

With a history spanning 7,000 years jade is a symbol of honor, faith and immortality for many Chinese. Yunnan is the ideal place for travelers to experience the rich jade culture



Fair a gem for jewelers

By XIA HUAN

Jewelers are displaying their wares this week at the six-day Yunnan High-grade Jadeite Summer Appreciation Fair.

Held in Kunming, the fair represents city efforts to become the jadeite capital of the world. It hosts domestic and foreign guests.

Approximately 300 pieces of high-grade jadeite from Yunnan and other regions of China are on display, valued at more than 2 billion yuan.

Jadeite accessories from 16 famous jewelry enterprises — among them Cuixiangyuan, Tailigong and Cuixi — will also be exhibited, said Deng Kun, director of the Yunnan Provincial Jewelry and Jade Quality Supervision and Examination

Institute.

All accessories have passed evaluations from the Institute's jadeite quality grade assessment committee and been issued certificates.

Companies are showcasing more than 100 premier examples of artistry. All products are grade-III jade.

Saturday's opening ceremonies recognized last year's award-winning gems. Held from 9-5 each day, the fair hosts lectures and forums on the jadeite industry.

Bai Gensheng, deputy chairman of China Folklore Society, is set to speak on Yunnan's jade culture.

Also of interest is an unveiling of the Yunnan High-Grade Jadeite Appreciation album. The publication features around 300 pieces of exceptional jade works. It is a joint venture of the Yunnan Jewelry Quality Professional Committee and the Yunnan Jewelry and Jade Quality Supervision and Examination Institute.

The province has long been

China's top jade distribution, processing and sales center. According to Deng, jadeite sales account for approximately 86 percent of Yunnan's total trade.

It is estimated that Kunming's jadeite sales alone will top 13 billion yuan.

"We hope the fair will help promote the jewelry and jadeite industry of the province," Deng said. "The jadeite industry in Yunnan needs to move towards sustainable and healthy development."

The fair is sponsored by Yunnan Cultural Industry Office, Yunnan Stone Industry Development Joint Conference Office, Yunnan Department of Commerce, Yunnan Department of Land and Resources, Yunnan Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine Department, Kunming People's Government, Dehong Prefecture People's Government, Baoshan People's Government and Yunnan Stone Industry Promotion Committee.



Green is gold for Kunming

By LI YINGQING

Kunming, capital of Southwest China's Yunnan province, is seeing green. The city, home to the nation's top emerald distribution center, has more than 3,000 jewelry enterprises. Almost all deal in emeralds.

With a 10 billion yuan turnover in 2009, emerald trade volume accounted for almost half of Kunming's jewels market. Predicted turnover this year is more than 13 billion yuan, according to Yunnan Provincial Jewelry Quality Inspection Institute.

Strict market regulations and new quality assurance measures have aided jewelry industry growth. Nearly 97 percent of city jewel products are up to standard, reported Yunnan Provincial Bureau of Quality and Technical Supervision.

Kunming is fast becoming an internationally recognized center for jade processing, marketing, trading and research.

Several training centers for jade artisans, traders, and inspectors have opened in the city, awarding degrees to

a number of talented future industry professionals.

Also contributing to the quality of Kunming's jade industry is the Yunnan Provincial Academy of Jewelry Quality and Technical Supervision. The jewelry and jade inspection body is Yunnan's only organization accredited in conformity assessment.

Its inspection standards are among the toughest in the country.

In 2009 the Academy introduced an emerald quality rating system, China's first local standards for emerald processing.

Experts estimate that the brand value of Yunnan Jewelry has exceeded 20 billion yuan.

Kunming is currently building an industrial center dubbed Jade City. It will combine jade mining, manufacturing, selling and tourism. The city is also beginning construction on a jewelry processing plant.

For many Chinese, jade represents honor, faith and immortality. Its history spans 7,000 years, and has given China its title as a State of jade.

New standards for jade

By BAO WANXIAN

Yunnan province in the southwest of China is renowned worldwide for its centuries old jade culture.

But only recently did the provincial government approve a new grade regulation standard, used to judge jadeite quality.

Prior to the standard, jade traders had to determine grade by examining color, texture, purity and craftwork, said Deng Kun, chief of Gem and Jade Quality Supervision Inspection and Research Institute of Yunnan.

Now, traders can classify jadeite according to five levels and 12 grades.

"It is a significant standard which can bring order to the flourishing jade market in Yunnan, and nationwide," said Deng.

"Yunnan's jade industry has a high reputation in Asia, but when we do

business in the US and Europe, we hit a bottleneck due to the lack of clear and official standards. Good standards will make for a healthy market," Deng said.

Jewels and jade products are also important in Yunnan's tourism industry, which unscrupulous jade trading works will undoubtedly damage.

"Experts in Yunnan's jade industry have been striving for many years to draft a single and effective standard for determining the quality of jadeite," Deng told China Daily.

Since the 1990s, domestic jade and jewel certification institutes have been partnering with jade experts from Hong Kong, Thailand and Burma to establish the standards.

Experts from the Gem and Jade Quality Supervision Inspection and Research Institute of Yunnan worked with over 8 million jades and jewels

to help the cause.

Besides drafting a clear certification system, the Yunnan provincial government established nine quality inspection organizations, located in Kunming, Dali, Lijiang, Ruili, Tengchong, Longling, and Jinghong.

Quality acceptability for jade products sold in Yunnan reached 96.9 percent over a six month period this year, up seven percent from 2009 said a recent investigation by Gem and Jade Quality Supervision Inspection and Research Institute.

According to Sun Shulin, a 42-year-old Kunming resident who often invests in jade, an official standard and quality inspection organization will make things easier for traders.

"Our target is to build strong demand for high-quality Yunnan's jade products all around the world," Deng said.

