

CHINA

BUILDING THE NEW ERA | BASES OF HOPE

Editor's Note: China Daily is running a series of stories on old revolutionary bases with profound history and heritage that are striving to lead local people on the road to prosperity in the new era.

Life for residents of Red area improving

Tea, TCM and loans help Jinzhai county dwellers prosper as they emerge from poverty

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Luo Xianping has been busy overseeing the harvest of *Corydalis* tuber, a traditional Chinese medicinal plant that belongs to the poppy family, in the mountains of Jinzhai county in Anhui province.

Last autumn, the resident of Banzhuyuan township planted about 53 hectares of the plant, which is used to relieve pain.

"The plantation should bring in about 3.2 million yuan (\$473,300) this year," said Luo, who hired farmers to take care of his land and encouraged others to grow more of the plant on their own farmland.

Luo, who is in his 50s, calls his farm "Tushengjin", which translates as "soil becomes gold".

A member of the Communist Party of China, he said he was happy with his business and life, though his family experienced difficulties in the past. In the late 1920s, Luo's grandfather and five brothers joined the CPC army to take part in the revolution. Only one returned alive, but badly wounded.

It wasn't until after the founding of New China that the family learned that the others, including Luo's grandfather, had died while serving. "They paid with their lives in hopes that their descendants could live happy lives," he said.

Records show that more than 2,000 people from Banzhuyuan — which currently has a population of 20,000 — were martyred during the revolution.

Jinzhai county was one of the birthplaces of the people's armed forces and of the Chinese revolution. About a third of its 300,000 residents participated, and most died in battles, according to the Jinzhai Revolution Museum.

President Xi Jinping visited the museum and a memorial hall for the Red Army on April 24, 2016, and laid a wreath at a monument commemorating those who had fallen during the revolution. He also visited five households in Dawan village, the hometown of 65 revolutionary martyrs, in neighboring Huashi township.

Jinzhai, which was governed by Lu'an city, was among the country's poorest counties, and Dawan was on the county's list of the 71 most poverty-stricken villages, with 242 of its 1,032 households registered for poverty alleviation measures in 2014.

Thanks to the measures taken, Dawan was removed from the list

in 2018, and the county was taken off the national poverty alleviation list in 2020.

At the five homes he visited, Xi listened to ideas and suggestions from the villagers on poverty alleviation measures.

He also sought their views on migration and resettlement.

Chen Zeshen, now 73, had been living alone in a rundown, brick-and-clay house for decades before Xi's visit. His only son died in 2003, and his wife in 2007. In keeping with an old superstition, Chen had changed the location of the house's front door twice, hoping to reverse the family's misfortune.

In 2015, Yu Jing was sent to Dawan to serve as its first Party secretary for poverty alleviation. She helped Chen secure a loan of 8,000 yuan to install photovoltaic power panels that could be used to generate additional electricity for the power grid. The electricity generated earned him about 3,000 yuan a year, half of which was used to repay the loan.

Yu also persuaded Chen to take out a second bank loan to purchase goats to raise. The interest for both loans was paid by the government.

The same year, the local government started to build a community in the village, with dozens of new two-floor houses to resettle poverty-stricken residents.

In May 2017, Chen moved into a new 80-square-meter house. He received 90,000 yuan in compensation for giving up his old house to the local government for tourism development.

A tourism development company was founded in Dawan in 2019, and the village received 300,000 tourists. Last year, 400,000 tourists visited, bringing in around about 80 million yuan, according to the local government.

"We also planted more tea trees and traditional Chinese medicinal herbs," Yu said.

Dawan is now home to 330 hectares of tea. "The favorable policies of the Party and the government opened a new door, one that led me out of poverty," Chen said.

He added that he was thrilled to meet Xi in 2016.

"I will never forget chatting with General Secretary Xi Jinping that day," he recalled. "He sat in the front yard of my house for a meeting with the villagers and officials and asked me if I had any wishes, and I said I hoped my income would double that year. That wish was later more than fulfilled."



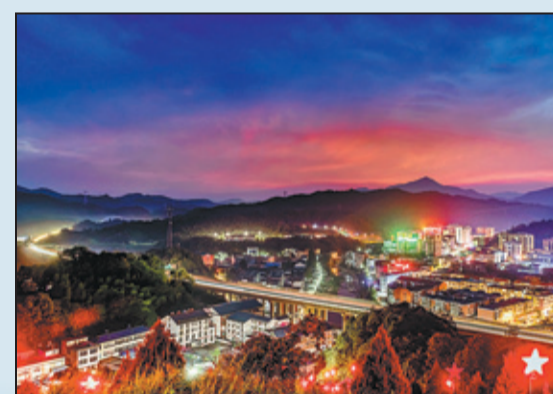
Farmers harvest morel mushrooms in a greenhouse in Jinzhai county, Anhui province. YUE YANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



A farmer checks the health of a kiwi fruit tree on a plantation in Jinzhai. YUAN JIE / FOR CHINA DAILY



A guesthouse caters to increasing numbers of tourists in Jinzhai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



With a population of 20,000, Banzhuyuan is a prosperous town. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Right: An aerial photo shows Dawan village in Jinzhai county, Anhui province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Revolutionary base in Dabie Mountains served as CPC stronghold

Located on the borders of Hubei, Henan and Anhui provinces, the Dabie Mountains Revolutionary Base was one of the most important in the history of the Communist Party of China. Despite multiple setbacks and numerous sacrifices, soldiers from the area continued to keep the Party's revolutionary cause going.

Historically, the Dabie Mountains were a key military area due to their strategic position. Passes through the hills, usually heavily guarded, were important routes for travelers from the north to the more populous and prosperous south during times of peace, while their flanks impeded quick advances from the north during times of war.

When the first alliance of the CPC and the Kuomintang, or the Chinese Nationalist Party, broke down in April 1927, the Dabie Mountains were one of the first areas to offer military resistance against the KMT.

On Nov 13, 1927, the CPC led the Huang'an-Macheng Uprising, dur-

ing which they conquered Huang'an (today's Hong'an) county in Hubei. After months of guerrilla warfare, they begin to create a revolutionary base in the border area between Hubei and Henan provinces.

The CPC led two more uprisings in the area in May and November 1929 and established smaller revolutionary bases in southeastern Henan and western Anhui.

In April 1930, under the guidance of the central leadership, CPC military forces in the three areas regrouped as a single united army. In June, a congress of workers, farmers and soldiers in Guangshan proclaimed the establishment of an area-wide Soviet government, and the Hubei-Henan-Anhui Revolutionary Base, or Dabie Mountains Revolutionary Base, was officially formed.

Red forces quickly expanded after the regrouping. By November 1931, it could count on nearly 30,000 soldiers. Second only in size to the Central Red Army, it was renamed the Red Fourth Front Army, and was led



Statues of Red Army soldiers at a Red tourism site in Jinzhai county, Anhui province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

by Xu Xiangqian (1901-90), who would become the chief of staff of the People's Liberation Army.

The expanded army was able to fend off multiple attempts by the KMT to eliminate the base. In June 1932, when Dabie was at its peak following the defeat of three KMT offensives, there were Soviet regimes in 26

counties home to a population of 3.5 million, again only second in size to the Central Revolutionary Base in southern Jiangxi province.

To secure the supply of grain, the base launched land redistribution campaigns in 1930. It issued loans to help farmers get tools and cattle and to cultivate every piece of land avail-

able. Thanks to proper economic and industrial policies, the base was able to support itself despite an economic blockade by the Nationalists.

The KMT launched its fourth attempt to wipe out the base in July 1932, calling in 300,000 troops. Overly optimistic as the result of previous victories, leaders at the time vowed to retaliate. As a result, the core of the Fourth Front Army was unable to rescue the central area of the base. They eventually marched west, away from the Dabie Mountains base, and set up the Sichuan-Shaanxi Revolutionary Base.

Those remaining were reorganized into the 25th Red Army, which attempted to defend the base under difficult circumstances. Dabie was badly affected as local Soviet governments gradually dissolved, but guerrilla warfare led by the CPC continued.

In November 1934, as the Central Red Army began the Long March, the 25th Red Army also began their own strategic move and eventually

joined Red army forces in Shaanxi province in September 1935.

A much smaller fraction of about 1,000 soldiers remained and fought at the base for three more years. As the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) broke out in earnest in 1937, they were regrouped as a detachment of the New Fourth Army, which operated under the agreement between the CPC and the KMT to jointly fight the invaders.

After victories against the Japanese in 1945, the base again played a role during the War of Liberation (1946-49). In summer 1947, the core force of the Shanxi-Hebei-Shandong-Henan (Jin-Ji-Lu-Yu) Field Army, led by Liu Bocheng (1892-1986) and Deng Xiaoping (1904-97), marched hundreds of kilometers into the Dabie Mountains and led a surprise attack on the KMT heartland. This marked the beginning of the PLA's offensive.