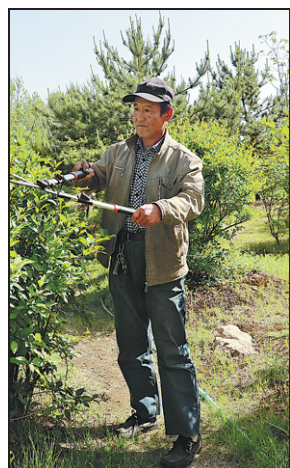
"I'm getting closer to my goal of paying back those who helped me," he said. "I told myself to just be patient and life will keep moving."

Wang Liqiang contributed to this story.



Residents in Songjiagou village in Kelan county perform drum dance to celebrate Spring Festival. ZHAO WENJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Villager relishes decision to leave rural home for city



Zhang Xiuqing works as a gardener at a factory near his new home.

WANG LIQIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

By YUAN SHENGGAO

"I realized I made the right decision to live in a city," said Zhang Xiuqing, a resident in the Guanghuiyuan community in Kelan county, Shanxi.

Zhang made his remark while clearing snow at the factory where he works, shortly after this year's first snow fell on Jan 5.

"With central heating, my new home in Guanghuiyuan in the county seat is a pleasant upgrade from the cave-house in my former village of Zhaojiawa," Zhang said.

Zhang was among the last 13 residents of six households to move out of Zhaojiawa, one of the least-developed villages in Kelan.

But his decision to move came only after officials pleaded with him to move.

"I was reluctant to move when officials came to persuade me in 2017," Zhang said.

Zhang's major sources of revenue then came from the 100-or-so sheep and goats he herded on nearby hills, plus a meager yield of corn from his farmland.

He said the officials did not force him to move. Instead, they gave him two options: he could move to a new home in the county seat and find a new job with the government's help, or he could stay in the village with his sheep and goats.

Zhang knew that staying meant his family might be the last one left in the village. That meant loneliness and inconvenience in the years to come.

"Loneliness is unbearable. I talked to the animals and birds when I was herding alone but they didn't respond," Zhang said.

His main concern with moving was whether he and his wife could find new jobs to support his family and pay for the schooling for his two children.

Zhang decided to visit the new settlement. Residents there told him a number of enterprises had been established in the neighborhood to help with poverty alleviation. Jobs were easily available with recommendations from the government.

Convinced, Zhang and his wife made the decision to move. They now live in an apartment with access to running water, gas and central heating.

Zhang found a job in a nearby coking factory, with a monthly salary of more than 3,000 yuan (\$465). His wife works as a ranger at a nearby forest.

The land of Zhaojiawa has been leased to a company for growing medical herbs and former villagers receive rent and dividends, Zhang said.

Wang Liqiang contributed to this story.



A worker tests products at Zhongke Lu'an's laboratory.

LI JIANGMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Enterprise expands with cutting-edge LED chips

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The mention of LED, or light emission diode, usually reminds people of devices that emit lights of multiple colors such as red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.

The lights are visible because they have wavelengths between 400 and 700 nanometers.

But Zhongke Lu'an, an integrated circuit chips company based in the city of Changzhi in Shanxi province, is producing other kinds of LED products.

Its newly developed deep ultraviolet LED has played a crucial role in the prevention and control of COVID-19.

Deep ultraviolet LED, emitting invisible light that features wavelengths between 200 and 350 nm, can inhibit the spread of bacteria and viruses by changing their genetic DNA and RNA structures, said Chen Peng, a Zhongke Lu'an executive in charge of LED production.

"Our company launched the world's first plant for the mass production of deep ultraviolet LED chips and lighting devices in July 2019, just months before the worldwide COVID-19 outbreak," Chen said.

"In the past, hospitals mainly used lights containing mercury for disinfection," Chen added. "However, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, which became effective in

August 2017, prohibited the use of mercury because it's a heavy pollutant and a poisonous heavy metal."

China joined the convention last year, banning the production and import of products that contain mercury.

"Our environmentally friendly and energy-saving deep ultraviolet LED products are an ideal substitute for the mercury-filled lights in hospitals," Chen said.

Zhongke Lu'an has an annual production capacity of 30 million deep ultraviolet LED chips. However, the output cannot meet global market demand, according to Cui Yongqiang, deputy general manager of the company.

Cui said the company is planning to build a second-phase project for the product with an annual capacity of 300 million chips.

Zhongke Lu'an is a subsidiary of Lu'an Group, one of the leading coal-mining companies in China.

Following Shanxi's recent campaign to transform its economy from one that is dominated by coal to a new model featuring multiple areas of growth, Lu'an has diversified its operations in recent years. The company has branched out to such sectors as new energy, chemicals, semiconductors and LED chips. Zhongke Lu'an is a large part of those diversification efforts.

Li Jianning contributed to this story.