

## How Can a County “Talk to the World”?

“I look look” “Give me 两个” This kind of quirky language, combined with gesturing, plays out every day in every corner of Yiwu International Trade City, becoming a vivid microcosm of Yiwu’s dialogue with the world.

Recently, General Secretary Xi Jinping issued important instructions, noting that Yiwu’s small commodities have broken into a big market and grown into a major industry, forming the “Yiwu development experience.” This is a successful practice of developing county-level economies according to local conditions.

So, without access to the sea or border advantages, how has Yiwu—an inland city in central Zhejiang once called a “peripheral hinterland”—managed to do business with 233 countries and regions? Today, we break down the underlying logic of Yiwu’s dialogue with the world.



Foreign merchants are shopping for goods at the Global Trade Center in Yiwu.

Source: Xinhua News Agency

## 1

Commodities are Yiwu' s calling card to the world. It is not just a place where "everything is available," but one that makes foreign buyers "come and not want to leave."

**What makes them not want to leave lies in the ecosystem of "everything can be purchased."** Walking into the International Trade City, more than 80,000 stalls and over 2.1 million types of goods come into view... Someone once calculated that if you spent 3 minutes at each shop, browsing 8 hours a day, it would take 1 year and 4 months to cover the entire market.

In Yiwu, no matter the style, material, or design, you can find everything in one stop. “Yiwu’s uniqueness is not just the completeness of products, but also the completeness of information,” said an entrepreneur of mixed Chinese-Korean heritage. After eight years working in a Japanese procurement company, he returned to China and found during market exploration that sourcing in Yiwu often came with the lowest costs. The government also provides subsidies for transportation and exhibitions, significantly reducing startup capital. With this informational advantage, he decisively shifted to kitchenware—introducing Korean cookware while leveraging Yiwu’s supporting ecosystem for independent R&D, transforming from a trader into a category innovator. In Yiwu, “completeness” is not just a phrase—it is the completeness of ecosystem, information, and services.

**What makes them not want to leave also lies in the ability of “rapid response.”** “Post a demand online, and Yiwu delivers globally within a week”—this is no exaggeration. Just a few days ago, a “palm-sized sun hat” went viral on platforms like TikTok. What amazed

many was that a hat trending on phones in the morning was prototyped via 3D printing by Yiwu merchants in the afternoon and mass-produced, quickly entering European and American markets—vividly demonstrating “Yiwu speed.”

In Yiwu, such stories happen almost every day. With 1.26 million business entities thriving and linking to 2.1 million small and micro enterprises, and a “half-hour supporting network”... Yiwu’s speed relies on clustered industrial chains, where upstream and downstream gears mesh tightly, turning “solo operations” into “collective charges.” In Yiwu, time differences are business opportunities, and merchants often capture demand even before their clients do.

**What makes them not want to leave is also the fairness of “price comparison at fingertips.”** In the past, foreign buyers had to visit stalls one by one, handwrite quotations, and compare prices like gathering intelligence. Now, by opening platforms like YiwuGo or Chinagoods and entering keywords, prices, specifications, and store reputations for identical products are visible at a glance. A home textile merchant fluent

in five languages said that in her online shop, clients can compare multiple quotations without even speaking.

Relying on massive transaction data, the “Yiwu Small Commodities Index” has become an important reference for understanding small commodity trade dynamics in China and even globally. Currently, the Chinagoods platform serves over 3.8 million global buyers, with more than 8 million products online. In 2025, the platform’s transaction volume exceeded 50 billion yuan. Upgrading from “buy nationwide, sell globally” to “buy globally, sell globally,” Yiwu’s cross-border e-commerce transactions reached 168 billion yuan in 2025. In Yiwu, fairness is never just a slogan—it is the comparable prices on mobile screens, the daily operation of a credit system, and the reassurance that encourages global buyers to place orders and return.



On the second floor of the Global Trade Center in Yiwu, foreign businessmen are viewing the "Outbound Trade" data.

Source: WeChat official account "Yiwu Release"

## 2

If the dazzling array of goods attracts global buyers, then the institutional innovations growing from Yiwu's commercial soil have created the miracle of "World Yiwu."

**Solving the pains of growth.** Some say that in Yiwu, what matters is not "what you have," but "what you think." From version 1.0 roadside markets to version 6.0 global digital trade centers, Yiwu has never been constrained by its initial disadvantages. Instead, it maximizes human initiative, evolving continuously under market demand. As an

entrepreneur put it: “Reform here has never stopped for a moment.”

For example, Yiwu pioneered the “market procurement trade model,” solving the problem of consolidated exports for over 2 million types of small commodities, lowering the threshold for small and micro enterprises to go global and capturing fragmented global demand. In 2024, a new round of international trade reform began, with Yiwu launching 97 measures across five areas, continuing to ride the waves of global trade transformation. Time and again, “creating something from nothing” has become Yiwu’s greatest confidence in engaging the world.

**Retaining “global partners.”** As a city oriented toward global markets with active economic exchanges, Yiwu has a diverse population structure with concentrated migration. Merchants from over 100 countries and regions gather here, with nearly 30,000 foreign residents, and an average of over 30,000 foreign traders present daily in 2025. Business-savvy Yiwu locals have applied pragmatic and efficient market thinking to social governance, upgrading from managing foreign traders to retaining “global partners,” creating unique competitiveness.

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For example, Yiwu pioneered a foreign mediator mechanism, allowing people from different cultures to find common ground. Multilingual mediators bridge language and cultural gaps, accurately capturing the real emotions and needs of foreign traders, making “consultation first” a natural choice. Additionally, Yiwu has built a full-cycle foreign-related service system, promoting convenient access to insurance and medical settlement for foreigners—ensuring that they not only “stay” but also “want to return” and “don’t want to leave.”

**Charting its own path.** Yiwu may be small, but it has a global vision, finding its place in international markets and gaining a voice in global competition. It is a city that defines “big” through “small.”

It is the starting point of the “Yiwu-Xinjiang-Europe” China-Europe freight train. With a three-dimensional transport network of land, sea, air, and digital connectivity, Yiwu has gained the capacity of a national strategic node. It has keenly captured the transformative power of digital technology in trade, launching the country’s first large model focused on small commodity trade, “World Yiwu.” Yiwu Pay supports global

payments in 26 currencies, covering over 170 countries and regions. It is also a hub of opportunity, evolving from street peddlers to livestreaming, mobile selling, and warehouse broadcasting, with younger, digital-savvy entrepreneurs becoming the main drivers of innovation—people of different backgrounds sharing opportunities and dreams.



On April 17th, the first X8074 "Yiwu - Mengxinke" dual-hub interconnection train, fully loaded with 110 standard containers of daily necessities and other goods, departed from Jinhua Yiwu West Station.

Source: Chao News Client

### 3

On the stage of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala in the Year of the Horse, Yiwu showcased an 8-minute performance to the world, adding a vivid new chapter to “World Yiwu.” If Yiwu is seen as a market, it trades goods and services; if it is seen as a window, it exchanges culture and civilization.

**In Yiwu, you may bump into the world at any moment.** Merchants from over 100 countries and regions live, work, and study here, with diverse cultures interweaving. Some netizens joke that in Yiwu, “changing countries for a meal” is as easy as taking a walk on another street—enjoy authentic Turkish barbecue, then head to Korean streets for live octopus and fried chicken, effortlessly letting your taste buds travel the world. Yiwu’s dialogue with the world is not ceremonial—it is embedded in everyday details.

**Globally, stories about Yiwu are widely shared.** In 2025, facing U.S. tariff pressures, Yiwu businesswomen responded confidently; in

early 2026, the unexpectedly popular “crying horse” toy went viral worldwide. Leveraging its strengths as a hub of merchants and goods, Yiwu actively tells China’s story through trade, with businesspeople as the protagonists.

Resident foreign merchants share their personal experiences of Yiwu’s openness and warmth, while overseas Yiwu traders convey its commercial vitality and spirit through their achievements. Yiwu also explores its cultural heritage, capitalizing on the “China Travel” trend—turning a box of Yiwu goods and a city tour into a social media phenomenon.

**Behind Yiwu’ s development lies an open China. From “chicken feathers for sugar” barter to establishing the Yiwu market, and now becoming the “world’ s supermarket,” Yiwu has always been deeply integrated into China ’ s broader opening-up.** Amid rising protectionism and global uncertainty, only by maintaining openness, expanding markets, and integrating domestic and international circulation can resilience be strengthened. Over the past 20 years, Yiwu has

maintained the courage to lead in reforms, becoming a pioneer in many pilot programs and contributing valuable experience to China's opening-up.

Looking back at history, we see resilience in the stories of the Qi family army defending against foreign invasions. Centuries later, with the same spirit of courage and determination, Yiwu has stepped onto the global stage. From this small city's dialogue with the world, different people draw different conclusions. Looking ahead, this dialogue will surely become even more splendid.