

Portico of the royal library at the Imperial City in Hue

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The tiled roof and portico of this two-story royal library in the walled Imperial City, or Citadel, at Hué are trimmed with carved and painted dragon statues. The square columns and area over the entrance are carved with Chinese style characters, the form of writing used in the Vietnam area when the Imperial City was built.

Most of the original buildings of Hué's Imperial City date to ambitious efforts by Nguyen dynasty rulers in the 1800s to control both the north and south of Vietnam from a centrally located capital. The architectural plan of Hué's walled Imperial City was designed as a near replica of the Forbidden City in Beijing, China. While drawing on the symbolic model of the powerful Chinese court, the Vietnamese here constructed two-tiered, rather than three-tiered, roofs to show their respect for the powerful Chinese emperor.



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