

MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

Stone Stele Records of Royal Examinations of the Le and Mac Dynasties (1442-1779)

(Vietnam)

Ref N° 2010-31

PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1 SUMMARY

Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam (Temple of Confucius – National University) historical Site in Hanoi was established in the 11th century and dedicated to Confucius (551-479BCE). The founder of Confucianism and Confucian education. Vietnamese monarchs, like in other countries in this region, adopted Confucianism and made it the socio-political foundation for building the State and particularly from the 15th century on, they used Confucian philosophy to govern the country. Van Mieu - Quoc Tu Giam was also an educational centre which trained talented people and mandarins for administration in Vietnamese monarchical dynasties. Over the centuries, it produced thousands of Tien si (Doctoral laureates of royal examinations) for the country. Vietnamese people always consider it to be the first national university of Vietnam.

The stone steles preserved at Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam historical site record the names of the laureates of Royal Examinations of Le and Mac Dynasties. On each stone stele is an inscription in Chinese on the Royal examinations held between 1442 and 1779. Each of the 82 steles commemorates an examination and then were erected between 1484 and 1780. Their inscriptions often display the Dynasty's attitude towards the training and employing of talented individuals. Very often they highlight the idea that *“Talented and virtuous people are the State's vitality”*. This idea has two following implications:

(i) It points out that the successive monarchies always attached importance to training and employing talented and virtuous people for administration and national development.

(ii) It emphasizes the intelligentsia's responsibility to serve wholeheartedly the dynasty and the nation.

Apparently, the fact that the Royal dynasties honoured the laureates of Royal examinations by inscribing their names in stone had a great social impact, as it encouraged students – it may do so even now – to perfect themselves morally and intellectually to become good citizens. The steles are also symbolic of success, intellect and wisdom in education.

Today, they continue to attract the attention of Vietnamese and foreign scholars, government officials and tourists alike. Thousands of visitors, including foreigners, come to Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam everyday to admire the steles. Many high-ranking government officials, including state leaders, have highly appreciated the profound significance and value of the steles as a kind of historical document.

Furthermore, the steles constitute a rich contribution to literature and art. Their designs and ornamental patterns are unique works of art dating of the 15th to the 18th centuries.

Stone Stele Records of Royal Examinations of the Le and Mac Dynasties (1442-1779) was inscribed on **Asia/Pacific Memory of the World Documentary Heritage register** by **MOWCAP** in 3/2010.

2 DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

2.1 Name (person or organisation)

Hanoi Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism under Hanoi people committee

2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated

Administrative organization

2.3 Contact person(s)

Dr. Dang Kim Ngoc, Director of The Center of Scientific and Cultural Activities Van Mieu-Quoc Tu Giam

2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email)

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3 IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

Name: Stone Stele Records of Royal Examinations of the Le and Mac Dynasties (1442-1779)

Details : 82 stone steles were set up between 1484-1780 at Van Mieu-Quoc Tu Giam, Hanoi, Vietnam. **Custodian:** The Center of Scientific and Cultural Activities Van Mieu-Quoc Giam (**see 5.2**)

3.2 Description

The system of Confucian education and examination was established in Vietnam during the Ly dynasty in the 11th century. The first Confucian examination was held in 1075 under King Ly Thanh Tong to select talented and virtuous people for state administration. In 1434, under the Early Le dynasty, King Le Thai Tong gave an order for examinations to be held on a regular basis, once every 3 years. The first royal examination to select *Tien si* (Doctoral laureates) was held in 1442, during King Le Thai Tong's reign.

According to the regulations, the *Tien si* enjoyed many privileges and favours granted by the King. Their names were solemnly announced before the public gathered at the Royal Palace, and recorded down on a gold board hung at the Gate of the Palace or at Van Mieu; they were given ceremonial gowns and treated to a banquet held by the King in the Royal Garden; then, they were escorted home in procession, riding on horses granted by the King; and their names were engraved on stone steles set up at Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam, rendering them immortal.

Steles were erected on the King's order. Firstly, the Ministry of Public Works was assigned to acquire good stone; highly-educated mandarins were requested to compose inscriptions. Calligraphers and masters craftsmen were carefully selected from all over the country to write the text and engrave it on the steles.

The steles are different in size and their styles and decorative patterns bear the imprints of a historical epoch spanning over 300 years. The biggest stele is 2.07m in height and 1.3m in width, while the smallest is 1.1 in height and 0.7 in width (not including the tortoise-shaped base). Most of them are 0.25m thick. Each stele consists of 2 sections, namely: the *stone slab* and the *base*. *The slab* includes:

(1) *The arched stele pediment engraved with various designs*: flowers, leaves, clouds, the moon; or the dragon, holy lion, tortoise and phoenix. The lowest part of the pediment bears the title of the stele in Chinese characters written in the seal style;

(2) *The rectangular stele body*; its edges are engraved with such designs as clouds, flowers and leaves. The inscription here consists of 2 parts: the first part presents reasons for holding the exam and erecting the stele; the merit of the King; and the names, positions, and functions of the examiners. The second part includes the list of the laureates; the names and positions of the inscription compilers, editors, calligrapher;, and the date of the stele's erection.

The first stele was set up in 1484 by order of King Le Thanh Tong. The inscription narrates the royal examination held in 1442. The title of the stele in Chinese characters is as follows: *Stele Recording the Names of the Laureates of the Royal Examination Held in the Year of Canh Tuat, under the Reign of Dai Bao III*.

King Le Thanh Tong gave an order to erect the first 10 steles, which recorded 10 royal examinations held between 1422 and 1484. However, only seven of them have survived; five steles were erected in the years 1487, 1496, 1513, 1521, 1529, and two steles were set up in 1536. Twenty five steles were erected in 1653 to record the 25 examinations held between 1554 and 1653. Twenty one steles were made in 1717 to record the 21 examinations held between 1656 and 1717. Twenty two steles were erected between 1721 and 1780. Thus, the last stele was made in 1780 recording the examination held in 1779.

The erection of such steles aimed not only to honour talented people and encourage Confucian scholars in education, but also to foster virtue in contemporary mandarins and intellectuals. The stone steles made a great social impact on the education and training of talented citizens.

Bibliography : *A Complete History of Dai Viet*. Printed from woodblocks made in 1697.

- Nguyen Dynasty Historiography's Office. *Main Synopsis of the General History of the Viet*. Education Publishing House. 1998.
- Phan Huy Chu (1918). *Categorized Codes and Norms of the Successive Dynasties*. Education Publishing House. 2005.
- *Les stèles du Vanmieu du Hanoi*, Edition Thế Giới, 1977.
- *Stele Inscriptions at Quoc Tu Giam Hanoi* (introduced and translated: Do Van Ninh), Cultural information Publishing House, Hanoi, 2000.
- *Van Mieu-Quoc Tu Giam and 82 Doctoral Laureates Steles* (Chief reviser: Ngo Duc Tho), Publisher: Center of Scientific and Cultural Activities Van Mieu-Quoc Tu Giam, Hanoi 2002.
- *Inscriptions of the Doctoral Laureates' Steles at Van Mieu-Quoc Tu Giam, Hanoi*, Publisher: Center of Scientific and Cultural Activities Van Mieu-Quoc Tu Giam, Hanoi 2002. English version.
- *Inscriptions of Vietnamese Doctoral Laureates Steles* (Introduced and translated: Trinh Khac Manh). Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 2006.

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(For further information, please see attached appendix N^o 01- catalogue of steles).

4 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

4.1 Authenticity

The steles recording the Le and Mac dynasties' royal examinations and kept at Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam, Hanoi, are original artifacts. Each inscription contains such details as the date of the stele's erection and the names and official posts of the inscription compilers, revisers, calligraphers, and engravers. Steles of each historic period are distinct from those of other periods; distinctive features such as designs, decorative patterns, tortoise-shaped bases, and the type of Chinese characters used for their inscriptions preserve the stele's originality and prevent attempts to produce replicas.

It was a great affair for the Court to erect a stele. This practice is documented many times in official historical books such as *Dai Viet su ky toan thu* (A Complete History of Dai Viet), *Kham dinh Viet su thong giam cuong muc* (A Main Synopsis of the General History of the Viet), *Lich trieu hien chuong loai chi* (Categorized Codes and Norms of Successive Dynasties), and the references there from match the information taken from the stele inscriptions kept at Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam.

The original location and order of the stone steles at Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam have been preserved over the centuries, since their erection.

(For further information, please see attached appendix N° 01).

4.2 Is world significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability established?

The steles of royal examinations (1442-1779) at Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam are unique and irreplaceable. If any of them would be lost or damaged, humanity would lose forever a valuable and rare historical document as well as an original work of art. The above statement of warning is reasoned based on the following factors:

The steles, as documentary sources, relate how Confucianism was introduced into Vietnam and how it was modified to suit Vietnamese culture and ideology. Here, Vietnamese Confucianism differs from Chinese Confucianism in the sense that Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam was built in Viet Nam in 1070 not only to honour Confucius and Confucian sages, but also to train talented individuals and crown princes, whereas the Confucius Temple in China was designed to honour only Confucius and his disciples. Moreover, Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam is also dedicated to Chu Van An, a Vietnamese profound Scholar, great educator.

The steles present a typical way to recruit and employ talented people in Vietnam: talented individuals were selected through examinations. Mandarins were promoted based on their performance on exams and in accordance with their moral virtues and capabilities. They were instructed to perfect themselves regularly and to cultivate in themselves the traits necessary for fulfilment of their duties; to administrate the State with their talent and virtue; and to avoid wrong-doing, corruption or dishonest acts that might cause harm to the nation and its people.

The steles vividly document the 300 years' history of training and recruiting talented individuals in Vietnam under the Le and Mac dynasties, as well as similar practices outside of Viet Nam. The uniqueness of this method of recruiting and employing talented individuals was based on such ideas as *“State governance should be based on talented and virtuous people”*; *“Education and training should turn students into government officials devoted to the service of the Court and nation; their honour should match their deeds.”*

The steles are also unique in terms of their construction: stone was carefully selected, designed, decorated, and engraved with texts. This work must have required extraordinary patience and skill as it was done entirely by hand.

The erection of stone steles as records of Royal examinations in Vietnam followed the same tradition in China. Among the countries in the sphere of Chinese influence, only Vietnam and China have preserved steles of Royal examinations. This fact is of paramount significance to the study of cultural exchanges among the countries in Northeast Asia. However, the Vietnamese steles of Royal examinations are different from Chinese ones; the inscriptions on the Vietnamese steles are a rich historical source about the ideology and politics of the Vietnamese monarchies and their views on educating, training, and recruiting talented individuals. Moreover, each stele is itself a vivid work of art. In contrast, the Chinese steles of royal examinations are just registers of the laureates' names.

Furthermore, these steles furnish valuable information about Vietnamese emissaries, that would contribute to the study of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and other

Northeast Asian countries. Among the 1304 doctoral laureates whose names are recorded on the steles, 225 were once assigned diplomatic missions to China under the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and the Qing dynasty (1644-1912).

The stone steles at Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam are symbols of Vietnamese traditional culture. At present, thousands of tourists and scholars, Vietnamese and foreign, visit this site every day and highly appreciated the historical documentation preserved here.

4.3 Are the criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style (f) social, spiritual and community significance satisfied?

a) Time: The practice of holding Royal examinations to select talented and virtuous people for administration began in 1075. It continued throughout the Le dynasty and up to 1919 when the Nguyen dynasty held the last examination. For more than 300 years prior to the Le dynasty, during the Ly and Tran dynasties, royal examinations had been held irregularly. During that time, the nomenclature for the laureates was not fixed and the number of laureates for each exam was small. In 1434, Emperor Le Thai Tong ordered that examinations be held regularly, specifically once every 3 years. From 1442 on, laureates of a royal examination were awarded the title *Tien si* (Doctoral laureate), and one stone stele was erected for each examination. From 1484 to 1780, under the Le and Mac dynasties, the successive Emperors had 82 stone steles erected to record the names of 1304 *Tien si*.

The Le dynasty is recognized as the most developed of the Vietnamese feudal regime. During this period, Confucianism was the foundation of the society. The Le Kings, especially King Le Thanh Tong, turned it into the national orthodox doctrine. As a result, Confucianism became the basis of state governance and education philosophy and the ideology and knowledge highlighted in the stele inscriptions were derived from Confucianism. Moreover, during Le Thanh Tong's reign, many valuable literary and historical works were produced; the Hong Duc Code of Law was composed; the national economy and culture thrived. These achievements were associated with the education system at the time, especially the method of identifying and employing talented individuals.

b) Place:

The stone steles of Royal examinations were set up at Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam, in the heart of Thang Long – Hanoi. Having been the political, economic, and cultural center of Vietnam for 1000 years, Thang Long – Hanoi embodies the quintessence and intelligence of the Vietnamese nation. This place reflects most clearly the characteristics of Vietnamese culture; the stone steles have enriched this culture and shaped its identity.

Founded in the late 11th century, Van Mieu- Quoc Tu Giam trained thousands of people. It was the holiest and most venerated site reserved by Vietnamese Confucian scholars for the cult of Confucius and his doctrine. The steles were established here because Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam was the topmost education center in the country. Today, Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam is well-known as a national historical and cultural heritage site mainly due to its historic role and the steles preserved there.

c) People:

Many eminent figures in Vietnamese history will be remembered forever because their names, birthplaces, and positions or merits are recorded on the steles. They include:

(i) *Kings and lords of the time*. For example, King Le Thai To, who founded the Le dynasty and King Le Thanh Tong, who ordered the first stele erected.

Le Thanh Tong (1460-1497) was enthroned at the age of 18. He was a clear-sighted and decisive king. He was also a talented scholar, strategist and military leader.

Under Le Thanh Tong's rule, especially during the period of the reign title of Hong Duc (1490-1497), Dai Viet (Vietnam) was independent, united, and powerful; and the national culture and education thrived. Le Thanh Tong was a great reformer: he reformed the government structure, gave prominence to the judiciary, promulgated the Hong Duc Code of Law, and ordered the map of Hong Duc – the first ever official map of Dai Viet (Vietnam). In 1843 he had Van Mieu reconstructed and Quoc Tu Giam enlarged into a marked architectural complex. He also developed the system of Confucianism-based education and examination. He was the King who ordered the first steles erected in Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam to honour talented individuals and encourage students to learn Confucianism.

Le Thanh Tong was a poet who founded and headed the Tao Dan Literary Association - the first writers' association in Vietnam. According to his orders, many great historical works were revised and published, including *Dai Viet su ky toan thu* (A Complete History of Dai Viet).

(ii) *The laureates of the Royal examinations held between 1442 and 1779*. A good number of them later became famous figures in Vietnamese history and made great contributions to culture, education, the military, the economy, and diplomacy. Many held high-ranking and important posts in the Royal Court. Among these are::

Ngo Si Lien, a native of Chuc Son commune, Chuong Duc district (presently Chuong My district, Hanoi). He passed the royal examination held in 1442 under King Le Thai Tong. He was Vice-Minister of Rites, Deputy Director of Quoc Tu Giam, and a mandarin at the Institute of History. Ngo Si Lien was a distinguished historian in the 15th century. He composed, among other works, *Dai Viet su ky toan thu* (A Complete History of Dai Viet, in 15 volumes) in the 10th year of Hong Duc's reign (1479). It is an official book on the more than 2000-year history of Vietnam spanning from the Hong Bang era (BCE) to that of King Le Gia Tong (1675). His name was recorded on the stele of the royal examination held in 1442. The stele was set up in the 15th year of the Hong Duc reign (1484) under King Le Thanh Tong.

Le Quy Don (1726-1784), a native of Dien Ha commune (now in Thai Binh province). He was the second laureate of the first rank of the royal examination in the 13th year of the Canh Hung reign (1752) under King Le Hien Tong. He acted as adviser to the Trinh Lord; He was the Vice-Minister of Finance, and then the Vice-Minister of Rites. He was a famously erudite scholar of the 18th century. He penned many works on philosophy, history, literature and economics, such as *Dai Viet thong su* (History of Dai Viet) and *Bac su thong luc* (Stories on the Missions to the North). His name is recorded on the stele of the royal examination held in 1752. The stele was set up in 1753 under King Le Hien Tong.

(iii) *High-ranking mandarins, scholars, cultural celebrities, talented artists, and calligraphers*. For example, Nguyen Trai (1380-1442), who was a native of Chi Ngai commune, Phuong Son district (present Hai Duong province), but who lived in Thuong Phuc district (now Thuong Tin district, Hanoi). He passed the royal examination in 1400 under the

Ho dynasty. His name is mentioned on a stele in reference to the royal examination held in 1442. At the time, Nguyen Trai was the Chief of the National Academy. He was assigned to review and assess the examination papers submitted to the King in Hoi Anh Palace. This stele was set up in 1484, during King Le Thanh Tong's reign. In 1890, Nguyen Trai was commemorated by UNESCO as a Great Poet and Great Man of Culture of the world. Nguyen Trai was a renowned statesman, diplomat, and writer of the 15th century. His works are numerous; of particular note are: *Quoc Am thi tap* (A Collection of Poems in the National Language), *Nam Viet du dia chi* (A Geography of Vietnam), and *Quan trung tu menh tap* (Letters and Commands Composed during War-time).

Using the steles as reliable documents, Vietnamese and foreign scholars can study the history, education and culture of Vietnam in the past, and young generations can absorb the traditions and values left by their ancestors.

d) Subject and theme:

Vietnamese and foreign scholars can approach the stone steles of royal examinations at Van Mieu-Quoc Tu Giam from various perspectives. A particular focus should be made on the core tenets of Confucianism and their implications for Vietnamese social life. Subjects for study may be the history, culture, legislation, philosophy, and language historic Vietnam. Of note are the following themes:

- Political ideology:

The first concern of the Le monarchies in power was to assert the dominance of Confucianism in the ideology and politics of their dynasties. Thus, the steles of royal examinations at Van Mieu- Quoc Tu Giam all laud the role of Confucianism in the socio-political life and the centralised monarchical regime of Vietnam and extol the monarch as the most powerful and supreme entity. The inscription on the royal examination held in 1442 reads: From the Le dynasty on, Confucianism became the foundation for the Vietnamese society, state governance, and national education. The Confucian examination system was the only way for people to acquire high social status.

- Training and using talented individuals

The centralized monarchical regime of the Le dynasty always attached importance to talented people and considered them the *essence of the nation's vitality*, the *source of national development and prosperity*. The stele of the royal examination held in 1442 points clearly to this attitude: "*Virtuous and talented men are the basic strength of a state. If the vitality is strong, the State will be powerful and prosperous. If it is not, it will weaken and have a low standing. Therefore, clear-sighted monarchs always attach importance to educating talented individuals and selecting Confucian scholars for the mandarin, and regard the fostering of the State's essential energy as an urgent task*".

The Kings of the Le and Mac dynasties trained and selected talented students on the basis of Confucian doctrine. Therefore, they used Confucian standards of "virtue" and "talent" for testing and classifying candidates for exams. In 1434, King Le Thai Tong issued an edict, which reads in part: Apparently, the policy of developing education and properly using talent and training human resources should be a priority for any dynasty or regime that wishes to ensure prosperity and strength for its nation.

(For further information, please see attached appendix N° 02)

e) Form and style:

The stone steles of Royal Examinations at Van Mieu-Quoc Tu Giam, Hanoi, are the results of creative work by Vietnamese craftsmen and famous writers of their time.

All the 82 steles at Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam are of the same model: the slab is flat, with an arched pediment and tortoise-shaped base; the tortoise is rather big and looks strong; yet, the steles are of different sizes. Those erected in the late 15th to early 16th centuries are smaller than the ones made in later periods. The steles of the 18th century are rather large. Obviously, the size of a stele depended on society's ideals and the dynasty's regulations. In the 15th-16th centuries, the Court (and Confucianism as well) regulated that steles of royal examinations to be set up at Van Mieu must be smaller than the ones at Lam Kinh, where the tombs of the King's ancestors were located. Later, this regulation became looser, which accounts for the presence of the steles of bigger sizes at Van Mieu.

The decorative designs on the steles follow the same course of development. In the late 15th and early 16th centuries, the designs were simple; the pediments of the steles were decorated with only moon and cloud motifs, and the stele edges with flowering vines. At that time, the dragon image was used solely for the King as a token of deep respect. In the 17th - 18th centuries, the designs on the steles became more diverse, and began to include dragon, phoenix, and moon motifs; the stele edges were decorated with lively leaf flower, animal, bird, and human motifs. The introduction of the divine dragon image into the decorative patterns for steles testifies to the fact that the King did not enjoy such deep respect as in prior periods. Each stele is a real work of art as they are the results of master mind and hands of the best scholars, craftsmen and calligraphers over times. They are of great significance to the study of ancient documents in Chinese as the texts were written in Chinese characters, but read in Vietnamese way of pronunciation, so they can serve as references for those who study the former Vietnamese languages.

f) Social and spiritual impact and community significance

The Steles had a great social impact on education and training of. First of all, as a symbol of success and wisdom in education, the steles encouraged contemporary people and people of the following generations in education. It is shown in the inscriptions that, in 1442, there were only 450 students who took part into one Royal Examination. However, the number of the participants of the following Examinations increased to one thousand, even 6000. Moreover, Steles standing at Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam are a living model for the people of all time to admire and follow.

Today, they continue to draw the attention of Vietnamese and foreign scholars, government officials and tourists alike. Thousands of visitors, including foreign people, come to Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam everyday to learn about how our ancestors employed talented individuals, as well as about the Vietnamese philosophy of education. Many high-ranking government officials, including state leaders, have highly appreciated the profound significance and value of the steles as a kind of historical document. Let see the photos:

Thousands of people, including foreign tourists come daily to admire the Steles

4.4 Are there issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management that relate to this nomination?

Rarity

These steles are the only engraved archives in Vietnam and the world which contain information on history of the royal examinations; the successive dynasties' conceptions of education, training and employing talent; and their philosophy of state governance. The irreplaceability and rarity lie in the content of the steles, the mode and condition of their establishment, their historical and artistic value, and their social impact. They are lively evidence of the intellect, aptitude and dexterity of the Vietnamese people. If any of them was lost or damaged, it would be difficult, even impossible, to be recover it. As we see above, the whole process of producing a stele was done very meticulously under the King's supervision. Each step was handled with great care, especially with regard to the selection of the writer, designer, calligrapher and engraver.

Integrity.

According to some historical books, there should be 91 steles, but only 82 have survived to date; 9 steles may have been damaged or lost. According to the scientists' study, they was damaged or lost by the end of 18th century. At present, the 82 steles that remain are being preserved indoors and well protected with security guards. The inscriptions on all the steles are, in general, readable. However, in the inscriptions of 61 steles. are blank spaces we may come across vacancies within certain lines of Chinese characters. This is because, in around 1840, the Nguyen King ordered the names of the Trinh Lords to be erased from the steles. Copies of the original inscriptions made earlier by some scholars can help complete the missing data with the exact Chinese characters.

Threat

The heritage site, including the steles, is open to the public. Some visitors, due to their inadequate awareness and knowledge, or driven by certain superstitious impulses, touch or rub the steles or tortoises, which causes some deterioration. However, it is impossible to put them in seclusion because they are invaluable heritage, an integral part of the historical site Van Mieu-Quoc Tu Giam. With more and more visitors coming to the place everyday, they are exposed to even higher threats.

Moreover, they have undergone severe damage in recent years due to sun, wind, and other natural elements. Characters in the inscriptions have become blurred due to erosion. In an effort to conserve the steles, the inscriptions have been copied onto paper for preservation and study.

5 LEGAL INFORMATION

5.1. Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Name: Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Vietnam. Address: 51- 53 Ngo Quyen Street, Hanoi, Vietnam

Telephone: +844 3943 9915 Facsimile: +844 39439009 Email: bovanhoathethaodulich@chinhphu.vn

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage

Name: The Center of Scientific and Cultural Activities Van Mieu-Quoc Tu Giam, under Hanoi Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism. Address: 58 Quoc Tu Giam Street, Hanoi

Telephone: +844 38452917 Facsimile: 84437472566 Email: vanmieu.qtghn@gmail.com

5.3 Legal status:

(a) Category of ownership

State Owned

(b) Accessibility

The original steles are accessible to the public

Moreover, the stele inscriptions have been translated from old Chinese into Vietnamese and published in a book for wider circulation.

(c) Copyright status

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Vietnam holds the copyrights on the steles. However, they are open to the public for reading, copying and photographing without charge. It is not allowed for public to make rubbing copy.

(d) Responsible administration

Hanoi Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism

(e) Other factors

6 MANAGEMENT PLAN

6.1 Is there a management plan in existence for this documentary heritage? YES

The steles are import relics of the Nation, so they have been being protected and preserve since their establishment. Recently, a substantial investment was provided in the construction of 8 roofs to protect the steles in 1994.

Direct management agency: *The Center of Scientific and Cultural Activities Van Mieu-Quoc Tu Giam, under the Hanoi Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism.*

All the stele's inscriptions have been copied, translated into Vietnamese, and published in the book "*Van Mieu-Quoc Tu Giam Hanoi and 82 Inscriptions on the Steles of Royal Examinations*". Twenty selected texts have been translated into English and published in the book: "*Texts of the Steles of Royal Examinations at Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam, Hanoi*"

The Center of Scientific and Cultural Activities Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam will copy and digitise the inscriptions and pictures of the steles for preservation and will upload them onto the Internet.

- Translation of stele inscriptions into English will continue so that all 82 steles can be made known to foreign readers in book format.

- The guarding of the steles will be intensified to prevent human direct contact, especially during festivals held at Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam. A plan of closing the steles with glass door or proper fan is under consideration.

. 7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Provide details of consultation about this nomination with (a) the owner of the heritage (b) the custodian (c) your national or regional *Memory of the World* committee

a) Owner of the Heritage

Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism of Vietnam (see 5.1)

b) Custodian

**Center of Scientific and Cultural Activities Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam under Hanoi
Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism (see 5.2)**

c) National Committee for UNESCO of Vietnam

d) Regional MOW Committee:

MOWCAP (Memory of the World Committee for Asia/Pacific Region)

PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION

8 ASSESSMENT OF RISK

8.1 Detail the nature and scope of threats to this documentary heritage

Even though the steles were made of good stone and have been covered with roofs, they cannot endure the impact of the weather and human activities and thus continue to wear out or get cracked. However, it is impossible to put them in seclusion because they are invaluable heritage, an integral part of the historical site Van Mieu-Quoc Tu Giam. With more and more visitors coming to the place everyday, they are exposed to even higher threats

Moreover, the steles have undergone severe damage in recent years due to sun, wind, and other natural elements. Characters in the inscriptions have become blurred due to erosion. In an effort to conserve the steles, the inscriptions have been copied onto paper for preservation and study.

9 ASSESSMENT OF PRESERVATION

9.1 Detail the preservation context of the documentary heritage

Previously, due to the difficulties of the country which had just emerged from the war, and due to improper awareness of people towards the values of the steles, preservation was limited. Recently, the State and designated authorities have made serious efforts and invested properly to help improve the preservation of the steles.