

Conservation and Transformation of Hue Traditional Garden Houses in the Hue Citadel Area, Vietnam

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1. Background and Objectives of this research

Due to the change of construction technology and economical development, traditional wooden architecture and its' culture in Vietnam has been rapidly disappearing. Due to the rapid increasing of population and diversification of residents, and urbanization, countermeasure construction to natural disasters, shop houses, garden houses, and temporary housings are mixed together in the scenery of the Citadel at present.

The Hue traditional garden houses (HTGHs) were the major architectural elements which create the living quarter in the Citadel in the Nguyen period. HTGHs were build as residences or villas for royal families and high ranking mandarins at that time. Due to the situation of the Citadel as mentioned before, a large number of HTGHs were demolished and many HTGHs which still remain until now have transformed and/or undergone land subdivisions. Furthermore, according to previous researches¹, HTGHs' density is much higher compared to other or whole area of the province.

The purpose of this research is to clarify the creating factor and process of the present conditions of HTGHs' transformation and conservation, with focusing on the residents' restoration and alternation activities toward HTGHs, and governmental supports for conservation of HTGHs in recent years.

2. The Content of Field survey

The content of this research is based on the results of field survey of 8 HTGHs. To clarify the process of conservation and transformation of HTGHs, select 8 houses which typically show 6 factors, political factor, economical factor, damage from natural disasters, damage of the War, family change, modification of living environment, based on the previous research of Nguyen Ngoc Tung²).

3. Conclusion

Among 91 HTGHs in the Citadel, only 8 HTGHs are surveyed in this research. But, if we classify these 8 HTGHs from certain points of view, we can lead the logical consequence. From the comparison between Le The Du's house and Tran Thi Tram's house, which are selected by focusing on income and damage from the flooding in 1999, it can be said that 1) Threats of natural disasters are enormous, and caused great damage to HTGHs whose owners are economically disadvantaged. Governmental responses after damage are different or even opposite between owners of HTGHs, and caused significant gaps. Next, from consideration of 3 HTGHs, they are Bui Thi Phuong Xuan's house, Pham Quang Hong's house, and Phan Huu Hiep's house, which are selected because of high social status and positions of their ancestors and big scale of the houses, it can be said that 2) residents of these houses don't trust current regime and don't want to receive any support from the regime. Xuan's house is an ultimate case because after the end of the War in 1975, they chose to make their living only by small income and food from vegetable production in their garden instead. In the transition of society, they have kept their pride by live by themselves instead of working under the regime of North Vietnam. Conservation of HTGHs for those residents can be considered to be strongly connected to those residents' feelings.

2) Nguyen Ngoc Tung : Transformation of Hue Traditional Garden Houses in Hue Citadel area Vietnam, 2007