

RELICS OF THANG LONG IMPERIAL HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED

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On preparing the ground for building the National Assembly Complex and Ba Dinh Hall located amidst Hoang Van Thu street, Hoang Dieu street, Doc Lap street and Bac Son street, in accordance with Law on Cultural Heritage, the Government of Vietnam permitted archeologists to excavate the site on a large scale.

Since December of 2002 till the end of October of 2003, an area of 17.000sqm has excavated. This is the largest-scale excavation in Vietnam and possibly the largest in South East Asia. The work exposed a variety of relics and remains dating back to Dai La Citadel (from the seventh to ninth century), Thang Long Citadel (from the eleventh to the thirteenth century) and Hanoi Citadel (nineteenth century).

Scientifically, this discovery requires much work to be done. Much time will be needed for researching and discussing the naming, functioning and chronological dating of architectural relics, determining the structures of the site and its chronological transformations, classifying and outsourcing them. In fact, there are sufficient scientific evidences to give

general evaluations on the priceless historical - cultural values of the excavated relics.

This excavated site lied to the west of Thang Long imperial citadel dating back to the dynasties of Ly, Tran, the early Le, Le Trung Hung (eleventh century to eighteenth century), back to Dai La (seventh to ninth century) and Hanoi citadel (nineteenth century). The excavation has revealed a long - standing history from seventh to nineteenth century, dating back to the pre - Thang Long era, the era of Thang Long and Hanoi. Excavated relics show a consecutive overlapping of cultures.

The excavated site has exposed foundations, column footings, fragments of brick-wall, brick-laid roads, and drainages, wells, vestiges of "King River", lotus ponds etc, revealing the majestic sights of early Thang Long Citadel yet to be referred to and illustrated in ancient sciptures and maps. A relic of Ly - Tran Palace foundations reveals nine columnades, nine chambers 27m wide and 62m long, larger than the palace in Hue Citadel and other preserved architectures. Wells

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dating back to Dai La, Ly, Tran, Le and Nguyen dynasties have been discovered. On the other bank of "King River" the foundations of an unusual architecture were found. They were made up of 6 round - haped columns and a square-shaped column as a contemplating octagonal pavilion.

A wide sort of heavyweight remains are building materials such as bricks (plain bricks, engraved bricks, paving bricks, etc.), tiles of all sorts, stone column footings, fragments of iron woods, etc., royal belongings and facilities, jewelleries, Vietnamese potteries, potteries from China, Japan and the Middle East; bronze coins of various dynasties; weaponry (cannons, fences, swords, arrows etc.), some of which are completely rare. Column footings stand firm on stone stands with lotus imprintings typical of Ly, Tran dynasties underpinned by foundations of pebbles and bricks one meter deep underneath. Tiles and baked clay statues decorated on roofs are engraved with delicate dragon, phoenixes, lovers, and leaves. Royal potteries with the letter "Quan" of different types and skillfully imprinted are found. Archeologists have also discovered pottery moulding patterns and clusters of scraps, indicating pottery - aking compounds located in Thang Long Citadel. Bricks are found bearing chronological signs with engravings such as "Jiang Xi Guan" (Tang Dynasty), "Dai

Viet quoc quan thanh chuyen" (Dinh and early Le dynasties). "Ly gia de tam de Long Thuy Thai Binh tu nien tao" (1057), designations of the armed forces involved in building the citadel such as "Trang Phong Quan", "Vu Ky Quan", "Ho Uy Quan"..., servants from districts such as "Thu Vat chau, Thu Vat hung", names of palaces such as "Truong Lac Kho" (Truong Lac was the queen and wife of King Le Thanh Tong). These relics show high skills in art and techniques of Dai Viet (Great Viet) and its extensive foreign relations.

These discoveries have shown a fact that underneath Thang Long Citadel lie intact valuable relics and remains, paving ground for an extensive excavation and planning a preserved site for a complex of historic relics and culture of Thang Long Citadel, Ancient Hanoi Citadel and revolutionary relics of Ho Chi Minh era such as Ba Dinh Hall, Moselume and Stilt House, Headquarter of the Vietnamese Army in the anti - American period, forming a sequence going back from the seventh century to the twentieth century. This is an invaluable cultural heritage of Vietnam amidst the Capital of Hanoi and, if well preserved, this will possibly be recognized by UNESCO as a world's cultural heritage.

Recognizing the historical - cultural values of the site and discharging responsibility before history and the

people, in early November of 2003 the Politburo of the Vietnam Communist Party approved request by archeologists to widen excavation over the site as planned for constructing the National

Assembly Building and Ba Dinh Hall in order to gather sufficient scientific evidence to support the preservation of national cultural relics.

Baked clay pottery embellished with phoenix ornamentations



Chen Dynasty's ancient wells

