

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	1



MOWCAP
UNESCO Memory of the World
Regional Committee for Asia/Pacific

Nomination form
Asia/Pacific Memory of the World Register

ID code:	Item or collection short title:
Institution / Owner:	Country or countries
Assessed by: <u>(Rujaya Abhakorn) (date) / /</u> <u>(xxxxxxx) (date) / /</u> <u>(xxxxxxx) (date) / /</u> <u>(xxxxxxx) (date) / /</u>	Decision: (circle as appropriate) 1. Recommended 2. Not recommended 3. Recommended subject to the following (attach additional comments if required):

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	2

--	--

Nomination form



Part A: Essential information



Nguyen dynasty's Imperial records are administrative records of Nguyen dynasty, the last feudal dynasty in Vietnam which lasted from 1802 to 1945. The collection was created during the transaction of Nguyen dynasty in its state management activities including records created by grass-root to central organizations in its administrative system submitted to the Emperors for approval, records created by the Emperors, diplomatic notes and literature works composed by royal family.

Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty are basically handwriting on Do (poonah) paper in Chinese and Nom (Chinese-transcribed Vietnamese). Some of them created in late dynasty are in French and Vietnamese. Imperial record collection has autographs of ten Nguyen dynasty's emperors.

The collection reflects all aspects of social life, historical changes, domestic and foreign policies on politics, economy, diplomatic relation, military, culture, social affairs, religion and so on in Vietnam in 19th century and early half of 20th century.

The collection is now being preserved in National Archives Center No.1 of the State Records and Archives Department of Vietnam, Ministry of Homes Affairs. This is also the last administrative record collection of a feudal dynasty remains in Vietnam.



2.1 Name of nominator (person or organisation)

National Archives Center No. 1, The State Records and Archives Department of Vietnam (SRADV) - Ministry of Home Affairs.

2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

Custodian

2.3 Contact person(s)

- Doctor VU Thi Minh Huong, Director General of SRADV;
- Master HA Van Hue, Director of National Archives Center No. 1, SRADV;
- Master NGUYEN Thu Hoai, Chief of Division for Han Nom records, National Archives Center No.1, SRADV.

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	3

2.4 Contact details

Name:	Address:
VU Thi Minh Huong	12 Dao Tan street, Ba Dinh district, Hanoi, Vietnam

Telephone	Facsimile	Email
+84 4 38327001	+84 4 37666197	vuminhhuong@archives.gov.vn

Name:	Address:
HA Van Hue	18 Vu Pham Ham street, Cau Giay district, Hanoi, Vietnam

Telephone	Facsimile	Email
+84 4 37822655	+84 4 38255614	havanhue@archives.gov.vn

Name:	Address:
NGUYEN Thu Hoai	18 Vu Pham Ham street, Cau Giay district, Hanoi, Vietnam

Telephone	Facsimile	Email
+84 4 37822655	+84 4 38255614	hoaihannom@gmail.com

3.1 Title of documentary heritage item or collection

IMPERIAL RECORDS OF NGUYEN DYNASTY (1802 – 1945)

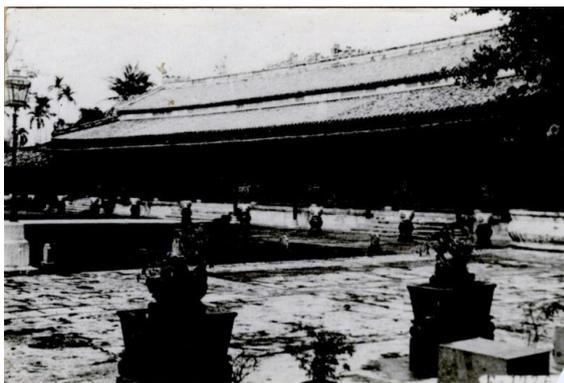
3.2 Catalogue or registration details

The nominated collection is whole collection of Nguyen dynasty's records including 773 volumes, which is equivalent to about 85,000 documents of 11 Nguyen dynasty's Emperors ranging from 1802 to 1945. They are Emperor Gia Long, Emperor Minh Menh, Emperor Thieu Tri, Kinh Tu Duc, Emperor Kien Phuc, Emperor Ham Nghi, Emperor Dong Khanh, Emperor Thanh Thai, Emperor Duy Tan, Emperor Khai Dinh and Emperor Bao Dai¹

¹ Nguyen dynasty had 13 Emperors in which 11 Emperors had Imperial records. Two others (Emperor Duc Duc and Emperor Hiep Hoa) didn't have records. Autographs of 10 among 11 Emperors were found in the collection of Imperial records.

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	4

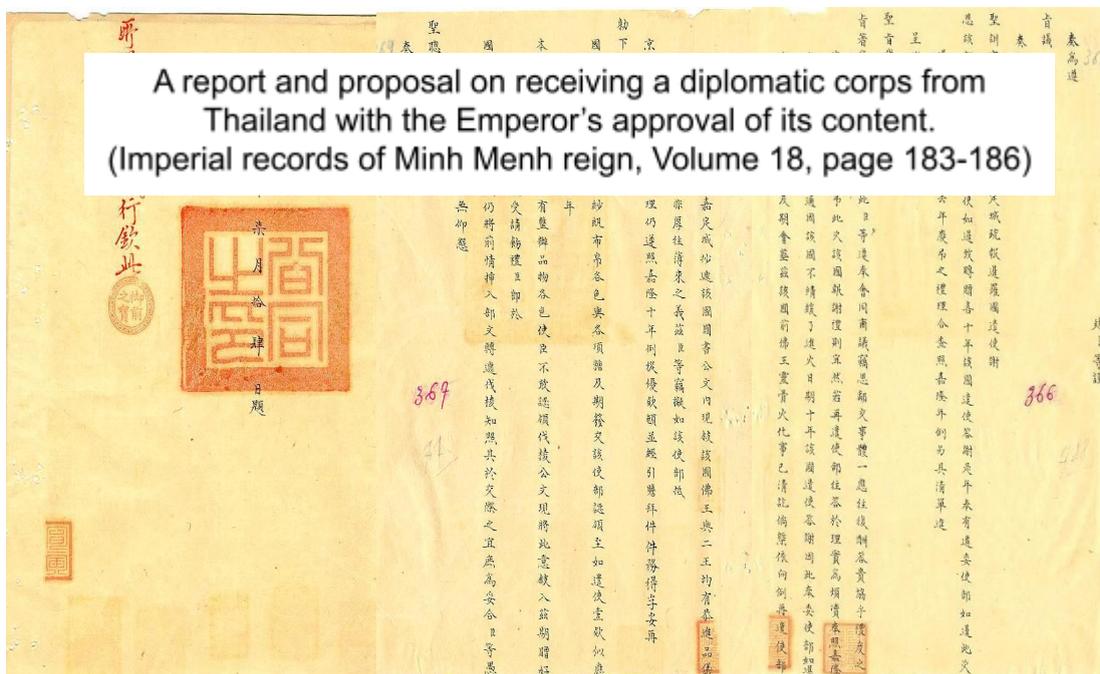
3.3 Photographs or a video of the documentary heritage



Can Chanh Palace – Workplace of the Emperors in Nguyen dynasty (1920)



Emperor Khai Dinh approve document (1920)



Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	5



Repository for preserving
Imperial records of Nguyen
dynast



●

3.4 History/Origin/Background/Provenance

Under Nguyen dynasty, the administrative system is an autocratic centralized government, the Emperor was the leader and had supreme power, and all activities

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	6

under the system must be approved by the Emperor. Therefore, all subordinate organizations in the government during their transaction had to submit their administrative documents to the Emperor for approval. Those documents then were collected and controlled by Nguyen dynasty's Cabinet under a whole archival collection of the royal family.

In Gia Long reign (1802 – 1819), Royal library was the organization specializing in preservation of Imperial records, which turned to Records Management Department in the 1st year of Minh Menh (1820), and then changed in to the Cabinet again in 1929. In 1933, Emperor Bao Dai replaced the Cabinet by setting up Royal Office. Despite its change of name, it almost remained the same function as an assistant unit to the Emperor in delivering documents and preserving significant ones.

The collection of Imperial records was preserved in the East Building of the Royal Palace until it was moved to preserve in Hue Cultural Institute in 1942. In 1959, under the order of the President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Imperial records were moved to the Hue University Institute for preservation. In 1961, the Sai Gon regime handed all these documents to the Da Lat Archives. In March 1975, they were sent to the Archives Department of Sai Gon Records Management and Archives Department for preservation. In 1978, the collection was handed over to the Archives Department of the Prime Minister Palace, which is now the State Records and Archives Department of Vietnam. The Archives Department then assigned the Central Archives Repository No. 2 in Ho Chi Minh City to manage them. In 1991, under the Decision of the President of Ministers' Council of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, all of the collection of Nguyen dynasty's Imperial records was moved to National Archives Center No.1 in Hanoi for preservation.

3.4 Bibliography

Publications:

1. The National Historiographer's Office of the Nguyen dynasty, *Đại Nam thực lục (Chronicle of Dai Nam)*, translated by the Institute of History; History Publishing House, 1962-1978; reprinted by the Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 2003
 2. Cabinet of the Nguyen dynasty, *Khâm định Đại Nam hội điển sự lệ*, translated by the Institute of History, Thuan Hoa Publishing House, Huế, 1993.
 3. The National Historiographer's Office of the Nguyen dynasty, *Minh Mệnh chính yếu*, translated by the Institute of History, Thuan Hoa Publishing House, Huế, 1994.
 4. The National Historiographer's Office of the Nguyen dynasty, *Đại Nam liệt truyện*, translated by the Institute of History, Thuan Hoa Publishing House, Huế, 2006.
 5. The Committee for Vietnam History Translation, Hue University Institute, *Catalogue of the collection of Nguyen dynasty's Imperial records*, Hue, Volume I - 1960, Volume II - 1962.
-

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	7

-
6. Nguyen The Anh, *Anti-Tax movement in central region in 1908 reported in Imperial records under Duy Tan reign*, Ministry of Culture, Education and Youths, Saigon, 1973; reprinted by Literature Publishing House, 2008.
 7. Ha Mai Phuong, *Performance of the Ministry of Construction under Emperor Tu Duc's reign reported in Nguyen dynasty's Imperial records*, Master Thesis, History Faculty, Saigon Literature University, 1974.
 8. The State Records and Archives Department of Vietnam, *Guidelines to the collection of Nguyen dynasty's Imperial records*, Information and Culture Publishing House, volume II - 1998, volume I - 2010 (sponsored by Toyota Foundation - Japan)
 9. The State Records and Archives Department of Vietnam, *Guidelines to the collection of Nguyen dynasty's Imperial records*, volume II (English version), World Publishing House, Hanoi, 2000 (Preface by Prof. Anthony Reid - Australian National University, Canberra)
 10. Lý Kim Hoa collected, translated, *The Imperial records of the Nguyen dynasty – Buddhism records of Nguyen dynasties through 143 years from Gia Long 1802 to Bao Dai 1945*, consisting of 250 royal documents on Buddhism under the Nguyen dynasty, Information and Culture Publishing House, Hanoi 2002.
 11. Vũ Thanh Hằng, Trà Ngọc Anh, Tạ Quang Phát, *Imperial Archives of Tu Duc reign 1848 - 1883: Selection and Summary*, consists of 1128 royal documents, Literature Publishing House, Hanoi, 2003.
 12. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Border Committee, *Collection of Imperial records of the Nguyen dynasty regarding the exercise of Vietnam's sovereignty on Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes*, Tri thức Publishers, Hanoi, 2013.
 13. The State Records and Archives Department of Vietnam, *Seals on Imperial records of the Nguyen dynasty*, Hanoi Publishing House, 2013.

Articles :

14. Matsumoto Nobuhiro (松本信廣), *Archives Bibliography of An Nam Royal Court (越南皇室所藏安南本書目)*, published in « Shigaku » (史學), volume 14, session 2 (1935).
 15. Chen Ching Ho, *The Imperial Archives of the Nguyen dynasty 1802-1945*, Journal of Southeast Asian History, Cambridge University Press, vol 3, issue 2, September 1962, pp.111-128).
 16. Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Role of Imperial Archives in studying modern Vietnamese history*, Interdisciplinary study on Vietnam (Sài Gòn), Vol. 1 (1974), pp. 107-111 (*Le rôle des châu bản dans les recherches sur l'histoire moderne du Viêt-Nam*, Études Interdisciplinaires sur le Viêt-Nam (Saigon), vol. 1 (1974), pp. 107-111).
 17. Nguyễn Thế Anh, *South-Dynasty government and Vietnamese revolutionists in Imperial Archives during 1910-1913*, Văn Lang (Westminster CA.), Vol. 3 (6/1992), pp. 79-112.
 18. Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Imperial Archives in association with movements led by Phan Bội Châu during 1910-1913*, Hue studies , I, 1999, pp. 276-298.
-

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	8

19. Records of Workshop *Imperial Archives of the Nguyen dynasty – Potential documentary heritage* (27 articles) August - 2013.

3.6 Names, qualifications and contact details of up to three independent people or organisations with expert knowledge about the values and provenance of the documentary heritage

Name	Qualifications	Address
Prof. Phan Huy Le	History	Vietnam Association of Historical Science Tel: +84 4 39305736 Email: phle3@yahoo.com

Name	Qualifications	Address
Ass.Prof., Dr. Nguyen Cong Viet	Han Nom studies	Institute of Han Nom Studies Tel: +84 4 38574956

Name	Qualifications	Address
Dr. Phan Thanh Hai	History	Hue Monuments Conservation Center Tel: +84 54 3530840 Email: thanhhai.ditich@gmail.com

I assert that the above named referees have given their written permission for their names and contact details to be used in connection with this nomination for the Asia/Pacific *Memory of the World* Register, and their names to appear on the website. (Contact details will not appear on the website or be disclosed by the MOWCAP to any third party).

Signature

Full name HA VAN HUE

Date November, 2013

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	9

4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Name: The State Records and Archives Department of Vietnam, Ministry of Home Affairs Address: 12 Dao Tan street, Ba Dinh district, Hanoi

Telephone: +84 4 38327001 Facsimile: +84 4 38326871 Email: vuminhhuong@archives.gov.vn

4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

Name: National Archives Center No.1 Address: 18 Vu Pham Ham street, Cau Giay, Hanoi

Telephone: +84 4 37822655 Facsimile: +84 4 38255614 Email: havanhue@archives.gov.vn;
hoaihannom@gmail.com

4.3 Legal status

The collection belongs to the Government of Vietnam.

4.4 Accessibility

National Archives Center No.1 in cooperation with experts in Han Nom has completed classification of content of the whole Imperial records collection for establishing database for reference services. Accessing to the collection by current finding aids is convenient, which includes the *Set of catalogues on Nguyen dynasty's Imperial records* for traditional finding method and the *Database of Nguyen dynasty's Imperial records* for accessing through LAN in Reference Services of National Archives Center No.1.

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	10

4.5 Copyright status

Copyright belongs to National Archives Center No.1 – the State Records and Archives Department of Vietnam. The utilization, copy and printing from the database or the original must be approved and allowed by the archives and compliant with law and regulation prescribed for accessing archival collection of the Government of Vietnam.

5.1 First criterion: authenticity.

After establishing domination, since 1802 feudal state of Nguyen dynasty had built a complete administrative system from grass-root to central level for state management. The performance of this whole system is almost reflected in Imperial records. Events documented in Imperial records had high authenticity because they were information used in practical management of the society and were received and processed directly by the Emperors under Nguyen dynasty.

Nguyen dynasty defined strictly format of Imperial records. Together with evidence remaining on records such as the Emperors' handwriting, seals..., it made Imperial records very difficult to fake.

Imperial records were used as a historical source to compile books. Therefore, its authenticity can be double checked by comparing its information with books officially compiled in Nguyen dynasty, such as *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (Literally: *Royal Annals of Dai Nam*), *Đại Nam nhất thống chí* (Literally: *Dai Nam Comprehensive Encyclopedia*), *Đại Nam liệt truyện* (Literally: *Dai Nam Biographies*), *Khâm định Đại Nam hội điển sự lệ* (chính biên, tục biên) (Literally: *Royal rules and regulations*), *Quốc triều chính biên toát yếu* (Literally: *Brief History of Nguyen Dynasty*), *Minh Mệnh chính yếu* (Literally: *Significant policies of Minh Menh*), *Minh Mệnh tấu nghị*, *Gia Long Thiệu Trị Tự Đức công văn* (Literally: *Correspondences in the reigns of Gia Long, Thieu Tri and Tu Duc*), *Tự Đức chiếu dụ* (Literally: *Tu Duc's Royal proclamation and edict*), *Hà đê bộ văn tập*, *Hà đê tấu tư tập* (Literally: *Royal documents on dykes and dyke-maintenance under Tu Duc reign*)...

The authenticity of its content could be also cross checked with records of other countries created at the same time showing relation with Nguyen dynasty, such as:

- *Archival records of Qing Dynasty (China) on sea accident issue (Oversea relations)*² provide information on oversea ships including Vietnamese ones had commercial activities with Qing Dynasty's businessman or got accident on the sea. The information was also documented in details in records of the Ministry of Construction and *Vien Thuong bac* (A place outside royal palace for receiving foreign ambassadors and also a workplace for officers specializing in diplomatic relations) in the collection of Imperial records;

² *List of historical records in Qing Dynasty on sea accidents – Section “Oversea relation”* 《清代檔案中的海難史料目錄 (涉外篇)》Center for Social Science and Humanity Studies – Central Study Institute, Taipei, 2004.

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	11

- *The Annals of Emperor Rama I and Rama II (Thailand)*³ provide information about diplomatic relation between Emperor Gia Long (Vietnam) and Emperor Rama I and Rama II and detailed notes about gifts presented by Emperors of two countries to the other. That information was also reflected in the correspondence or reports by Vietnamese ambassadors to Thailand in Imperial records of Gia Long reign...

5.2 Second criterion: world significance.

Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty are original and the unique ones which contain the Nguyen dynasty's Emperors' autographs. This is also the most complete administrative record collection of a feudal dynasty in Vietnam being preserved. Its uniqueness is reflected in following aspects:

- Imperial records have comments written directly by the Nguyen dynasty's Emperor in red ink. Methods of making comments are various, such as: *Chau diem* is a red spot made by the Emperor to the head of document, which means his approval for the proposed content of the document; *Chau phe* is a word, a sentence or a paragraph written by the Emperor to show his viewpoint, idea or instruction; *Chau khuyen* is a red circle around a person's name or item approved by the Emperor; *Chau mat* is a red tick on what he didn't approved; *Chau so*, *Chau cai* is the cross on mistakes in the document and his correction by its side.

Approving document was originated from China, however when comparing with Ming and Qing Dynasty we found that the procedure of delivering, reviewing by the Emperor and managing document under Nguyen dynasty was more centralized and more direct. Cabinet was the department exercising the function of receiving and processing documents submitted by all organizations of Nguyen dynasty before submitting them to the Emperors, then preserving the original with the Emperors' comments. Nguyen dynasty Emperors based on the Cabinet's and Ministries' advisory opinion to write his comments in red ink directly on the documents. In China, due to geography, the Emperor was only deal with significant issues and empowered local agencies to tackle other issues. Document submitted to the Emperor had to go through many processing steps, then was divided in to two types: one was processed by the Cabinet and the other was processed by Grand Council (literally, Office of Military Secrets). Chinese Emperor only considered and approved on the *Thinking paper* (a proposal) attached with the submitted document, then Commenting Department was responsible for rewriting the Emperor's comments in Manchu while Proposing Department would rewrite the Emperor's comments on the submitted document in Chinese in red ink.

- Writing is an identity of Nguyen dynasty's Imperial records. There are four types of scripts found in the collection of Imperial records, include Chinese, Nom (Chinese-chino transcribed Vietnamese), French and Vietnamese. Like most of other feudal dynasties, Confucianism was the official thought and the Chinese feudal model was applied in Nguyen dynasty. Therefore, Chinese (the pictographic characters entered to Vietnam by old Chinese) was the official writing characters used in

³ *The Annals of Emperor Rama I and Rama II* was compiled by Prince Phraya Damrong Rajanubhab (1862-1943) – the son of Emperor Rama IV – in the early of 20th century.

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	12

government's documents. However, in Nguyen dynasty Nom characters (characters created by Vietnamese basing on Chinese characters, previously used in folk literature) were also used in some official documents. Typically, a remarkable number of records created in Gia Long reign was written in Nom⁴.

In the end of 19th century, when French officially imposed domination in Vietnam, besides Chinese and Nom some documents were written and commented in French. In the early of 20th century, Vietnamese (using Latin scripts) was used in the system of administrative document in Vietnam. Although sprouting much earlier (around 16th – 17th century), it only started to become popular in this time due to impact of French and French domination. Therefore Imperial records created in late Bao Dai reign were almost in Vietnamese.

The system of scripts used in Imperial records reflects changes in language used in Vietnam from early 19th century to mid 20th century as well as changes in social thought and the impact of cultural waves from colonizers entering to colonized countries.

- Imperial records reflect social life in Vietnam from early 19th century to mid 20th century, especially its change from a feudal society to semi feudal semi colonial society through the domination of French in three main periods:

- In the early 19th century under the reign of Gia Long, Minh Menh and Thieu Tri: This was the most prosperous period and also the independent period of Nguyen dynasty. In this period, the Emperor held full power and considered for approval all aspects of the country. Nguyen Dynasty also enacted many policies to build up and reinforce feudal government, such as naming the country, maEmperor seals, issuing Royal proclamation on ascending the throne, building Imperial city, establishing sovereignty, setting up and completing organizations in the government system and so on. The Royal court was actively opened trade relations with oversea partners by sending ships to Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Macau... to buy and sell goods and permitting ships from China, Thailand, England, French and Spain to conduct business activities in sea and river ports of Vietnam with paying tax.
- From 1848 to 1883 when French started to conquest Vietnam and complete the pacification in Vietnam in the reign of Tu Duc: In this period, Nguyen Dynasty had to cope with many difficulties threaten by the West's ambition on taEmperor over the country. In 1858 French and Spain officially attracted Vietnam. French then continuously put pressure on Nguyen Dynasty to enforce signing land granting agreements on the Royal court, gradually taEmperor over 6 South provinces. However, Nguyen Dynasty still held power in controlling the country politically. Imperial records in this period show that the Emperor still considered for approval most of significant documents from home to foreign affairs.

⁴ Records of Gia Long reign, Volume 4, had 10 out of 13 documents written in Nom

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	13

-
- When the French imposed full domination to Vietnam, from 1883 to 1945: Emperor Tu Duc passed away in 1883. Duc Duc, Hiep Hoa and Kien Phuc continuously came to the throne but was quickly dethroned or killed. This was the most confused and gloomy days in the history of Nguyen Dynasty. After the 1883 and 1884 agreements signed with French, Nguyen Dynasty almost lost independence. Vietnam had two political regimes of Nguyen Dynasty and French at the same time in this period. French decided all significant issues of Nguyen Dynasty, such as politics, military, foreign affairs and economy. This is reflected in Imperial records created in Dong Khanh reign afterward when all significant documents must be considered and approved by French Resident Superior's Palace before passing to the Emperor for approval.

The collection of Imperial records of Nguyen Dynasty is the original records with high truth for objectively researching about Nguyen Dynasty. The August Revolution in 1945 had put an end to the 143 years of existence of Nguyen Dynasty. However, Vietnam then continuously underwent two wars with French and America. In that situation, many politicians and historians have blamed Nguyen Dynasty for its responsibility in losing the country to French colonial. After the Renovation in Vietnam in 1980s, viewpoints on Nguyen Dynasty had changed in positive way. The collection of Imperial records is one of the most significant sources in reconsidering for a more neutral and fairer assessment on Nguyen Dynasty. Therefore, the collection is more and more appreciated by domestic and foreign researchers when studying about Nguyen Dynasty.

5.3 Third, world significance

Time:

Nguyen Dynasty (1802 – 1945) is the last feudal dynasty in Vietnam history and also the last one in the region. This was the period of dramatic change from a feudal society to capitalism in the world. Some capitalists in Europe with colonial thought wanted to expand to remote and underdeveloped areas to colonize them. Vietnam at that time was a potential destination for the Western countries. Therefore during its governing, Nguyen Dynasty had to incessantly fight for independence and sovereignty. However a small country with backward feudal thought couldn't prevent itself from the conquest of the West.

In 1858, Spain – French allied troops opened fire to Vietnam. In 1862 Nguyen Dynasty was forced to sign an agreement on granting three south-east provinces and Con Lon island to French. In 1874, Nguyen Dynasty had to sign another agreement on recognizing French sovereignty in the South (from the south of Binh Thuan province). Following by two other treaties in 1883 and 1884, Nguyen Dynasty had to accept French protection on all aspects in Vietnam and Indochina. Therefore, Nguyen Dynasty's power holding period is one of unusual historical period which comprised three stages: the independent period (1802 – 1958), the struggling period for independence (1858 – 1883) and the colonized period (1883 – 1945). This time also marked the collapse and end of feudal regime in the world.

Place:

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	14

Imperial records were created during state management activities of Nguyen Dynasty's government system in Hue Imperial city. Hue was no longer the imperial city of Vietnam from 1945 but it still has inside many cultural heritages of a prosperous time of a dynasty with Royal citadel, Royal palace, mausoleums and other cultural value. In 1993, the Complex of Hue Monuments was inscribed in the World Heritage List by UNESCO. In 2003, Hue Royal Court Music was inscribed in the List of Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. Imperial records are also a heritage of Nguyen Dynasty, an original collection to prove for the activities of a feudal dynasty in the history that no longer exists.

People:

The collection of Imperial records is one of original collections that reflects comprehensively and objectively the political and social life of people in Vietnam in Nguyen Dynasty. The images of Nguyen Dynasty's Emperors from Gia Long to Bao Dai are reflected clearly in the collection through their health status, tonic remedies, health treatment for the Emperor, Emperor's birth and death, ascending to the throne, handing the reign, and abdication, literature works created by the Emperors... Their important policies and autographs also reflect their personality and capacity.

The collection also mentions about a lot of politicians, cultural celebrities, scientists and strong-willed patriotic scholars through information about their duties and responsibilities, such as:

- Ha Tong Quyen (1789 – 1839): He was the Head of Secret Affairs Institute in Minh Menh reign. In 1832, on behalf of the royal court he had a working visit to Bali, Indonesia.
 - Phan Thanh Gian (1796 – 1867): He was mandarin under three Emperors' reign, Minh Menh, Thieu Tri and Tu Duc, holding positions in the Secret Affairs Institute, Historiographer's Office, Minister of Justice, and Minister of Finance... He was sent to China, Indonesia, Singapore, France and Spain... as Emperor's envoy.
 - Pham Phu Thu (1820 – 1883): He was Minister of Finance, First Assessor of War Minister Counsellor, province chief of Hai – An in Tu Duc reign. In 1863, he was dispatched to France as assistant envoy to Phan Thanh Gian, then to England, Spain and Portugal.
 - Nguyen Thanh Y (1819 – 1897) was a diplomat in Tu Duc reign, used to be representative of Nguyen dynasty for many times in negotiation with French. In 1878 he headed a delegation with Vietnamese products to French to participate in an international fair held in Paris.
 - Bui Vien (1841 – 1878) was a diplomat in Tu Duc reign. He was also the first one who campaign for diplomatic relation with America, represented for Nguyen dynasty to visit America in 1873.
 - Phan Boi Chau (1867 – 1940) was a famous scholar and a revolutionist of Vietnam who was also the founder of Duy Tan Hoi (Association of Modernization), promoter of Dong Du movement that encouraged Vietnamese young people to come to Japan to study with the hope of coming back to contribute to the country.
-

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	15

Subject and theme:

Imperial records are administrative records created during activities of state management, therefore they contain a variety of information, reflecting all aspects of social life in Nguyen dynasty, such as:

- Diplomatic policy of Nguyen dynasty with foreign countries;
- Economic policies like land management, reclamation; tax policies; policies promoting production; building bridges and roads, dykes, controlling floods...
- Education and Cultural policies like opening schools, conducting competitions, compiling books...
- Military activities and social security like anti-French activities, repressing rebellion against royal government, conflicts in borderland...
- Activities on governmental organization, such as organizing governmental system from local to central level, wages, mandarin grades, rewarding and punishment, promoting and demoting...
- Religious policies, such as forbidding Catholicity, punishing catholic...
- Health care policies, such as health care regulations for the Emperors, Royal family and citizens, propagandizing on hygiene and preventing epidemic diseases...

Form and style:

Imperial records were written on *do* (poonah) papers, a special type of paper manually made from bark of *do* (poonah) trees in some Vietnamese traditional craft villages. The papers are durable, non-blurred, resistant to decay and termites, non-crispy and non-acidifiable. Imperial records were handwritten with a brush and traditional manually made ink, and drafted by clerks who were examined and recruited for their literature talents and beautiful handwriting. The Imperial records of the Nguyen dynasty are in various types of documents including royal proclamation, edicts, decrees, petition, reports, replies, comment papers... which were created under strict regulations regarding their function and authority of issuance. The Emperor's comments were in red ink and the seals were also in red ink creating a noble style for imperial documents and making them as beautiful as ancient calligraphy pictures.

Rarity

The collection of Nguyen dynasty's Imperial records is the only archival holding of a feudal regime remained in Vietnam and among very few documents in the world that have autographs of the Emperors, who commented in details on all national issues in the documents. They are the valuable original materials that facilitate the researching and restoring the whole political, economic, cultural and social system and people of a nation in a course of history. These documents, in addition to informative value, have become precious antiques as they have gone through a long period of time. Seals on

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	16

the documents, autographs by the Emperor, the format of the document, the language, scripts, paper material and ink ... have all become valuable materials providing lot of information about different areas including administration studies, document studies, family annals studies and seal studies... These documents are almost the unique one written by hand without printing, therefore if they are unfortunately lost, there's nothing can help to recover them and that will become a great loss for the mankind.

Integrity

Due to impacts of war, weather, climate, many of the Imperial records were strongly damaged and lost. However, with more than 773 volumes of about 85,000 documents, the collection of Nguyen dynasty's Imperial records is a rather complete and comprehensive collection of a feudal regime in Vietnam that remains.

Threat

Although Vietnamese government and archives agencies have paid special attention to the collection, after undergoing hundreds of years, some documents are even more than 200 years; the deterioration of the collection is unavoidable. Vietnam has a tropical, hot and humid climate, which is favorable for microorganism and fungus to attack the documents. Vietnam has also gone through wars therefore the collection has been moved back and forth several times and they suffered from unfavorable poor preservation conditions. As a result, many documents have been so damaged that it is difficult to restore them. About 3,000 pages of the imperial documents are sticky and incurable.



YES NO

Preservation status:

The entire collection has been digitalized and microfilmed for security preservation to minimize impacts on the originals. Content of the documents has also been briefly translated for building database to facilitate accessing to the collection by traditional sets of catalogues and by local networks for readers coming to Reference Services.

The content of the Imperial records has also been introduced on several media such as newspapers, television and publications...The publications like *Guidelines to the Collection of Nguyen dynasty* in 1998 and 2010; the exhibition on *Seals on Imperial Records of Nguyen Dynasty* in 2011 and *Royal Comments on Imperial Records* in 2012 have attracted great attention from the public and researchers. In 2013 a significant workshop on Imperial records was also organized in Hanoi and another large-scale exhibition on Imperial records was also held in Royal palace in Hue city. The collection has been the theme of many documentary films on Vietnam Television VTV1, VTV2, VTV4 channels...

Preservation Plan:

Imperial records of Nguyen Dynasty are being preserved in specialized repository with the application of advanced technology to minimize the deterioration of documents.

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.
2013	Imperial records of Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945)	17

However, Vietnamese related archival organization have been continuing with researches and updating advanced preservation method suitable with the material of Imperial records to prolong the life-span of the records. In coming years, the State Records and Archives Department of Vietnam will enhance its cooperation with local and international organizations to publish and introduce Imperial records of Nguyen Dynasty on different types, such as books, exhibition, and documentary film and so on.



The nomination includes:

- Nomination form;
- Images of Nguyen Dynasty's Imperial records;
- Brief translation of some typical records;
- Articles of local and international scholars on Nguyen Dynasty's Imperial records.