



# Tangshan shadow puppetry on show at Jiading Museum

**Yang Yujie and Wang Jie**

Shadow play is a type of puppet performance that uses a light source to cast silhouettes of flat, articulated figures onto a translucent screen.

The Tangshan shadow puppetry, also known as Luanzhou shadow puppetry, Laoting shadow puppetry, or Donkey Skin shadow puppetry, is one of the most famous in China. In 2006, it was selected among the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage.

The “Stories in Light and Shadow—Tangshan Shadow Puppetry Exhibition,” on show at the Jiading Museum, reflects a vivid and splendid picture of the folk art to the public.

Nearly 180 items are on display, revealing the modeling, story, production and performing of Tangshan shadow puppetry. Some of the exhibits date back to the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

“The costumes of Tangshan shadow puppets are primarily in the Han Chinese style. The distinction between male and female characters is often reflected in their footwear: men wear court boots and combat boots, while women wear tiny shoes,” said Guo Yijue, a docent at the museum.

“In depicting age, the number of beards is often used to distinguish male characters. Middle-aged male puppets in their forties or fifties typically have five locks of beard.”

Unlike other local shadow plays, the Tangshan shadow puppetry has its own scripts. The “Pingxi Book,” a collection of scripts from the Qing Dynasty, is also on display.

“The collection includes over 500 scripts, focusing on historical stories, myths and legends,” Guo added.

Each Tangshan shadow puppet is



The “Pingxi Book” is a collection of scripts for Tangshan shadow puppetry, compiled during the Qing Dynasty. — Photos by Yang Yujie

a work of art involving eight production steps. Donkey skin serves as the perfect medium for this traditional art form due to its bright, transparent and flexible qualities.

During the exhibition, a variety of activities will take place. Several Tangshan shadow puppetry artists were invited to the opening ceremony to present shadow performances for the public.

**Date:** Through March 2, 10am-5pm

**Admission:** Free

**Address:** 215 Bole Rd  
博乐路215号



Left: Disks preserving the lyrical performances of Tangshan shadow puppetry transport audiences back to a bygone era.

Below: During the exhibition, two performances are presented to showcase the charm of Tangshan shadow puppetry.

