

GUIZHOU'S SCENERY, ETHNIC DIVERSITY A DRAW FOR VISITORS



Guizhou province sees the tea industry as a pillar for poverty alleviation and ecological development. Farmland stretches across picturesque scenery in Tongren city, Guizhou. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Mountainous landscape, natural resources make region a paradise for tea

By LIXIN
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Farmers in Guizhou province are particularly happy with the arrival of the harvest festival this year.

In the past year, crops of tea, pepper, chestnut rose and dragon fruit in Guizhou all ranked first by volume in the country, while the value of the province's agriculture industry created for related industries ranked among the top nationwide.

Guizhou, with an often unforgiving terrain, has achieved a historic breakthrough in agriculture.

The province has experienced a rural industrial revolution, which has added environmentally friendly momentum to the high-speed and high-quality development of its economy.

In 2018, 1.48 million people in Guizhou left poverty, lowering the poverty rate to 4.3 percent, and 14 poor counties were lifted out of poverty.

Relying on its abundant resources, Tongren city in Guizhou province is making significant achievements in poverty alleviation by cultivating distinctive industries, local officials said.

This year, the city has been focusing on the supply-side structural reform in the agriculture sector to revitalize its rural economy.

A poverty-stricken area in the Wuling Mountains, Tongren has a diverse terrain with mountains accounting for 67.8 percent of its total area.

Tongren has great potential to develop an efficient agricultural industry, with huge variations in altitude, biological diversity, clement weather and fertile land.

The city has developed a series of green agricultural products, such as Fanjingshan delicacies, which have created a number of products and local brands such as Fanjingshan Green Tea, Shiqian Moss Tea and Tongren Pearl Peanut.

Fanjingshan, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, has increased Tongren's popularity and reputation.

Fanjingshan Green Tea ranked 31st in brand value in China's tea industry in 2018, with a brand value of 1.98 billion yuan (\$277.48 million). Tongren's



A farmer picks tea leaves at a plantation in Guizhou.

unique ecological resources created Fanjingshan Green Tea. Tongren has a tradition of tea-drinking since ancient times. "The tea here grows quite long, so we only take one bud and one leaf at a time when picking tea leaves. You can't pinch the tea leaves with your fingernails. Given the fact that we are surrounded by mountains with low temperatures and high humidity, the tea tastes very good," said You Hui, a local resident.

Shiqian county in the city is another region that has been committed to the aim of "agricultural clustering management, tea gardens as scenic spots as well as the integration of agriculture and tourism".

The county plans tea gardens at high locations, grows tea of high quality, and promotes the industry with significant investment. It makes use of classic tea gardens to drive development and transform old tea gardens.

At the same time, new tea is widely planted in suitable places, which gives new life to older tea gardens.

By the end of 2018, the area of tea gardens in Shiqian reached 388,000 mu, or 25,840 hectares, of which Shiqian Moss Tea accounted for 60 percent. There were more than 130 tea processing enterprises and 43 professional tea cooperatives, including six provincial-level enterprises and 17 municipal ones. The number of people working in the tea industry reached 150,000, and the industrial scale ranked among the largest in Guizhou province.

Tongren is also exploring new approaches to lifting farmers out of poverty by helping poor households and encouraging farmers to play a role in the industrial chain of high-quality green agricultural products.

Statistics show by the end of 2018, the total area of tea plantations in Guizhou was 5,013 square kilometers, ranking first in the country for six years.

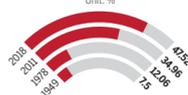
The total output of tea reached 3.62 million metric tons for a total production value of 39.4 billion yuan.

Guizhou has helped 152,000 impoverished people through the tea industry, of whom 89,000 people have been pulled out of poverty behind.

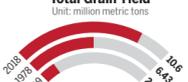
Poverty-Stricken Population



Urbanization Rate



Total Grain Yield



Total Retail Sales of Consumer Goods in Rural Areas



Per Capita Disposable Income of Urban Residents



“The government gave me a job and it was convenient for my children to go to school. My life became significantly better.”

Pan Xueqin, a local resident of Wanshan district

1.48 trillion yuan
GDP of Guizhou last year

196,900 kilometers
highway mileage in Guizhou last year

57 percent
forest coverage rate of Guizhou in 2018

Southwest China's Guizhou province attracts visitors with its untouched scenery, ethnic diversity and kind-hearted people, rooted in the region's cultural legacies and traditions formed over thousands of years.

Yaoshang Ethnic Culture Village, also known as Shiqian Gelao First Village, is one such charming destination in the province. Its picturesque landscapes, rich historical heritage, 90 percent forest coverage as well as remarkable poverty alleviation efforts in recent years are among tourist attractions. The village is defined not just by its view but also its local customs such as the "saying spring" and the Gelao puppet show.

More than 600 years ago, after the people surnamed Deng in Jiangxi province moved to this village, they set up kilns to make pots, cans, urns, and other utensils, from where the name Yaoshang is derived.

"Before 2003, Yaoshang village was poor. There were 50 or 60 singletons over the age of 30, with a per capita income of less than 700 yuan (\$98.22). In the morning, villagers carried over 50 kilograms of charcoal and walked more than five kilometers of mountain road to nearby county. Fifty kilograms of charcoal would sell for 40 or 50 yuan," said Zuo Yan, a local villager.

Before the development of the village's tourism industry, the region was remote and hard to get to — it was one of the poorest and most isolated areas in China.

Zuo said that in the past, parents would tell their children, "If you don't behave, I'll send you to Yaoshang." The situation has been changed today, to encourage children, parents will say, "If you study hard, I will take you to Yaoshang at the weekend". These two sentences describing Yaoshang's past and present have become the epitome of Yaoshang people's happy new life. Snacks are an important part of village culture, especially fairy tofu, which is made from premla micophylla and plant ash.

After checking into a hotel half-an-hour from the airport, I went for dinner with China Daily reporters and members of the local Party committee. I discovered I'm a tofu fan, something that for whatever reason I'd never tried back home. I enjoyed its fundamental absurdity. Though it's a jelly, it's more meat substitute than dessert. It went particularly well with the self-made soy sauce-ginger-lime-and-chilli dip that was to become a staple of my trip.

After a few hours' flight, I landed in a rural airport that reminded me of Donegal's. No need for a shuttle



From left: Villagers in poverty-stricken areas move to new houses in Zhenfeng county, Guizhou province. An advanced roads network snakes through Wengxi town, Sinan county. Chestnut rose farming is a leading industry in promoting rural industrial revolution in Guizhou.

By EOGHAN NORRIS MCNEILL
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I left Beijing for Guizhou province at the start of August thinking about a Gaelic football match. It's one of Ireland's national sports, a mixture of rugby and association football played at home and in Irish emigrant communities.

The county I'm from, Donegal on Ireland's northwest coast, was playing Mayo in a de facto All-Ireland quarterfinal that day. Before booking flights, I checked to see I'd be in Guizhou in time to watch it online and made sure my streaming subscription was up to date.

After a few hours' flight, I landed in a rural airport that reminded me of Donegal's. No need for a shuttle

Local villagers have benefited from recent social welfare measures, Li Xin reports.



The A-mei Qituo town is the largest relocation and resettlement site of Qinglong county, Southwest China's Guizhou province.

Locals consider premla micophylla a fairy leaf, which inspired the name of the delicacy. Fairy tofu is made by rubbing the plant, adding its juice to the plant ash for five minutes to form tofu, before stirring in your favorite ingredients.

To address poverty in the region, the county's Party committee and government since 2003 have decided to prioritize tourism. Adopting the principles of "government guidance, department cooperation, bundling funds and mass participation", Yaoshang's

tourism infrastructure has been greatly improved. Now, most villagers run some form of agritainment business, a combination of agriculture and entertainment.

Yaoshang people have been able to make great strides in poverty alleviation through tourism, and the village has become a model for poverty alleviation in Shiqian county. Poverty alleviation through relocation is a policy developed by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council, which is consid-

ered as a No 1 project and one of the "four tough battles" to win the fight against poverty.

Tongren city, located in the Wuling Mountains, is an area of extreme poverty. It is a big city with a large population, where only through ecological migration can locals begin to enjoy better, more fulfilling lives.

Wanshan district is emblematic of the government's relocation policy. The district has consistently promoted the transformation of urban development in places like Wangjia Garden, which covers an area

of about 663 mu, or 44.2 hectares, with a total construction area of about 475,200 square meters and total investment of 2.03 billion yuan (\$284.41 million). It's a cross-regional relocation site where work first began in 2017 and 2018. In 2017, all structures in the garden were medium and high-rise buildings, before 16 new, 18-story buildings were built.

Last year all of the complex buildings were multi-story, and today it is home to 18,379 people from 4,232 households from Sinan, Yijiang and Shiqian. "My husband died of illness and I was unable to survive alone with four children," said Pan Xueqin, a local resident of the Wanshan district. In September 2018, she moved to Wangjia community and is now an embroidery worker there. "Our government asked me to move here. The government gave me a job and it was convenient for my children to go to school. My life became significantly better."

Amenities in the area have been improved, and the "joint office, employment security, balanced education, public service and grassroots Party building" principle is implemented to ensure the move is seamless for all involved. There is a convenient service center, micro-factory industrial park, school, health service station, supermarket and new era civilization practice center, all to help the people who have been relocated.

To achieve the next stages of the development of Party organization, public services, social security, employment, training, industry and pair support, a 6,000-sq-m micro-factory industrial park has been built at Wangjia Garden. It has helped encourage labor-intensive enterprises to set up micro-factories providing jobs for relocated people nearby, and to achieve a mutually beneficial environment for both employment and family care.

Highway mileage in the province was 196,900 kilometers in 2018, 101 times that in 1949. Expressway mileage was 6,453 km and high-speed railway mileage reached 1,262 km last year.

Local authorities have prioritized poverty alleviation and focused on infrastructure and construction in rural areas by developing industries that included the improvement of education, healthcare and housing.

They have built pitch and cement roads extending about 80,000 km in rural areas, facilitating 12 million people living along the roads.

They restructured local agriculture, reduced farming of inefficient crops such as corn and developed efficient industries such as vegetables, tea and edible fungus.

The low-income population in the province was reduced from 6.23 million in 2015 to 1.55 million in 2018.

Local authorities also centered on the supply-side reform and advanced, environmentally friendly and efficient development.

Authorities have promoted a project aiming to transform about 1,000 industrial companies and attract about 1,000 companies to develop in Guizhou.

The province also implemented the big data strategy and promoted development of the national big data comprehensive pilot zone.

It resolved debt risks and maintained a steady and continuous momentum for economic development.

Forest coverage rate in the province increased to 57 percent in 2018 and good air quality days reached 98.2 percent on average in Guizhou's counties.

Local officials put employment in a prominent place and launched a three-year action plan training farmers from 2019-21.

Last year saw the creation of 780,000 jobs in urban areas. They also realized remote diagnosis and treatment in cities, counties and even townships, making it easier for people in mountainous areas to access medical services.

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Guizhou is a pioneer in promoting progress in education in both urban and rural areas.



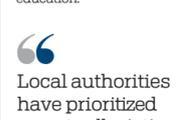
Yi people take a photo on a country road in Guizhou.



A doctor carries out health checks for villagers in Guizhou.



Guizhou provides a three-year free training program to boost vocational education.



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Poverty alleviation boosts economic, social development

By SUN ZHIGANG, SHEN YIQIN

Authorities in Guizhou in Southwest China see poverty alleviation as a direct way of serving the people. The previous provincial Party committees and governments led local officials and residents to promote economic and social development.

The province's urban and rural landscapes have changed radically since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

The province saw its GDP reach 1.48 trillion yuan (\$208.7 billion) and a per capita GDP hit 41,244 yuan in 2018, which were 2,377 and 937 times the respective figures in 1949.

The per capita disposable income of urban and rural residents was 31,592 yuan and 9,716 yuan respectively last year, 336 times and 201 times the tallies in 1949.

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