



Le temple de la littérature

The Red river delta

Contrary to the Mekong Delta, the Red River Delta contains many historical vestiges. It is the cradle of the Vietnamese nation. Found here, near Thanh Hoá in the Ma River valley is the presence of an Austro-Asiatic civilization in the millenium before Christ at the Bronze Age called Dongsonian Age. Also started with the Bronze Age, the mystical periods of Vietnam's history. The first legendary dynasty, that of Hồng Bàng, would have reigned until 3rd century B.C. From this delta has begun at the beginning of 10th century the Nam Tiến Movement (or the Descent toward the South) started by General Lê Hoàn and finished in 18th century by the kings Nguyễn.

Vietnam's history is linked closely with this Red River (or Sông Hồng). It is it that forged the Viet soul. It was it who molded the thick identity of the Vietnamese people. At the same time, it is both enemy, friend and actor of the Vietnamese people.

To dominate and control its water and its whim, the Vietnamese people had to build and consolidate dikes ceaselessly. These dikes existed for a thousand years and broke sixteen times during the past twenty-five years. It is because of the Red river that the Vietnamese people has been haunted with the domination and control of water. Since the beginning of our era, the Vietnamese people have been compelled to organize, perform, and maintain water accommodation works. This has brought to the Vietnamese the virtue of being more patient, more obstinate, keener, hard working and methodical in dike construction, canal digging, embankment building and breach filling. In this delta is found a sophisticated network of drainage canals and high dikes that only a centralized state on water control such as Vietnam knows how to realize. It is it that witnessed several decisive battles of the Vietnamese people against their invaders. It is thanks to its complicity that General Trần Hưng Đạo defeated the Mongol army by planting on its bed pikes that broke the Mongol ships in 1288 at the mouth of the Bạch Đằng river, renewing the tactics used by General Ngô Quyền against the Chinese in 938 (a victory that put an end to the thousand-year Chinese domination). It is also witness of the Yên Bái uprising led by nationalist leader Nguyễn Thái Học in 1930.

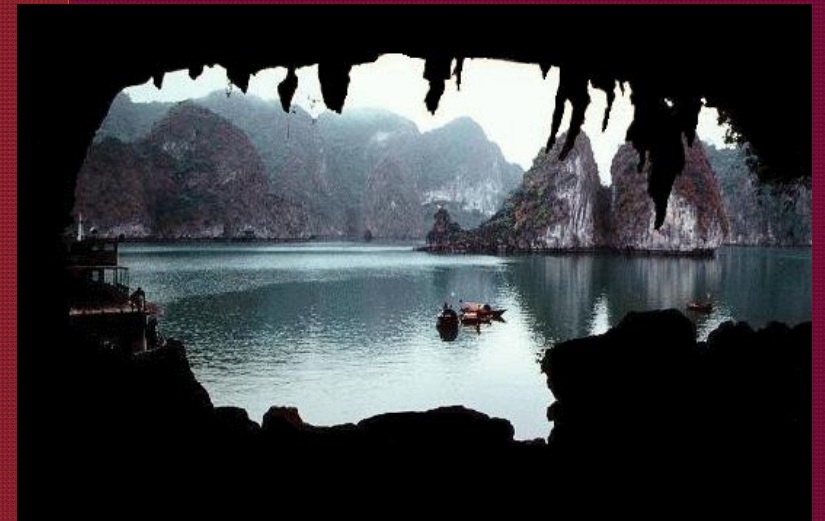


Its destiny is that of the Vietnamese people. It is It that gives the capital of Vietnam the last name Hà-Nội (Hà means river; Nội means inside, interior). Hà-Nội means " On this side of the river". This city was founded by king Lý Thái Tổ (Lý Công Uẩn) in year 1010 at the neighborhood of Đại La that geomancers believed to be favorably sheltered from the waters of the Red river. It is also called "Thăng Long" (City of Ascending Dragon) for Lý Thái Tổ saw in his dream a golden dragon flying from that locality.

It is It that saw Ha-Noi growing with its thirty-six business streets and lakes. Writer Thạch Lam of the "Tự Lực Văn Đoàn" writing club talked about It in his novel " Hà Nội 36 phố phường". It is It that gave rise to the French construction of the Paul Doumer (now Cầu Long Biên) bridge 1680 meters (approx. one mile) long at Hà Nội.

Thanks to Its silt rich in iron, and with Its irrigation, the delta is so fertile that it is possible to have one more harvest in November. It is It that shapes the landscape of the delta. Every day are seen women leaning under their conical hats, feet and hands in the clay, children coming from school surveying the dikes, motionless buffaloes in their mud baths under a sun that is sometimes overwhelming. it is It that often floods the plain of Hoa Lư

The Red River is the second largest river of Vietnam after Mekong. It descends from Yunnan, a mountainous region south of China. It is known as the "six-head river" that enters Vietnam definitively at Lao Cai. It curves on more than 1000km (over 600 miles) before dying in the somptuous bay of Hạ Long.



HA LONG BAY

Marvel of the nature

Vịnh Hạ Long



This one is the eighth wonder of the world. It counts more than three thousand isles, islets, and reefs. One finds rocks of varied forms. Some are tiny, others are of important dimension bearing picturesque names such as isle of the Wonder, isle of the Surprise, the Marionettes, the Monkeys, the Toad etc... The Ha Long bay has become for the past few years the site most visited by foreign tourists when they landed in Vietnam. Mini-cruises by junk make it possible to visit it. It is in this bay, according to the legend, that a dragon would have descended to tame the sea currents. That is why the Vietnamese called it Hạ Long (or the site of the Descending Dragon).

Impressed by the splendor and beauty of this bay that he visited by junk in 1468, king **Lê Thánh Tông** left some unforgettable verses in witness of his emotion:

Muôn ngọn núi nổi trên như biển ngọc
La liệt như những sao sa, những quần cờ, chênh vênh màu xanh biếc ...

High summits are drawn up as a crowd in the sea like many jewels
Bluish tops are dispersed like the falling stars and the pieces in the chessboard of waves.
Fish and salt, abundant like sand, offer a rapid gain to people.

Đồng Bằng Sông Hồng