

The Four Thousand Year History of Vietnam



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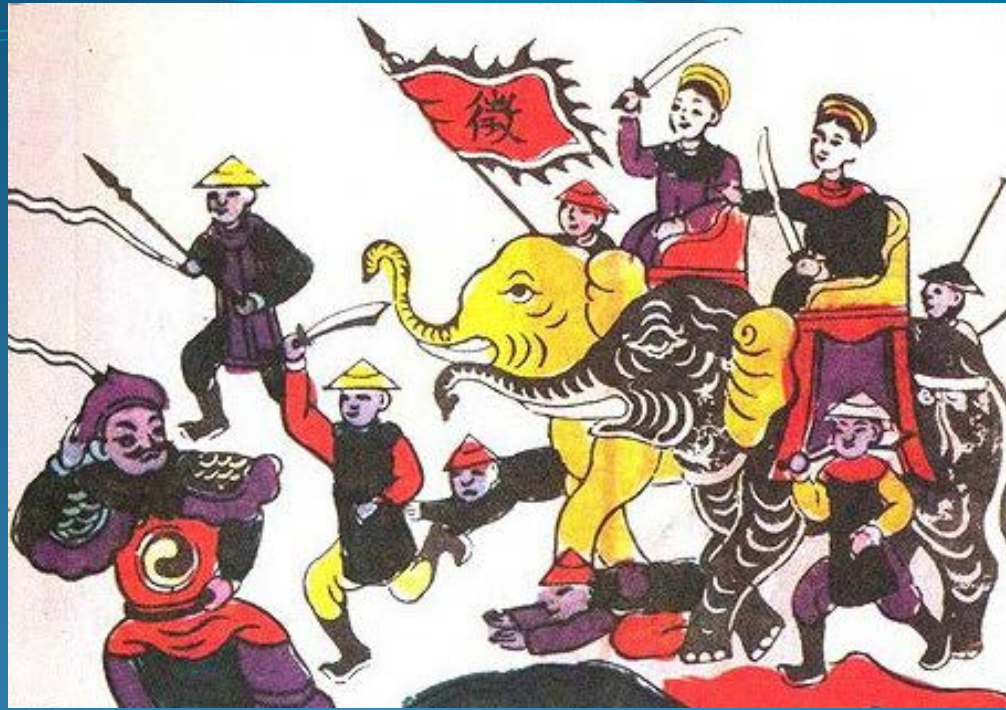
The Hong Bang Dynasty and the 18 Hung Kings who founded the country called Van Lang now known as Vietnam. Hong Bang Dynasty lasts over 2500 years spanning from 2879 to 258 BC.



The designs and ornaments on Dong Son Bronze Drums which were made during the later part of the Hong Bang Dynasty reflect the maritime and water rice agriculture oriented society.

After the Hong Bang Era, Vietnam underwent a century of successive occupations, from 258 BC to 938, by a series of different Chinese Dynasties.

During this period, there were numerous uprisings against foreign rulers but mostly failed. A few regained independence for a short period. The most famous uprisings were those lead by 3 women, sisters Trung and Lady Trieu.



Sisters Trưng, year 40, defeated the Chinese rulers and regained sovereignty for the country for 2 years.



Lady Triệu 202 caused great losses to the Chinese rulers.



Ngô Quyền finally defeated the Chinese in 938 at Bạch Đằng River and ended 1000 year occupation of the Chinese.

Ngô Quyền opened up a new era of independence for 10 centuries with a series of dynasties between (939-1945).

During this period waves of foreign invaders kept coming. Vietnam fought back very hard and eventually defeated and successfully expelled them all. Following are the most typical cases:



Lý Thường Kiệt (Lý Dynasty) defeated the Song invaders (1075-1077) and unequivocally declared:



“The mountains and rivers of the South
belong to the Viets of the South.
This is clearly written in the Celestial Book.
Those who try to invade this land
will surely suffer defeat!”

Ly Thuong Kiet 1076



Trần Hưng Đạo (Trần Dynasty) 3 times
defeated Mongolian Yuan invaders
(1257 – 1288)



Mongolian Yuan invaders (Genghis Khan's army) were defeated in the famous battle on Bạch Đằng River in 1288.



Lê Lợi 1417-1428, organized the army to revolt against the Ming Dynasty Rulers and ended their 30 year occupation of Vietnam.



The legendary Hoàn Kiếm Lake or lake of the returned sword was built to honour Lê Lợi and to tell the story of Lê Lợi returning the sword to the turtle once the Ming Rulers were defeated.



Quang Trung Nguyễn Huệ (Tây Sơn) defeated the Qing invaders in a short few days during Tết in 1789.



Võ Nguyên Giáp defeated the French in Điện Biên Phủ 1954 and the Americans in 1975 ending a century of foreign occupation.

Victory in Dien Bien Phu

1954



Under Hồ Chí Minh's leadership, once again, Vietnam regained its national sovereignty from nearly a century of foreign occupation.

Hung Kings' Temple



On his way back to Hanoi for the first time in 10 years to celebrate the freshly regained independence, President Hồ Chí Minh decided, first to visit the Hung Kings' Temple to pay a homage to the first emperors, the founders of Vietnam.



The president used this occasion to express his gratitude to the founding ancestors and to inform them that the country is now back to their children's hands.



Looking back, the history of Vietnam is rife with turmoil and wars, at times the country seemed incapable of regaining its sovereignty. President Hồ Chí Minh pondered whether the war against the French would be the last war that Vietnamese had to fight for independence?



Then he shared his contemplation with his comrades who accompanied him:

The Hung Kings founded the country, you and I, from now on, we all must together put all our efforts to sustain and protect it.”



After this remark in 1954, the Vietnamese people had to fight three more wars against the Americans, Cambodians and Chinese between 1960-1990. Will these wars be the last?

Today, on this occasion of Hung Kings' commemoration, we must pledge to the founding ancestors that we will strictly follow president Hồ Chí Minh's teaching and will make sure such mishaps as those in the past will not ever happen again.

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