

CHINA



Yao Keyou works in a factory belonging to the Fenghui Bamboo and Wood Products Company in Huzhou, Zhejiang province.

PHOTOS BY FENG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Disabled people find growing opportunities in Zhejiang

Bamboo factory helps boost income for blind, deaf and others

By MA ZHENHUAN in Hangzhou
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Disabled people in remote villages in Zhejiang province have found extra ways to earn money in recent years as the country focuses on achieving common prosperity.

For example, Yao Keyou, who is physically disabled, is responsible for the maintenance and repair of bamboo packaging at a factory in Huzhou city, and earns about 5,000 yuan (\$726) per month.

Miao Yonghong, who is unable to hear or speak, earns a similar amount weaving curtains at the same factory, which is near her home.

Fifteen other disabled people like Yao and Miao work at the 50,000-square-meter factory. They have jobs thanks to an entrepreneur who set up a business providing work for people with disabilities in Zhejiang and neighboring Anhui province. As a result the incomes of 42 families have increased and they are now living better lives.

With an annual output value of 120 million yuan, the Fenghui Bamboo and Wood Products Company was founded in 2005 by Liang Ruihong, who himself has a physical disability.



Bamboo products on display in a showroom at the factory.

Located in his hometown of Meixi township, in Huzhou's Anji county, the company makes a variety of bamboo products, from daily household necessities and woven items to bamboo utensils, as well as bamboo fiber products and building materials.

Many left-behind residents and people with disabilities in rural areas previously lived alone and had little-to-no chance of securing a stable job due to their physical condition or age, according to Liang.

He understood this plight all too well.

Born into a poor farmer's family in Dushantou village in 1960, Liang contracted polio when he was a child, which complicated life.

After failing to pass the national college entrance examination, he made a living working in fields and collecting pig droppings for manure.

After about a year, Liang seized the rare opportunity to become a full-time employee at a bamboo whip factory in a neighboring town. Humble, curious and hardworking, he was promoted to workshop director after five years, and developed 50 new bamboo and wood products.

Over time, the idea of setting up his own company began to take shape. "We didn't have the money," he said. "I had to borrow it from friends. I set the factory up near home with 10 colleagues."

During the first few years, when the products were ready, Liang traveled with the delivery van to present them to customers in person.

"To save on accommodations, I often slept in the van with the driver at night," he said.

As his business grew, Liang never forgot about the hardships he had

to endure because of his physical disability.

As company chairman, he created jobs on the processing lines, which do not require physical exertion and are easy to master. To ensure that as many people as possible could benefit from his success, the company set up a charity in 2010.

Each year, the charity donates 250,000 yuan to help people with disabilities in Meixi township and 1.37 million yuan to improve the infrastructure in communities.

After nearly two decades of rapid development, Liang's company is now renowned for being one of China's largest manufacturers and exporters of bamboo and wood products. It is also one of the country's largest producers of natural food packaging containers and restaurant utensils.

These green and environmentally friendly products are not only popular with Chinese customers, but are also well-received abroad, particularly in the United States, Europe and Japan.

"The company's overseas sales reached \$13.27 million last year," Liang said, adding that the products will help contribute to national goals to peak carbon emissions by 2030 and reach carbon neutrality by 2060.

For Liang, the company has set an example to the world, showing that it is possible to strike the right balance between economic development, making money and environmental protection.

Baby girl breaks Asia's heart transplant record

By LIU KUN in Wuhan and
WANG XIAOYU

The life of a 53-day-old girl suffering from a congenital heart defect in Wuhan, Hubei province, has been saved by record-breaking surgery as doctors successfully performed a heart transplant.

The girl, weighing less than 3.9 kilograms, underwent the surgery on Feb 26 and was taken off the ventilator on March 1, an indication that her heart and lung functions had stabilized, according to the Union Hospital Affiliated to Tongji Medical College at the Huazhong University of Science and Technology.

"The surgery required us to connect five key vessels and insert hundreds of stitches. Each stitch was less than a millimeter or two from the other," said Dong Nianguo, head of the hospital's department of cardiovascular surgery.

The younger the baby, the more challenges an operation presents. "The requirements were exacting," he said.

For instance, the amount of anesthetic had to be calculated by the milligram.

"When undertaking a cardiopulmonary bypass (a technique in



Doctors conduct a heart transplant on a 53-day-old girl at the Union Hospital Affiliated to Tongji Medical College at the Huazhong University of Science and Technology in Wuhan, Hubei province, on Feb 26. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

which a machine temporarily takes over the function of the heart and lungs), we didn't even dare blink our eyes. After the operation, we arranged for teams to monitor her around the clock," Dong said.

Fortunately, the girl is doing well so far, and Dong said that she was transferred to a general ward on March 3.

The girl's mother, surnamed Hu, said that she realized her daughter often seemed tired and had trouble

feeding about 20 days after her birth.

On Jan 29, she exhibited shortness of breath and was diagnosed as suffering from serious congenital heart disease.

Later, the baby was brought to Dong, who examined her and determined that she was in the terminal stages of heart disease. He decided that the only way to save her was by giving her a new heart.

The family waited for a suitable

heart donor for about a month, and it seemed hope was fading until they were notified that the heart from a 7-month-old male donor in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, who had died from brain bleed, was a match for their daughter.

At around 11:45 am on Feb 26, the heart arrived at the hospital in Wuhan. Eight minutes later, it was placed inside the girl's chest as doctors began to carefully connect blood vessels.

The heart was restarted at around 12:15 pm, and the transplant was announced a success about 45 minutes later when the girl was taken off the bypass.

She is the youngest heart transplant patient in Asia, breaking the record set by the Union Hospital in 2019 when a 66-day-old baby was also given a heart transplant.

"It's not our intention to break records. The successful outcome is the result of countless efforts in the past to save lives," Dong said.

Xia Jiahong, vice-president of Union Hospital, said that it has completed 150 heart transplants since 2008, 40 percent of all such surgeries performed nationwide.

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Qingdao FTZ legal space a first in China

By XIE CHUANJIAO in Qingdao, Shandong
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On March 1, the Qingdao Maritime Court in Shandong province opened a space specifically to deal with maritime affairs in the Qingdao pilot free trade zone. The aim is to offer efficient legal services to support opening-up and enhance maritime law in the country.

The area is comprised of two courtrooms and is the first of its kind to be established by a maritime court in a pilot free trade zone in China.

The Qingdao Area of the China (Shandong) Pilot Free Trade Zone, also known as the Qingdao FTZ, is located in the Qingdao West Coast New Area, which covers an area of 52 square kilometers.

Zhang Dongqing, a member of the Qingdao Maritime Court's leading Party members group, said that the establishment of the space is a milestone in the development of the court, saying that it will tread a new path in the integration of maritime law with the development of pilot free trade zones. "It will handle foreign maritime and commercial cases and promote maritime law to ensure businesses operating in the Qingdao FTZ conduct operations legally," Zhang said.

Additionally, the space will lead the allocation of foreign-related maritime resources, resolve disputes and support the training of foreign legal specialists, he added.

In collaboration with the Qingdao FTZ, the Qingdao Maritime Court has released guides on model contracts and trial cases to help shipping and port businesses conduct foreign trade. Previously,

eight model contracts had been made available on the Shandong Port Group's contract management platform. A subsidiary of the Shandong Port Group, the Qingdao Port successfully claimed its right of a maritime lien over a contract worth 200 million yuan (\$28.6 million) by using a model contract for reference.

Since its establishment in 2019, the Qingdao FTZ has been committed to creating a free and convenient business environment to develop foreign trade and logistics and attract investment, capital and personnel. It set up a legal service center with strong support from the Commission for Political and Legal Affairs of the CPC Qingdao Municipal Committee, local courts and procuratorates, universities and colleges and other organizations.

Currently, the center has a foreign-related trial circuit court, an intellectual property circuit court, a foreign-related commercial court, an international arbitration center, an international commercial mediation center and a public legal service center. The result is a one-stop public legal service system for free trade.

Xia Xu, the general manager of China Marine Bunker (PetroChina) Company's Qingdao branch, applauded the efforts of the Qingdao FTZ to create a legal and law-based business environment. He said he appreciated the center's collaboration with legal services, which addresses a number of concerns. He added that he hoped the FTZ would continue to improve its legal system, create a fair, open, transparent market rule, and ensure a rule-of-law business environment.



Black-necked cranes winter at Dashanbao Nature Reserve in Zhaotong, Yunnan province, in December. WANG GUANSEN / XINHUA

Borders no boundary to protecting cranes

By LI HONGYANG
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China is expected to cooperate with Bhutan this year to protect black-necked cranes along migratory routes as the bird's rising population has made conserving their shrinking habitats all the more urgent, according to a researcher.

Wu Heqi, an associate researcher at the Kunming Institute of Zoology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said that black-necked cranes fly from Bhutan to the Tibet autonomous region in spring to breed and return to Bhutan to winter, so collecting information about habitats and their conservation status in China and sharing this between two countries is important to the species.

"Both Bhutanese and Chinese researchers are eager to share this information," Wu said.

"If we learn more about the threats cranes face along migratory routes and summer breeding areas, we can develop protective measures between the two countries."

The cranes usually inhabit alpine areas, so shrinking habitats and climate change pose a major challenge, Wu said.

In their wintering areas in Yunnan and Guizhou provinces and their breeding grounds in Sichuan, Qinghai and Gansu provinces, and the Xinjiang Uygur and Tibet autonomous regions, habitable areas are shrinking due to construction of infrastructure.

For example, extensive fencing

that enclose pastures on grasslands can disturb cranes, especially young birds, while they are attempting to take wing.

"Cranes need to run to gain speed to take off. However, they can run into fences in the process, which is dangerous. On foggy or rainy days, cranes also risk flying into high-voltage lines while airborne," he said.

Cranes fly at altitudes of more than 7,000 meters during migration, and their routes range from several hundred to nearly 2,000 kilometers in length.

Additionally, too few nature reserves are ready to support them, Wu added.

"Even during short trips of just three or four days, the birds have to stop in the middle to rest. The situation on the ground determines whether they are able to complete migration successfully," Wu said.

The cranes like to feed on insects in open grassland and fish in shallow wetlands.

Planting trees or shrubs in wetland habitats can lead to a decrease in food and an insecure environment as birds may become wary of predators lurking in vegetation.

Black-necked cranes reside in high-altitude areas mostly in China, India and Bhutan. In 2020, they were downgraded from "vulnerable" to "near threatened" on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species.

Today, the number of the cranes globally has risen to about 15,000.