



Creative cultural products from Yongji city are exhibited at the seventh CIIE.



Ceramic products made by a company in Yangcheng county are on display at the CIIE.

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Since its first time in 2018, the North China province of Shanxi has used the China International Import Expo, or CIIE, as a platform to promote its high-level opening-up, share global resources and showcase its new development patterns.

This year's CIIE, running from Nov 5 to 10 in the eastern coastal metropolis of Shanghai, has entered its seventh edition.

When Shanxi's presence at this year's expo featured the four functions of international purchase, investment and trade promotion, cultural exchanges and business cooperation, as it had in the previous sessions, it attracted a great deal of attention from visitors with a perfect combination of its culture and economy.

This year's CIIE, featuring the participation of attendees from 152 countries, regions and international organizations, is seen as a prime showcase of Shanxi's cultural and tourism resources, latest industrial developments and trade and investment opportunities.

More than 7,000 representatives from Shanxi's 2,140 enterprises attended this session of the CIIE.

The exhibitors from Shanxi province mainly represented businesses and entities engaged in the fields of international trade, retail, manufacturing, culture and tourism.

A highlight of Shanxi's attendance this time is that there were a large number of exhibits representing Shanxi's cultural heritage, tourism projects, and time-honored brands with deep roots in history and culture.

New image

The Shanxi pavilion at this year's expo spanned an area of 405 square meters showcasing the general image and business opportunities of the province.

The pavilion was among the most attractive provincial exhibition zones at the CIIE as it featured immersive and interactive experiences. With the help of modern digital technologies, the pavilion displayed Shanxi's natural landscapes, history, culture, life and traditions, as well as the latest achievements in industries, sciences and technologies.

The most impressive part of the Shanxi pavilion was an interactive zone called "Travel Shanxi with Wukong", showcasing Shanxi's cultural and tourism resources using the hit video game *Black Myth: Wukong*.

On Aug 20, the highly anticipated *Black Myth: Wukong* — a Chinese self-developed AAA game — made its domestic and global debut, immediately becoming an industry hit.

The game has also sparked interest in Chinese culture, as it is deeply rooted in Chinese mythology and inspired by the legends of the Monkey King — or Sun Wukong — in *Journey to the West*, a classic Chinese novel that has been represented in numerous films, TV shows and cartoons.

The art design of the game took inspiration from ancient Chinese architecture

and other traditional cultural elements. The unique cultural features have resulted in additional benefits outside the game industry, arousing fervent enthusiasm from netizens to experience the Chinese cultural heritage displayed in the game.

Shanxi is no doubt one of the biggest beneficiaries of this video game. Of the 36 scenic spots featured in the game, 27 are located in Shanxi, including landmark sites of ancient buildings, like Foguang Temple, Nanhan Temple and Jingke Temple in Xinzhou; Xuan Kong Temple in Datong; Shuanglin Temple in Jinzhong; Chongfu Temple in Shuozhou; and Yuhuang Temple in Jincheng.

As a result of the win-win cooperation between the game's developer and Shanxi's tourism authorities, tourism operators in the province have been authorized to use the game to promote its cultural tourism attractions.

Following the game's launch, the Shanxi Culture and Tourism Department began a massive promotional campaign called Travel Shanxi with Wukong.

This time, the seventh CIIE has become a stage for promoting this campaign.

When leading visitors to take part in a cosplay show featuring Wukong and other legendary figures in the game, a Shanxi tourism official said that, in the province, scenic sites relating to the game have seen a rapidly growing number of tourists, who want to see the real things that have been rendered into the game images.

"This time, we expect to draw overseas tourists' attention to Shanxi, as the CIIE is a grand expo featuring the large number of foreign visitors," said the official. He noted that his optimism comes from the game's great popularity overseas.

Black Myth: Wukong is available on multiple online game platforms, including PS5, Steam, Epic Games Store and WeGame.

According to media reports, just minutes after its release on Aug 20, the game surged to the top of global app store best-seller lists and retained the place for many days to come.

Other attractions

In addition to tourism sites relating to the game, Shanxi's landmark attractions like the Yellow River, the Great Wall and the Taihang Mountains are also showcased on a big display screen at the Shanxi pavilion.

The Taiyuan Drama Troupe held a drama show entitled *Dreamy Trip to Shanxi's Museums*, giving visitors a glimpse into the many cultural and historical relics in the province.

"Among the many provincial pavilions I've visited, the Shanxi pavilion is the most impressive," said a Shanghai visitor surnamed Chen. "This gives me a strong interest in Shanxi and the province will be on my visiting schedule in the future."

In addition to the cultural and tourism resources on display, exhibited products with distinctive local cultural characteristics of Shanxi, proved another big draw to visitors.

On display were a great number of products made using centuries-old, traditional



The interactive zone called "Travel Shanxi with Wukong" is the most attractive part of the Shanxi pavilion. PHOTOS BY YAN JIE / FOR CHINA DAILY

CIIE PUTS SPOTLIGHT ON SHANXI'S UNIQUE CULTURAL CHARMS

Province's heritage, industries, rich history showcased to global visitors at import expo's seventh edition



Xinghuancun Fenjiu's white liquor products (above) and beef made in Pingyao county (right) are exhibited at the CIIE.

techniques, with some on the national and local lists of intangible cultural heritage items, like the Fenjiu white liquor from Fenyang, matured vinegar from Qingxu, *fuhua* cloisonne ware from Changzhi, hand-polished lacquerware from Pingyao, *chengni* ink slabs from Jiangxian, *lu* silk products from Changzhi and Jincheng, and iron kettles from Jincheng, showing how the traditional assets are well preserved and still alive in people's daily life.

Lu'anfu Silk Group, based in the southern Shanxi city of Jincheng, took part in the CIIE for the first time. It showcased the *lu* silk products made with both traditional and modern techniques.

Lu silk is a local silk variety developed in the Shanxi city of Changzhi and neighboring areas like Jincheng.

A foreign visitor poses for a picture with Wukong and Erlangshen, two figures in the Chinese video game *Black Myth: Wukong*, at the Shanxi pavilion.

Above: A business representative from Shanxi introduces products to a foreign visitor. Left: Silk products made by Lu'anfu Silk Group are exhibited.



With a production history of many centuries, the *lu* silk industry reached its peak of prosperity in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). While being supplied to the royal and noble families in China, the products were also exported to overseas regions on a large scale by the renowned Shanxi merchants during that time.

The ancient technique for making *lu* silk is still alive to this day and was included in the national intangible cultural heritage list in 2014.

Liu Duoxia, branding manager of Lu'anfu Silk Group, said that her company's silk products are made with both traditional and modern techniques.

"Silk products are traditionally delicate and need to be taken care of in a special way," Li said. "For instance, they cannot be



Carved lacquerware products from Xinjiang county on show.



Hand-polished lacquerware products from Pingyao county on display.

washed by machines."

However, as Lu'anfu uses modern production techniques to strengthen the durability of its *lu* silk products, they become more popular among the ordinary consumers as they can be washed by both machine and hand, according to Liu.

Ye Peng, a visitor to the Lu'anfu booth, said he was deeply impressed by the silk scarves on display.

"This is the first time that I saw the *lu* silk products from Shanxi," Ye said. "I was amazed with their texture, quality and their rich color schemes."

Local produce

A range of Shanxi's local farm produce was also exhibited, attracting great interest from visitors.

One example was the millet from Qinzhou, Shanxi. The yellow millet variety, produced by a Qinzhou company under the brand name of Qinzhou Yellow, attracted attention from both domestic visitors and overseas buyers.

Millet was among the earliest grains in China. It has been planted on the Loess Plateau that today includes Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces for around 7,000 years. Qinzhou is a major producer of yellow millet in Shanxi and is known throughout the country for the high quality of its products.

Qinzhou Yellow is a renowned millet brand name with a geographic indication. It was a favorite food of the royal families during the Ming and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, according to Wang Zhen, branding manager at Qinzhou Yellow Millet Group.

To cater to international buyers, Wang said the company prepared English brochures to introduce the taste and nutritional values of the produce at the seventh CIIE, as well as finished products made from it. The company's products have been sold in 28 provincial-level regions in China and a number of foreign counties including the United States, Canada and Poland.

"We see our exhibition at the CIIE as a crucial step in globalization," Wang said. "We hope more consumers throughout the world have a better understanding of this produce unique to China and have a new dietary option."

High-tech products

In addition to products with deep roots in history and culture, Shanxi's companies also exhibited a great variety of high-tech products developed and positioned to improve people's quality of life.

Among the prominent exhibits in this field were the recombined human-origin collagen products made by Jinbo Biopharmaceutical based in the Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Zone.

An executive of the company said at the CIIE that Jinbo Biopharmaceutical was one of the earliest companies in the world that mass-produced the medicine when volume production began in January 2021.

Recombined human-origin collagen is a crucial product for post-surgery recovery because of its performance in helping in hemostasis and wound healing.

The executive said that Jinbo Pharmaceutical has also been developing a range of products derived from the collagen, especially those related to plastic surgery, forming an industrial cluster that has reached a scale of 10 billion yuan (\$1.39 billion) in output value.

Platform for networking

In addition to exhibiting products, the CIIE has also offered a platform for networking for Shanxi's businesses and their counterparts from around the world, as well as a platform to promote local business and investment opportunities.

On Nov 4, on the eve of the seventh CIIE, a promotional fair called the Shanxi Chambers of Commerce Festival was held in Shanghai. Representatives from 11 Shanxi chambers of commerce in Shanghai, as well as similar chambers in Sichuan, Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Yunnan, Inner Mongolia autonomous region and Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, attended the festival.

Promoting the business opportunities in Shanxi's tourism industry was a highlight of this festival. Shanxi's officials introduced the province's major investment projects in this sector.

Yang Chunquan, chief of the Shanxi Investment Promotion Bureau, said that businesses from the rest of the country should be aware of the investment opportunities brought by the latest developments of the three landmark tourism routes in Shanxi — the Yellow River, the Great Wall and the Taihang Mountains. He said construction of an extensive sightseeing road network linking the scenic spots along the three routes — the Yellow River, Great Wall and Taihang No. 1 highways — was fully completed in October.

"The road network, with a total length of 13,000 kilometers and total investment of nearly 100 billion yuan, will mean a substantial improvement of the accessibility to the many tourist destinations in Shanxi," Yang said. "This also means great investment opportunities will arise in the tourism industry, especially those related to culture-tourism integration and rural vitalization."

On Nov 6, a roadshow and promotional event for Shanxi's next-generation information technology and artificial intelligence industries were held in Shanghai during the CIIE. A total of 150 representatives from Shanxi and Shanghai attended the events.

Officials from the Shanxi Department of Industry and Information Technology and the province's development zones released lists of projects that they hope to cooperate on with businesses from Shanghai. And there were also roadshows for five Shanxi projects with the highest potential for investment.

During the events, businesses on both sides signed agreements on investing in seven projects in the fields of next-generation IT, semiconductors, AI, intelligent manufacturing and smart industrial zones. The agreed total investment amounted to 1.93 billion yuan.

Li Yao contributed to this story.