

CHINA

FROM THE GRASSROOTS

Traditional craft creates employment in Guizhou

By YANG JUN in Guiyang and YE ZIZHEN

Miao embroidery, a national intangible cultural heritage, is helping people in Guizhou province improve their lives through increased incomes and cultural confidence.

Peng Yi, the owner of a Miao embroidery company in Bijie, Guizhou, has devoted herself to inheriting the traditional skill of the Miao people and providing more job opportunities to residents.

Born in Huawu village in Bijie's Qianxi county, Peng grew up watching villagers make traditional Miao clothing and accessories and developed an interest in Miao batik and embroidery.

While in primary school, she attended a class taught by Yang Qiong, an inheritor of Miao embroidery. Peng was impressed by the knowledge and skill behind the ancient craft and made up her mind to become an inheritor herself.

In 2008, Peng became Yang's only student, but the learning process was not always smooth.

Recalling the tough moments, Peng said the horsetail stitches and paper-cut stitches were the most difficult to master.

When doing horsetail stitches, or *mawexiuxi*, the embroiderer stitches hair from a horse's tail at the tip of the pattern on the cloth.

Paper-cut stitches, or *jianzhixiu*, require the embroiderer to cut the cotton cloth into the shape wanted, sticking up to 10 layers of patterns together, and then stitch the cloth to make it colorful and complete.

To gain more knowledge and master higher-level skills, Peng enrolled at Guizhou Minzu University and earned a master's degree in folk art.

Miao embroidery is more eye-catching and brighter than the four other traditional Chinese embroidery forms, which are found in the provinces of Jiangsu, Sichuan, Hunan and Guangdong. And while their patterns have broader market appeal, Miao embroidery prefers themes of Miao history, water and mountain scenes, and local customs.

Peng's efforts to inherit and spread the ancient skill have been backed by local government.

Guizhou's provincial government is launching a special plan to assist the development of the Miao embroidery industry by providing free lessons and venues for embroiderers to start their own workshops and brands.

Xiang Songxian began working at Peng's company in 2018. Before

that, she worked in Zhejiang province in East China for nearly a decade.

"My mother got sick years ago, so I decided to come back to my hometown to look after her," the 29-year-old said. "There are many advantages to working here. The money I make here is enough to improve my quality of life. I can spend more time with my mother and also master more Miao embroidery skills."

Peng has many ideas about how to develop Miao embroidery, including creating more diversified products, recording the skills and knowledge required so that future generations can master and learn them, and expanding cooperation with other disciplines such as pottery and wooden products to advance the industrialization and marketing potential of the craft.

"What's traditional is also fashionable," President Xi Jinping said during a visit to a workshop in Huawu in February last year, urging the promotion of Miao embroidery to aid rural vitalization.

To celebrate the Lunar New Year, Peng and her colleagues have also designed new products with tiger elements, including a tiger-shaped pillow.

"The pillow we designed uses spiral, sun and floral patterns, indicating expectations of a better life in Miao culture," Peng said.

Zhang Chi contributed to this story.

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Peng Yi shows a tiger-shaped cushion she designed and made. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Military issues new set of rules for honor system

By ZHAO LEI zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

China overhauled its military honor system recently by issuing a set of rules.

The Regulation on the Armed Forces' Honor System sets three major categories of honor — one for service members' exploits during wartime, another for their work during peacetime and the third for efforts during massive noncombat operations — and also establishes special honors for commanding officers.

The regulation stipulates that the new honor system consists of medals, honorary titles, citations, commemorative badges and special rewards. It lists recipients' qualifications, the criteria for the awards, the awarding procedures and measures used to promote the recipients' actions, and it explains how the honor system is managed.

The document also governs the issuance of honors granted to foreign nationals and Chinese soldiers' acceptance of foreign honors.

The processes for approving and conferring honors to service members during wartime will be streamlined to inspire soldiers fighting on the front line. Rewards and other special treatment bestowed upon those honored for wartime exploits must be

greater than those for others, it emphasizes.

According to the regulation, two types of medals have been revived — the Red Flag and Red Star medals, which were last used almost eight decades ago.

The history of the Chinese military's honor system can be traced back to the early years of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, the first armed forces units under the Communist Party of China.

In 1931, the Party established and awarded its first military medal — the Red Flag. Eight Red Army leaders, including Mao Zedong and Zhu De, received the decoration.

Two years later, the Red Army created the Red Star Medal and decided that it should be the highest decoration for military personnel.

Since then, the Chinese armed forces have reformed their honor system several times.

The Central Military Commission's Political Work Department began working on the new regulation in January 2019.

It was reviewed and approved by a meeting of the CPC Central Committee's Political Bureau on Nov 18 last year and then issued by the CPC Central Committee, State Council and Central Military Commission on Dec 9.

Tears of joy



A community worker bursts into tears as she celebrates the end of a lockdown in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on Wednesday. The community was placed under closed management during the Spring Festival holiday due to a COVID-19 outbreak. DONG XUMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

HK races to contain outbreak as cases soar

Medical workers from mainland sent to help city conduct large-scale testing

By KATHY ZHANG in Hong Kong kathyzhang@chinadailyhk.com

Hong Kong is taking urgent steps to increase its testing capacity for COVID-19 with support from Chinese mainland authorities, including the dispatch of medical workers, as the city races to contain its worst-ever outbreak, with 1,161 new cases recorded on Wednesday.

Between 100 and 200 mainland medical workers will work at a makeshift novel coronavirus testing laboratory being set up by BGI Group, said Antony Wu Ting-yuk, chairman of BGI's affiliate lab in Hong Kong.

Daily testing capacity is expected to increase from 200,000 to 300,000. The facility, called the Huo-Yan Laboratory and located at the Ma On Shan Sports Centre in the New Territories, will be gradually put into operation from the middle of this month, Wu said.

BGI is one of several companies contracted by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government to conduct large-scale COVID-19 testing. It first built the Huo-Yan Laboratory in the city in August 2020. The lab, then set up at the Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park Sports Centre on Hong Kong Island, played a

vital role in cutting novel coronavirus transmissions during a previous spike in the city's epidemic.

In the immediate short term, Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor said on Tuesday the government will purchase millions of rapid testing kits for COVID-19 from the mainland and distribute them to residents in high-risk areas.

She also expressed confidence that the city can contain the current outbreak with firm support from the central government.

The new measures have become necessary as the city faces an unrelenting surge of infections.

As a result, there has been a rapid spike in demand across the city for virus testing and quarantine and treatment facilities, putting the government's resources, including the public health system, under extreme pressure.

The virus has spread at a staggering speed, with the number of infections rising from just three linked with imported cases in December to more than 4,000 local cases in the past two weeks. The worsening situation coincided with Lunar New Year festive gatherings. Health authorities have found many transmission clusters affecting multiple families in recent days.

Trains help workers return to factories

By QIU QUANLIN in Guangzhou qiuquanlin@chinadaily.com.cn

After arriving at Guangzhou South Railway Station in Guangdong's provincial capital on Wednesday afternoon, Zhang Ximei prepared to depart for nearby Dongguan, where she has worked in a garment factory for four years.

"Many of my fellow workers have also prepared to return to work," she said. "We are already familiar with the working and living environment in Dongguan."

Zhang, from Congjiang county, Guizhou province, a low-risk area for the spread of COVID-19, was one of 600 migrant workers who took a special high-speed train for an organized return to work in the prosperous Pearl River Delta region after the Spring Festival holiday.

"After staying at home for half a month during the holiday, I am happy to take the special train back to the city," said Zhang, 34.

Wednesday's arrival of the special train, which offered free tickets for migrant workers, marked the start of the organized return of workers to Guangdong, an economic powerhouse in South China.



Workers wait at Guangzhou South Railway Station before taking bus to return to work in Dongguan, Guangdong province, on Wednesday. QIU QUANLIN / CHINA DAILY

The province's human resources and social security authority said two more such trains, carrying about 1,200 migrant workers from Guizhou and Yunnan province, will be organized in the coming days.

More than 8 million migrant workers left Guangdong to return to their hometowns for the Spring Festival holiday, which began on Jan 31, according to Guangdong authorities.

It is estimated that more than 90 percent will return to Guangdong after the holiday.

Human resources authorities in Guangzhou, Foshan, Dongguan, Jiangmen and other cities in the Pearl River Delta region are organizing job fairs for migrant workers from other regions and provinces, based on their local COVID-19 outbreak situations, Guangdong authorities said.

Health authorities in cities like Guangzhou and Dongguan have

warned workers from medium- and high-risk areas to postpone plans to return to work.

Dongguan's health commission said migrant workers must report their health conditions to their work units after returning.

A man tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday after he took a high-speed train to Guangzhou from Baise, in the neighboring Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Saturday.

Guangxi authorities are racing against the clock to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus and minimize the risk of COVID-19 as the number of confirmed cases in the region continues to grow.

Fifty-four new locally transmitted COVID-19 cases were reported in the region, all in Baise, between noon Tuesday and noon Wednesday, bringing the total since Friday to 180, the region's health commission said on Wednesday.

Plan aims to improve community services

By CHENG SI chengsi@chinadaily.com.cn

More quality community-based public services, including preschool education, nursing and medical services, will be available by 2025, according to a plan released by the State Council, China's Cabinet.

The plan said that by 2025, 80 percent of communities in rural areas will be equipped with comprehensive service facilities including stores, schools and hospitals, up from 65.7 percent in 2020. All urban communities should have comprehensive service facilities by 2025.

It also says 18 community workers should be available for every 10,000 urban residents by 2025, up from 15 in 2020.

Nursing services for the elderly, especially those with disabilities and financial problems, have been made a priority in the improvement of community services.

"The aging population will keep growing over the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, and grow further by 2035," Ou Xiaoli, director of the National Development and Reform Commission's social development department, said at a news conference on Wednesday. "It's necessary to develop community services offering the elderly meals, house cleaning, showers and medical treatment."

80 percent

of communities in rural areas will be equipped with comprehensive service facilities including stores, schools and hospitals by 2025.

"We should first secure people's basic needs rather than talking big. We can't let the elderly living in urban areas be left behind in the internet era, and don't have the heart to let the elderly in the countryside — those in their 80s or 90s — cook their own meals without any help."

He said residents' basic and urgent needs for babysitting, education, nursing services and culture and sports facilities were being ignored by the management of some communities, with staff members only focusing on administrative matters.

"Communities in the new era carry people's wishes for a good life for all ages," Ou said. "We will continue to introduce more domestic services to communities and diversify some basic services providing public goods including sports, maintenance, retailing and even hairdressing in the future."

Some provinces have explored new ways to make community services, especially those focusing on the elderly, more accessible.

For example, communities in Gongshu district, Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, introduced vehicles to help the elderly take showers early last year. Some elderly people have difficulties taking baths at home due to disabilities or a shortage of professional nursing staff members.

The district's civil affairs bureau said the bath-assistance team also helps seniors check their blood pressure and blood sugar levels.

In addition to such nursing services, the plan also emphasizes care for juveniles, medical and legal services, and emergency response services.

It encourages more companies and social groups to invest in the sector and urges young people to get involved in social work to secure high-quality community services.

Wang Aiwen, vice-minister of civil affairs, said at the news conference that it's necessary to enhance the training of community workers, and encourage key groups such as college graduates and demobilized military personnel to take grassroots jobs in communities.