

Daigoku-mon Gate

Daigoku-mon Gate was the main gate of Daiichiji Daigokuden-in (Former Imperial Audience Hall Compound), located on the south side of the compound. The compound was approximately 317.7 m north to south and approximately 176.6 m east to west, and was surrounded by a roofed mud wall corridor. The emperor would sometimes make an appearance here at ceremonies.

The gate is a reconstructed two-story gate built with foundation stones as a result of excavation and research. The gate has a width of 22.1 m, a depth of 8.8 m and a height of approximately 20 m. This makes it a slightly smaller structure than Suzaku-mon Gate (main gate of the Nara palace site). Nevertheless, ornamental metal fittings have been fitted to the tips of all the rafters. The ornamental metal fittings are fixtures which are applied only to important structures. More parts of this gate were fitted with fittings than Suzaku-mon Gate, That gives it a rank equivalent to Daiichiji Daigokuden (Former Imperial Audience Hall).

Moreover, the foundation stone stylobates and ridge-end tile lotus flower patterns have also been restored to a high-ranking structure conforming to Daiichiji Daigokuden (Former Imperial Audience Hall).

Was it called Daigoku-mon Gate at that time? It is not possible to find that gate name in any written materials. Accordingly, it has been named Daigoku-mon Gate based on case studies of palaces in Japan and China. This has been written on the plaque hung over the gate.

■ Overview of the Structure

Construction period: November 2017 to March 2022

Structure: Wooden five-column and three-entrance two-story gate

Structure area: 449.81 m²

Total floor area: 195.68 m²

Maximum height: Approx. 20 m from the surface of the ground to the top of the ridge-end tiles

Height of the eaves: Approx. 14 m from the surface of the platform

■ Main Finishes

Base exterior: Rhyolite welded tuff (Tatsuyama stone)

Foundation stone: Natural stone granite

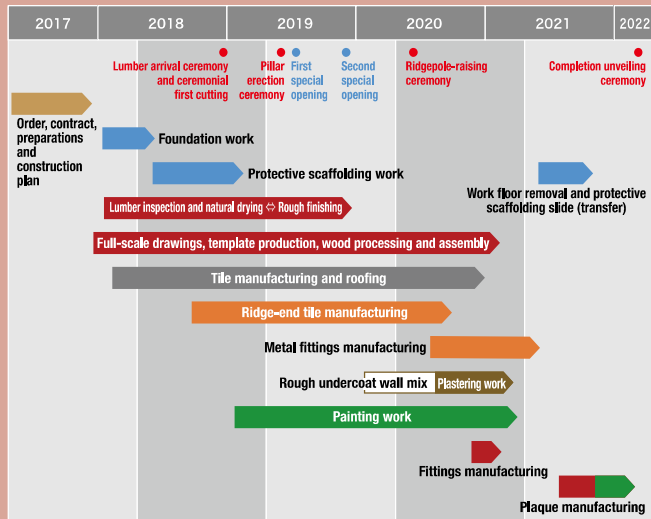
Wooden painting: Red soil, white chalk and verdigris coating

Wall: Plaster finishing

Roof: Hipped tiled roofing

Metal fittings: Made of bronze

■ Reconstruction Work Process



Information

Opening hours: 9:00-17:00 (last admission at 16:30)

Closed on: Second Monday (closed on the day after if a holiday) in Feb., Apr., Jul., and Nov., and between December 29 and January 1

Admission: Free

Please refrain from eating, drinking, smoking and talking on a mobile phone inside the compound.

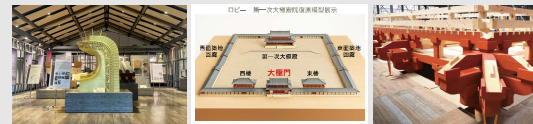
Access



- 15 minutes walk from the South Exit of Yamato-Saidaiji Station
- Gurutto Bus Oriya-dori (Omiya Avenue) Route (every 30 minutes on weekdays and every 15 minutes on weekends and public holidays)
 - From Kintetsu Nara Station Bus boarding point 8 to "B18 Suzakumon Hiroba-mae" and 12 minutes walk to the north.
 - From Kintetsu Yamato-Saidaiji Station South Exit Square to "B1 Suzakumon Hiroba" and 10 minutes walk to the north.
- From JR Nara station West Exit Bus boarding point 13, take a bus #160 or #161 to "Suzakumon Hiroba-mae" and 12 minutes walk to the north.

Fukugenjigyo-Johokan (Information Center for Reconstruction Project of the Former Imperial Audience Hall Compound)

Exhibits on ancient carpentry techniques, tools, etc used in the reconstructions including Daigokumon-Gate. 2 minutes walk from Daigokumon-Gate



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Inquiries

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Daiichiji Daigokuden-in (Former Imperial Audience Hall Compound): Daigoku-mon Gate (South Gate)



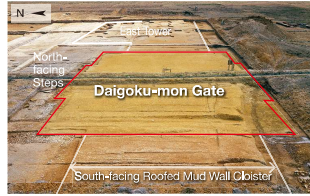
Daigoku-mon Gate Reconstruction Research

Excavations

The Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties carried out excavations here in 1973, 2005 and 2017. It was not possible to confirm the position of the pillars. However, ground reinforcement for the platform (foundation) under the structure, stones covering the sides of the platform (exterior), remains of the steps and a gutter to catch rainwater falling down the roof (rainwater gutter) were detected. The size of the platform and steps were ascertained from those clues.



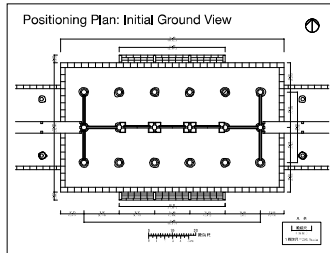
Excavation



Excavation in 1973 Which Discovered Almost All the platform

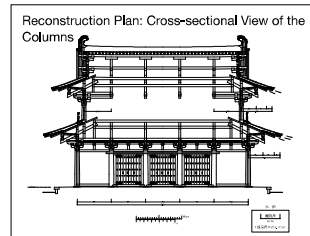
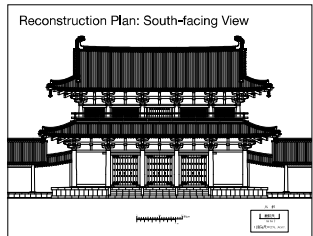
Positioning of the Pillars

The clues obtained from the excavations were the size of the platform and steps and the rainwater gutter. The platform of Daigoku-mon Gate is characterized by having a relatively large proportion in terms of depth with respect to the frontage. The position of the pillars was restored based on that information after verifying in an integrated manner the shape and depth of the roof (protrusion of the eaves) and the superstructure of the structure such as the bracket complexes on the pillars in addition to analyzing written materials, pictorial materials, similar cases of excavations and existing ancient structures.



Shape of the Gate

The written documents revealed it is highly likely that Kofukuji Nandai-mon Gate was a two-story gate with a lower roof and an upper roof from the first half of the Nara period (710 to 794). It was also found that all ancient two-story gates had at least five columns. Furthermore, the pictorial documents depict most of the two-story gates being gabled roof structures. Daigoku-mon Gate was reconstructed as a gabled roof two-story gate taking into consideration the era, its size and its position in the compound as a result of other case studies.



Inheritance of Traditional Skills Wood Craftsmen

The gate was built using traditional architectural techniques – from the selection of the wood to the preparation of the full-scale drawings and templates, processing, finishing with a *chona* (adze) and a *yariganna* (spear plane) and assembly.



Inheritance of Traditional Skills Stone Artisans

Granite produced in Shiga Prefecture was used as the column base stones while Tatsuyama stone tuff from Hoden in Hyogo Prefecture was used as the exterior of the platform. These stones were carefully cut, processed and installed.



Inheritance of Traditional Skills Painting Artisans

The structure was painted with a traditional technique in which the pigments and glue are mixed on-site using reddish-brown clay, green verdigris and white chalk paints.



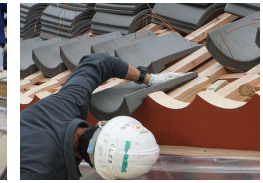
Inheritance of Traditional Skills Wall Craftsmen

Plasterers are craftsmen who finish the coating of the walls and floors with soil and plaster using trowels and other tools. This was a time-consuming six-step process from the undercoating to the final plaster coating.



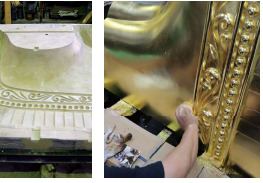
Inheritance of Traditional Skills Tile Craftsmen

The tiles were made one-by-one using a modern tile-making method after restoring ancient tile-making techniques. It was roofed with traditional and high-class hipped tiled roofing.



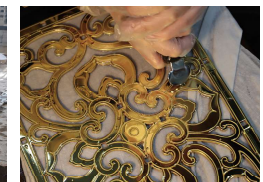
Inheritance of Traditional Skills Ridge-end Tile Artisans

Bronze was cast after undergoing the stages of clay mold, plaster mold, FRP mold and sand mold divided into four parts. The surface was lacquered with gold leaf. This ornamental ridge-end tile is called *shibi*.



Inheritance of Traditional Skills Metal Artisans

The ornamental metal fittings are made of bronze. The same technique as for the Great Buddha of Nara was employed for the amalgam plating used in some places for the finishing (vaporize mercury after applying mercury in which gold had been dissolved).



Inheritance of Traditional Skills Plaque Craftsmen

The plaque was shaped with a *yariganna* (spear plane). The lettering was colored with painting made from traditional natural pigments after the area around the letters was carved with a chisel. The shape of the surrounding frame is basically the same as Daigokuden (Imperial Audience Hall).



Inheritance of Traditional Skills

The reconstruction of Daigoku-mon Gate was supported by the skills, experiences and knowledge of many craftsmen in various fields who have inherited the traditional skills of ancient architecture.

