

# Father and daughters making a lifesaving impact for villagers

Family says they feel great to help neighbours, **Daqiong** and **Palden Nyima** report.

**A** father and his two daughters in Tibet have been contributing to the battle against COVID-19 over the last two months, to the benefit of every villager.

Dawa Tsering, the father and an official in the village of Tashi Dushi in Chushul county, has taken on so many tasks that he does not have enough time to manage his own affairs.

Tibet was the first region in China to be declared free of the coronavirus, after its only confirmed patient was cured and discharged from the hospital on Feb. 12.

Despite the country's and Tibet's progress in epidemic control, the region still requires health checks in airports, train stations and highway checkpoints, and asks to disinfect village roads to reduce the risks of imported cases.

Like other communities, Tashi Dushi has been carrying out prevention tasks in accordance with the government's regulations.

"My duty includes disinfecting 12 village roads, some public facilities and residences twice a week together with my colleagues," Dawa Tsering says.

According to Dawa Tsering, fellow villagers were given face masks twice by the local government in the last two months and also received other prevention supplies.

"Unlike in previous years when the Tibetan New Year celebration was a very lively event, it was rather quiet this year," he says, adding all villagers were required to stay at home during the two-week holiday in February.

Villagers were told to avoid gatherings by not visiting each other, he says.



**A village official in Tashi Dushi (second from right) talks with residents on how to prevent the epidemic and normalise farming activities.** DAQIONG / CHINA DAILY

As many shops and restaurants in the neighbourhood closed during the last two months, the government dispatched a food retailer to open an outlet in the village to meet their daily needs.

"Villagers can buy flour, oil, rice, meat, vegetables, fruits and candies from the outlet, reducing their chance to travel out," he says.

For spreading health knowledge to the villagers, Dawa Tsering and his colleagues found WeChat very useful.

"We make announcements by sending messages through smartphones," Dawa Tsering says.

Most of the villagers did not go out and there were fewer visits during last two months, except for a few Han people, who married Tibetan women in this village and returned from their home provinces. The returnees all had to receive two-week quarantine separated from their family members.

Those who were taken to quarantine had to have their body temperatures checked twice a day, he

says.

Dawa Tsering says villagers were not used to regular habits like frequently washing hands. But after the outbreak, their awareness of prevention largely improved.

At first, some villagers were reluctant to comply with such practices, but they gradually became co-operative and supportive. Dawa Tsering's two daughters have also contributed a lot in the progress.

During the period, younger daughter Karma Chozom has been tutoring school children in the village, and the elder daughter Dawa Drolkar has worked as a health consultant.

"Almost every day, a few students came to me for questions, and I became a versatile teacher by teaching them Chinese, English, Tibetan, and mathematics," says Karma Chozom, adding she also taught them music and dance.

Karma Chozom, a student in Lhasa Normal College, said she was honoured to assist her father

and help kids in the village.

"I feel great to help the kids a little bit, and I especially enjoyed teaching them songs and dance," the 20-year-old says.

Dawa Drolkar, a student in Jiangsu College of Nursing in Jiangsu province, says the outbreak extended her 10-day holiday to more than two months.

She worked as a health consultant in the village, where her jobs included producing short videos showing healthy habits, such as washing hands, wearing masks, protecting animals and the importance of eating boiled food, and other hygiene knowledge.

"Every time I met someone in the village, I would share my health knowledge. I would say the disease is not that scary if you pay enough attention to prevention," she says.

"I taught the villagers to maintain sound psychology during this adverse period," she says. "I taught them how to correctly wash their hands and wear masks by sending short videos on WeChat. I also shared with them the latest news about the epidemic."

"Making short videos for prevention knowledge is not easy, but quite interesting. Every time a video is done, I am rewarded with a sense of accomplishment."

With the region's control of the epidemic and operations resumed among more local businesses, Dawa Tsering and his two daughters felt much relief.

The daughters say they wanted to help their father in the village's epidemic prevention and other affairs before returning to school. However, Dawa Tsering wishes his daughters could go back to school as soon as possible.

## Innovation efforts to lift Tibet's economy

By **LIU YUKUN** and **PALDEN NYIMA**

The Tibet autonomous region will step up support for local technology companies and tech innovation as part of its efforts to shore up the local economy, officials said.

As part of this, it has set up a "science and technology innovation voucher" mechanism under its Science and Technology Department to encourage the development of enterprises.

Companies can apply for a voucher at the science and technology entrepreneurship service center of the department multiple times in a year. The annual limit of issued vouchers for science and technology for small and medium-sized enterprises is 100,000 yuan (\$14,077), while the limit for startups was set at 50,000 yuan. The innovation voucher must be used in the same year of application and will be invalid if it has expired.

Companies can use the voucher to purchase services from universities and research institutes, such as services related to research and development, startup incubation, technology consultation, and many other aspects.

The vouchers can also be used for expenses such as awarding performance bonuses to laboratory personnel and management, training, laboratory construction and operation, research and development of science and technology equipment and testing methods.

Bao Hanwen, director of the science and technology entrepreneurship service center at the Science and Technology Department of Tibet, said the voucher will help relieve financial pressure associated with research and development for tech firms, promote cooperation among companies, universities, and research institutes, and facilitate transformation of scientific and technological achievements into real productive forces.

The center organized expert evaluations in May and August last year. It forwarded the innovation voucher recipients to Tibet's Science and Technology Department for review, and the results were published on the department's website in November.

Bao said the evaluation was mainly based on company's product research and development process with criterion relating to research content, research methods, and many other aspects.

Innovation vouchers totaling 5.43 million yuan pertaining to science and technology innovation were issued till March. Tibet's Science and Technology Department has also selected 38 technology innovation service providers, including universities and research institutes, where com-

## Peach blossom festival a sign of recovery in tourism

An annual peach blossom festival is held in Southwest China's Tibet autonomous region, marking the start of a gradual service resumption of local tourist sites as the COVID-19 outbreak becomes subdued in China.

The festival, which began in the city of Nyingchi on April 2, features wild peach groves, artistic performances and livestreaming sightseeing tours for visitors, according to the city's tourism development bureau.

Before the on-site event gets started, the beautiful sceneries of peaches, valleys and snow-capped mountains were livestreamed by the city via six social media platforms, including Sina Weibo and Douyin, also known as TikTok.

Liu Guangming, executive vice-mayor of Nyingchi, said the city would take this chance to gradually restore and promote its tourism industry, which was affected by the epidemic.

To reduce the risk of cross infections, the city has demanded disinfection and cleaning of the tourist sites, and fever screening and personal information registration for visitors upon arrival in the scenic spots.

More than 40 million tourists from home and abroad visited Tibet in 2019, up 19 percent year on year, according to local authorities.

The autonomous region temporarily closed its scenic attractions to tourists starting Jan 27 to help battle the epidemic.



Tibet had reported only one confirmed COVID-19 case to date, who was discharged from hospital on Feb.12 after recovery,

the regional health commission said.

Xinhua