

CHINA



Students admire exhibits on display at the Ancient Architecture Campus Museum in Shanxi Experimental Secondary School, Shanxi province, on April 10. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

Ancient architecture museum opens in Shanxi high school

Endeavor hoped to get more young people involved in cultural heritage

By ZHU XINGXIN in Taiyuan and CHEN LIANG

Shanxi's first museum based on a school campus opened on April 10, showcasing the province's wealth of historical heritage and ancient architecture, and immersing the students in the culture of museums and cherishing the past.

The Ancient Architecture Campus Museum, located in Shanxi Experimental Secondary School in the provincial capital Taiyuan, aims to integrate cultural heritage protection into the educational environment of the campus.

As part of the museum's inauguration, a prelude exhibition titled Ancient Architecture Technology Enters Campus was also launched.

"Through my role as a guide, I deeply appreciated the spirit of the nation's master craftsmen," said Ren Hongye, a student at the school. She found herself transforming classroom knowledge into dynamic cul-

tural dissemination, realizing that "preserving traditional culture is everyone's responsibility."

Using ancient building models, digital interactions and informative panels, the exhibition showcases the heritage and current technological preservation efforts for Shanxi's ancient buildings. This allows students and teachers to engage closely with history.

Highlights of the exhibition included a model of the Yingxian Wooden Pagoda, the world's tallest wooden pagoda; a 3D-printed sculpture model of Foguang Temple in Wutai county, Xinzhou city; and an interactive installation of "the 28 constellations" — colored statues depicting celestial phenomena — from the Yuhuang Temple in Jincheng city.

These exhibits utilized digital technology to make abstract historical knowledge visible, tangible and interactive. They merged history, art and technology, providing an immersive experience that highlighted the charm of the collision between traditional craftsmanship and modern technology.

"This combination of tradition and technology, allowing us to explore ancient buildings on computers, helps us understand Shanxi's architectural heritage," said Song Jiaqi,

another student. "It makes us more confident in promoting Shanxi's culture and proud of our country's technological advancements."

At the unveiling ceremony of the museum, Wu Zhijun, the school's principal, said, "I hope this opportunity will build a cultural bridge, allowing students to engage closely with ancient architectural relics, appreciate the charm of Shanxi's culture, and foster pride in our local heritage and confidence in our national identity."

Shanxi is known for having the largest and most well-preserved collection of ancient buildings in China, with nearly 28,000 structures, including temples, opera stages and pavilions. About 80 percent of China's surviving wooden structures from before the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) are in Shanxi, including the only three remaining Tang Dynasty (618-907) wooden buildings. This wealth of ancient architecture provides unparalleled opportunities for cultural heritage education.

"Integrating cultural heritage into campuses is not just about spreading knowledge, it's about nurturing cultural confidence and a sense of protection in the younger generation," said Lu Yi, director of the Shanxi Academy of Ancient Building, Paint-

ed Sculpture and Fresco Preservation, a research institution of the Shanxi Culture Relics Bureau. As one of the leading institutions for science popularization in the province, it has been striving to bring the research results of Shanxi's cultural heritage to a wider audience.

Lu said that the campus museum is improving its exhibition content and presentation, promising an even more comprehensive display in the future.

The unveiling ceremony was part of the school's 2025 science and technology festival.

At the event, the institute dispatched a team of young volunteers. They conducted professional explanations and technical demonstrations on-site, helping students operate 3D scanning equipment and making abstract professional knowledge tangible and accessible.

Lu hoped that the museum, as the first of its kind in Shanxi, would serve as a model and lead the way for similar initiatives. He added that in the future, this model could be expanded to more schools, allowing the benefits of cultural heritage protection to reach more young people.

Contact the writers at zhuxingxin@chinadaily.com.cn



From left: Visitors enjoy a performance on Tianjin Ancient Cultural Street in Nankai district on May 1. Performers stage a street show at the newly renovated and opened Luhe Duyun Alley in Tianjin on May 1. PHOTOS BY WEI JIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Tianjin revives ambience of old town

By YANG CHENG in Tianjin yangcheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Passing under a vibrant vermilion archway in the morning, the lively calls of street vendors fill the air, instantly transporting visitors back to the bustling old-town ambience of Tianjin, a thriving coastal city with a rich history.

As evening falls, amid red walls and black tiles adorned with shimmering lights, visitors are captivated by popular intangible cultural heritage items and local delicacies. These picturesque scenes unfold in the recently renovated Luhe Duyun Alley, nestled within the Tianjin Ancient Cultural Street in Nankai district.

The 200-meter alley mirrors the scenes depicted in the historical *Luhe Duyun Painting*, showcasing the vibrant commercial and cultural activities along a grand canal built during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) under Emperor Qianlong's rule

(1736-96). "The newly renovated and opened alley is part of Nankai district's endeavor to establish itself as a premier tourism hub in the city. Plans are underway to introduce additional tourist attractions throughout the district," said Nie Weixun, head of Nankai district.

The district saw 1.61 million tourist visits during the May Day holiday from May 1 to 5, creating a combined value of 523 million yuan (\$72.4 million), up 14 percent year-on-year, according to official statistics. "The renovation efforts and the introduction of unique cultural and tourism initiatives are poised to infuse fresh energy into the street, attracting a larger audience keen to explore and experience the area," Nie said.

Efforts to upgrade the alley's buildings have produced positive outcomes. For example, Jade Emperor Pavilion, a Taoist temple dating back to 1427, and the Tianhou Temple, dedicated to the worship of the Mazu

goddess and constructed in 1326, have both attracted more visitors with their new looks and services.

Tianhou Palace has begun promoting official cultural and creative products, such as figurines, specialty cups and sachets, since this May.

During the five-day holiday, it launched an immersive night tour, unveiling a treasure hunt map connected with local folk museums to introduce traditional competitions, enriching the visitors' experience.

Renowned cultural and historical scholar Luo Shuwei, 87, who recently published a book on the street, emphasized that this 1-kilometer street serves as a bridge between Tianjin's past and future, as well as China's heritage. For example, it has seen a revival of both heritage landmarks and long-standing local enterprises, showcasing the street's role in keeping tradition and contemporary vitality alive.

The street is home to renowned

brands like Yumeijing, a household name known for its children's skin cream. Since the production of the first 25-gram sachet in 1979, it has sold 4.6 billion to date, said Jiang Wei, president of Tianjin Yumeijing Group. In addition, the group delves into the core values of Chinese culture, emphasizing "integrity," "benevolence" and "diligence," she said.

"Yumeijing will actively explore the cultural essence of time-honored brands, integrating our corporate culture to showcase the vitality of Chinese traditional culture," she said.

Such efforts to embed cultural heritage into modern life mirror the broader revitalization taking place along the street. In this context, the street's administrative committee has set forth plans to strengthen links between the historic Drum Tower, built in 1493, and neighboring areas, and plans to develop them into a prominent tourist destination.

There will also be efforts to revitalize some nearby buildings, introducing a variety of cultural and tourism activities to deepen visitors' understanding on local customs in Tianjin.

Children in Xizang receive free operations for limb deformities

By PALDEN NYIMA in Lhasa palden_nyima@chinadaily.com.cn

During the May 1 holiday this year, 28 children from Chamdo city in the Xizang autonomous region received free corrective surgeries for limb deformities at the city's Kharub District People's Hospital.

A team of surgeons from Beijing performed the operations as part of a project supported by Beijing Jishuitan Hospital, the public welfare medical team at Beijing Peking University People's Hospital and the Beijing Joint Care Foundation.

This initiative, now in its eighth year, has provided life-changing operations for nearly 300 young patients in the city, allowing them to be more confident and independent.

According to the foundation, they have been arranging for orthopedic experts to voluntarily carry out public welfare assistance activities for children with congenital hand and foot deformities in Chamdo since 2017.

"The causes of the defects are related to the local dietary habits. Xizang is a geologically active area, and local disease is also related to the natural environment," said Lin Jianhao, director of the bone and joint department at Peking University People's Hospital and chairman of the foundation.

Lin said that more than 95 percent of the patients are children with an average age of 6 to 7 years old, and the foundation has spent more than 2 million yuan (\$278,000) on treatment for these patients.

Lin also said that the children feel different from others because of these defects, and this can have psychological and physiological

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Lodre Tenba, grandpa of 10-year-old Tibetan patient Wangmo

effects on their growth, and they may exhibit behaviors such as avoiding social interactions and experience emotional distress.

"It is important to address this issue before the child matures mentally," Lin added.

In addition, this project has been training more local medical professionals to deal with these defects.

Ten-year-old Tibetan girl Wangmo was born with congenital abnormalities in her hands — each hand had six fingers but lacked thumbs and proper grips, making even basic tasks such as holding a pen or tying shoelaces difficult.

Thanks to the surgery, her hands now look and function almost like those of a normal child.

"I am very thankful to the experts from Beijing, as well as the meticulous care provided by the medical staff," Lodre Tenba, Wangmo's grandpa, was quoted as saying by People's Daily.

"Not only have they waived all treatment costs for us, but they have also ensured that we do not have to bear any transportation or accommodation expenses incurred during the treatment."

China's highest city no longer a treeless outlier

LHASA — Nagchu, China's highest city at an average elevation of over 4,500 meters, has achieved the seemingly unachievable: it is no longer "the city without trees".

Once a barren landscape where even survival was a challenge, the northern city in the Xizang autonomous region has rewritten its ecological destiny through decades of perseverance, marking a historic breakthrough in high-altitude afforestation.

Perched on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Nagchu was officially reclassified as a city in May 2018. Its relentless winds and thin air, with oxygen levels just half those at sea level, have made it a place where boiling water barely reaches 85 C and packaged goods swell as if ready to burst.

For many years, the absence of trees was a defining feature, so much so that award-winning author Ma Lihua once wrote in her travel notes that "Nagchu Town has everything, except a tree".

Now, parks and sidewalks across Nagchu are dotted with alpine willow, spruce and sea buckthorn — a testament to a quiet revolution. On the city streets, billboards reading "promote high-altitude greening, erase Nagchu's treeless legacy" proclaim this transformation.

"Nagchu has achieved China's

We've successfully tested tree planting in urban areas, with a survival rate of over 80 percent."

Dainzin Puncog, a resident of Nagchu, the Xizang autonomous region, who works with the city's forestry and grass-land bureau

highest-altitude success in tree planting," said Cewang Rigzin, director of the city's forestry and grassland bureau. Since 2021, the city has invested heavily in afforestation, forest management and experimental planting in high-elevation urban areas.

"When I was a child, I could only see green trees on TV or in photos. Now, we've successfully tested tree planting in urban areas, with a survival rate of over 80 percent," said Dainzin Puncog, a native of Nagchu with the bureau.

Trial planting of trees in Nagchu began in the 1990s. Generations of local families and officials have poured efforts into this achievement, turning what once seemed a fanciful idea into reality.

XINHUA



Residents of Nagchu city, Xizang autonomous region, plant saplings during an event on May 8. JIGME DORJE / XINHUA