

北京中軸線上の歴史的景観保存

-永定門の再建を事例として-

Historical Landscape Preservation along Beijing Central Axis: A Case Study of Yongdingmen Gate Reconstruction

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Objective

The traditional Beijing central axis, spanning from Yongdingmen Gate in the south to the Bell and Drum Towers in the north, covers 7.8 kilometres. Dating back to the 13th century, it features various historical structures like royal palaces, ceremonial buildings, administrative facilities, and road remains. The preparation for its World Heritage nomination began in 2011. However, uncertainties surround its cultural heritage status, particularly concerning the rebuilt Yongdingmen Gate in 2005, raising debates about its authenticity and integrity. (Que,2018).

This study investigates the role of Yongdingmen Gate reconstruction in the Central Axis' historical landscape and its impact. It aims to evaluate the reconstruction's effectiveness, its alignment with cultural heritage preservation principles, the identification of new values for potential World Heritage recognition and provides suggestions for improving the World Heritage site environment.

1.2 Research Subject and Methodology

The "Yongdingmen Gate" in this article refers to the reconstructed architecture located at the southernmost end of Beijing's Central Axis, rebuilt in 2005.



Figure 1 Current Status of Yongdingmen Gate

This dissertation employs literature review, case study, and field investigation. The literature review delves into Yongdingmen Gate's historical background, reconstruction challenges, and its impact on the city's historic landscape. It discusses international and domestic controversies regarding

reconstruction and their alignment with China's heritage conservation regulations. The case study compares Yongdingmen Gate's reconstruction to Suzaku Gate in Japan. Field investigations examine Yongdingmen Gate's relationship with its environment, potential hindrances to World Cultural Heritage approval, and offer suggestions for tourist guidance enhancements.



Figure 2 Location of Yongdingmen Gate
Source From: Beijing Central Axis Official Website

2. Historical Evolution and Policy Analysis

2.1 Historical Evolution of Yongdingmen Gate

Yongdingmen Gate, originally built in 1553 as a defense against foreign invasions, underwent a remarkable evolution. Initially, only the Gatehouse stood, followed by the addition of the Wengcheng in 1564. In 1766, a grand reconstruction took place, enhancing its scale and adding an arrow tower. However, urban development led to its demolition in 1950-1951 and 1957 for public traffic.

In 2005, a reconstruction project aimed to restore the historical landscape. Positioned on Beijing's central axis, Yongdingmen Gate serves as a symbol of Chinese culture and a witness to historical transformations. Its unique demolition and subsequent reconstruction complete the central axis's historical narrative.

2.2 Policy Analysis of Yongdingmen Gate

In China's heritage protection context, authenticity means preserving history, culture, and tradition, aligning with heritage awareness. Differing from the West, China once had a confused understanding of authenticity within World Heritage protection. This led to projects claiming reconstruction but being cultural recreation (Cui, 2017). However, China's reconstruction approach to Yongdingmen Gate acknowledged its history, presenting it as a central axis cultural event. Archaeological findings met authenticity standards, portraying history accurately. This balanced approach maintained the central axis integrity and met World Heritage standards, showcasing China's evolving understanding of authenticity in heritage preservation.

3. Comparative Analysis

The reconstruction of Suzaku Gate in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Nara Palace Site aims to offer an immersive historical and cultural experience. In contrast, China's approach to heritage values emphasizes abstract and spiritual aspects rather than construction techniques. Yongdingmen Gate's reconstruction improved the central axis's historical landscape, attracted tourists, and enriched academic research on Beijing's history and culture.

Table 1 Differences between Suzaku Gate and Yongdingmen Gate

Name	Rehabilitation Focuses
Yongdingmen Gate, Beijing	Visual impact with modifications to the interior of the building
Suzaku Gate, Nara	Restoring authentic historical images in the absence of original records.

Abstract:

This research examines the reconstruction of Yongdingmen Gate along Beijing's traditional Central Axis and its impact on the city's historical landscape, particularly in the context of its World Cultural Heritage nomination. The study assesses the reconstruction's effectiveness, alignment with heritage preservation principles, and the emergence of new cultural values thus concluding that the reconstruction successfully blends modern urban elements with tradition, preserving traditional architecture, boosting tourism, and enhancing the historical landscape. However, issues like unclear signage and limited integration with the surrounding environment may affect its World Heritage application. The study also recommends solutions such as clear signage and improved connectivity with Yandun Ruins Park to enhance its chances of success.

4. Field Investigation and Recommendations

4.1 Field Investigation

During the site survey, the author observed Yongdingmen Gate's maintenance issues, including clearer guidance, signage and visual schematics. Coherence between Yongdingmen and Yandun (A stone stele established during the Yuan Dynasty, typically constructed alongside Yongdingmen Gate, symbolising the guardianship of the city.) Ruins Park is essential for World Heritage candidacy. Integrated cultural preservation and management measures are required to present Yongdingmen's historical landscape effectively.

4.2 Recommendations

Upon recognition of the Beijing central axis as a World Heritage Site, challenges and opportunities emerge for Yongdingmen Gate. A comprehensive heritage management plan should address maintenance, visitor management, and environmental monitoring. Sustainable tourism development at Yongdingmen Gate Square is vital to showcase its cultural value while minimizing negative impacts. Educational initiatives and community engagement can raise public awareness of heritage preservation. Long-term planning ensures adaptability to societal and environmental changes, aligning with World Heritage Site conservation objectives: respecting history, preserving culture, promoting community development, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

Reference

- Cui, J. (2017). Breaking the Ice - Discussion on the Material Reconstruction of Chinese Cultural Relics and Historic Sites. *China Cultural Heritage* (02), 16-27.
- Que, W. (2018). The "Beijing Central Axis" Project for World Heritage is Contrary to the Spirit of World Heritage. *China Historical and Geographic Review* (04), 5-2