



SUMMARY REPORT

INTERNATIONAL EXPERT CONSULTATION MEETING ON THE BA DINH ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE AND THANG LONG IMPERIAL CITADEL



**Hanoi
10 - 11 August 2004**

Report on the International Expert Consultation Meeting on the Ba Dinh Archaeological Site and Thang Long Imperial Citadel Hanoi, 10-11 August 2004

Background

Ba Dinh Site is the most important archaeological find of recent years in Viet Nam. In December 2002 archaeologists from the Institute of Archaeology, lead by Prof. Dr. Tong Trung Tin, began the excavation at the area of 18 Hoang Dieu. The site is situated behind the current National Assembly in Ha Noi and covers 48,000 square meters, of which 19,000m² has been excavated.

The site was designated for the construction of a new National Assembly House and National Conference Hall. The construction work has been put on hold and the archaeological studies continue. Final decision will be made based upon a more detailed assessment and conclusion of the archaeological site.

The Government has assigned the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences in cooperation with Ministry of Culture and Information, Ministry of Construction, to supervise the Institute of Archaeology to carry out the archaeological study and excavation of Ba Dinh site. The successful excavation of the Ba Dinh site has exposed millions of valuable artefacts in what are the probable vestiges of Thang Long Capital - continuously occupied for more than 1300 years.

International Expert Consultation Meeting

The International Expert Consultation Meeting on Ba Dinh Archaeological Site and Thang Long Imperial Citadel gathered over 60 notable scholars, researchers and heritage managers from overseas and Vietnam, as well as Vietnamese Government leaders and officials.

The meeting was organized by the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, the Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO and the UNESCO Hanoi Office.

First day was dedicated to a field visit to the Ba Dinh Archaeological Site and Thang Long Imperial Citadel. Second day was reserved for discussion of the historical, cultural, archaeological values of both sites.

The scientific and academic discussion and exchanging of ideas between the international and national experts will result in recommendations for measures to be taken on conservation, preservation, protection and planning of development of the site, to be further reviewed by experts and leaders of Vietnam.

Report on the Concluding Roundtable

Following a one-day site visit, presentations and remarks by national and international participants, **Dr. Richard Engelhardt**, UNESCO Regional Adviser on Culture for Asia and the Pacific, led a roundtable discussion on recommendations for the Ba Dinh site and the Thang Long Citadel. The contributions have been summarized below.

What is the value, significance of the site?

Statement of Value and Significance

The Thang Long Imperial Citadel, considered in its entirety, meets all internationally-determined criteria for priority safeguarding and permanent conservation as a cultural heritage site of high value and outstanding significance at both the national and international levels. The value of the Citadel site as an “archaeological laboratory” site for research into the history and documentation of the endogenous development of the Vietnamese state polity is unique and of *outstanding universal value* as understood in the context of the 1972 UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Culture and Natural Heritage.

The significance of the ancient Citadel site, within its contemporary urban context, derives from its unique and irreplaceable role as witness to the historic identity of Hanoi City and development model for a timeless continuity of Vietnamese urban life. The safeguarding of the high historical value and the outstanding cultural significance of the site demands that the integrity and authenticity of the entire Thang Long Citadel (and related ancient urban precincts) be protected in their entirety and managed within an urban development context which respects the central, historical role of the site as the birthplace of Vietnamese urban life.

Assessment of Value and Significance According to International Criteria

There was consensus among the experts that the Ba Dinh site and the Thang Long Imperial Citadel meet the criteria of *uniqueness* filling in a previously unknown chapter in Vietnamese history, with many archaeological layers illustrating a span of 1,300 years of urban development;

Monumentality of the urban planning template and its realization through harmonious constructions of fortifications, palaces, gardens and public space;

Capacity to make a discourse on all levels -- historical, social, political---between the past, present and future among all members of Vietnamese society and internationally;

Symbolic value for the community – particularly as capital of Dai Viet and symbol of “birth of the nation”;

Potential as part of a museum system for the enlightenment and education of the population of Hanoi, especially for younger generations; and *environmental impact of preservation* within the urban planning context giving a high quality of life to the people of Hanoi.

These criteria are similar to those used to evaluate candidates for the World Heritage List.

These are considerations – from both the national and international perspective -- that the Vietnamese experts and scholars may take into account in preparation of the report to the Government, in articulating the site’s values explicitly as a step to protection and long-term conservation.

How much of the site should be preserved?

Priority: Safeguard the Integrity of the Thang Long Citadel

The Ba Dinh archaeological site – and indeed the entire Thang Long Citadel – should be viewed in the wider context of historic Thang Long/Hanoi. Although different preservation options are available for different parts of the historic city, and there is consensus that the entire Citadel should be preserved as an historical monument of national importance, and protected by a buffer zone surrounding the Citadel wherein development controls are in place to ensure that new developments do not damage, degrade or detract from the historic and symbolic value of the Citadel.

Priority: Make Conservation Decision Based on Highest International Standards

Decisions on conservation of the various parts of the Citadel should be made according to the highest internationally-established standards and based on the overarching objective to protect

and preserve the historical and cultural value of the site. When considering new or adaptive uses for all or parts of the Citadel, highest consideration should be given to the priority to preserve its historic, cultural and scientific value; any argument (economic, developmental, ideological, etc) which proposes to sacrifice long-term protection of the Citadel for short-term practicality should not be acceptable as such an argument is incompatible with the overarching objective of safeguarding the site, its value, significance and meaning for future generations.

Priority: Promote Scientific Research

Scientific research on the entire historical area is a necessary first step to answering the questions of how to preserve the site, and excavated artefacts and their archaeological context. Vietnamese researchers are conducting archaeological studies in several areas surrounding the 140ha Citadel complex and this will help identify the various elements of the complex and the most appropriate methods of conservation and presentation for each area and element.

Priority: Integration of Archaeological Protection into the Urban Planning Strategy of Hanoi

Since the whole area of Thang Long Citadel is of outstanding national and international value - not only that which has been already excavated, but even more particularly the heritage that is still underground and is yet to be discovered and studied-- there is a need to plan carefully the development and future use of this large area in full consideration of the need to provide long-term protection to the as-yet-unexcavated areas as well as the already-excavated portions to ensure that this invaluable record of Vietnamese history is not lost for future generations. This will require carefully integration of archaeological conservation into the urban plan for Hanoi.

Priority: Immediate Action to Protect Ba Dinh Excavated Area and Thang Long Standing Monuments from Further Environmental Deterioration

Those parts of the Citadel which have already been excavated need special urgent conservation attention, as they are exposed to rapid deterioration because of their exposure to rain and other climatic factors. The entire Ba Dinh archaeological site area, including the "C" and "D" areas – which have the same value as the more completely excavated "A" and "B" areas – is in need of urgent action to protect the area from these environmental factors which are contributing to its very rapid and alarming deterioration. In addition, the central axis of the Thang Long Citadel including the existing Le monuments, is also endangered and constitutes a priority area for preservation and research.

How should the site complex be preserved?

A Combination of Short, Medium and Long-Term Planning is Required for Site Conservation

A plan for preservation of the Ba Dinh site and Thang Long Imperial Citadel should include these stages: (a) urgent action to preserve the current excavation site (that is, areas "A", "B", "C", and "D"); (b) identification of the extent of a protected heritage area including the larger citadel; (c) establishing mechanisms for protection; and (d) establishing a long-term program of research and conservation including excavation of additional selected areas.

In preparing this plan, it should be recognized that there may be different strategies for different zones, and that research and preservation are processes that will take place in stages.

The Need of Legal Protection is Paramount

The steps of this process will include: (i) establishing policies and legal provisions for protection of the site; (ii) setting up an organization to implement research, preservation and urban planning, including an inter-ministerial working group; and (iii) developing a system of cultural and environmental impact assessment of any proposed interventions into the Citadel area and its buffer zone. Legal protections and preservation actions should be introduced in the context of the urban planning of the city. To preserve the underground heritage and preserve long term options, new construction should not be allowed in the Citadel area.

Excavation is a Long-Term Research Tool, not a Conservation Action

Preservation does not mean excavation of the whole site. Plans for excavation should take a long-term perspective as in Rome, Nara, Seoul and other urban archaeological sites. The parts of the site that have been partially excavated are fragile and under immediate threat from the environment, particularly the water table, rainfall, sunlight, temperature and humidity. Due to this danger, parts of the area that has already been opened should be closed or filled in with sand in order to preserve them for future research and conservation, while leaving some parts open for public access.

The whole area of the current Ba Dinh archaeological site, including the parts not yet excavated, should be preserved in this way, as an archaeological and cultural park. The site should be studied and preserved together with other elements of the Citadel complex including the 20 ha portion of the Cam Thanh, including Dien Kinh Thien, which has been returned to Hanoi for restoration and research.

Future excavation should continue at a slower pace, and in planned stages. Further excavation requires gaining further experience in urban archaeology and adopting new methods. A long-term research program should be established, beginning in the near term with test areas. As part of this long-term process, research can be carried out at first on only a part of the site, leaving other parts for excavation in the future. In the four areas of the Ba Dinh excavation site, over 2 ha have not yet been excavated, and careful study of the site should be carried out before any further excavation. A cover or canopy is suggested in all phases of excavation, given the climate and environment, and care should be taken minimize disturbance to the equilibrium of the site.

How should the site be opened to the public?

The Public Wants, and Should be Given, Educational Access to the Site

There is always dialectic between preservation and exhibition – the solution is to expose one part, and at the same time conduct regular conservation of the exposed place. In addition to preserving the site, it is important to find ways to show the value of the site to the Vietnamese people, including visits by tourists and schools. It will be necessary to decide what elements, and what layers will be preserved in the open air to show to the public. It is emphasized that heritage includes the recent Revolutionary heritage – which should also be wholly preserved. Exhibits, including images of past construct, virtual exhibits, and presentation of research on the site, should be organized. These heritage sites can thus be opened to the public as a cultural and archaeological park.

For further information please contact:

Mr. Brian Zottoli, UNESCO Office Hanoi
Telephone: (+84 4) 747 0275
Email: b.zottoli@unesco.org.vn

ANNEX 1: TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Day I

10 August 2004 (Tuesday)

Field Visit

08:30 – 12:00 Working visit by all participants to Ba Dinh Archaeological Site (No. 18 Hoang Dieu Street)

12:00 – 13:30 Luncheon

13:30 – 17:00 Field Visit, cont'd

Day II

11 August 2004 (Wednesday)

Plenary Session at Daewoo Hotel

08:00 – 08:30 Registration of Participants at Daewoo Hotel

08:30 – 09:00 Opening Ceremony

Welcome Address and Opening Speech by:

1. Prof. Do Hoai Nam, President of the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences
2. Mr. Chu Shiu Kee, Representative and Head, UNESCO Hanoi Office

09:00 – 10:15 Chairpersons of the Morning Session: Prof. Do Hoai Nam & Prof. Phan Huy Le

- Presentations by Prof. Phan Huy Le, Prof. Tran Quoc Vuong, Dr. Tong Trung Tin, Dr Bui Minh Tri

10:15 – 10:30 Tea/coffee break

10:30 – 12:00 Presentations by Prof. Phan Khanh & Dr Le Thi Lien

- Contributions by Experts from Japan and France

12:00 – 13:30 Luncheon at Daewoo Hotel

13:30 – 15:00 Chairpersons of the Afternoon Session: Prof. Do Hoai Nam & Dr. Richard Engelhardt

- Discussions by International Experts and Participants

15:00 – 15:15 Tea/coffee break

15:15 – 17:00 Continuing discussions

Closing Session

- Closing Remarks by Dr. Richard Engelhardt
- Closing Speech by Prof. Do Hoai Nam

19:00 Reception hosted by the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences

ANNEX 2: INVITED GUESTS

BUREAU OF THE MEETING AND ORGANIZERS

1. Prof. Đỗ Hoài Nam	President, the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences (ASS)	Vietnam
2. Mr. Le Kinh Tai	Secretary-General, Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO	Vietnam
3. Mr. Chu Shiu-Kee	Representative and Head, UNESCO Hanoi Office	UNESCO
4. Prof. Phan Huy Lê	President, the Vietnam's Historian Association	Vietnam
5. Dr. Richard Engelhardt	Regional Adviser for Culture, UNESCO Bangkok	UNESCO
6. Mr. Brian Zottoli	Programme Officer, Culture, UNESCO Office Hanoi	UNESCO
7. Dr. Hà Văn Phụng	Vice Director, the Institute of Archaeology	Vietnam
8. Dr. Nguyễn Giang Hải	Head, Department of Foreign Cooperation ASS	Vietnam
9. Ms. Trần Lan Anh	Deputy-Head, Department of Foreign Cooperation ASS	Vietnam
10. Mr. Phạm Quang Thọ	Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO	Vietnam
11. Ms. Nguyễn Tô Tam	Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO	Vietnam

INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS

1. Dr. Andrew Hardy	History, Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO)	France
2. Mr. Christian Pedelahore	Architecture, School of Architecture (Paris)	France
3. Mr. Francois Magnier	Architecture, Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO)	France
4. Mr. Bertrand Porte	Restoration, Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) (Phnom Penh)	France
5. Mr. Philippe Le Failler	History, Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) (Hanoi)	France
6. Mr. Pierre Pichard	Archaeology, Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) (Bangkok)	France
7. Mr. Leidulf Mydland	Archaeologist	Norway
8. Dr. Mrs. Silvana Rizzo	Archaeologist Coordinator, Ministry of Cultural Assets and Activities, Italy	Italy
9. Dr. Ms. Maria Letizia Conforto	Architect, University of Ferrara Laboratory of Historical Monuments Restoration	Italy
10. Mr. Corrado Pedeli	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)	Italy
11. Ass. Prof. Dr. Shigeeda Yutaka	Expert on History of Asian Architecture, Faculty of Human Life and Environment, Nara Woman's University, Kitauoya Nishimachi, Nara City, Nara	Japan
12. Prof. Dr. Ueno Kunikazu	Expert on History of Asian Architecture, Faculty of Human Life and Environment, Nara Woman's University, Kitauoya Nishimachi, Nara City, Nara	Japan
13. Prof. Yamanaka Akira	Expert on Ancient Urban Archaeology, Dept. of Culture Faculty of Human Science, Mie University, Kamihamacho, Tsu City, Mie	Japan
14. Mr. Yun Hyeung-won	Researcher, King's Capital in Ancient Silla	Korea
15. Mr. Antoni Nicolau	Kultura / International Committee for Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History (ICMAH)	Spain
16. Ms. Lidia Font	Conservator Restorer	Spain

VIETNAMESE EXPERTS

1. Prof. Vũ Khiêu	Labour Hero, the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences	Vietnam
2. Prof. Trần Quốc Vương	National University of Ha Noi	Vietnam
3. Prof. Lê Văn Lan	Institute of History	Vietnam
4. Prof. Cao Xuân Phổ	Institute For Southeast Asian Studies	Vietnam
5. Ass. Prof. Dr. Tống Trung Tín	Vice Director, the Institute of Archaeology	Vietnam
6. Dr. Bùi Minh Trí	The Institute of Archaeology	Vietnam
7. Ass. Prof. Phan Khanh	Vice-President of Thang Long Heritage Preservation	Vietnam
8. Prof. Dr. Vũ Minh Giang	Deputy Director, the National University of Ha Noi	Vietnam
9. Ass. Prof. Nguyễn Quang Ngọc	Director, Institute of Vietnamese Studies, National University of Hanoi	Vietnam
10. Ass. Prof. Dr. Nguyễn Hải Kế	Head, Department of History, National University of Hanoi	Vietnam
11. Mr. Nguyễn Vinh Phúc	Researcher on Hanoian Study	Vietnam
12. Ass. Prof. Đỗ Văn Ninh	Institute of History	Vietnam
13. Ass. Prof. Nguyễn Quốc Hùng	Deputy Director, Department for Cultural Heritage	Vietnam
14. Dr. Phạm Quốc Quân	Director, the Museum of Vietnamese History	Vietnam
15. Mr. Lê Thành Vinh	Senior Architect, President of the Institute of Heritage Preservation	Vietnam
16. Dr. Nguyễn Hồng Kiên	Institute of Heritage Preservation	Vietnam
17. Dr. Nguyễn Tiến Đông	Institute of Archaeology	Vietnam
18. Dr. Lê Thị Liên	Institute of Archaeology	Vietnam
19. Dr. Vu The Long	Institute of Archaeology	Vietnam
20. Mr. Phạm Nhu Ho	Institute of Archaeology	Vietnam
21. Ass. Prof. Nguyen Thua Hy	National University of Hanoi	Vietnam

INVITED GUESTS

1. Representative	French Embassy	France
2. Representative	Italian Embassy	Italy
3. Representative	Norwegian Embassy	Norway
4. Representative	Japanese Embassy	Japan
5. Representative	Korean Embassy	Korea
6. Representative	Spanish Embassy	Spain
7. Mr. Shin-ichiro Nakazawa	Institute of UNESCO World Heritage, Waseda University	Japan
8. Mr. Kobayashi Hiroyuki	Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Vietnam	Japan
9. Dr. Pham Quang Nghi	Minister, Ministry of Culture and Information	Vietnam
10. Dr. Tran Chien Thang	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Culture and Information	Vietnam
11. Mr. Phan Quang Trung	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Planning and Investment	Vietnam
12. Mr. Nguyen Xu@n Thao	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Planning and Investment	Vietnam
13. Mr. Nguyen Cong Nghiep	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance	Vietnam
14. Mr. Nguyen Cong Su	Deputy Chief, Secretariat of Government	Vietnam
15. Representative	Ministry of Construction	Vietnam
16. Mr. Duong Trung Quoc	General-Secretary, the Vietnam's Historian Association	Vietnam
17. Mss. Ngo Thanh Hang	Vice President, Hanoi People Committee	Vietnam
18. Mss. Tran Hong Ha	Deputy Head, Secretariat Hanoi People Committee	Vietnam
19. Mr. Phan Dang Long	Director, the Department of Culture and Information	Vietnam
20. Dr. Truong Quoc Binh	Director of Vietnam Fine Arts Museum	Vietnam
21. Mrs. Tran Thi Tam Dan	Director, National Committee of Culture and Education for Youth and Children	Vietnam
22. Ass. Prof. Nguyen Bich	Vice – Director, Office of the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam	Vietnam
23. Academic Prof. Vu Tuyen Hoang	President, Vietnamese United Association for Sciences and Technologies	Vietnam
24. Representative	Office of the Parliament of Vietnam	Vietnam
25. Representative	Office of the Center for Communist Party	Vietnam

