

Tongxiang develops into key player

County-level city in Zhejiang builds infrastructure to encourage high-tech industry and innovation



ILLUSTRATION BY SHI YU / CHINA DAILY



White chrysanthemums are native to Tongxiang.



Tongxiang's traditional snack of honey cake.



The sweet plums that grow in the area are named Zuili.



A local painting uses wheat straw as a medium. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Named for being the hometown of *wutong* trees, or Chinese parasol, in ancient times, Tongxiang, a county-level city of East China's Zhejiang province, has seen burgeoning development in many of its sectors.

Spanning an area of 727 square kilometers, Tongxiang has a population of 1.03 million and is home to Wuzhen, which has been the permanent host of the World Internet Conference since 2014.

In 2021, Tongxiang's GDP reached 114.2 billion yuan (\$17 billion), an increase of 8.5 percent year-on-year. Its fiscal revenue and general public budget revenue were 17.8 billion yuan and 10.9 billion yuan respectively, ranking 25th among

China's top 100 counties, according to local officials.

Administrated by Jiaxing city, the site of the first national congress of the Communist Party of China in 1921, Tongxiang is a major area of Red heritage. There were 58 Party members at the first CPC national congress; of them, renowned figures Shen Yanbing, better known by his penname Mao Dun, and his brother Shen Zemin were native to Tongxiang.

Until the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Tongxiang had developed 29 local Party branches and more than 100 Party members including revolutionary heroes Kong Lingjing, Chi Gengxiang, Chen Danchi and Zhan Xingmin.

In recent years, the city has paid efforts toward Party construction including rolling out a three-year action plan and developing Red brands. The city has taken a leading role in building the first batch of grassroots Party organizations in Jiaxing.

Apart from revolutionary legacy, Tongxiang has taken advantage of high-level conferences and meetings to accelerate the innovation construction.

Efforts have been made to build facilities for supporting industrial innovation such as the Fenghuang Lake Science and Technology City, the Wuzhen International Innovation Zone and a new town for the high-speed railway industry.

In addition, the city has built the "home of academicians", which was included in the first batch of its kind in Zhejiang province and is the only such organization in Jiaxing. It has cooperated with the School of Materials Science and Engineering in Tsinghua University and Yangtze Delta Region Research Institute of Tsinghua University to set up the Wuzhen Lab. This has gathered a slew of new-type industrial research institutes affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Zhejiang Sci-Tech University and Communication University of Zhejiang.

Benefiting from conferences, the city has achieved remarkable progress in digital economic development, local officials said. So far, Tongxiang has more than 1,500 national and provincial high-tech businesses. As of 2021, it has more than 2,700 digital economic businesses and the industry's output value topped 20 billion yuan.

The city stands out among its peers in Zhejiang in terms of the integrated development of industrialization and informatization. According to local officials, a cluster of projects including a supercomputing center in Wuzhen; Zhejiang Hozon New Energy Automobile Co; Baidu's Apollo Park in Wuzhen and the Huawei Innovation Center, are in progress.

In 2018, Tongxiang was approved as the first county to build an exclusive channel for international internet data by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. It marked a major step in its smart city construction. The city has been designated as one of the areas with the best information infrastructure in the country.

As a city boasting industry and market development potential in Zhejiang province, Tongxiang is home to more than 160,000 market players and over 40,000 businesses including industrial conglomerates China Jushi, Tongkun Group, Xinfengming Group and Hua-you Cobalt, as well as manufacturing giants Jeamo Motor and Zhejiang Double Arrow Rubber. Together they have helped form a competitive industrial system featuring new materials, digital economy, equipment manufacturing and the fashion industry.

In 2021, the output value from industrial enterprises of designated size with an annual revenue of at least 20 million yuan reached 220 billion yuan. Meanwhile, the total market value of 10 listed companies ranked No 1 in Jiaxing.

Moreover, the renowned Wuzhen scenic area and the country's largest woolen

sweater distribution center, Puyuan wool sweater market, helped Tongxiang win awards such as a national tourism city, a pilot city for the all-for-one tourism and first prize in the service industry development in Zhejiang.

With the improved development in modern agriculture, Tongxiang was also granted the honor of national bright star in promoting the digital development in agriculture and rural areas and a provincial pilot county in building beautiful countryside in the new era.

Located in Hangjiahu Plain in northern Zhejiang province, Tongxiang is a key transportation hub. Sitting among the cities of Shanghai, Suzhou and Hangzhou, it is part of the one-hour commuting circle connecting with the trio. By high-speed railway, Tongxiang is 20 minutes away from Hangzhou and 45 minutes away from Shanghai.

Expressways of Shanghai-Kunming, Shanghai-Jiaxing-Huzhou and Lianshi-Hangzhou and the 320 national highway run through Tongxiang. The number of highways in the city has ranked top for years in Zhejiang province. Moreover, the city has a total of 22 inland waterways measuring 272 kilometers in total.

Building on the national strategy of the integration of the Yangtze River Delta region, Tongxiang has increased investment in infrastructure construction featuring rail transit and a rapid and intelligent development. This includes the Shanghai-Jiaxing-Hangzhou railway and the Suzhou-Taizhou Expressway, as part of Tongxiang's efforts to become a transport hub for the Yangtze River Delta region and a gateway to the northeast of Hangzhou's urban area.

Praised as a land of fish and rice and home of silk, Tongxiang is more than a fertile piece of land, it holds a slew of culture with thousands of years of history such as Majiabang and Liangzhu. The city

has produced renowned literati including Zhang Lyuxiang, Lyu Liuliang, Mao Dun, Feng Zikai and Mu Xin.

Taking advantage of these cultural treasures, Tongxiang has created a series of brands, such as Mao Dun literature and Feng Zikai arts, and has built facilities including new libraries and fitness centers. The Bohong City Bookstore has branches all around the city and cultural auditoriums have been built and promoted in rural areas, which represent the character of Tongxiang.

Over the past years, Tongxiang has granted national-level honors including a cultural model city and hometowns of Chinese folk arts, calligraphy, photography, literature and new plays.

Boasting improved construction and a sound natural environment, Tongxiang provides residents with high-quality living. The city was listed as a national pilot in harmonious community construction. It made the list of the top 10 counties with good social governance in Zhejiang province.

In recent years, Tongxiang has also increased its investment in social welfare.

The city has completed coordinated development in its educational, medical and elderly care services. So far, the endowment insurance and medical insurance have been expanded to cover all around the city.



A woman wears blue calico, made using an ancient dyeing technique.