Beasts of burden a boon for herdsman

2018-01-26

China Daily USA |  
 Updated: 2018-01-26 16:19

Tstendrup, a herder, spends a great deal of time caring for the 60 yaks - his main source of income. Since 2013, he has taken his livestock almost every night to a nearby park to participate in a show titled Princess Wencheng. Last year alone his beloved animals earned him 130,000 yuan ($20,270).  
"These animals need to eat well and grow well, as they are too precious for my family now," he said.  
The performances of Princess Wencheng began in Lhasa, capital of the Tibet autonomous region, in August 2013 and have been a huge success. Now it is an important tourist attraction alongside must-see spots like the Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple.  
In 2017, more than 450,000 people watched the show, and the box-office takings stood at 160 million yuan.  
Before the show was staged at Ceqogling village opposite the Potala Palace, most people in the area made a living growing potatoes and barley.  
"Few people had as many yaks as Tstendrup and many worried that it would be hard for them to look for jobs," said Pedron, a village official.  
In preparing for the show, which needs around 800 performers, villagers soon found jobs. Now each performer earns 4,000 yuan a month. During the winter season when they do not need to perform, they each get a 600 yuan allowance.  
Many people have also taken up logistical jobs in the park, according to Pedron.  
Usunhome, a private company that organizes the show, said 95 percent of people working for the show were farmers and herders.  
"The show has been a good way to preserve Lhasa's cultural heritage and has seen active participation from locals," said He Ping, the company's president.  
Pubu Tashi, one of the performers, said: "People in the village love to be on stage because there is a strong Tibetan operatic tradition here. The show gives them the stage they need, and at the same time it is a big source of income for families."  
In 2016, over 5,200 people found jobs at 41 cultural parks in Tibet. Their average income was 7,400 yuan a year. A cultural park themed on Qomolangma, known as Mount Everest in the West, will be built in Shigatse this year.  
"Cultural events and performances have created many jobs, and it is a good way to lift people out of poverty," said Norbu Tsering, an official with the Tibetan Department of Culture.  
Xinhua

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201801/26/WS5a6ae47fa3106e7dcc136f87.html