

NGOC LU BRONZE DRUM

GENERAL

Dong Son bronze drums, along with thousands of artifacts, have been discovered all across Vietnam. The name indicated that a large number of those drums were initially found in Dong Son, Thanh Hoa province. All told, there are about more than thirty sites with significant discoveries in recent years.

Even though the bronze drums have been found in many places in Southeast Asia and South China, archaeologists all over the world generally agree that the finest examples have been found in Vietnam.

NGOC LU

Bronze Drum Ngoc Lu was accidentally discovered in 1893 in Ha Nam Ninh province, southeast of Hanoi, originated from the Dong Son period after the fourth century B.C. They were well preserved and intricately decorated. The sophisticated metallurgy technique and complex metal alloy used in the construction of the drums reflect the advancement of the Dong Son culture.

The best example of Ngoc Lu drum is 63 centimeters high, 79 centimeters in diameter, and of cylindrical shape.

The tympanum, which is the flat top of the drum, depicts three concentric panels with various decorations; the sun with its radiating beam, human figures with a plethora of activities, geometric patterns, circular motifs, and animals...

WORKS OF ART

Ngoc Lu drums are considered the most sophisticated drum artifacts built anywhere in Southeast Asia. In fact, they remain artistic masterpieces today. They also represent distinct Vietnamese national features and artistic tastes of the people.

The drums also radiate some sense of aesthetic beauty, by virtues of various depictions of human activities on different panel or layers; so all sorts of stories could be told through the ages.

In general, those pictorial depictions of legends, beliefs and rituals help transform a seemingly bulky and heavy drum into an objet d'art, with a sublime sense of softness, grace and delicacy, all at the same time.

ITS USE

It is a general belief that drums – due to their stout, sonic boom and cadence – were mostly used to motivate and inspire people in some of the most pivotal moments in Vietnam's history. The bronze drums have been used for a variety of occasions, including invocation for rain or favorable weather for harvest season, and as part of ritual ceremonies in the community. It is also known that they were used as burial gifts to important or significant leaders in the area.

The ritual sound and tempo of the Ngoc Lu Bronze Drum, passing through the eternity of time, reach out to touch the heart of every Vietnamese.

Its echo is also an imposing reminder that it is almost an ecclesiastical duty that this generation must fulfill its destiny to spread the reverberation of our ancestor's drums in a unified, free and democratic society.