

Research on Value Excavation, Protection and Inheritance of the Beijing Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt from the Perspective of “Dual Heritage”

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Abstract: From the perspective of “dual heritage” (cultural and natural heritage), the Beijing Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt has distinctive ecological value and humanistic connotations, and constitutes an important carrier for studying the historical evolution and sustainable development of Beijing. Based on dual-heritage theory and using methods such as literature analysis and field investigation, this paper systematically reviews the natural foundation and humanistic accumulation of the Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt, and explores its ecological wisdom of “harmony between mountains and water” and its historical trajectory of “integration of city and landscape.” The study argues that the core value of the cultural belt lies in the long-term interaction between the natural system (the ecological barrier of the Western Hills and the shaping role of the Yongding River system) and the humanistic system (imperial gardens, water-conservancy projects, religious architecture, etc.), which formed Beijing’s site-selection logic of “backing onto mountains and facing water” and the landscape pattern of the “Three Hills and Five Gardens.” In the contemporary context, the paper proposes a coordinated inheritance strategy of “ecological restoration + cultural revitalization,” with a view to providing theoretical support and practical reference for the construction of Beijing as a national cultural center and for the development of the national cultural park system.

Keywords: Dual heritage; Beijing Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt; value excavation; heritage inheritance; Beijing.

1. Introduction

The Beijing Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt is located in western Beijing and is one of the important birthplaces of Beijing’s history and culture. The belt takes the Taihang Mountains in western Beijing and the Yongding River, which runs across the mountains and flows southeast across the plain, as its basic “one mountain and one water” skeleton, forming a broad belt-shaped cultural area [1]. The concept of dual heritage refers to a region that possesses both natural-heritage and cultural-heritage values. This dual heritage value makes the Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt highly significant for research on cultural protection and sustainable development. Against the background of global cultural-diversity protection and sustainable development, how to excavate and inherit the dual-heritage value of the Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt has become an urgent issue.

The purpose of this study is to comprehensively excavate the natural-heritage and cultural-heritage values of the Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt, to analyze their dual-heritage characteristics and interrelationships, and to propose effective inheritance strategies. The study is of great significance for regional cultural protection: it can provide a theoretical basis and practical guidance for protecting the region’s unique cultural heritage and natural landscape. At the same time, by excavating its value, it can promote the development of regional cultural tourism and cultural and creative industries and support the sustainable development of the local economy. In addition, the study can provide reference for the protection and inheritance of other similar cultural belts and advance the cause of cultural-heritage protection in China.

2. Definition of the Core Concept of “Dual Heritage” and Theoretical Basis

The “dual heritage” in this paper does not strictly follow the rigid definition of “World Mixed Cultural and Natural Heritage” in the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which requires outstanding universal value at the global scale and recognition through UNESCO review and designation. Instead, it is a localized and practice-oriented conceptual interpretation based on the intrinsic attributes and value characteristics of a heritage region [2]. Specifically, it refers to a specific geographical space that simultaneously possesses significant natural ecological value and profound humanistic historical value, and in which the two kinds of value are not isolated but form, through long-term spatial-temporal interaction, a symbiotic relationship of “nature as the foundation and culture as the soul”: the natural ecological environment provides the survival foundation, spatial carrier and resource support for human activities and shapes the regional cultural identity; while human production, life, cultural creation and historical practice continuously endow natural space with spiritual connotation, historical memory and cultural symbols, transforming natural landscape into cultural landscape bearing collective emotion and the genes of civilization, and ultimately forming an organic whole in which the two are interdependent, mutually shaped and inseparable. Its core characteristics are concentrated in three aspects: first, the symbiosis of nature and culture, emphasizing not a simple superposition but a deep integration and co-evolutionary dynamic relationship; second, the complexity of value, covering natural values such as ecological services, landscape aesthetics and scientific research, as well as humanistic values

such as historical inheritance, artistic appreciation, social identity and contemporary use, forming a multi-level and all-round value system; third, the integrity of protection, requiring the breaking of the traditional separation between natural and cultural heritage protection and the use of systematic thinking to coordinate all resources so as to maintain the integrity, authenticity and sustainability of the heritage region.

According to the Beijing Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt Protection and Development Plan issued by the Beijing Municipal Government, the spatial scope of the belt takes the Western Hills mountain system and the Yongding River basin as its core carriers, covers the main body of the Western Hills, the main stream and tributaries of the Yongding River, and radiates to surrounding ecologically related areas and culturally extended areas. Administratively it involves the entire territories of Haidian, Shijingshan, Mentougou, Fangshan, Fengtai and Changping districts and relevant surrounding connecting areas, forming a spatial pattern of coordinated “mountain–river–city” linkage [3]. As the compound region with the most favorable natural endowment and the richest cultural connotation among Beijing’s “three cultural belts,” its heritage resources show marked characteristics of “symbiosis of nature and humanity, and integration of history and modernity.” In terms of natural heritage, the Western Hills rise and fall continuously and possess rich vegetation types such as temperate deciduous broad-leaved forests, with ecological functions such as water conservation, soil and water retention, and climate regulation; they are an important ecological security barrier in western Beijing. As Beijing’s “Mother River,” the Yongding River’s rivers, wetlands and shoals within the basin constitute a complete hydrological ecosystem, provide important habitats for biodiversity conservation, and form a magnificent, beautiful and richly layered natural landscape aesthetic system through the geomorphic pattern of “mountains encircling and water embracing” [4]. In terms of cultural heritage, the region has accumulated a complete historical thread from ancient times to the modern era: the Zhoukoudian Peking Man Site and the Liulihe Western Zhou Yan capital site from prehistoric times witnessed the origins of early human civilization and dynastic capitals; imperial gardens retained by successive dynasties (the Summer Palace, the Old Summer Palace ruins, the Fragrant Hills Jingyi Garden, etc.) and religious sacred sites (Tanzhe Temple, Jietai Temple, Yunju Temple, etc.) demonstrate the brilliant achievements of imperial and religious culture; ancient villages scattered among the mountains (Cuandixia Village, Lingshui Village, etc.), ancient post roads and ancient water-conservancy facilities carry the historical memory of folk life wisdom and regional transportation and trade; and modern industrial heritage clusters such as the Mentougou coal mines and the Changxindian railway factory record China’s difficult exploration of modern industrialization [5]. This region is not only the core ecological barrier of Beijing but also an important carrier of the capital’s cultural roots. It embodies the urban development wisdom of “mountains and water depending on each other, city and river coexisting,” and is a key sample for interpreting Beijing’s historical evolution and cultural identity.

Value excavation is the core foundational part of this study. It specifically refers, under the holistic vision of “dual heritage,” to breaking through the traditional framework in which natural and cultural heritage values are cognized

separately, and to conducting a multi-dimensional and in-depth inquiry into and interpretation of the value system of the Beijing Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt with systematic thinking. Specifically, its core tasks include: on the one hand, comprehensively identifying and meticulously sorting out the core connotations of natural ecological value and humanistic historical value in the region. Natural ecological value covers multiple dimensions such as ecological barrier function, biodiversity maintenance, landscape aesthetics, and geological-hydrological scientific research [6]. Humanistic historical value includes rich aspects such as historical inheritance, artistic and aesthetic expression, social identity cohesion, and contemporary social use. On the other hand, it deeply analyzes the characteristics of the two kinds of value—such as the ecological rigidity of natural value and the historical continuity of humanistic value—and their intrinsic connections, such as the shaping role of the natural environment on human activities and the cultural empowerment of human practice on natural space. It then accurately refines and profoundly reveals the symbiotic core value of mutual dependence and coordinated evolution between nature and culture, as well as the outstanding universal value that can reflect regional uniqueness and civilizational representativeness. This process requires not only reliance on multidisciplinary theories and methods and the integration of research results in ecology, history, geography, architecture and other fields, but also the combination of field investigation, literature textual research, expert demonstration and other pluralistic means, so as to finally form a systematic and structured value cognition. This provides a scientific, clear and instructive value orientation for the formulation, implementation and optimization of subsequent protection and inheritance strategies, ensuring that protection and inheritance work always unfolds around core values and avoids deviating from the essential attributes of heritage.

Protection and inheritance are the key paths to the perpetual continuation of “dual heritage” value. The two support each other and are dialectically unified, together constituting a complete system for the sustainable development of heritage resources. Protection here is not simple static preservation; rather, under the premise of strictly adhering to the core principles of authenticity and integrity of cultural and natural heritage, and based on the results of the value excavation above, it builds a scientific and systematic protection system. It should not only adopt technical measures such as ecological restoration, vegetation conservation, hydrological governance and biodiversity protection for the ecological fragility of natural heritage, so as to prevent risks such as environmental pollution, ecological degradation and natural disasters; it should also use professional methods such as archaeological exploration, cultural-relic restoration, ancient-building repair and adaptive conservation of industrial heritage for the historical vulnerability of cultural heritage, so as to avoid threats such as human destruction, overdevelopment and erosion by time. At the same time, through formulating special protection plans, improving management systems and perfecting laws and regulations, it effectively maintains the original state of heritage and rigidly safeguards core values, ensuring stability and continuity of heritage in spatial-temporal dimensions [7]. Inheritance, by contrast, focuses on the dynamic transmission and living continuation of value. Its core is to break the barrier between heritage and contemporary society and, through diversified

and innovative paths and carriers, to make the core values of the cultural belt widely recognized, deeply identified with and actively practiced by contemporary people. It includes not only traditional forms such as museum exhibitions, cultural-site display and academic research dissemination, but also innovative forms such as study tours, cultural experiences, intangible-heritage performances, digital-media communication and cultural-creative product transformation. Through multi-channel and audience-differentiated communication and interaction, it builds a bridge between heritage value and public cognition, enabling contemporary people to understand the deep meaning of heritage through perception, experience and participation [8], and then effectively passing on the historical memory, cultural spirit and ecological wisdom it carries to future generations. In this way, the cross-generational inheritance and perpetual use of heritage value are finally realized, allowing “dual heritage” to continue playing important roles in contemporary society in cultural nourishment, ecological support and social cohesion.

3. Dual-Heritage Characteristics of the Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt

The natural-heritage characteristics of the Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt are mainly reflected in its unique geographical environment and rich ecological resources. Geographically, the Western Hills are an important mountain range in the Beijing area, with complex and diverse terrain including mountains, hills and plains. The climate is a temperate semi-humid continental monsoon climate, with four distinct seasons and moderate precipitation. In terms of hydrological conditions, the Yongding River is the largest river in the Beijing area, with a broad basin and abundant water resources [9]. In terms of ecological resources, the Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt has abundant animal and plant resources and is a habitat for many rare and endangered species. Its ecosystem types are diverse, including forest ecosystems and wetland ecosystems, and it has important ecological service functions such as water conservation, soil and water retention, and biodiversity protection.

The cultural-heritage characteristics of the Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt are mainly reflected in its rich historical and cultural relics and unique intangible cultural heritage. In terms of historical and cultural relics, many ancient buildings, ancient sites and historic districts are distributed within the cultural belt [10]. For example, ancient buildings such as Xiangshan Temple and Tanzhe Temple witnessed the spread and development of Buddhist culture in the Beijing area; the Zhoukoudian Peking Man Site is an important witness to early human activity; and many ancient villages retain traditional architectural styles and ways of life. In terms of intangible cultural heritage, the belt contains rich folk culture, such as traditional festivals and folk beliefs; traditional skills such as traditional handicrafts and folk arts; and local operas such as Peking opera and Pingju opera. These intangible cultural heritages are the crystallization of local people’s wisdom and have important cultural value [11].

In short, the characteristics of dual heritage have two aspects: one is nature and the other is humanity. The core connotation of a compound heritage region in which nature and humanity coexist is dual heritage. Symbiosis is the

essential feature of “dual heritage,” embodied in the fact that natural ecology and humanistic history are not simply superimposed but form a dynamic relationship of “mutual dependence, mutual shaping and inseparability.” Taking the Beijing Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt as an example, the mountain texture and forest vegetation of the Western Hills and the hydrological corridor of the Yongding River constitute the natural foundation of regional development. They not only provide survival resources such as water, minerals, land and spatial carriers for human activities, but also shape the regional cultural characteristics through natural conditions such as landforms and climate—for example, the practice of harnessing the Yongding River gave rise to water-conservancy culture, and the forest environment of the Western Hills nurtured religious reclusive culture and the garden-making ideas of imperial gardens [12]. Conversely, human historical practice has continuously endowed natural space with cultural connotation: the production activities of prehistoric ancestors left civilizational imprints such as the Zhoukoudian site; the construction of successive dynasties made the Western Hills a cluster of imperial gardens and religious sacred sites; and modern industrial activities formed industrial heritages such as the Mentougou coal mines, transforming natural landscape into cultural landscape bearing historical memory, cultural symbols and collective emotion. This coordinated evolution of “nature as the foundation and culture as the soul” runs through the whole process of regional development and constitutes the core trait distinguishing “dual heritage” from single natural heritage or single cultural heritage.

The existence of “dual heritage” depends on the integrity of a specific geographical space, and the realization of its value and its protection and inheritance must be premised on spatial integrity. Taking the Western Hills mountain system and the Yongding River basin as its core carriers, the Beijing Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt has formed a linked spatial pattern of “mountains as the barrier, river as the vein, and city as the core.” Administratively it spans Haidian, Shijingshan, Mentougou and other districts, and spatially it covers mountains, rivers, wetlands, forests, ancient villages, urban blocks and other types. This spatial integrity is reflected not only in the connectivity of the natural ecosystem—for example, the forests of the Western Hills and the wetlands of the Yongding River constitute a complete ecological corridor—but also in the relevance of cultural resources, such as ancient post roads linking ancient villages and religious sacred sites along the route. The water-conservancy facilities of the Yongding River witnessed the inheritance of harnessing from ancient to modern times, and industrial heritage and imperial gardens together reflect the historical changes of regional functions [13]. Spatial integrity is the foundation for the survival of “dual heritage” value; once space is fragmented, the connectivity of natural ecology and the continuity of cultural context will be damaged, and its compound value will also be impaired.

As a model of the integration of Beijing’s natural and cultural heritage, the in-depth excavation of the dual-heritage value of the Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt provides unique support for the capital’s high-quality development. From the perspective of natural heritage, the Western Hills ecological conservation area and the Yongding River alluvial plain constitute the “mountain-water skeleton” on which Beijing depends for survival. Its geological

evolution records the formation history of the North China Plain, and its rich biodiversity has become the ecological foundation for the city's sustainable development. In the dimension of cultural heritage, the region carries a complete civilizational sequence from prehistoric human activity sites (such as Zhoukoudian), to water-conservancy projects of the Jin and Yuan periods (such as the old course of the Jinkou River), and to the imperial gardens of the Ming and Qing "Three Hills and Five Gardens." Among them, the planning wisdom formed through the interaction of "mountain–water–city" remains the core expression of Beijing's historical context [14]. By systematically sorting out the coupling relationship of "geological structure–ecosystem–humanistic landscape," we can not only innovatively build a heritage protection model of "large-scale ecological protection + micro-regeneration and adaptive use," but also take the Yongding River Cultural Belt as a link to integrate scattered relics into a three-dimensional network that tells Beijing's civilizational story of "long-standing origins and harmony between humanity and nature," providing value guidance and a practical paradigm for the construction of a national cultural center.

4. Value Excavation of the Beijing Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt from the Perspective of "Dual Heritage"

4.1. Historical Value

The Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt occupied an important position and played an important role in historical development. From human activities in remote antiquity to the construction of imperial gardens in the Ming and Qing periods, the cultural belt witnessed the historical changes of the Beijing area from ancient times to the present. Its historical value is embodied in the multi-dimensional and multi-layered accumulation of civilization and spatial evolution. From the Zhoukoudian Site of the Paleolithic Age to the Donghulin remains of the Neolithic Age, the region witnessed early human activities at the stage of the origins of Chinese civilization; the Liulihe Site of the Shang and Zhou periods, as the original enfeoffment site of the Yan state, provides key evidence for studying early state forms and capital systems. In the medieval period, because of its proximity to Youzhou (present-day Beijing), this zone became a military defense and transportation hub; after the Liao and Jin dynasties, it also assumed political-symbolic and religious-cultural functions with the construction of imperial gardens (such as the Fragrant Hills Jingyi Garden) and temple clusters (such as Tanzhe Temple and Jietai Temple) [15]. As a carrier of natural–humanistic interaction, the Yongding River not only shaped the regional ecological pattern but also profoundly influenced the development of social economy in western Beijing in terms of canal transport, irrigation and settlement distribution. In the Ming and Qing periods, the cultural belt was further integrated into an organic component of the capital system, and the spatial allocation of its functions—military (Juyongguan, etc.; see Figure 3), funerary (Ming imperial tombs; see Figure 4), and leisure (Three Hills and Five Gardens)—reflects the compound utilization of the areas around traditional Chinese capitals. Overall, the cultural belt is a typical sample for studying the evolution of human–land relations, the blending of multiple

ethnic cultures, and the shaping of space by political power in northern China, and it has irreplaceable historical significance for deepening research on the historical geography and cultural ecology of northern China.



Figure 3. Juyongguan (Juyong Pass)



Figure 4. Ming Tombs (Ming Dynasty Tombs)

4.2. Cultural Value

The Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt is marked by highly significant pluralistic cultural fusion and has an important influence on regional cultural identity. Within the belt there is both inheritance of Han culture and blending of ethnic-minority cultures, forming a distinctive regional culture. For example, the combination of Buddhist culture at Xiangshan Temple with local folk culture formed a unique religious cultural landscape [16]. The uniqueness of cultural heritage is also reflected in its rich historical relics and intangible cultural heritage, such as the architectural style of ancient buildings and the exquisite craftsmanship of traditional skills. These cultural heritages are of great significance in cultural inheritance and are important carriers for inheriting and carrying forward fine traditional Chinese culture.

The Western Hills–Yongding River area contains rich intangible cultural heritage, mainly in three categories: first, traditional skills, such as the national-level intangible-heritage items "Jingxi Peace Drum," "Liuli glazed-brick firing crafts" (see Figure 5) and "Legends of the Yongding River" [17]. Second, folk festivals and celebrations, including the Miaofengshan Temple Fair with a history of more than 400 years and the Jingxi ancient banner fairs. Third, oral literature, such as the folk literary heritage of "Stories of Harnessing the Yongding River." These intangible-heritage

items vividly display the regional characteristics of the integration of mountains, water and humanity in western Beijing; among them, the Miaofengshan Temple Fair attracts hundreds of thousands of pilgrims every year and has become the largest folk festival in North China. At present, through building intangible-heritage exhibition halls, developing cultural-creative products and holding cultural festivals, the innovative inheritance of these living cultural heritages is being promoted.



Figure 5. Glazed handicrafts

4.3. Ecological Value

The ecosystem of the Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt is complete and rich in biodiversity. Its forest ecosystem and wetland ecosystem provide habitats for many animals and plants and constitute an important ecological barrier in the Beijing area. For example, the forest ecosystem of the Western Hills plays an important role in water conservation and soil and water retention, while the wetland ecosystem of the Yongding River has important ecological service functions such as climate regulation and water purification. The uniqueness of the natural landscape also makes it an important destination for ecotourism, attracting large numbers of tourists to enjoy natural scenery and promoting the development of local ecotourism.

4.4. Economic Value

The Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt has huge potential and plays an important role in regional economic development. Tourism value is an important embodiment of its economic value: the rich natural landscape and cultural heritage attract large numbers of tourists for sightseeing, driving the development of related local industries such as catering, accommodation and transportation. The cultural and creative industries are also an important embodiment of the economic value of the cultural belt. Through the creative development of cultural heritage, distinctive cultural-creative products and cultural services can be formed, promoting the transformation and upgrading of the local economy [18]. In addition, the synergistic relationship between dual-heritage protection and economic development is of great significance for regional sustainable development. Through rational protection and development, a benign interaction between cultural-heritage protection and economic development can be achieved, creating more employment opportunities and economic income for local residents and promoting the sustainable development of the regional economy.

4.5. Social Value

The social value of the Beijing Western Hills–Yongding

River Cultural Belt is mainly reflected in its multiple functions as a carrier of historical memory, a bond of cultural identity and a resource for sustainable development. From a sociological perspective, through the symbiotic system of material remains (such as ancient villages, temples and ancient roads) and intangible cultural heritage (such as temple fairs, folk skills and oral traditions), the cultural belt maintains the collective memory and cultural inheritance of local communities. The long-term interaction between its mountain-water pattern and humanistic landscape has shaped the distinctive regional identity of “Jingxi culture,” an important component of Beijing’s urban spirit. In the contemporary context, the region’s traditional ecological wisdom (such as water management and mountain agriculture) provides a historical reference for ecological-civilization construction, while the living protection of cultural landscape (such as Cuandixia Village and other traditional villages) explores a cultural path for rural revitalization. As a component of national cultural parks, the cultural belt promotes the cultivation of public historical consciousness through the integration of culture and tourism, and its interdisciplinary research paradigm also provides methodological inspiration for the social use of cultural heritage.

5. Current Situation, Problems and Constraints in the Protection and Inheritance of the Beijing Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt

5.1. Current Situation of Protection and Inheritance

A preliminary protection system has been established: relevant departments have issued policy documents such as the Beijing Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt Protection and Development Plan, delineated protection scope, established a census and registration system for heritage resources, implemented special protection projects for key heritage sites (such as the Zhoukoudian Site, the Summer Palace and Tanzhe Temple), and achieved staged results in natural-ecological restoration (such as the comprehensive treatment of the Yongding River and the Western Hills afforestation project).

Inheritance and utilization have begun to show results: relying on the resources of the cultural belt, a number of cultural-tourism routes have been created (such as imperial-garden tours, ancient-village and ancient-road tours, and industrial-heritage tours); multiple museums and memorial halls have been built (such as the Beijing Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt Museum and the Changxindian February 7th Memorial Hall), and various cultural exhibitions and science-education activities have been carried out; some heritage sites have achieved preliminary integration of cultural value and economic value through creative transformation and digital empowerment [19].

Public-participation awareness has gradually increased: through media publicity, volunteer services and community activities, the public’s awareness of and protection consciousness toward the cultural belt have continuously improved. More and more social forces are participating in heritage protection and inheritance, forming a preliminary pattern of government leadership and social participation.

5.2. Main Problems

Fragmented value interpretation: value excavation of the cultural belt mostly concentrates on a single heritage type, lacks a systematic interpretation of the “nature–culture” symbiotic value, and has not formed a unified value-narrative system; the value publicity of different heritage sites acts independently, lacking integrity and relevance, resulting in a vague overall public cognition of the cultural belt.

Insufficient coordination in protection and management: natural heritage and cultural heritage are managed by different departments, and there is a phenomenon of “fragmentation by administrative sections.” Ecological restoration and cultural protection lack overall planning, and conflicts between ecological protection and cultural-heritage utilization have appeared in some areas; a cross-district coordinated protection mechanism has not yet been improved, resulting in low overall protection efficiency of the cultural belt.

Insufficient innovation in inheritance models: inheritance still relies mainly on traditional museum display and tourism sightseeing, lacking interactivity, experientiality and innovation; it is insufficiently attractive to young groups, and the risk of an intergenerational gap in cultural inheritance is prominent; the creative transformation of cultural resources and industrial integration are not deep enough, failing to fully activate the contemporary value of heritage.

Imbalance between protection and utilization: some areas suffer from excessive commercial development, threatening the authenticity and integrity of heritage; some heritage sites are idle and abandoned due to capital shortages and poor management and have not been effectively utilized; a balance mechanism among ecological protection, tourism development and community development has not yet been established.

Insufficient depth of public participation: public participation still stays at a shallow level such as volunteer services and visiting tours, lacking effective channels to participate in heritage-protection decision-making, inheritance-model design, supervision and management; the principal position of community residents in heritage protection and utilization has not been fully reflected, and the benefit-sharing mechanism is imperfect.

5.3. Analysis of Constraints

Institutional and mechanism constraints: there is no unified cultural-belt management agency, and the cross-department and cross-district coordinated management mechanism is not sound, causing obstacles in policy implementation, resource integration, supervision and assessment. Although the legal and regulatory system for heritage protection has been gradually improved, special regulations and implementation rules for “dual heritage” are still insufficient.

Insufficient capital investment: heritage protection, ecological restoration and facility construction require large amounts of capital, but current funding sources mainly rely on government finance, market-oriented financing channels are not smooth, the enthusiasm of social capital participation is not high, and capital shortage has become an important factor restricting protection and inheritance.

Lack of professional talent: there is a shortage of interdisciplinary professionals who understand both natural-

ecological protection and cultural-heritage management and possess innovative ability; the professional quality of grassroots heritage-protection and inheritance personnel needs to be improved, making it difficult to adapt to the complex needs of “dual heritage” protection and inheritance.

Weak technical support: the application of technologies in heritage-value assessment, protection and restoration, digital display and ecological monitoring is not widespread enough; there is a lack of long-term monitoring and dynamic assessment of the “nature–culture” symbiotic relationship of the cultural belt, and the technical-support system is not yet sound.

6. Path Optimization for the Protection and Inheritance of the Beijing Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt from the Perspective of “Dual Heritage”

6.1. Build a Coordinated “Nature–Culture” Protection System

Strengthen top-level design and overall coordination: establish a cross-department and cross-district Cultural Belt Management Committee to uniformly take charge of planning, resource integration, coordination and management, and supervision and assessment; improve the legal and regulatory system for “dual heritage” protection and formulate targeted protection rules and technical standards; incorporate natural-ecological protection and cultural-heritage protection into unified planning to achieve “one blueprint to the end.”

Implement classified and graded protection: based on value-assessment results, divide the cultural belt into core protection areas, buffer zones and radiation zones, and implement classified and graded protection. Core protection areas focus on protecting the authenticity and integrity of heritage and strictly limit development activities; buffer zones focus on promoting ecological restoration and environmental improvement and moderately carrying out public-welfare display activities; radiation zones promote the integrated development of culture, ecology and industry to achieve a balance between protection and utilization.

Strengthen coordinated ecological and cultural restoration: combine ecological restoration with cultural-heritage protection. In ecological projects such as Western Hills forest tending and the comprehensive treatment of the Yongding River, attention should be paid to protecting historical relics, ancient post roads, ancient villages and other cultural heritage; in cultural-heritage protection projects, ecological concepts should be integrated to restore the natural ecological environment of heritage sites, achieving bidirectional restoration and coordinated improvement of “ecology–culture.”

6.2. Create a “Value-Led” Inheritance Model

Build an integrated value-narrative system: take the “nature–culture” symbiotic value as the core, integrate the value connotations of various heritage resources in the region, and refine unified cultural themes and value symbols; compile a value-interpretation manual for the cultural belt and systematically present the overall value and historical context of the belt to the public through museum exhibitions, online

and offline publicity and other forms, so as to enhance public cultural identity.

Innovate inheritance carriers and forms: promote digital protection and display of heritage, use technologies such as VR/AR, big data and artificial intelligence to create immersive and interactive digital-experience projects (such as digital museums, virtual roaming and online study tours); develop cultural-creative products that combine heritage elements with modern design and life needs to realize the daily-life inheritance of cultural value; hold various themed cultural activities (such as cultural festivals, intangible-heritage performances and academic forums) to enhance the interest and participation of inheritance.

Strengthen audience-differentiated inheritance strategies: formulate differentiated inheritance plans according to the needs of different groups. For teenagers, develop study-tour courses and campus activities and integrate the value of the cultural belt into basic education; for community residents, carry out community cultural activities and volunteer training and encourage residents to participate in heritage protection and inheritance; for tourists, optimize tourism-product design and improve the cultural-communication effect in tourism experience.

6.3. Promote Coordinated Progress of “Protection–Utilization–Development”

Promote deep integration of culture and industry: rely on the natural and cultural resources of the cultural belt to develop ecological tourism, cultural tourism, study tourism, health and wellness tourism and other formats, and create high-quality tourism products; promote the development of cultural and creative industries, cultivate a number of culturally competitive enterprises, and develop distinctive cultural-creative products and services; promote cross-border integration of culture with science and technology, sports, agriculture and other industries, and expand the value-transformation paths of the cultural belt.

Achieve an organic combination of ecological protection and improvement of people’s livelihood: in the process of ecological restoration and heritage protection, pay attention to safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of community residents and establish benefit-sharing mechanisms (such as employment priority, income dividends and community development funds); encourage community residents to participate in tourism services, cultural display, ecological management and protection, so as to achieve a virtuous circle of “protecting heritage, improving people’s livelihood and promoting development.”

Regulate heritage-utilization behavior: formulate access standards and operating norms for the utilization of cultural-belt heritage and strictly restrict excessive commercial development; establish a dynamic monitoring and assessment mechanism for heritage utilization, regularly inspect and evaluate heritage-utilization conditions, promptly correct improper utilization, and ensure the balance between protection and utilization.

6.4. Improve the “Pluralistic Participation” Guarantee Mechanism

Broaden capital-investment channels: establish a diversified capital-investment mechanism of “government leadership, social participation and market operation.”

Increase government financial investment and set up a special fund for cultural-belt protection and inheritance; optimize the business environment to attract social capital to participate in heritage protection, project development and operation management; encourage public-welfare donations, charitable trusts and other methods to provide financial support for protection and inheritance.

Strengthen professional talent-team building: rely on universities and research institutions to cultivate interdisciplinary talents who understand both natural ecology and cultural heritage; strengthen professional training for existing practitioners and improve their professional ability and comprehensive quality; establish talent-incentive mechanisms to attract outstanding talents to devote themselves to cultural-belt protection and inheritance.

Improve the public-participation mechanism: build public-participation platforms, establish systems such as hearings, consultation meetings and volunteer services, and safeguard the public’s right to know, participate and supervise in heritage-protection decision-making, planning, project implementation and other links; give full play to the principal role of community residents and encourage communities to independently carry out heritage-protection and inheritance activities; strengthen publicity and education to enhance public awareness and participation capacity, forming a good atmosphere of joint participation by the whole society.

Through this study, the dual-heritage value of the Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt has been comprehensively excavated, its natural-heritage and cultural-heritage characteristics and their interrelationships have been analyzed, and corresponding inheritance strategies have been proposed. The study holds that the Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt has rich historical value, cultural value, ecological value and economic value, and that its natural heritage and cultural heritage are interdependent, together constituting a unique dual-heritage region. Through the implementation of inheritance strategies such as policy support, community participation, tourism development, education and communication, and cross-department cooperation, the dual-heritage protection and inheritance of the Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt can be effectively realized, promoting the sustainable development of regional culture and economic prosperity.

Although this study has achieved certain results in dual-heritage value excavation and inheritance strategies, it still has some limitations. For example, the sample size in field investigation and questionnaire surveys was limited, which may affect the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the research results. In addition, quantitative research on the synergistic relationship between dual-heritage protection and economic development is not deep enough, lacking specific quantitative indicators and model analysis. In future research, the sample size should be further expanded to improve scientificity and reliability; quantitative research on the synergistic relationship between dual-heritage protection and economic development should be strengthened, and a scientific evaluation-index system and models should be established to provide a more scientific decision-making basis for dual-heritage protection and inheritance. At the same time, attention should be paid to new problems and challenges emerging in the process of dual-heritage protection and inheritance, and protection and inheritance models should be

continuously explored and innovated to promote the sustainable development of the Western Hills–Yongding River Cultural Belt.

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