Royal literature consists of verses, characters and parallel sentences
Asia/Pacific Memory of the World Register 2015

Part A: Essential information

1 Summary

Over the last 700 years, from Thuan Hoa Region (since 1036) to Phu Xuan Capital under the Tay Son dynasty (from 1788 to 1801), the capital of the Nguyen dynasty (from 1802 to 1945), and then Thua Thien Hue today, Hue culture has left a deep impression on Vietnamese culture.

The values of Hue culture are not merely the values of palaces, pavilions, walls and tombs associated with particular natural elements; but also the subtlety and the creativeness in the decorative art; the most original are the decorative styles “one verse, one picture” and “one character, one picture”.

They were formed at the same time of the planning and the building of Hue constructions (1802-1945). They were chosen from Nguyen emperors’ famous works, then encrusted, inlaid, carved, enameled or covered in alto-relievo with plaster, porcelain and terra-cotta.

The contents are about confirming the national independence and the sovereignty of the country, reflecting some policies of the court, singing the praises of grass and trees, flowers and leaves, and holding up the poets’ talent.

The art values of verse, character and picture panels are expressed in the form of one verse panel with one picture panel or one character panel with one picture panel creating a unique style of Hue royal architectural decoration. They are art works of high values in the decoration of Hue royal constructions serving as a picture as well as a unique handicraft work which show the talent of the past artisans. In spite of war devastation, natural disasters and the impact of human beings for a long period of time, this original decorative literary type in Hue, the old capital, is still well conserved. In 1993, Hue Monuments Complex was recognized as the World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. And right in Hue, a world heritage, contains a rare and unique documentary heritage which creates a particular style of Hue royal architectural decorative art.

2 Nominator

2.1 Name of nominator (person or organisation)
Hue Monuments Conservation Center - Thua Thien Hue People’s Committee
2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

Administrative organization

2.3 Contact person(s)

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3 Details of the Nominated Documentary Heritage

3.1 Title of documentary heritage item or collection

Royal literature on Hue royal architecture (1802-1945)

3.2 Catalogue or registration details

The catalogue of nomination heritage consists of the constructions built during the reign of Nguyen Emperors (1802-1945) with the decorative styles “one verse, one picture” and “one character, one picture” formed at the same time of the building of the constructions. The royal literature is expressed in a wide variety of forms and contents. One verse panel with one picture panel is on Vietnamese traditional topics such as eight precious objects (for ornaments), flowers and leaves, fruits, dragons,
cranes, dragon head, lianas, and so on. The picture panel has decorative values only, not serving as the illustration for the verse panel beside it. In spite of war devastation, natural disasters and the impact of human beings for a long period of time, Hue still preserves a large quantity of verses on the royal constructions. According to statistical data, there still exist 2679 verse panels. The same number is with the picture panels, encrusted, lacquered and inlaid with mother-of-pearl on wood, on enamels, covered with porcelain and terracotta. This is really a lively museum of literature under the Nguyen dynasty.

The details of each nomination heritage are as follows:

1. **Royal literature at Noon Gate:** It is the main gate of Hue Imperial City. It is decorated with eight verse panels on enameled bronze boards, and the verses are written in five-word, four-line, two-line, five-word and two-line, seven-word styles. The contents are about the origin of the Nguyen dynasty and the landscape of the royal areas. Eight decorative picture panels on the topics of eight precious objects (for ornaments) and flowers and leaves accompanied by 8 verse panels.

2. **Royal literature at Thai Hoa Palace:** It is the place for important festivals of the royal court. It was rebuilt in 1883 in the reign of the Emperor Minh Mang (1820-1841). The whole palace has 297 verse panels written in five-word, four-line, two-line, five-word and two-line, seven-word styles. Those about praising the national independence, promoting the diplomatic relations with other countries and celebrating the Emperors’ conscientiousness account for 73.7% of total verses in the palace; those praising natural landscape account for 26.3% of the 297 verse panels. Several picture panels are of lianas, stylized chrysanthemums in the form of the “shou” (Longevity) character, eight precious objects (for ornaments), climbing plants in the form of a dragon, vases of flowers and fruits.

3. **Royal literature at Trieu To Temple:** It is the temple for worshipping Nguyen Kim – the father of the first Lord who established Cochin China, Lord Nguyen Hoang. It was built in 1804 and restored in the Emperor Minh Mang’s reign as it is now. There are 82 verse panels written in various styles: seven-word, four-line; five-word, four-line; four-line, four-word; eight-line, four-word; six-line, four-word; seven-line, four-word; two-line, four-word. The content of celebrating the ancestors who founded the dynasty accounts for 42.7%; those praising the sacredness in the temple account for 41.5%; those praising the subjects’ worry and respect account for 15.8%. One verse panel goes with one picture panel on different topics such as two dragons facing the Sun, tiger head design, flowers and leaves, “Shou” (longevity) character.

4. **Royal literature at Hung To Temple:** It is the temple for worshipping the
parents of the first Emperor of the Nguyen dynasty, the Emperor Gia Long (1802-1820). It was built and restored in the Emperor Minh Mang’s reign (1820-1840). There are altogether 83 verse panels together with 83 picture panels of eight precious objects (for ornaments), flowers and leaves, fruits in this temple for the purpose of decoration. Verses were written in five-word, four-line; seven-word, four-line, two-line, seven-word; four-line, four-word; one-line, seven-word, three-line, five-word. Those describing the country’s beauty account for 70% of total of verses in the temple; those praising the ancestors’ merits and the royal rites account for 30%.

5. Royal literature at The To Temple: It is the place for worshipping The Nguyen Emperors. It was built in 1821 in the Emperor Minh Mang’s times. The To Temple has the most verse panels. Six hundred and eighty five ones are in “one verse, one picture” style. Topics of decorative picture panels are eight precious objects (for ornaments), flowers and leaves. Verses are in the styles of five-word, four-line; seven-word, four-line; eight-line, four-word; two-line, seven-word; two-line, five-word; four-line, four-word; six-line, four-word. Those praising the predecessors’ merits in their country governing compared to the previous prosperous and peaceful dynasties account for 82.63% of the total of 685 verse panels; those emphasizing the worshipping rites at temples account for 13.14%; those praising the country account for 4.23%.

6. Royal literature at Long An Palace: It was built in 1845 with the splendid decoration of 377 verse panels and 52 high longitudinal framed boards. The verses are in variety of styles: five-word, four-line; seven-word, four-line; two-line, five-word; and three-line, seven-word. They are about the praising of the peace of the country and the emperors’ feelings and faithfulness to the country, describing the beauty of nature, using literary allusions to teach people. Verse panels always go with picture panels on the topics of eight precious objects (for ornaments), scrolls, and flowers and leaves.

7. Royal literature at Minh Mang Tomb: It is the 2nd Nguyen Emperor’s tomb. It was built from 1840 to 1843. The whole construction is decorated with 475 verse panels in “one verse, one picture” style. The poetry styles are five-word, four-line; seven-word, four-line; two-line, seven-word; two-line, five-word, one-line, seven-word and, in some cases, some successive verse panels are put together to make one complete poem. Those describing landscapes account for 92.63%; those recording the agricultural development policies and people’s emotions at good omen (rain, good crops) account for 7.36%. Topics of picture panels are mainly eight precious objects (for ornaments), flower baskets, The Eight Trigrams, plants, branches, fruits, dragons, cranes, dragon heads and birds.

8. Royal literature at Thieu Tri Tomb: It is the 3rd Nguyen Emperor’s tomb.
It was built in 1848. Two hundred and seven is the total number of the verse panels in the whole construction. Those praising the beauty of spring and autumn account for 73.43%; those praising the beauty of nature account for 26.57%. The same number of picture panels is of eight precious objects (for ornaments), flowers and leaves, vases of flowers, lianas in the form of a dragon, fruits, and scrolls. The styles of the poetry are five-word, four-line; two-line, five-word; two-line, seven-word (successively arranged to make a complete poem), and even three-line, seven-word (successively arranged to make a complete poem).

9. **Royal literature at Duc Duc Tomb:** It is the 5th Nguyen Emperor’s tomb. It was built in the Emperor Thanh Thai’s reign (1885-1888). The interior of the construction is decorated with twenty verse panels in the style of four-line, four-word. They mainly praise the predecessors’ merits and hold up the worshipping rituals. Only eight precious objects (for ornaments) can be found on the picture panel.

10. **Royal literature at Dong Khanh Tomb:** It is the 9th Nguyen Emperor’s tomb. It was built in 1888. There are 271 verse panels and 24 high longitudinal framed boards. The styles of the poetry are five-word, four-line; two-line, five-word; two-line, seven-word (successively arranged to make a complete poem), sometimes three-line, seven-word (successively arranged to make a complete seven-word, eight-line poem). Those praising the stability of dynasty and the emperors’ conscientiousness account for 4.43%; those praising the beauty of nature account for 6.27%; those praising the autumn account for 89.3%. Topics of the picture panels are eight precious objects (for ornaments), flowers and leaves, vases of flowers, lianas and fruits.

11. **Royal literature at Khai Dinh Tomb:** It is the tomb of 12th Nguyen Emperor. It was built in 1920 and completed in 1931. Twenty four verse panels and 10 parallel sentences covered by plaster, porcelain and terra-cotta are in the style of two-line, five-word; two-line, seven-word; one-line, seven-word (successively arranged to make a complete poem). The contents are mainly on two major topics: praising gentlemen’s morale and strong will, and praising merits of the country protecting and of the prosperity and of the country.

12. **Royal literature at Thien Mu Pagoda:** It is an old pagoda in the west of the city. It was built as early as 1601. There are 56 verse panels and 8 parallel sentences which are mainly on Buddhist teachings. The only verse panel style here is two-line, seven-word (successively arranged to join a complete verse).
3.3 Photographs or a video of the documentary heritage At least three digital photographs of the documentary heritage should be provided to be used by MOWCAP for the purposes of promoting Memory of the World e.g. newsletters, website etc.
2015 | Royal literature on Hue royal architecture (1802-1945) | 8/34

Panorama of Noon Gate - The Imperial City

Verses on Noon Gate - The Imperial City
(Praise of the origin of the dynasty)

Panorama of Thai Hoa Palace - The Imperial City

Interior of Thai Hoa Palace - The Imperial City

Verses at Thai Hoa Palace - The Imperial City
(Confirmation of the country's sovereignty and declaration of independence)
Year | Name of documentary heritage | Page
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2015  Royal literature on Hue royal architecture (1802-1945)  10/34
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<td>11/34</td>
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Panorama of Sung An Temple - Minh Mang Tomb

Interior of Sung An Temple - Minh Mang Tomb

Verses at Sung An Temple - Minh Mang Tomb
(Verse on the spring, summer, autumn and winter; birds, flowers and leaves)

Panorama of Bieu Duc Temple - Thieu Tri Tomb

Interior of Bieu Duc Temple - Thieu Tri Tomb

Verses at Bieu Duc Temple - Thieu Tri Tomb
(Praise the love of the country)
Year | Name of documentary heritage | Page
--- | --- | ---
2015 | Royal literature on Hue royal architecture (1802-1945) | 12/34

Panorama of Ngung Hy Temple - Dong Khanh Tomb

Verses at Ngung Hy Temple - Dong Khanh Tomb
(Verse on the beautiful landscapes in summer and spring)

Panorama of Long An Temple - Duc Duc Tomb

Interior of Long An Temple - Duc Duc Tomb

Verses at Long An Temple - Duc Duc Tomb
(Praise the king father’s learning and merits and the Heaven’s blessings)
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Panorama of Thien Dinh Palace - Khai Dinh Tomb

Verses at Thien Dinh Palace - Khai Dinh Tomb
(Verse on the beauty of foliage in 4 seasons: apricot, orchid, chrysanthemum and small bamboo)

Panorama of Thien Mu Pagoda

Verses at Dia Tang Temple - Thien Mu Pagoda
(Praise Buddhist catechism)
3.4 History/Origin/Background/Provenance

Hue, a land of long-standing history and the meeting place of different cultures and civilizations, typically the Confucian civilization from the north, Buddhist civilization from the south, and the native elements from Southeast Asia… In 1636, Hue was chosen to build the capital city of Cochin China and gradually became the new center of culture and politics in the south of Dai Viet. Up to the middle of the 18th century, Hue had been the famous, noisy and gaudy capital of Cochin China with a system of abundant wooden constructions. However, not until the beginning of the 19th century, after the Emperor Gia Long had unified the country and made Hue the capital of independent Vietnam, Hue, the capital city, became more and more complete.

The building of the constructions of Hue occurred mainly in the reigns of the Emperor Gia Long (1802 – 1820) and the Emperor Minh Mang (1820 – 1841) and then they were fully done in the reigns of the Emperor Thieu Tri (1841 – 1847) and the Emperor Tu Duc (1848 – 1883). At that time, traditional materials such as bricks, tiles and especially wood were used for the constructions. However, from the Emperor Dong Khanh’s times (1885 – 1889) on, Vietnam was strongly under the influence of Western civilization, and a new type of architecture with reinforced concrete decorated with porcelain and terra-cotta in relief appeared in the royal constructions. For this reason, in Hue royal architecture, along with the system of wooden architecture, which prevailed at the time, there appeared a number of constructions with hard materials adapted from the architectural style of Neo-classicism, especially in the times of last two Emperors, Khai Dinh (1916-1925) and Bao Dai (1925-1945).

It can be said that Hue capital under the Nguyen dynasty is the fruits of the development and the integration of Vietnamese traditional architectural art and the planning of a complete system of impressive constructions consisting of walls, palaces, royal tombs, temples, pagodas, etc., in harmony with the poetic natural scenery of The Huong River, Mount Ngu Binh, Vong Canh Hill, Tam Giang Lagoon, etc.

In 1804, the Emperor Gia Long began to construct Hue Imperial City with three most important constructions: The To Temple for worshipping the predecessors, Can Chanh Palace for the emperor to work in and give audiences, and Dien Tho Residence for the queen-mother. After that, other constructions were built in the Imperial City and Cung Thanh, (later called the Forbidden Purple City). Nevertheless,
since the Emperor Minh Mang was enthroned and re-planned the Imperial City and the Forbidden Purple City, built The To Temple, re-arranged the position of Hoang Khao Temple (later called Hung To Temple), moved Thai Hoa Palace to the south, built Noon Gate (replacing Doan Mon), etc., the layout and the appearance of the Nguyen dynasty’s royal court became more balanced and complete. Royal literature was used to decorate on 3-horizontal decorative panels and high longitudinal boards, roof walls in the interior and exterior of Noon Gate, Thai Hoa Palace, Can Chanh Palace, Trieu To Temple, Hung To Temple, The To Temple, Thien Mu Pagoda, etc. One verse panel or one character panel going with one picture panel created the unique architectural decoration style of “one verse, one picture” or “one character, one picture” in the Nguyen royal palace. This decoration style was applied on 3-horizontal decorative panels in golden red lacquer, alternating large panels and small ones on different themes with symbols cleverly arranged on different parts of the walls. In this stage, the main materials were precious wood (iron wood, kien kien wood, etc.), mother-of-pearl, bone or at a higher level, elephant tusks or enamels (bronze board covered with enamel), concrete carved with porcelain and terra-cotta. The artisans carried out the carving and the inlaying directly on wooden panels in a fixed size, then fixed them directly on the constructions (after that they could be covered with golden and red lacquer or varnished). These served as the 3-horizontal decorative panels, high longitudinal framed boards, roof walls and walls of palaces and pavilions. As for blue enameled bronze, the artisans wrote on bronze boards then covered them with enamel, which created colorful verses and pictures, used mainly to decorate the exterior of the constructions, the roof walls of the palaces or the tops of the gates. One thing to notice is that from the Emperor Minh Mang’s times, the use of royal literature to decorate constructions became more popular and was gradually considered the official royal regulation, especially with Hieu Tomb (Minh Mang Emperor’s Tomb). Specifically in the Emperor Thieu Tri’s times, (The Emperor Thieu Tri was known as a Confucian scholar and famous for his talent in poetry and dissertation on rhythmical prose), the decoration style “one verse, one picture”, “one character, one picture” was more popular, typically at Bieu Duc Temple (Thieu Tri Emperor’s Tomb), Long An Palace (renamed Khai Dinh Museum in 1923), etc. Even in national pagodas in the capital, this decoration style was also used. Thien Mu Pagoda was built in Lord Nguyen Hoang’s times and restored in the Emperor Thieu Tri’s times.
The pagoda is appreciated for its special and magnificence with the panel decorative art of “one verse, one picture” style, especially at Huong Nguyen Temple (Thien Mu Pagoda).

In the Emperor Tu Duc’s times (1848-1883), because the country was in the difficult situation, and perhaps also because the emperor, the most talented poet of the Nguyen dynasty, wanted to use the word “Khiem” (modest) to admonish himself, he did not use poetry to decorate his own constructions but used only the decorative style “one verse, one picture” for some constructions of his father’s tomb at Xuong Lang (the Emperor Thieu Tri’s Tomb). The traditional decoration “one verse, one picture” was only put into use again from the Emperor Dong Khanh’s times (1885-1888) right at his tomb, Tu Lang; this style was inherited by the Emperor Khai Dinh and the Emperor Bao Dai, although the style of expression and the materials had undergone a change: Constructions made of reinforced concrete engraved with porcelain and terracotta for the purpose of decoration.

3.5 Bibliography

- **Publications**

4. Royal poetry collections of Minh Mang, Thieu Tri, and Tu Duc Emperors.
9. Mai Khac Ung, *Emperor Minh Mang’s Tomb*, Vietnamese Historical Association,
Thua Thien Hue Historical Association, 1993.

- Articles

- Website
15. https://youtu.be/vKg9779nv-Y

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

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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 (Please PRINT)
PHAN THANH HAI

Date

4 Legal information

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4.3 Legal status
Category of ownership: State Owned

4.4 Accessibility
Direct: All visitors are able to enjoy Hue relics directly. However, because most of decorative literature is carved on 3-horizontal decorative panels and high
longitudinal framed boards of constructions, it is difficult to fully read. Moreover, due to the preservation rule, the use of flash lights to make films or to take photographs is limited.

*Indirect:* All the contents of the verses are translated into Vietnamese and used as the database for consultation documents. The consultation tool system consists of table of verse contents on Hue royal architecture by traditional consultation or consultation of internal network at Scientific Research Department of Hue Monuments Conservation Center.

The Website on the links:
- www.hueworldheritage.org.vn
- https://youtu.be/vKg9779nv-Y
- https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.875589275870559.1073741851.466174683478689&type=3&uploaded=41

4.5 Copyright status

The copyright belongs to Hue Monuments Conservation Center – Thua Thien Hue People’s Committee. Using, copying, printing or photographing of the database and the original documents must be allowed by the management offices, and Vietnamese Government’s regulations on the use of the archives must be obeyed.

5 Assessment against the selection criteria

5.1 First criterion: authenticity.

The Royal literature on Hue royal architecture is the original only in Hue royal constructions, Vietnam. In the construction and restoration history of the Nguyen dynasty (1802-1945), there were no documents mentioning the changes, adjustment or renewal of the poetry decorative architecture or their contents on these relics. Since the Nguyen dynasty came to an end (8-1945) there has not been any mention of the restoration on the decorative details “one verse, one picture”. After the Hue Monuments Complex was recognized as the World Heritage, great progress has been made in the heritage restoration techniques at Hue relics, much national and international attention is specially paid to the heritage conservation task. However, the decorative verse panels on architectural constructions remain intact.

The fact that the original and unique documents are without changes or
adjustment confirms the great values of the royal literature on Hue royal constructions in the overall traditional document heritage of the whole Vietnam. Up to now, the conservation of Hue cultural heritage has achieved great results; the royal literature on these constructions is always regarded as a valuable art work containing precious historical values, and therefore, it is better and better preserved.

The royal literature on Hue royal constructions is the original and unique documents, the Nguyen Emperors’ works, typically the Emperor Minh Mang’s and the Emperor Thieu Tri’s ones in Ngu che thi (the Collection of the Emperors’ poems) and on the building of the constructions, they were carved, encrusted on wood, enameled on bronzes, covered with porcelain and terra-cotta on concrete. They are uniquely archived on Hue royal constructions and are irreplaceable in their original values.

Up till now, the verses have been archived on the constructions. In recent years, many constructions have been restored, and these documents are restored with advanced scientific methods in order to make sure that those original scripts are, historically and culturally, as they were in the past.

5.2 Second criterion: world significance.

Royal literature on Hue royal architecture meets not only one but also nearly all criteria of world significance which are mentioned in the General Guidelines on protecting the documentary heritage belonging to the Memory of the World Program.

This is classical Chinese script - a language used popularly in countries of the same language (countries in Confucianism Cultural group) during the past thousands of years; therefore, it has high world significance and popularity. This language was used not only by the Vietnamese but also by the envoys from China, Japan and North Korea…when they came to Hue Citadel, they could read and easily understood. This was a special feature at Hue Citadel under the Nguyen dynasty. Royal literature on Hue royal architecture is a really special, unique and rare type of documentary “publishing” and “archives”. Usually, the documents stored in libraries, archives, museums but thousands of poems and parallel sentences which were carefully chosen from the Nguyen dynasty’s emperors, who were also famous poets such as the Emperors Minh Mang and Thieu Tri were kept on 3-horizontal decorative panels,
high longitudinal framed boards and walls of Nguyen royal architecture. Visiting Hue Monument Complex, researchers, international and national tourists can have a look at and exploit this typical document easily. Moreover, these verses were turned into art works by carving, inlaying, enameling, covered in hi-tech bas-relief, which expresses the subtlety, skill and creativeness in using many different materials (such as wood, elephant’s tusks, bones, mother-of-pearl, enamel, terra-cotta, etc.) creating colorful and interesting art works in order to adorn the constructions. Besides, the decoration of one verse panel or one character panel going with a picture created the decorative style “one verse, one picture”, “one character, one picture” which is very popular and typical on Hue royal architecture, becoming an official regulation, especially in the Emperor Minh Mang’s times. Under the earliest emperors’ reigns (Gia Long, Minh Mang, Thieu Tri, Tu Duc), traditional materials were often used mainly on wooden constructions. Since 1885 (from the Emperor Dong Khanh’s times), Hue royal architectural style was influenced by Western civilization, apart from the decoration on wooden constructions, modern materials such as concrete, iron and steel appeared and the decoration was mainly bas-relief on porcelain and terra-cotta. On joined porcelain and terra-cotta pictures, verses were directly put on the pictures in the style “poem in picture”, “picture in poem”, not the style “one verse, one picture” on wooden constructions¹. This proves the harmonious access between “tradition and development” in architectural decoration. The uniqueness and rarity are expressed not only in thousands of documentary literature which are being kept but also in the variety of architectural types on which literature is preserved such as on palaces, tombs and pagodas…There is no historical-cultural relic in Vietnam which has such a typical decorative style like that of Hue Citadel. This is a unique style of Hue royal architecture during nearly 150 years.

Looking out over the world, we see that human beings’ wooden and stone-carved memories are very popular since the old days up to now. We are able to see the pictograph carved on a stone tablet honoring Pharaoh God, or the pictograph and pictures on the walls of worshipping temples and tombs describing Pharaoh God and the power of kings and angels near the Nile River, or on the memorial at Luxor Temple in Egypt. Visiting Kakadu National Park in Australia, we can see the traits of joined-image pictures on sandstone tablets of Aboriginal 25.000 years ago, as well as the carved pictures of Europeans in early XIXth century. Ajanta cave in India

¹ Phan Thanh Hai – Le Thi An Hoa – Pham Duc Thanh Dung: ‘System of literature in Classical Chinese script on Hue royal wooden architectures – A unique documentary heritage’, ibid…
contains masterpieces of sculpture of the II\textsuperscript{nd} century BC and partly IV\textsuperscript{th}-VI\textsuperscript{th} century AD which describe the legend of Buddha, folk stories, the fauna and flora, the life and customs of the Indians of that time. In countries influenced by Confucian culture, we see that the characters are mainly written on stone steles or stone tablets; there are pictures on some relics or meaningful words in classical Chinese script written on pictures. In China, at the tomb of Hien Vien King (Xi’an) who is regarded as the progenitor of the Chinese, there are a lot of stone steles on which are the orations of dynasties or autographs of celebrities of all ages. At Mount Tai (Shan Dong), there are many lines of characters dedicated by kings or famous people on flattened cliffs around the mountain. At Khong Temple (at Confucius Monument), there are 13 stele houses set up by kings of different dynasties. In Japan, there is one of the most ancient wooden pagodas of this country named Horyu which was built in 607. The walls around the Kondo/ the Main Hall (Toa Kim Duong) is the decoration of famous pictures depicting Buddha and Bodhisattva which were drawn in early eighth century. The visitors also see many pictures drawn on the columns of Truong Lang in Yi He Yuan in Beijing (China) by royal painters, describing famous classic references in Chinese history\textsuperscript{2}. Through many archive forms at relics outside of Vietnam, we understand that each nation has its own way to preserve the memory, in which preserving on stone steles and cliffs is rather popular in many countries and abundant in Vietnam. The decorative style of drawing pictures on constructions can be seen in many places but it is different with Vietnam in themes: the wall-pictures in India, Egypt, China, Japan…illustrate Buddha, gods, classic references…while the decorative style on Hue royal architecture is geometrical motif, foliage, sometimes realistic, sometimes stylized. Especially, the decorative style “one verse, one picture” and “one character, one picture” (the decorative style in which one verse panel or one character goes along with a picture) on hundreds of constructions of different styles has become a unique style in the decoration for Hue royal architecture. Typically, Thai Hoa Palace is the first construction to be splendidly decorated with this style and Khai Dinh Tomb is the last construction in the Nguyen dynasty having this verse and picture decoration style.

\textsuperscript{2} Almanach, \textit{The World Civilizations}, Culture-Information Publishing House, Ha Noi, 1996.
5.3 Third, world significance must be demonstrated in meeting one or more of the following criteria. Because significance is comparative, these criteria are best illustrated by checking them against items of documentary heritage already inscribed (for example) on the International Memory of the World Register:

**Time:**

The Nguyen dynasty (1802-1945) was the last monarchical reign of Vietnam and of the region as well. There were big changes in this period, especially well-developed capitalism economy. There was a popular political shift from feudal regime to capitalism. Some capital European countries had colonial expansion on countries rich of human and natural resources. Therefore, during their reign, Nguyen royal court tried their best to seize the country’s self-control. However, being a small and underdeveloped country, the Nguyen dynasty lost their self-control and European capitalism ruled the country.

In 1858, French and Spanish coalition forces started their invasion by opening fire at Danang Port; in 1862, they forced Nguyen court to sign a Convention making concessions of 3 provinces of Southeast Area and Con Lon Island for France; in 1874, the court signed another Convention to acknowledge French sovereignty on the whole Southern Area; after that, through 1883 and 1884 Conventions, the Nguyen dynasty permitted French sovereignty all over the country and Indochina. Therefore, in 143 ruling years of the Nguyen dynasty, we can divide them into typical stages: Independent and self-control stage from 1802 to 1858; revolution stage for self-control from 1858 to 1883; and the last is the stage of becoming the colony of French in 1883 until tolling the knell (1845).

From the above-mentioned historical characteristics, the royal literature on Hue royal architecture also went through the ups and downs of the dynasties

- From 1802 to 1858: The formation and and thriving development of royal literature on Hue royal architecture, especially in the reigns of the Emperors Gia Long, Minh Mang and Thieu Tri.

- From 1858 to 1883: The ruling period of the Emperor Tu Duc – a gradually weak struggling period for the country’s sovereignty. In this stage, there was almost no character decoration on architectural constructions. The Emperor Tu Duc was a famous poet and left thousands of valuable verses for later generations; however, no verse was carved on the constructions of his tomb. This was the emperor’s inmost feelings and the disadvantages of Hue heritage. An explanation is that his tomb was named ‘Khiem’ (Khiem Tomb) (that means modest, discreet and humble), he did not
want to show off his knowledge; but this proved to be the tragedy of the emperor himself, the dynasty, royal family and the country...; his achievements and the dynasty’s peaceful and prosperous time were not known through characters and literature like former emperors.

- From 1883 to 1945: the period of French domination when the court had to sign the Convention to acknowledge their patronage all over Vietnam and Indochina. No more great constructions of traditional architectural style were built noisily as before. The court had lots of difficulties in all fields and continuous changes. Moreover, in later stable stages, Western architecture influenced these constructions, “one verse, one picture” style was gradually paid less attention.

   In this period, the literary decorations are mostly verses, parallel sentences, with historical and classic references such as those at Khai Dinh Tomb and An Dinh Residence.

- After the knell of the Nguyen dynasty was tolled in 1945, decorative style of literature in classical Chinese scripts on longitudinal and horizontal framed boards was not used when building any constructions.

**Place:**

The royal literature on Hue royal architecture on 3-horizontal decorative panels and high longitudinal framed boards appeared at the beginning of the Nguyen dynasty on all important constructions of this court.

At the beginning of construction work on the Citadel, especially in Hue Imperial City- Forbidden Purple City, Thai Hoa Palace was decorated splendidly with the style “one verse, one picture”. Under the Emperor Minh Mang’s times (1820-1841), the decoration of royal literature in classical Chinese scripts reached the pinnacle. In this stage, the constructions always obeyed strict regulations; decorative styles “one verse, one picture” and “one character, one picture” were always taken into consideration when designing a construction. Typical constructions in this stage were The To Temple, Thai Hoa Palace (reconstructed as now), Huong Nguyen Pavilion (Thien Mu Pagoda) and other different buildings at Minh Mang Emperor’s Tomb such as Sung An Temple, Bi Dinh (Stele House), Hien Duc Gate, Minh Lau Pavilion, Nghenh Luong Quan (in the Emperor Minh Mang’s Tomb, most constructions were built by the Emperor Thieu Tri after Emperor Minh Mang’s death).

In the Emperor Thieu Tri’s times (1841-1847), the well-balanced and
methodical characteristics in the architecture of the Emperor Minh Mang’s reign were reached a higher level and combined with the delicacy and munificence befitting the personality and literature of these talented and learned emperors. Typically, many constructions in the Emperor Thieu Tri’s times were appreciated as the pinnacle of Nguyen architecture such as Long An Temple (Khai Dinh Museum in 1923). Especially, verse and picture decoration in this period reached the pinnacle in both form and content.

In the Emperor Tu Duc’s times, apart from building the king father’s tomb, with the same style of royal literary decoration on 3-horizontal decorative panels and high longitudinal framed boards at Bieu Duc Temple, the Emperor Tu Duc left no typical valuable constructions of decorative style “one verse, one picture” during the 36-year rule.

After the Emperor Tu Duc’s times, when the Emperor Dong Khanh passed away (1889), the court continued to build Truy Tu Temple which used to be reserved for Kien Thai Vuong (the Emperor Dong Khanh’s father) and decorated with “one verse, one picture” style in order to turn it into a worshipping temple for the emperor (renamed as Ngung Hy Temple in commemoration of the Emperor Dong Khanh). It is considered as the final attempt to maintain the unique traditional architectural style in Nguyen royal court.

In the Emperor Thanh Thai’s times (1890-1907) and the Emperor Duy Tan’s times (1907-1916), the society had many changes, the emperors were sent into exile, the constructions had simple architecture but considerable marks of the decoration style “one verse, one picture” were left on 3-horizontal decorative panels at Long An Temple (the Emperor Duc Duc’s Tomb). In the Emperor Khai Dinh’s times (1916-1925), then the Emperor Bao Dai’s times (1926-1945), there were a great many buildings in European - Asian architectural style but the “one verse, one picture” style was not mentioned; the decoration was in free style, the parallel sentences, pictures and verses were on the same panel such as 4 seasons motif (apricot, orchids, chrysanthemum, bamboo).

People:
Royal literature on Hue royal architecture was chosen from typical remarkable pieces of Nguyen emperors and mandarins’ literary works, in many cases, the emperor himself composed his verses which reflected the worldview and outlook on life of emperors and mandarins of current the dynasty about the country, the royal
dynasty, culture-society, the people, the beauty of nature, Buddhism…creating great influences in terms of politics, society, culture-art, contemporary religion and belief. The royal literature was applied on constructions which were left up to now by talented handicraftsmen of the Nguyen dynasty who were also expert in calligraphy, picture methods.

Apart from characters influencing the formation of relics with the architecture of verse and picture panels on 3-horizontal decorative panels and longitudinal framed boards, there are 3 groups relating to this royal literature system: firstly, the group of people being praised in content of these poems; secondly, the group of people composing these poems; thirdly, the group of calligraphists writing and artists carving these valuable poems.

* Objects of praise in the literary works

- Nguyen Kim (1467-1545), with the title of An Thanh Hau, held the post of Dien tien Shogun in the Le dynasty. After Mac Dang Dung usurped the throne, he went into hiding in Thanh Hoa, made contact with Emperor Chieu Tong’s offspring, raised the banner of “follow the Le dynasty and kill the Mac” and began Le Trung Hung period. He was Nguyen Hoang Lord’s father - the person who built a strong authority in Cochin China. He was elevated to the status of the Emperor Trieu To Tinh by the Nguyen dynasty, worshipped at Trieu To Temple.

- 9 Nguyen Lords in Cochinchina were praised in verses on 3-horizontal decorative panels of Thai To Temple.

They founded, developed and established a thriving Southern area: Lord Nguyen Hoang (1525-1613), Nguyen Kim’s second-born child, the first person to rule Thuan Hoa and continuously develop the southern area. Lord Nguyen Phuc Nguyen (1563-1635), Lord Nguyen Hoang’s sixth-born son, moved the capital from Dinh Cat to Phuoc Yen, built Truong Duc rampart, Nhat Le frontier passage, etc.

Lord Nguyen Phuc Lan (1601-1648), Lord Nguyen Phuc Nguyen’s second-born son, moved the capital from Phuoc Yen to Kim Long in the vicinity of Hue, enthusiastically reclaimed the land and set up colonies deep into the South, violently struggled with Tonkin. Lord Nguyen Phuc Tan (1620-1687), Lord Nguyen Phuc Lan’s second-born son, the leader of many victories against Trinh army, reclaiming and colonizing Mekong Delta.

Lord Nguyen Phuc Thai (1649-1691), Lord Nguyen Phuc Tan’s second-born child, built Phu Xuan capital in 1687, established present Hue center.

Lord Nguyen Phuc Chu (1675-1725), Lord Nguyen Phuc Thai’s first-born son,
acquired red immense knowledge, favored talented people, enhanced Buddhism, set up examinations, resettled inhabitants to reclaim, built up Gia Dinh district, Bien Hoa prefecture, etc.

Lord Nguyen Phuc Thu (1696-1738), Lord Nguyen Phuc Chu’s first-born son, skillful in military affairs, loved his people, praised Buddhism adopting the religious title Van Truyen dao nhan.

Lord Nguyen Phuc Khoat (1714-1765) built the palaces, governed an independent dynasty, his fault of believing in dishonest mandarins, demoting his eldest son and promoting his younger son as heir led to the decline of Cochin China.

Lord Nguyen Phuc Thuan (1754-1776), Lord Nguyen Phuc Khoat’s 16th-born son, was enthroned at the age of 12, yielding power to dishonest mandarins, causing the rise of Tay Son movement, and when Trinh army flocked into Phu Xuan, he fled to the South and was killed in 1776, ending the period of Nguyen Lords in Cochin China.

- The Emperor Gia Long (1802-1819) named Nguyen Phuc Anh (1762-1819), revived the Nguyen dynasty’s realm in Cochin China and united the country in 1802. Most credit was given to him in the literary works housed in The To Temple for his strategy, great righteousness, generosity, accomplishments in restoring the sovereignty and unifying the entire country of Vietnam, and his talent in building a strong country during 18 years in his reign.

*Those involved in composing literary works carved on Nguyen royal architect certainly were famous and talented people holding important positions in Nguyen court.

Renowned members of this cohort included the Emperors Minh Mang and Thieu Tri, because most of the verses on the architecture have been found in the poetry collections of these two emperors.

- The Emperor Minh Mang (1820-1841) was brilliant in building and reorganizing the country. He had merits in choosing talented people through examinations, expanding and developing the border, establishing the sovereignty over territorial waters and airspace of the country. He was also a great poet of Vietnam, leaving 5000 valuable poems for future generations.

- The Emperor Thieu Tri (1841-1847) inherited from the Emperor Minh Mang both power and an orderly country, followed his father’s rules to govern the country. His remarkable talent was in literature and poetry. He was regarded as a great composer and a master in organizing examinations, leaving many great works in this
field. Especially, his aesthetics in architecture and decoration reached the pinnacle of Vietnamese art, especially in architectural and decorative art.

**Subject and theme:**

**Themes and topics**

The authors of the literature on Hue royal architecture are among the emperors; therefore, the contents contain abundant information reflecting many aspects of the society under the Nguyen dynasty:

1. **Declaration**
   - Declaration of the country’s independence
   - Confirmation of the country’s sovereignty
   - Confirmation of the history of founding the country and the people’s determination of protecting the country
   - International relations with powerful countries
   - Judicious policies in ruling the country
2. **Political doctrines for the governing of the country**
   + Principles: based on Confucian teachings
   + Self-improving, managing the household, governing the country and pacifying the world
   + Clarifying the righteousness, friendliness and intimateness of a man in high rank
3. **Policy**
   3.1. **Internal and external affairs:**
   - Reassuring the people; strictly regarding the people’s benefits as the foundation for all policies
   - Shaping tolerant politics
   - Developing the relations with foreign countries
   - Implementing flexible policies with neighboring countries
   - Giving much importance to agriculture
3.2. **Acknowledgements**
   - Appreciating the services of those re-establishing the country
   - Appreciating the services of those founding the dynasty
   - Appreciating the services of those expanding and developing the country
   - Appreciating the services of those protecting the country
   - Praising the country that had been unified, with effective institutions, that
could be compared with ancient powerful dynasties

4. *Emotions at good omens*
   - Favorable weather conditions
   - Rain at the right time
   - Good harvests

5. *Praising the beauty of the nature*
   - *Praising* the beauty and peace of the country.
   - *Praising* the beauty of nature throughout the year
   - Singing the beauty of the scenery, people, flowers, birds, etc.

**Forms and styles**

Most of the royal literature on Hue royal architecture was often carved on enamel, concrete and iron wood - a precious type of wood which is as hard as steel and difficult to be destroyed by any insects. Along with the special materials is the unique mode of character formation. The traditional mode was to use pen brushes to write on the surface of the materials. However, on Hue royal constructions, the scripts are formed on the surfaces of hard materials by such methods as carving, engraving, inlaying, encrusting, enameling, covering in bas-relief, which make the surface of scripts higher or lower than that of the materials. Both the materials and the mode of character formation show the sophistication, ingenuity and are compatible with the elegant royal atmosphere.

*The arrangement art shows a wide variety of literary styles*: Regarding to the style, the royal literature on Hue royal architecture has a lot of traditional literature types, in which verses are paid more attention than proses and the style of parallel prose. They are the styles of *five-word, four-line poem; seven-word, four-line poem; seven-word, eight-line poem; five-word, eight-line poem*, and parallel sentences with different length, horizontal boards with one or more characters presented in connection with the poems around. Apart from verses, there are also pieces of writings in formal elegant language. The common characteristic of all these types is condensed and succinct language, using fewer words but expressing more ideas, which is the highest level of expression in classical Chinese scripts.

*The art of combining verses with pictures*: many verse panels are arranged by combining one verse panel with one picture panel, or one character panel with one picture, which creates a typical and unique style of “one verse, one picture” or “one character, one picture” of the flowery decoration at the court. This is the expression of the school “picture in poem and poem in picture” which becomes classic in the
traditional art of the countries in East Asia. Verses and pictures complement and embellish each other helping make them much more effective than they are if appreciated separately.

First of all, this 3-horizontal decorative panel system is a joined one strengthening the force-bearing ability of constructions decorated with typical “one verse, one picture” and “one character, one picture” styles which make Hue relics magnificent, elegant and unique. Verses have original and deep aesthetic effects on the viewers. It cannot be denied the fact that they are unique pictures. They are special works of calligraphy decorating the most solemn positions of important palaces of the dynasty.

**Calligraphy art** is expressed on various types of characters, including basic classical Chinese scripts such as Zhuan, Li, Kai, Xing, Cao which are beautifully, intelligently, elegantly arranged and well-balanced in the calligraphy itself and harmonious with the surroundings. The variety in classical Chinese scripts makes this system of writing heritage acquire the norm of Zhuan genre, the solemnity of Li genre, the standard of Kai genre and the liberty of Xing genre and the high-faluting characteristic of Cao genre. Royal literature itself is one-version technological art works made by the most talented craftsmen of the court from calligraphy works, creating various forms and materials:

- Some carved on wood (intaglios)
- Some carved on wood (bas-relief)
- Some engraved with mother-of-pearl, alight with fanciful colors.
- Some engraved with elephant’s tusks and animals’ bones (intaglios and bas-relief...)

They are important documents to do research on the history of Vietnamese calligraphy and also a contribution of Vietnam to the perfection of calligraphy in square-shaped characters of Eastern Asia region.

**Pun art:** In regard to pun art in classical Chinese scripts, the poems of the Emperor Thieu Tri using palindromes and uninterrupted technique inlaid with mother-of-pearl in Long An Temple have to be mentioned, especially the poem Vũ trung sơn thủy 雨中山水 (the country in the rain). It includes 64 characters in classical Chinese scripts and is analyzed by Professor Nguyễn Tài Cẩn, a famous scholar in linguistics in Vietnam. He found that there are totally 128 ways of reading

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64 characters into different meaningful poems of *that ngon* (poems with 7 words in one line) or *ngu ngon* (poems with 5 words in one line) style. This is an unprecedented case in the history of using this technique in East Asian countries, showing the ability to combine various semantics of classical Chinese scripts as characters noting a monosyllabic language and expressing the talent and intelligence of a Vietnamese emperor in the Middle Age. On the other hand, the Emperor *Thieu Tri* also composed the poem *Phư ớ c viên văn hội lương đạ mãng ngâm* 福園文會良夜漫吟 which also uses the palindromes and uninterrupted technique.

In general, this is a particular form of precious archives of Hue royal architecture.

### 6 Other matters taken into account: rarity, integrity and threat

**Rarity**

Royal literature on Hue royal architecture is considered a unique archive of literary works containing valuable information, somewhat helping research into the images of a country’s politics, culture, society and people in a historical period. In addition to the valuable contents, these materials have become an abundant and precious collection of antiques during 2 centuries. Moreover, they are also considered a various, precious and valuable collection of pictures, calligraphy and technological arts. These products bear the hallmark of their age and establish a specific cultural form of Nguyen royal architecture on Hue Monuments Complex.

Each document unit in royal poetry on Hue royal architecture is an independent and unique entity, which has not been repeated and is not similar to products massively produced like the old printing technique on wooden tablets or modern publishing technique. In the Middle Age, when the modern printing technique was not popular, the printing technique on wooden tablets was the way to produce identical documents expressing the same work. Hand-written form could create rather, but not totally identical documents. However, each document unit in the royal literature on Hue royal architecture is greatly different from traditional documents printed on papers, which was the very popular technique in the old days. Each unit is a unique entity and different in the contents and in the style from the ones using materials forming the characters. This proves the uniqueness of royal literature on Hue royal architecture, which has a special value because each document unit has no equivalent replacement.
**Integrity**

Over 200 years, due to harsh weather and time, most of the royal literature is still intact on royal constructions. Consequently, Vietnamese people still feel proud of a particular art form which can keep the archives of lots of valuable works by historical figures having deep influences on the country’s politics, culture and society in a historical stage.

Due to the war and harsh weather, some of the royal constructions in Hue were destroyed. However, being aware of the values of the documents preserved on Hue Monument Complex, Hue Monuments Conservation Center, right since the first days of its establishment, has cooperated with many foreign specialists to deploy many preservation projects, including the preservation of literature heritage and decoration art on Hue royal constructions. Therefore, the “informer” of this kind of heritage is still kept as a unique original exhibit which hasn’t been modified and destroyed.

**Threat**

Although the Vietnamese Government, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism together with Hue Monuments Conservation Center have made every effort to preserve this heritage, the degradation is unavoidable for a 200-year-old one. Hot and wet climate in Hue create a favorable condition for mould and microorganism to develop, thus, influencing the 200-year documentary heritage. In spite of building on a perfect type of wood, this document is difficult to be maintained and preserved for a long time in harsh climate, unusual temperature and humidity in Hue.

7. **Preservation and Access Management Plan**

- The management plan

Since 2002, Hue Monuments Conservation Center has done a lot of researches and held many activities to set a good management plan for these valuable documents, specifically cooperating with The University of Science, Society and Humanity (a member of Ha Noi National University) to organize the conference on “Conservation and Enhancement of Hue Han Nom heritage”. At this conference, the matter of conservation and enhancement of the poetry system on Hue royal constructions was officially raised. Hue Monuments Conservation Center directly organized and supported favorable conditions for researchers to announce their works and theses mentioning the royal literature on Hue royal constructions, typically: *Emperor Minh Mang’s tomb* (1993), *From Ngo Mon to Thai Hoa Palace* (1994), *About 2 palindromes and uninterrupted poems of Emperor Thieu Tri* (1994), *Khiem Tomb and*
Emperor Tu Duc (2003), Collection of Researches on Nguyen Dynasty (2002),
Nguyen mark in Phu Xuan Culture (2002), Symposium report on Preservation and
Enhancement of Hue Han Nom heritage (2003), Long An Temple-Art Architectural
Heritage (2005), Characteristics of poetry language on Thai Hoa Palace (2007), the
magazine of Hue Cultural Heritage-Research and Preservation, Volume I (2007),
Volume II (2012), Volume III (2013)...

Hue Monuments Conservation Center has announced the content of the
literature on mass media: magazines, televisions, websites…attracting the attention of
the public and researchers. Hue Monuments Conservation Center is going to organize
many workshops on this heritage document to make it accessible for researchers and
people of all levels.

- The Preservation Plan

During the process of restoration and recovery of Hue Monuments Complex,
especially seriously degraded constructions, it is necessary to

+ suggest solutions to collecting, protecting and restoring decorative details
concerning the royal literature on relics as well as the architecture concerning the
language, handwriting and literature on panels, 3-horizontal decorative panels,
parallel sentences and other documents carved on relics.

+ focus on surveying and evaluating the present condition of royal literature
carved on wooden components.

+ continue to research and restore traditional enamel, carving and encrusting
technique in order to restore the poems and lost characters on panels at roof walls and
roof ridges.

+ keep noting and collecting the royal literature on Hue royal architecture or
in relevant libraries in order to recognize and identify the values, and then to propose
the ways to preserve and enhance this heritage.

+ organize scientific conferences and seminars with an aim to gather the
opinions of cultural managers, Han-Nom researchers concerning the preservation and
enhancement of the royal literature’s values on Hue royal architecture.

+ have long-term strategies for the preservation and enhancement tasks,
mainly focusing on applying newest scientific and technological achievements to the
preservation and enhancement of Hue royal architecture, paying attention to applying
the achievements of information technology to building and managing the data
system about relics, libraries and museums, applying the best solutions to protecting
the relics, using chosen materials for relics restoration and applying 3D-technology in
rebuilding relics space.

+ foster the application of digital technology to preserve the literary heritage on Hue royal architecture. Thereby, the poems will be collected, photocopied, digitalized, phonetically transcribed and translated to establish a data bank of classical Chinese scripts to serve the readers and long-term research. This is the best scientific solution to preserving the literary heritage on Hue royal architecture prone to the damage of weather and time.

+ popularize the literary heritage on Hue royal architecture regularly and widely through activities such as displays, exhibitions and on mass media such as organizing exhibitions on Han-Nom heritage at festivals, organizing Han-Nom calligraphy writing contests, building a website and introduction catalogue, propagating the heritage in Classical Chinese script on Hue royal architecture.

+ cooperate with culture and history researchers, Han-Nom researchers, calligraphers to preserve the royal literature through restoration, protection and research.

+ focus on scientific research, choose and publish relating to the royal literature on Hue royal architecture.

+ select typical works in Han literature on Hue royal architecture to introduce in schools in order to educate the national tradition and heighten the awareness of younger generations about the values and the preservation, enhancement of national culture.

8 Any other information

The register includes: 3 appendixes
* Register nomination form
* A 15-minute DVD about the royal literature on Hue royal architecture
* Appendix
  - List of 12 constructions with their nominated documents (descriptions and photographs)
  - 34 typical contents of verses in English