

# Archaeological Work in the Central Area of Imperial Citadel of Thang Long-Hanoi, Vietnam

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**Abstract:** The central area of Imperial Citadel of Thang Long-Hanoi has played an important role in the history of Vietnam. This city was founded in the 9th century, when northern Vietnam was still under the rule of Tang Dynasty. General Gao Pian established Dai La Citadel, which is the predecessor of Imperial Citadel of Thang Long. In 1010, Ly Cong Uan, the emperor of Ly Dynasty of Vietnam, moved its capital to this city and changed its name to "Thang Long", which lasted for nearly a thousand years. The long history of this city has left many cultural relics and historic sites, in this case, the central area of Imperial Citadel of Thang Long has been listed as a world cultural heritage. The archaeological excavation of No.18 archaeological site of Hoang Dieu Street has found a great deal of information about the layout, palace construction, aristocratic life, rights inheritance and cultural exchange of Imperial Citadel of Thang Long.

**Keywords:** Vietnamese archaeology; Central Area of Imperial Citadel of Thang Long; Urban Archaeology; World cultural heritage

## 1. Introduction

Imperial Citadel of Thang Long, the world cultural heritage, is located in the center of Hanoi, Vietnam. Ever since Ly Cong Uan, the first emperor of Ly Dynasty, moved its capital to this city in 1010 AD, it has been the capital of several dynasties in Vietnamese history. It was once heavily forbidden and full of palaces. Since modern times, the fierce struggle between colonial aggression and national liberation has added another vicissitudes to Imperial Citadel of Thang Long. In today's Imperial Citadel of Thang Long, ancient buildings stand tall on the ground, while "witnesses" of different historical periods are buried underground. Because of this, Imperial Citadel of Thang Long was listed in the World Heritage List in 2010. The archaeological work in the central area of Imperial Citadel of Thang Long constantly reveals a lot of information about the changes of "Dragon City".

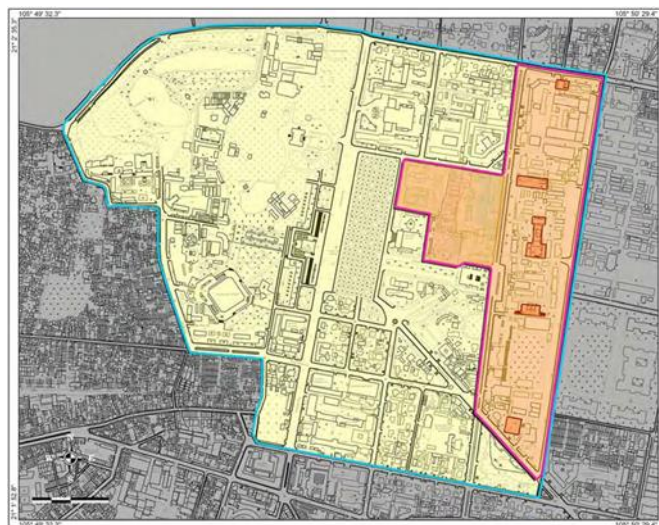


Figure 1: World Cultural Heritage Imperial Citadel of Thang Long-Hanoi (orange as the central area).

## 2. Evolution

The Imperial Citadel of Thang Long was built in the 9th century. At that time, the Tang Dynasty in the Central Plains set up counties in the northern part of Vietnam, which loosely ruled this desolate and remote place. In the Central Plains people's opinion, northern part of Vietnam was characterized by abundant rain, fog and unknown poisonous fog. The highest administrative institution was Annan DuHu (Annan Military and Political Office). In 824, DuHu Li Yuanxi was trapped by the chieftains, who had repeatedly rebelled and conquered. Li Yuanxi was had to build a small town in the north bank of Sa Dec River as guardiency. Naturally, the low and narrow fortress could not be commensurate with DuHu's status. However, a diviner said, "Your strength is not enough to build a large-scale city. In 50 years, a man named Gao will set up a capital here." In 864-866 AD, the general Gao Pian put down the rebellion in Jiaozhou (present-day northern Vietnam), repelled the invasion of Nanzhao Kingdom, and recovered the land under the jurisdiction of Annan DuHu. The Tang Dynasty then set up a Jinghai Jun (Jinghai Military Region) in Jiaozhou, with Gao Pian as its first military commissioner. During tenure, Gao Pian "observed the topography and built Dai La Citadel in the west of Lujiang River". ZiZhiTongJian(Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government) records that Dai La Citadel has a circumference of 3,000 steps and built more than 400,000 houses. The Vietnamese history book Dai Viet history book says: "Gao Pian occupied our land and claimed to be the king, building Dai La Citadel. The citadel wall is built with fortresses and gates, and the city is surrounded by canals, walkways and water dikes. A total of over 400,000 houses were built. "[1] The description of "more than 400,000 houses" may be exaggerated, and the size of the city wall may change in the long years to come. However, it is beyond doubt that the Dai La Citadel built by Gao Pian has laid the basic pattern of becoming Thang Long in the next thousand years. This Chinese-style city with high walls, fortresses and gates became the heart of northern Vietnam at that time. However, what Gao Pian did not expect was that his ruling center would become an emperor's city in another period of history and continue to this day.

After the collapse of the Tang Dynasty in the early 10th century, northern Vietnam was ruled by local chieftains. In 937, Ngo Quyen defeated the Southern Han Army in the Battle of Bach Dang(Trận Bạch Đằng), established political power and established Co Loa Citadel (now northeast of Hanoi). Dinh Bo Linh pacified the northern part of Vietnam in 968 and self-reliance as the first emperor of Dai Co Viet. The dynasty he established was called Dinh Dynasty (968-980) in Vietnamese history. Since Dinh Bo Linh was proclaimed emperor, he was named Jiaozhi District King(Giao ChiQuận Vương) in Northern Song Dynasty, and Vietnam was regarded as an independent feudal country.

Hoa Lu(Nanning province, Vietnam) has been the capital for 41 years, from Dinh Dynasty (968-980), founded by Dinh Bo Linh,to Former Le Dynasty(980-1009),founded by Le Hoan. In 1010, Ly Cong Uan overthrow the former Le Dynasty and established the Ly Dynasty. Hoa Lu is low-lying and narrow. Dinh Dynasty and Le Dynasty, both chose Hoa Lu as the capital, only existed for a short time. Due to these two factors, Ly Cong Uan is determined to move the capital, and the best choice for the location is undoubtedly Dai La Citadel, the former capital of King Gao. In Ly Cong Uan's royal edict "Moving the Capital Edict ", it's said:

Dai La Citadel is located at the geographical center, and the surrounding geographical features are like dragons and tigers guarding it, which conforms to the positive direction of the four directions. Surrounded by mountains and rivers, the land is vast and flat, with high terrain and pleasant climate. People live here refreshed, and all kinds of animals and plants can fully grow. No other city can be compared with it, as the center of traffic in all directions, and can be the capital of ten thousand generations. I want to establish a capital city in this place to settle down.

The land of Dai La Citadel is flat and open, the scale of the city is large, and the facilities are perfect, which is exactly what Ly Cong Uan, which wants to build a "capital of all ages", wants. In the process of moving the capital, Ly Cong Uan stopped at the gate of Dai La Citadel, and suddenly "Yellow dragon appeared beside the emperor's boat". Ly Cong Uan was overjoyed and changed the name of the city to "Thang Long ". From this, Thang Long became the name of the capital until the 19th century, which lasted for nearly 800 years.

After moving the capital, Ly Cong Uan immediately started the drastic construction on the basis of Dai La Citadel. He built Can Nguyen palace as a place to hold the audience, with Jixian palace on the left and Jiangwu palace on the right. After the Can Nguyen palace, the two palaces of Long 'an and Long Rui were built as living quarters. Repairing palaces such as Sunlight, Yueming and Cuihua is the residence of maids. In addition, national treasury and Town God Temple are built in the city. The city

wall opens four doors, namely Xiangfu Gate in the east, Guangfu Gate in the west, Daqing Gate in the south and Yaode Gate in the north. The capital pattern of Thang Long is basically established.

Ly Cong Uan chose Dai La Citadel, which is "in line with the direction of the Quartet's position", as the capital city, which embodies the traditional Chinese idea that "the king conforms to God's orders to establish a country and a capital city, and must live in the middle of the land, thus obtaining harmony between heaven and earth, yin and yang, and ruling the Quartet". Taking "establishing authority in the central government" as the guiding ideology, Can Nguyen palace was built. The name of the palace is not much different from that of the Chinese dynasty, so that some scholars think that the design of Thang Long imitates Chang 'an City in Tang Dynasty.

Vietnam's the dynasty of Tran (1226-1400), Early Le Dynasty (1428-1527), Mac Dynasty (1527-1592) and Later Le Dynasty (1593-1789) successively built the capital in Thang Long, forming the inner and outer three-layer structure of Thang Long: the outer city is capital, which is the residence and commercial area of civilians; Midtown is the "Imperial City", where court officials live and work. The smallest inner city is called "Forbidden City", which is the residence of the royal family.

Throughout the ages, Imperial Citadel of Thang Long was constantly modified and built. For example, Emperor Le Tuong Duc of the Early Le Dynasty overhauled the main hall and high platform, built huge city walls, and excavated ditches around the palace, which were paved with stone pieces and square bricks. From the maps of the Early Le Dynasty, it can be seen that the reconstruction of Thang Long has generally continued the pattern of triple city walls, and the imperial city center is still centered on Kinh Thien Palace (Can Nguyen palace in Ly Dynasty). In the Early Le Dynasty, there were scattered ritual buildings on the east side of the imperial city, such as the Prince's Palace, the ancestral shrine, the Directorate of Imperial Academy, the National Astronomical Observatory and the Southern suburb altar, and Fengtianfu was set to govern Shou Chang County and Guangde County (English translation), which was similar to the capital model of Ming Dynasty in the same period.

In addition to the influence of Confucianism, the design of Thang Long is also closely related to Taoist Feng Shui concept. When Li Yuanxi first built the city, there were "diviners" involved, and Gao Pian himself was "familiar with astronomy and geography", and was famous for being fond of immortal Taoism. According to the Vietnamese ancient book Lingnan Ghost Story, a strange man was seen standing on the Lujiang River in the east of Gao Pian one day. (Gao Pian) was very strange and wanted to defeat him with Taoist magic. At night, he dreamed that a fairy said to Gao Pian, 'Don't hurt me, I am an elf with a dragon belly and the leader of an underground elf. Why do you want to hurt me when you build a city here and I come to visit you?' "[2]Although this story is attached by later generations, the "Dragon Belly" mentioned in it is Nung Mountain, the seat of Kinh Thien Palace in the center of Thang Long Imperial City, which is the place where the national essence is gathered in the concept of Feng Shui in Vietnam.

In 1802, with the establishment of Nguyen Dynasty, the last dynasty in Vietnamese history, the fate of Thang Long changed greatly. The capital of Nguyen Dynasty was now in Hue, central Vietnam, and the level of Thang Long was lowered and renamed as "North City". Thang Long, which lost its status as the capital city, was completely rebuilt, and its overall scale was greatly reduced. The exterior wall was rebuilt in Vauban style, with a circumference of about 4 kilometers. The original Imperial City and Forbidden City only retain buildings such as Doan Mon, Kinh Thien Palace and Bac Mon, which are used as palaces for Nguyen Dynasty emperors to visit the north. In 1831, Nguyen Dynasty set North City as the provincial capital of Hanoi, and renamed it "Hanoi City", and the palace became the central axis of Hanoi City. In 1897, Hanoi became the base camp of French troops in Indo-China Peninsula. Most buildings in Hanoi were completely demolished by colonial authorities. Besides the remains of old palaces, a number of French buildings were newly built on the central axis. Since the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1954, Hanoi, as the capital of the new regime, has built a large number of military facilities. Basement D67, located on the central axis of the ancient city, served as the military center during the war and witnessed the process of Vietnam's national liberation and national reunification. Up to now, the central axis site of Hanoi ancient city and the Archaeological Site of No. 18 Hoang Dieu Street together constitute the central area of Imperial Citadel of Thang Long.

### **3. The central axis of Hanoi ancient city**

The remains of the central axis of Hanoi ancient city is located to the east of the Archaeological Site of No. 18 Hoang Dieu Street. It consists of the Flag pole, Doan Mon, Kinh Thien Palace, Basement D67, the Back Building and the Bac Mon, which are a series of closely related buildings from south to

north. The building dates from the Early Le Dynasty to modern times.

The palace wall and most of the gates on the central axis were built by Nguyen Dynasty in the early 19th century, and many buildings in the wall were built after the French colonists occupied Hanoi in the 1980s. Several important buildings built after 1954 were also built on the central axis of the ancient city of Hanoi, and served as the headquarters of Vietnam's Ministry of National Defense and the command post of the Vietnamese People's Army during the subsequent war.

Although the architectural remains of the central axis mainly reflect the history of the Thang Long Imperial City in Hanoi after the 19th century, the overall pattern and some architectural elements of the central axis have existed since the Li Dynasty, and its status as the power center has continued to this day. The history of Thang Long and Hanoi blend on this central axis.

### **3.1 Kinh Thien Palace**

Kinh Thien Palace was built in the Early Le Dynasty (1428) and is located on the remains of Qianyuan Hall (later renamed Tian 'an Hall, which was still used in the Tran Dynasty). In the Early Le Dynasty, Kinh Thien Palace was regarded as one of Annan's masterpieces. Nong Mountain (or Dragon Belly), where the Kinh Thien Palace is located, is regarded as a feng shui treasure in Vietnam. After that, the main halls of successive dynasties were built on top of Nong Mountain. The building on the foundation of the Kinh Thien Palace we see today was built by the French in 1886.

Kinh Thien Palace, once located in the center of the Forbidden City, now has only remnants, and only the front and back steps of Double-dragon are still intact. Built in 1467, there are 9 steps in front of the hall. Each step is 20cm high, 40cm wide and 13.6cm long. Double dragons are carved in the middle of the steps, and the walkway leading to the palace is divided into three, with the emperor walking in the middle and the princes walking on both sides. The two dragons are carved with distinctive features. The dragon head is located at the lowest stage, and the dragon body turns into a railing all the way. The dragon has five claws. The Double-dragon steps behind the hall were built in the late 16th century and early 17th century. Compared with the Double-dragon steps in front of the hall, the scale is slightly smaller. There is only one aisle on the steps, with a total of 7 steps. The Double-dragon is about 3.4 meters long and has beads in its mouth. Like the front of the hall, it is also a five-claw dragon.

### **3.2 Doan Mon**

Doan Mon is the main entrance of the forbidden city. It is said that the gate was built here during the Li Dynasty, but the Doan Mon we see today was built in the early Li Dynasty in the 15th century and rebuilt in the Nguyen Dynasty in the 19th century. Doan Mon, as the south gate of Kinh Thien Palace, played an important role in the court's handling of government affairs and holding major ceremonial activities.

The end door is made of stone and brick, and has a U-shaped plane, with a length of 46.5m, a width of 26.5m and a height of 6m. There are five arch door openings. Above the middle arch, there is a stone plaque with a length of 1.5 meters and a width of 0.7 meters, engraved with the word "Doan Mon". The middle and largest main entrance of the Five Doors is 4 meters high and 2.7 meters wide, which is a door for the emperor to pass through. The doors on both sides of the main entrance are 3.8 meters high and 2.5 meters wide, which are used by officials and royal nobles. There are auxiliary doors at the left and right ends.

There is a square between Doan Mon and Kinh Thien Palace, which is a place for the imperial court to hold major political, cultural, religious and diplomatic ceremonies, such as Human King Association, National Assembly swears (1128), Quang Chieu light festival (1136), Review Forbidden Army (1351), etc. The emperor also carried out imperial examinations here, selecting and recruiting celebrities and scholars with wizards and virtues.

When the gate was first built, it was topped with the original tall gate house, but it was not broken. During Nguyen Dynasty, a double-layer square pavilion made of bricks was built at the top of Doan Mon, which was surrounded by railings to form a courtyard. In 1998, the Vietnamese government restored and rebuilt the pavilion. Four Dragon with inward heads were decorated on the four roofs of the lower eaves, while four roofs of the upper eaves flew like blades, with two tiger-head decorations in the middle of the roofs. The pavilion has four doors: east, west, south and north, and the doors are decorated with hexagonal, cross and diamond patterns or patterns with the word "Shou". There are also

two arched doors made of bricks on both sides of the end door. The gatehouse has three floors, and the eaves are bent like knives.



*Figure 2: Remains of brick floor at the foot of the wall*

In 1999, archaeologists carried out archaeological exploration around Doan Mon, and found the remains of city walls and brick-paved ground in Li Dynasty, especially the brick-paved "lemon flower" road leading to Kinh Thien Palace in Tran Dynasty. This discovery proves that there was once a building at Doan Mon, and the age should be no later than the dynasty of Tran[3].



*Figure 3: "Lemon flower"-shaped road*

### **3.3 Flag pole**

The Flag pole in Hanoi was built in 1805 (one said it was built in 1812), which was in the same period as the construction of the Vauban -style city wall in Hanoi by Nguyen Dynasty. Most of the other ancient buildings in Hanoi were destroyed by French colonists who occupied the place around 1896, but the flag platform survived and was used as a military post.

The Flag pole includes a three-story platform and a pyramid-shaped tower with spiral stairs leading to the top of the tower. The tower is 33.4 meters high and the flagpole is 41 meters high. On the second floor, there are four doors. The plaque at the east gate reads "Welcome to the rising sun", the plaque at the west gate reads "Return to the light", the plaque at the south gate reads "Towards the light", and there is no plaque at the north gate[4]. There are 36 flower-shaped and 6 fan-shaped windows on the top and bottom of the tower for lighting.



### 3.4 Back Building

The Back Building, also known as the princess building or the back hall, was built in 1821, and it was a resting place for the accompanying maids who accompanied the emperor on his expedition to the north. At the end of the 19th century, the Back Building was destroyed, and the buildings now seen were rebuilt by the French. The existing Back Building has 3 floors, and the lower floor is box-shaped. There are 3 Basements on the second floor, the middle one is slightly higher, and each one is covered with a small house; The top floor is a square pavilion, with the roof covered with tiles and reliefs, and the roof decorated with Dragon head.

Archaeological work in 1998 found the remains of the 9th-20th century around the Back Building, mostly in Ly, Tran and Le Dynasties, including the pool built with bricks in the Early Le Dynasty, the lotus pillar foundation with the characteristics of Ly and Tran Dynasties, and the thin white glazed ceramics in the Early Le Dynasty[5].



Figure 4: Remains of public pool in Early Le Dynasty.

### 3.5 Bac Mon

Built in 1805, the Bac Mon is one of the five gates in Hanoi, and stands high on the north side of Imperial Citadel. The north gate is an arched gate, which is built with bricks. There is a "North gate" stone plaque written in Chinese characters in the middle, and the four sides of the stone plaque are decorated with patterns. The walls of the north gate are inclined by 15°, which makes the facade of the building trapezoidal with a 2-story watchtower at the top.

In 1990, during the archaeological excavations around the North Gate, archaeologists discovered the remains of a wall made of masonry during the Ly Dynasty, with a foundation as thick as 1.2 meters. The remains of another building are 1.66-2.2m deep.



Figure 5: Traces of walls in Le Dynasty.

In addition to the north gate, in 1805, when Nguyen Dynasty rebuilt the Vauban-style city, a wall was built from Doan Mon to the inner hall of the palace with a door on it. Today, there are 8 such palace gates in the ancient city. The French colonial government listed these gates and other cultural relics in Hanoi as a list of historical sites in 1925.

### **3.6 French buildings**

From the end of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century, French colonists built many military buildings in the central area of the ancient city of Hanoi. The first one was the French artillery command post built on the foundation of Kinh Thien Palace in 1886. In 1897, the French built many large houses in Doan Mon Square, including a two-story building with neoclassical style, which was made of brick and covered with concrete, and featured by the porch design of the facade and the roof of the terrace. Since 1954, this building has become the resident of Vietnam's Ministry of National Defense's Combat Bureau.

From the ancient city of Hanoi, we can observe the development of French architecture in Vietnam: there is a house built in 1930 on the east side of the Battle Bureau Building, and the arched covered eaves, steep tile tops and wide eaves show the typical features of French architecture in the 1920s. Compared with neoclassical architecture in the late 19th century, this architectural style is more suitable for the climate conditions in northern Vietnam.

### **3.7 Basement D67**

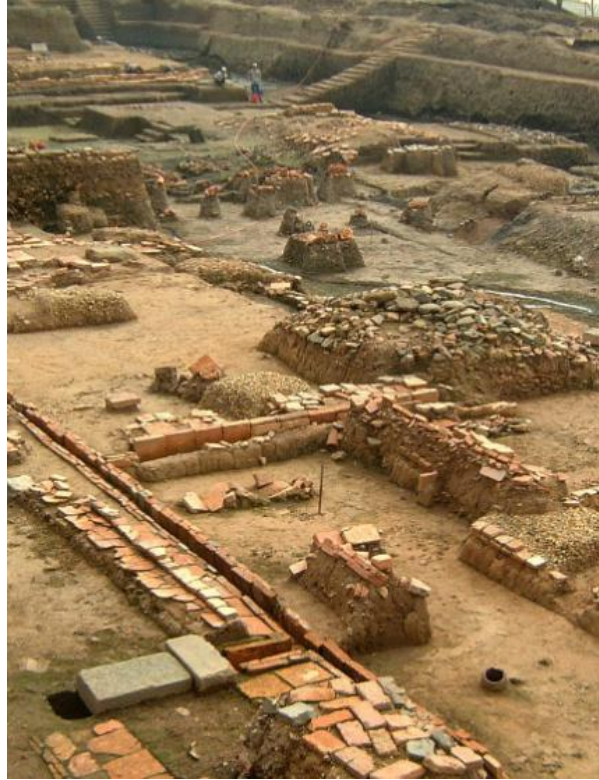
Basement D67, named after being built in 1967, is located in the north of Kinh Thien Palace, and there is a tunnel leading to the former French artillery command post underground. Basement D67 is the headquarters of the Vietnamese People's Army during the 1954-1975 war, including the studio and lounge of General Vo Nguyen Giap, Minister of Defense and Commander-in-Chief of the Vietnamese People's Army, and the studio of General Van Tien Dung, Chief of Staff. It is also the place where the meeting of the highest military leaders was held to decide the strategic process of Vietnam's national liberation and unification war.

Basement D67 is small in scale and simple in architectural style. From the appearance, it is just a very ordinary single-story house, but after careful observation, it will be found that it is actually a very strong military building. The wall is as thick as 0.6 meters, which can be completely soundproof; The door also has 2 floors, and the outer door armor is 1 cm thick; Spread a layer of sand on the roof to reduce the damage caused by ammunition; The basement is built under the courtyard between the ground building and the former French artillery command post, with a depth of 9 meters. The top is reinforced to prevent bomb attacks, and armored door is installed. There are three tunnels in the basement, one leading to the French artillery command post and the other two leading to Basement D67.

## **4. Archaeological Site of No. 18 Hoang Dieu Street**

The excavation area of No.18 archaeological site in Hoang Dieu Street is located to the west of the central axis of Hanoi ancient city. Historically, it was an integral part of the forbidden city from Ly Dynasty to Trung Hung Le Dynasty. The excavation area is located next to the new National Congress Building in Vietnam, with a total area of 47,720 square meters. The archaeological work in this area started from December 2002 to March 2004, and the excavated area exceeded 19,000 square meters.

The layers and unearthed cultural relics of the archaeological site No.18 Hoang Dieu Street cover Dai La Citadel period (7th-9th century), Thang Long period (11th-18th century) and Hanoi city period (19th-20th century), and the relics and cultural layers of each historical period overlap continuously. At present, the architectural relics revealed are mainly wooden columns and earthen tiles left by various palaces and attics. A most representative palace remains in the Ly and Dynasties has 14 rows of pillars in a space of 450 square meters, which divides the front of the house into 13 Basements. Craftsmen in Ly and Tran Dynasties used clay (the most common material in Vietnam), river gravel, brick, tile and porcelain to compact the foundation to prevent the foundation from settling. This construction technology is suitable for building large palaces on the foundation of uneven geological settlement in Hanoi ancient city area[6].



*Figure 6: Basic relic of Archaeological Site of No. 18 Hoang Dieu Street*



*Figure 7: Archaeological Site of No. 18 Hoang Dieu Street*

By analyzing the plane of architectural remains in the Ly Dynasty, archaeologists in Vietnam and Japan found a particularly important point: every building in Thang Long Imperial City had been comprehensively planned and designed before it was built, and various types of huge buildings in the excavated area were regularly distributed. In addition to these buildings, archaeologists have discovered many well-built drainage system relics, including small drainage ditches dedicated to single buildings and large drainage channels for large-scale drainage. Well systems in different historical periods are distributed among architectural relics, and 2 wells in Dai La Citadel period, 2 wells in Ly Dynasty, 6 wells in Tran Dynasty and 6 wells in Le Dynasty were excavated. Various pottery pots found at the bottom of the well help us to analyze the service age of the well and the daily life of Thang Long Imperial City.





*Figure 8: Drainage system of Archaeological Site of No. 18 Hoang Dieu Street*



*Figure 9: Well (built in Dai La Citadel Period, reused in Ly Dynasty)*

In addition to the above architectural remains and relics, many precious cultural relics, such as pottery, building materials and metal objects, have also been unearthed from the Archaeological Site of No. 18 Hoang Dieu Street. There are many kinds of ceramics found on site, including bowls, plates, cans, urns, pots, oil lamps, etc. The most typical ones are white glazed ceramics with thin tyres decorated with embossed dragon patterns (also called transparent white porcelain, the porcelain tyres are as thin as egg shells) and blue flower ceramics with dragon and phoenix patterns. Thin white glazed ceramics can see two pentagonal dragons secretly carved inside the objects through the light. Some porcelain bowls have the word "official" in the middle[7]. Pots, urns, pots, bottles and other utensils are decorated with traditional ornamentation such as water wave lines and rope lines. These ceramics are not only produced in Vietnam, but also imported from China, Japan and West Asia.

Metal relics and weapons have also been unearthed from the Archaeological Site of No. 18 Hoang Dieu Street. Among them, there is a cannon from the Ly Dynasty, which weighs more than 100 kilograms and is 1.2 meters long. Nom script are carved on it. Other metal cultural relics are mostly copper coins, labor tools and daily necessities, etc.



*Figure 10: Transparent porcelain bowl in Early Le Dynasty*

Animal bones and shells of marine mollusks, such as oysters, clams, mussels, etc., coexist with pottery, reflecting the daily diet structure of residents in Thang Long Imperial City. Pottery with inscriptions in Chinese characters was unearthed in the site, engraved with the names of "Changle" palace and storeroom, which clearly indicated that it was an item in the palace. According to historical records, "Changle" Palace is a huge and important palace in Forbidden City, and it is the residence of Empress Dowager Nguyen Thi Hang.

In addition, a wide variety of building components were found in the site area of No.18 Hoang Dieu Street, such as the statue of a beast with a dragon head and a phoenix head, and the tubular tile, tile and lining tile carved with phoenix-dragon-shaped, lotus-shaped and chrysanthemum-shaped ornamentation. eaves tile and the pottery statues used to decorate the eaves are decorated with dragon and phoenix, mandarin duck, flowers and leaves, which are beautiful and delicate, showing the magnificent appearance of the imperial city that once ascended the dragon.



*Figure 11: Red pottery phoenix head statue in Ly Dynasty*

Many architectural relics have also been unearthed in the excavation area, such as column foundations, wall bricks, road bricks, floor tiles or pebble foundations, as well as various reliefs, round statues, etc. Among them, tubular tiles and tiles with patterns such as dragons and phoenixes, mandarin ducks and flowers and leaves may be specially used for building the imperial palace. The materials are rich in the characteristics of each era, with characters carved on them, and the bricks of Jiangxi Army were made during the Dai La Citadel period. "Dayueguo Army City" brick is the product of the Dinh and Ly Dynasties. The bricks of Ly Dynasty bear the inscription "Made in the reign of the third emperor of Ly (1057)", and there are other inscription bricks with year numbers. The "Yongning Field" brick produced by Tran Dynasty has lotus pattern, chrysanthemum pattern and peony pattern. In the Early Le Dynasty, there were military titles on the tiles, such as "Zhuangfeng Army", "Wuqi Army" and "Xionghu Army", and some tiles had the inscription "Jinguang Hall" of the palace. In addition, there are green glazed tiles, yellow glazed tiles and tile with embossed dragon pattern.



*Figure 12: A brick with Ly Dynasty's reign title[8]*

The excavation of the Archaeological Site of No. 18 Hoang Dieu Street provides us with the information of lifting the dragon and banning the city. Most of the relics of various buildings and daily life, such as pottery, porcelain, brick and metal, bear the characteristics of various dynasties in Vietnamese history or the symbol representing the imperial palace, which proves that this area was

once an important political power center. The Archaeological Site of No. 18 Hoang Dieu Street can be regarded as one of the historical and cultural symbols of Vietnam. As the residence of royal aristocrats, it has continuous and tremendous political, cultural, social and economic influence.

## 5. Conclusion

The central area of Thang Long Imperial City in Hanoi gathers the best of Vietnamese culture, is the "Long Mai" of Vietnamese traditional culture, and is also the cultural exchange place between Vietnam and other countries and regions in the world. The integration of local culture and foreign cultural elements has created a unique city in history. Nguyen Du, a poet in Nguyen Dynasty, has a poem saying: "The ancient moon shines on the new city, and the scene of Thang Long City still emerges." Imperial Citadel of Thang Long - Hanoi bears the vicissitudes of history on the banks of the flowing Red River, witnessing the changes of the times.

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