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Introduction

*You ask me when I can return, but I don't know,
It rains in western hills and autumn pool o'erflow.
When we can trim by window side the candlelight,
And talk about the western hills in rainy night.*

This classic piece of poetry, which told the Tang poet's melancholy, reveals the hardships of the road to Shu or today's Sichuan Province.

During the reign of Xuanzong (A.D. 847–860) in the Tang Dynasty, poet Li Shangyin made his journey from Bashu or Sichuan back to the capital city Chang'an. As the road was obstructed by heavy autumn rain in the Bashan region or today's Nanjiang County, Sichuan Province, he felt a deep melancholy and wrote the poetry above, "Written on Rainy Night to My Wife in the North", which is cherished through his ages. In addition to the longing for relatives and friends as a long-time traveler, this piece mirrors the centuries-long plight of the Basha hinterland, as evidenced by a verse of Li Bai: "The hardships of the road to Shu are harder than ascending blue heaven."

After over a millennium of profound changes, what is the Bashan hinterland or today's Nanjiang County like? This book will take a close look at the historic changes that took place in Nanjiang. Through many in-depth field trips and investigations, we are keenly aware of the tremendous progress for local places. Since the introduction of the reform and opening-up policy, in particular the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), Nanjiang's county-level Party committee and government have led the 700,000 Nanjiang people to work hard in solidarity and make pioneering and innovative efforts, which brought about earth-shaking changes in its economy and society. During this process, Nanjiang, a mountainous county, explored and built a model of upgrading and transforming rural governance through green development and created an institutional mechanism of poverty alleviation and rural revitalization. Such a model and mechanism were adopted by the 80 counties

in the Qinling-Daba Mountains¹ and provide important inspirations and references for the nationwide rural revitalization and governance modernization of China's mountainous counties.

¹ The Qinling-Daba Mountains span between the Qinling Mountains and the Daba Mountains, crossing Henan, Hubei, Chongqing, Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu. In 2012, the Poverty Relief Office of the State Council and the National Development and Reform Commission issued the "Plan on Regional Development and Poverty Alleviation for Qinling-Daba Mountainous Area", in which 80 counties were designated to constitute the Qinling-Daba Mountainous Area. See Appendix 3 "Administrative Division of Qinling-Daba Mountainous Area".