

SOLUTIONS TO BRING HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RELICS OF DUC HOA DISTRICT, LONG AN PROVINCE TO CONTRIBUTE TO LOCAL ECONOMIC AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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With the advantage of being close to two large cities, Ho Chi Minh City and Binh Duong province, Duc Hoa district, Long An province has taken advantage of developing short-term tourism and weekend tourism to serve the needs of residents of these two cities. In order to contribute to the development of local tourism economy targeting short-term and weekend tourists, historical relics in the area need to be invested more in terms of exhibits; linked with other tourist destinations to become suitable routes for each group of tourists; have a fixed schedule of explanations at the relics on weekends; investing in building and operating a clean and spacious toilet system; informing, propagating and promoting the relics and routes widely on the media; combining with points of sale and restaurants to promote local dishes and specialties to attract tourists to visit and stay locally.

Keywords: *Solution; Cultural and historical relics; Tourism economic development; Duc Hoa district; Long An province.*

1. Introduction

Duc Hoa district, Long An Province has a very special location, bordering Cu Chi district of Ho Chi Minh City and Trang Bang Town of Tay Ninh Province to the North; bordering Binh Chanh and Hoc Mon districts of Ho Chi Minh City to the East. Duc Hoa is considered an important connection point with districts and towns of Ho Chi Minh City via National Highway 1A and National Highway 22, especially Hoc Mon town and Cu Chi town. Duc Hoa town is about 28km from Ben Thanh market and about 24km from Thu Dau Mot city, Binh Duong province.

Currently, Duc Hoa district is carrying out the process of industrialization combined with urbanization, besides promoting trade and tourism services. The important goal of the district is to become a central urban area in the North of Long An province and become a “satellite city” serving the Mekong Delta region and connecting with Ho Chi Minh City, contributing to the economic and tourism development of Long An province. With the development of infrastructure in recent years, Duc Hoa district now has many tourist and entertainment areas to meet the diverse needs of tourists such as Phuc Loc Tho ancient village tourist area, My Quynh zoo, West Lakes Golf course... In addition, the district has also built a

system of restaurants, hotels and motels that meet the standards to serve tourists.

With a location very close to Ho Chi Minh City and Thu Dau Mot City, Binh Duong province, tourism activities in Duc Hoa district, in addition to serving local people, should take advantage to serve the weekend travel needs of people in Ho Chi Minh City and Binh Duong province. That is, it is aimed at short-term tourists, weekend travelers who come and return the same day or just stay one night. Two large cities are Ho Chi Minh City and Binh Duong province, with a population of more than ten million people with very high incomes, to be currently lacking places to serve the needs of rest and entertainment on weekends when people do not have enough time to go to famous tourist destinations in the country or abroad. Until now, people in Ho Chi Minh City and Binh Duong province, when wanting to go out for a day or stay overnight, mainly choose Vung Tau city (Ba Ria - Vung Tau province). Now that there is a highway from Ho Chi Minh City to Nha Trang city, travel time is shortened, so Binh Thuan province has also become a favorite short-term beach tourist destination. But both Vung Tau city and Binh Thuan province are beach tourism, so if Long An chooses eco-tourism and returning to the source, it can still compete with Vung Tau city and Binh Thuan

province, targeting tourists from Ho Chi Minh City and Binh Duong province in the weekend and short-term tourism segment. Meanwhile, Duc Hoa district has a system of typical historical and cultural relics but has not been effectively exploited for tourism, therefore, in the tourism development of Duc Hoa district in the coming time, it is necessary to put these relics into exploitation to both contribute to preserving and enhancing the value of the relics in life and contributing to the economic development of the locality.

2. Research overview

In recent years, regarding historical and cultural relics in general and historical and cultural relics in Duc Hoa district, Long An province contributing to the development of local tourism economy, there have been authors interested in and researching, typically some researchs such as: *Oc Eo Culture - New Discoveries* (Diem, Con & Khai, 1995); *Long An 21 years of fighting the Americans* (Giau, 1988); *Long An preserves and maintains the value of historical and cultural relics associated with tourism development* (Hanh, 2024); *Long An promotes the strengths of historical and cultural traditions to develop tourism* (Man, 2024); *Long An exploits the value of cultural heritage in tourism development* (Minh, 2024);... The above typical studies are valuable legacy documents, helping the author complete the research content “*Solutions to bring historical and cultural relics of Duc Hoa district, Long An province to contribute to the development of local tourism economy*”.

3. Research methods

The article is based on the main research methods such as: Secondary data collection method; Synthesis and analysis method, on that basis to clarify the research content related to solutions to bring historical and cultural relics of Duc Hoa district, Long An province to contribute to the development of local tourism economy.

4. Research result

4.1. Some typical historical and cultural relics in Duc Hoa district, Long An province have potential for tourism development

In Duc Hoa district, there are many historical and cultural relics, but currently there are only four relics ranked at the national level and have great potential for tourism exploitation, which are Duc Hoa Crossroads Relic, Binh Ta Archaeological Relic, An Son Archaeological Relic and the historical relic of the garden and house of Mr. Huong Bo Nguyen Van Tho (Mr. Bo Tho).

4.1.1. Duc Hoa Crossroads historical site

The historical site of Duc Hoa Crossroads is located at the intersection of Provincial Roads

824 and 825 in Duc Hoa town, Duc Hoa district, Long An province, recognized as a national relic according to Decision No. 1570-VH/QD dated September 5th, 1989 of the Ministry of Culture and Information. Here, on June 4th, 1930, comrade Chau Van Liem, Secretary of the Gia Dinh - Cho Lon inter-provincial party and comrade Vo Van Tan, Secretary of the Duc Hoa District Party Committee, led more than 5,000 Duc Hoa farmers to gather in front of the district chief's residence to fight against high taxes and repression. The demonstration was bloodily suppressed, comrade Chau Van Liem and many other compatriots and comrades were sacrificed. After the Southern Uprising, in order to terrorize the revolutionary fighting spirit of the Duc Hoa people, the French colonialists set up a shooting platform for the Southern Uprising soldiers in Duc Hoa district, about 200m from the district headquarters. In July 1941 alone, 29 Southern insurgents fell here. During the resistance war against the United States of America to save the country, in 1964, the 25th Division of the Republic of Vietnam from Quang Ngai stationed in the Duc Hoa district headquarters area built a system of bunkers to store weapons and protect the military base. The Duc Hoa Crossroads area became the enemy's nerve center, where they launched sweep operations and bombarded our revolutionary bases. In order to promote the historical value of the relic site, in 1995, the Department of Culture and Information of Long An province (now the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism) built and implemented a project to preserve and restore the Duc Hoa Crossroads relic site. Since then, many items of the relic site such as the 10m high statue of comrade Vo Van Tan, the park, the protective fence, the relief recreating the demonstration on June 4th, 1930, the exhibition room, the execution platform,... have been implemented. At the same time, original relics such as the Duc Hoa District Palace, the bunker system, etc. have also been restored.

4.1.2. Binh Ta archaeological site

Binh Ta archaeological site in Duc Hoa Ha commune, Duc Hoa district, Long An province, located 800m east of Provincial Road 824 (old Provincial Road 9), was recognized as a national historical and cultural relic in Decision No. 1570/VH-QD dated September 5th, 1989 of the Ministry of Culture and Information. Binh Ta relic site includes 3 relics: Go Don relic, Go Xoai relic and Go Nam Tuoc relic, to be a large-scale archaeological relic cluster belonging to the Oc Eo culture. Based on the collection of relics, the form and scale of the architecture and especially the content of the Go Xoai inscription, it can be concluded that this was the political - power - religious center of the ancients, dating back about 1,600 years ago.

In which, Go Don relic is a type of brick temple tower architecture, 78.5 meters long from east to west; the widest width measures 60 meters (north to south), the entire architecture before excavation was underground, the closest place to the ground is 0.4 meters. The excavation has collected many stone artifacts such as the statue of the god Dvarapala (temple guardian god), the head of the statue of the god Ganesa (god of fortune), many worship objects such as linga, yoni, door frames carved with floral patterns, sacred water troughs (somasutra)... and many ancient ceramics. The Go Don relic is identified as a Hindu architectural relic of the Oc Eo culture.

Go Xoai relic is an architectural relic built of bricks, nearly square in shape with each side about 20 meters long, the foundation of the architecture has a very solid and complex structure, consisting of many different types of materials such as basalt pebbles, red gravel, white sand, pink sand...

The Go Xoai architecture has a square-shaped worshipping pit, 2.2 meters on the side; over 2.5 meters deep, near the bottom of the worshipping pit, bone ashes and a collection of valuable artifacts were discovered and a valuable collection of artifacts including many small, thin gold pieces carved with images of sacred animals such as turtles, snakes, elephants, rings and medallions studded with precious stones and a Sanskrit-Pail manuscript in the South Indian (Deccan) alphabet, 8th-9th century AD. Go Xoai architecture is considered the earliest Buddhist Stupa relic in the Mekong Delta.

The Go Nam Tuoc relic is a Hindu temple architectural relic built of bricks, 17.20 meters long and 11.10 meters wide, the upper part of the architecture has been lost, but the foundation still retains the architectural characteristics of the Oc Eo culture such as the corner structure, very straight brick foundation lines and a semicircular gate facing east.

4.1.3. An Son Archaeological Site

An Son archaeological site in An Ninh Tay commune, Duc Hoa district was recognized as a national relic according to Decision No. 324/QD-BHTTDL dated January 26th, 2011 of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. The relic is located on a bowl-shaped mound 280m from the left bank of the Vam Co Dong River with an area of 10,000 m²; about 7m higher than the surrounding area and the cultural layer at the highest position on the mound is over 4m thick. In 1978, through many excavations, a large amount of valuable relics were found such as: ceramic artifacts with hundreds of thousands of pieces (pots, bowls, vases, basins, sinkers, bronze objects); over 700 artifacts of labor tools such as axes, chisels, hoes, knives, pestles; artifacts of

ivory, bones, elephant horns; teeth of many extinct wild animals in this land such as chevrotain, monkeys, wild buffalo, tigers, foxes; jewelry made of soft shells, mainly round cylindrical beads, round earrings of various sizes;... In particular, there are 33 burials, including some relatively intact remains with many burial objects.

4.1.4. Historical relic of garden, house of Mr. Huong Bo Nguyen Van Tho (Mr. Bo Tho)

The historical site of the garden and house of Mr. Huong Bo Nguyen Van Tho (Mr. Bo Tho) is located in Binh Huu 2 Hamlet, Duc Hoa Thuong Commune, Duc Hoa District, Long An Province. The relic is ranked at the national level according to Decision No. 3827/QD-BVHTTDL dated October 31st, 2013 of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. Mr. Bo Tho's real name was Nguyen Van Tho, holding the position of Huong Bo (a position in the Huong Association Board of Duc Hoa village, Cau An Ha commune, Cho Lon province at that time). On March 4th, 1930, in Mr. Bo Tho's garden, comrade Vo Van Tan held a secret meeting, unanimously declaring the transfer of the An Nam Communist Party cell of Duc Hoa village to the Communist Party of Vietnam cell of Duc Hoa village. This is the first Party cell of Cho Lon province and one of the earliest Party cells established in the South of Vietnam, with comrade Vo Van Tan as Secretary, consisting of 7 Party members.

4.2. Solution to bring historical and cultural relics of Duc Hoa district to contribute to the development of local tourism economy

Meanwhile, due to investment in recent years in the development process, Duc Hoa district now has two entertainment and tourism areas that have initially attracted a number of tourists, namely Phuoc Loc Tho ancient village and My Quynh zoo project.

Phuoc Loc Tho ancient village eco-tourism area is located in Huu Thanh commune, Duc Hoa district, Long An province. This place is located on Provincial Road 824, only about 4km from Duc Hoa town and about 50km from Ho Chi Minh City. Located in an area of more than 5 hectares, there are 22 houses, each house has a different regional characteristic expressed through carved motifs. The ancient houses, which are 80 to 150 years old, are preserved and restored almost intact, keeping their ancient features, arranged harmoniously and planned in an airy space in harmony with nature. In 2006, the ancient village eco-tourism project began construction on an area of over 10 hectares. The village is divided into two separate areas, including a sightseeing area and an entertainment, dining and resort area. On August 17th, 2010, the People's Committee of Long An province issued Decision No. 2288/QD-UBND recognizing this

as a local tourist destination. In 2012, the Vietnam Book of Records established a record for having the most ancient wooden houses with rich carvings in Vietnam. In 2023, this tourist destination welcomed about 12,000 visitors.

My Quynh Zoo is located in Tan My commune, Duc Hoa district, Long An province, invested by Saigon Investment and Consulting Joint Stock Company. On June 12th, 2017, the People's Committee of Long An province issued Decision No. 2131/QĐ-UBND-GCN granting Certificates of biodiversity conservation facilities to 7 species in the list of rare and endangered species that need protection such as: Clouded leopard, clouded leopard, gaur, sun bear... Many items have been completed and put into service for tourists: Semi-wild animal area, water park, outdoor playground. In 2023, the zoo will welcome about 35,000 visitors.

With the current situation of relics and tourists, entertainment places in the area, to bring historical and cultural relics into tourism development, it is necessary to implement the following solutions:

Firstly, in order to exploit tourism, the Binh Ta archaeological site should have restored artifacts (replicas) placed at the relic to increase the relic's appeal to visitors; helping visitors fully visualize the outstanding achievements that the site's owner achieved in the past about 1,600 years ago.

Secondly, regarding the implementation of the routes, it is proposed to combine a historical and cultural relic and an eco-tourism area, a specific entertainment area as follows:

Route 1: Binh Ta archaeological site - Phuoc Loc Tho ancient village eco-tourism area. This route is suitable for young people and the elderly who want to explore historical and cultural values, architecture while enjoying the cool, fresh natural scenery. These two locations are also very conveniently connected in terms of traffic because they are both located on Provincial Road 824.

Route 2: Duc Hoa Crossroads Relic Site - My Quynh Zoo. This route is suitable for young families with small children. The square, memorial house and Duc Hoa district palace are suitable for children to move around and visit. Meanwhile, there are zoos and playgrounds for children to explore the natural world and participate in outdoor games.

These two routes are also very suitable for tourists to go back in the day or stay overnight because tourists can choose to stay overnight at hotels and motels near Phuoc Loc Tho ancient village eco-tourism area or My Quynh zoo.

Thirdly, at each relic site, a tour guide should be arranged at a fixed time on weekends (Saturday or Sunday), it is best to choose a tour guide time

in the middle of the morning because at this time, tourists from Ho Chi Minh City and Binh Duong province who depart in the morning will also just arrive. The schedule of the presentation must be fixed, announced in advance and should not be changed suddenly so that visitors know in advance to arrange their itinerary appropriately. The content of the presentation must be attractive but short, concise and choose highlights to attract listeners who are not experts.

Fourthly, we should invest in building and ensuring the operation of a clean and spacious toilet system at the two relic sites. With the distance from Ho Chi Minh City or Binh Duong province to these two relic sites, whether tourists travel by motorbike, bus... or other personal vehicles, they will need a place to stop.

Fifthly, organize information dissemination and promotion widely on mass media as well as social networks about the two archaeological sites of Binh Ta and Duc Hoa Crossroads as well as the two routes of Binh Ta Archaeological site - Phuoc Loc Tho Ancient Village Eco-tourism area and Duc Hoa Crossroads Relic site - My Quynh Zoo so that all people in Ho Chi Minh City, Binh Duong Province and other localities who are interested in knowing about them can visit and experience them.

Sixthly, combine introducing famous dishes, restaurants and local specialties so that tourists can enjoy and shop when visiting and experiencing these destinations.

5. Discussion

Among the four national historical and cultural relics of Duc Hoa district that have been introduced, in our opinion, the two relics that are most likely to be included in the tourist route to be the Duc Hoa Crossroads relic and the Binh Ta archaeological relic because these two relics have good landscape space and multi-layered historical stories; the Binh Ta archaeological relic in particular has many rich and valuable artifacts. In addition, the Duc Hoa Crossroads relic and the Binh Ta archaeological relic are located in a convenient traffic location. However, if these two relics become a separate route, it will be difficult to attract tourists because they are not attractive enough, especially for young people who do not have much experience to love and learn about the history of the land and locality. Therefore, it would be more reasonable to find a way to combine a historical and cultural relic with another ecological and recreational tourist area to form a route.

6. Conclusion

With its location near Ho Chi Minh City and Binh Duong province, Duc Hoa should focus on

developing short-term and weekend tourism. In order to serve short-term tourism and weekend tourism, local historical and cultural relics need to be adapted by linking other types of tourist attractions to create attractive routes for tourists. The relic management agencies themselves also need to enhance the value of the relics by increasing the attractiveness of the

exhibits, explanations or information promoting the relics and even seemingly small but not small things such as investing in the construction and operation of a clean and spacious toilet system... With these transformations, historical relics in Duc Hoa can become tourist destinations, thereby contributing to the development of local tourism economy.

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GIẢI PHÁP ĐƯA CÁC DI TÍCH LỊCH SỬ VĂN HÓA HUYỆN ĐỨC HÒA, TỈNH LONG AN ĐÓNG GÓP VÀO PHÁT TRIỂN KINH TẾ DU LỊCH ĐỊA PHƯƠNG

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Với lợi thế gần hai đô thị lớn là thành phố Hồ Chí Minh và tỉnh Bình Dương, vì vậy huyện Đức Hòa tỉnh Long An đã tận dụng phát triển loại hình du lịch ngắn ngày, du lịch cuối tuần phục vụ nhu cầu của cư dân hai đô thị này. Để đóng góp vào phát triển kinh tế du lịch của địa phương hướng đến đối tượng khách du lịch ngắn ngày, du lịch cuối tuần, các di tích lịch sử trên địa bàn cần được đầu tư hơn về mặt hiện vật trưng bày; liên kết với các điểm du lịch khác để trở thành những tuyến điểm thích hợp với từng nhóm đối tượng khách du lịch; có lịch thuyết minh cố định tại di tích vào cuối tuần; đầu tư xây dựng và vận hành hệ thống nhà vệ sinh sạch sẽ, khang trang; thông tin, tuyên truyền, quảng bá di tích và tuyến điểm rộng rãi trên các phương tiện truyền thông; kết hợp với các điểm bán hàng, nhà hàng để quảng bá những món ăn, đặc sản của địa phương để thu hút du khách đến thăm quan và nghỉ lại tại địa phương.

Từ khóa: Giải pháp; Các di tích lịch sử văn hoá; Phát triển kinh tế du lịch; Huyện Đức Hoà; Tỉnh Long An.