



The spiritual tourism resources of Tuyen Quang are a strength to serve the development of tourism

Mai Thi Van Huong ^{1*}, Nguyen Thi Thanh Loan ²

¹⁻² Faculty of Culture and Tourism, Tan Trao University, Vietnam

* Corresponding Author: **Mai Thi Van Huong**

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Abstract

The article is based on the study of the theoretical system and guiding principles for tourism development in Tuyen Quang province. It highlights the strengths of tourism resources such as the system of guiding documents, spiritual tourism destinations, spiritual tourism products, tourism services and technical facilities, tourist market and human resources for tourism development in the area. The research results serve as a premise for developing spiritual tourism in the tourism development orientation of Tuyen Quang province in the future.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, tourism in general and spiritual tourism in particular have become one of the popular economic phenomena and are considered the spearhead industry in Vietnam. The spiritual tourism is a form of tourism aimed at exploring and experiencing the spiritual activities of a locality or region.

Tuyen Quang is a province that converges enough strengths to develop various forms of tourism such as historical tourism, ecological tourism, cultural tourism,... and spiritual tourism. This place is evaluated as a potential destination for developing spiritual tourism thanks to many historical relics, scenic landscapes, temples, traditional festivals, and other spiritual activities. With the development of spiritual tourism, Tuyen Quang city can attract many tourists to visit and experience spiritual activities. This article delves into the strengths of spiritual tourism resources in Tuyen Quang province, such as the system of directive documents, spiritual tourism sites, spiritual tourism products, services and technical facilities serving tourism, tourist market, and human resources serving the development of tourism in this area.

2. Content

2.1. Some directives on developing spiritual tourism in Tuyen Quang

Decision No. 72/2010/QĐ-UBND dated December 7, 2010 of the People's Committee of Tuyen Quang province approving the Tourism Development Plan of Tuyen Quang province until 2020, which includes the development of spiritual tourism products such as Khuong Viet Geological Park, Sung Thien Dieu Thanh Temple, Duc Thanh Tan Vien Temple, etc.

Decision No. 384/QĐ-UBND dated November 13, 2019 of the People's Committee of Tuyen Quang province approving the Spiritual Tourism Development Plan in the province during the period of 2019-2025 with the goal of gradually developing Tuyen Quang spiritual tourism into the center of spiritual tourism in the Central Highlands and Northern mountainous region, linking the development of spiritual tourism with characteristic tourism products that are the strengths of the province such as historical, cultural, festival, ecological, and community tourism, in order to complete the goal of developing tourism into an important economic sector, contributing to the socio-economic development of the province.

Decision No. 658/QĐ-UBND regarding the approval of the overall communication plan on tourism in Tuyen Quang province for the period of 2021-2025, with a vision towards 2030, mentions the development of a communication system to introduce and promote the province's tourism destinations, attractions, and products to domestic and foreign tourists. The plan also focuses on improving the quality of tourism services, enhancing the tourism business environment, and strengthening cooperation with other localities in the region and the world to develop sustainable tourism and bring benefits to local communities.

In addition, the policies and guidelines of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism on the development of spiritual tourism are also applicable to Tuyen Quang and other provinces and cities throughout the country

2.2. The tourism development situation of Tuyen Quang city

Tuyen Quang is a mountainous province located in the Northeast region of Vietnam, about 165 km north of Hanoi. Tuyen Quang borders the following provinces: Bac Kan to the east, Thai Nguyen to the southeast, Vinh Phuc to the west, Ha Giang to the north, Yen Bai to the northwest, and Phu Tho to the south. Its natural area covers 5,870 km², with a population of over 732,256 people consisting of 22 ethnic groups living together.

Tuyen Quang has a lot of potential for tourism development, especially in ecotourism and cultural tourism. Tuyen Quang is famous for its vast rice fields, rivers, waterfalls, and majestic mountain ranges. These are favorable conditions for developing ecotourism activities such as trekking, mountain climbing, waterfall sliding, cave exploration, fishing, hunting, and more.

Furthermore, Tuyen Quang has many historical and cultural relics, such as the Tan Trao historical site, the Saint Tran Hung Dao temple, the Tho Dia (God of the soil) temple, Thanh Tam pagoda, Ham Rong pagoda, and more. These destinations will provide visitors with interesting and attractive experiences

Notably, Tuyen Quang still retains many distinctive cultural features of the ethnic minority groups living here, such as Tay, Nung, Dao, Mong, and more. Therefore, visitors to Tuyen Quang can also visit, explore and learn about the cultures and lifestyles of these ethnic groups

Tuyen Quang has a strong potential for developing cultural and spiritual tourism, which lies in its heritage sites, temples, and pagodas, including numerous famous landmarks such as the Mac Dynasty Citadel, Ha temple, Thuong temple, and Y La temple. These historical and artistic landmarks, communal houses, temples, and shrines showcase the remarkable talent of local artisans. Each year, Tuyen Quang attracts a significant number of tourists who come to explore the city's unique historical and cultural beauty.

2.3. Representative spiritual tourism destinations of Tuyen Quang city with valuable tourism services

2.3.1. Ha temple

The Ha temple is an ancient building with beautiful architecture and exquisite woodcarvings, situated in a serene space, backed by the mountain and facing the historical Lo river. It is the birthplace of the Thoai Mother Goddess, also known as the Thoai Phu Third Mother Goddess. The Ha temple in Tuyen Quang is the origin of the Dum Temple (Thuong temple) and the Y La temple. They are a group of

temple worshipping the Thoai Mother Goddess with the same origin.

The temple was built in 1738. In 1991, it was recognized as a national historical and cultural relic. In 1994, this temple was further ranked as an ancient architectural and artistic relic.

From the 11th to the 16th of the second lunar month each year, the Ha temple festival in Tuyen Quang is celebrated with grandeur and excitement, praying for timely rains and favourable weather, good harvests, and good health for everyone

2.3.2. Thuong temple

Thuong Mother Goddess temple in Tuyen Quang is considered a sacred temple and has been honored by the dynasties of the Le and Nguyen emperors with fine name. This temple is located in Trang Da commune (Tuyen Quang city) and is dedicated to the Mother Goddess. It was built in 1801. Legend has it that two princesses, Ngoc Lan (also known as Mai Hoa princess) and Phuong Dung princess (also known as Quynh Hoa princess), came to survey the local area by boat along the river. When a storm hit at night, the two princesses flew up into the sky, which people believed to be a supernatural event, so they built a temple to worship them. The major festival of the temple is held annually on the 12th of the second lunar lunar each year, where the goddess is carried from the Thuong temple to the Ha temple, attracting many visitors from both inside and outside the province.

2.3.3. Y La Mother Goddess temple

The Y La Mother Goddess temple, located in Y La ward, Tuyen Quang city, was built during the reign of Canh Hung emperor in 1747 and dedicated to Princess Phuong Dung, the daughter of Hung King. The Y La Mother Goddess temple was recognized as a national historical relic on March 18, 2016. This temple also left many priceless cultural heritage items. Inside the temple, there are still two ancient bells and 16 old statues, bronze musical instrument, pottery, horizontal lacquered boards, parallel sentences, inscriptions, royal ordination documents and divine genealogies. However, the most noteworthy cultural heritage items are the intangible ones. The temple still preserves 6 royal ordination documents of 4 Nguyen emperors such as Dong Khanh, Thanh Thai, Duy Tan, and Khai Dinh, bestowed upon the Y La Mother Goddess Temple

2.3.4. Canh Xanh temple

The Canh Xanh temple is a historical site located in Group 17, Minh Xuan Ward, Tuyen Quang City. This temple was originally a small shrine built in the late 19th century using materials such as bamboo, wood, and leaves. The Canh Xanh temple was built to honor and worship the Thuong Ngan Mother Goddess (or the pseudonym is the Lam Cung Mother Goddess), also known as the Thuong Nga Lady, who governs the mountainous and forested regions. It is a place where people express their respect for the Thuong Ngan Mother Goddess and their desire for a peaceful and prosperous life in the region.

2.3.5. Kiep Bac Temple

Kiep Bac Temple is a historical site located in Tan Quang Ward, Tuyen Quang City. It is also known as "the Kiep Bac sacred temple". The temple was built to worship Hung Dao Vuong - Tran Quoc Tuan, an outstanding figure in history, a national hero who made great contributions to the resistance

war against the Mongol Yuan invaders in the second half of the 13th century. That resistance war wrote an immortal epic with the Dong A spirit of Dai Viet's army and people. With the people of Tuyen Quang and the Vietnamese people's faith and respect, Tran Quoc Tuan was deified as a saint and a spiritual father of the Vietnamese people, and many temples was built to worship him

2.4. Typical spiritual tourism products

The worship of the Mother Goddess in Tuyen Quang was formed very early around the beginning of the 17th century and developed strongly in the 18th century. This place is also considered the cradle of the Mother Goddess Third (the Thoai Mother Goddess) - the goddess who governs the region's rivers and waters. A proof that the temples worshipping Mother Goddess in Tuyen Quang were built hundreds of years ago (the Ha temple in 1738, the Y La Mother Goddess Temple in 1743, the Thuong temple in 1801, etc.) due to the quite thick system of Mother Goddess temples, Tuyen Quang is considered as the land of the Mother Goddess. Worshipping Mother Goddess is the oldest indigenous belief in Vietnam. Through the process of evolution, humans realized that life is given by nature, including air, food, and water. From there, the awareness of gratitude to nature arose. On the other hand, humans have also suffered many abnormal natural disasters caused by extreme weather phenomena... The fear of nature is growing day by day. Humans cannot understand why nature is both generous and harmful to them. Therefore, the only way to deal with nature is to pray, hoping to receive more and suffer less, and thus the belief in worshipping nature was born. When the ancient Vietnamese entered the Mother Goddess system, the role of women was elevated, and the power of nature was equated with the power of mothers. The belief worship of the Mother Goddess emerged. In addition to worshipping the Mother Goddess, at the temples, there is also the worship of Saint Tran (also known as Tran Hung Dao), a historical figure who made great contributions to the three resistance wars against the Mongol and Yuan invasions during the Tran dynasty (13th century). He is revered by the people as one of the "Four Immortals" (including Lieu Mother Goddess (or Princess Lieu Hanh), Chu Dong Tu, Tan Vien God (or Mountain God), and Saint Tran). The worship of Saint Tran represents the moral principle of "when drinking water, remember its source" of the people in the region. Currently, only the Kiep Bac and Canh Sanh temples (in Tuyen Quang City) have a separate altar for Tran Hung Dao.

Along with the worship of the Mother Goddess at some temples, Tuyen Quang also has several Buddhist pagodas such as An Vinh, Trung Quang, Linh Thong, Huong Nghiem, Pho Linh, Nui Man, and Phuc Lam. Although there are not many temples and pagodas built in Tuyen Quang, there are always a lot of people who go to worship. This reflects the benevolent nature of the people, which is one of the important principles of Buddhism.

Besides being an ancient land, Tuyen Quang is also a spiritual and cultural region. Currently, Tuyen Quang has 8 recognized intangible cultural heritages, which are the Thuong, Ha and Y La temple Festivals, the Long Tong festival, the Then ritual of the Tay ethnic group, the Páo dung singing, the Maturity ritual of the Dao ethnic group, the Soong co singing of the San Diu ethnic group; and the traditional Tug of War. and Sinh Ca singing of the Cao Lan ethnic group. There are about 560 historical and cultural

relics in the province, including 67 architectural and artistic relics, and 133 national historical and cultural relics (2 of which are special national-level relics). These are attractive tourism resources that are being exploited to develop the province's tourism products. In addition, there are dozens of temples and pagodas throughout the province that are hundreds of years old, many of which have been recognized as national-level relics. These places of worship are not only famous for their sacredness, rich history, and unique ancient architecture, but also for their beautiful, pristine, and exotic landscapes, such as the Canh Xanh temple, the Mo Than temple, the Pac Ta temple, the Bac Muc temple, and the Thac Cai temple. Especially, the cluster of Mother Goddess temples including the Ha, Thuong, and Y La Mother Goddess temples (in Tuyen Quang City) were built in the 18th century to worship the Mother Goddess deity and are renowned for their sacredness. Every year from the 10th to the 16th of the 2nd lunar month, the procession of the Mother Goddess statue takes place from the Y La Mother Goddess temple to the Ha temple, and then from the Thuong temple across the river to the Ha temple to participate in the joint ceremony. This is the largest traditional festival of the year for the people of Tuyen Quang City, which was restored in 2007. After 10 years of organization, the procession of the Mother Goddess has become part of the spiritual and cultural life of the local people, attracting a large number of local residents and tourists to create a unique cultural space of Tuyen Quang people

2.5 Tourism services and technical facilities

Accommodation: The number of accommodation establishments has increased over the years. Currently, there are 389 accommodation establishments in the province, an increase of 104 establishments compared to 2017, mainly concentrated in the city with 147 establishments. Among them, only 38 hotels meet the standards from 1 to 4 stars, including Muong Thanh Hotel (4 stars), Royal Hotel,...

Food and beverage establishments: Currently, there are about 250 food and beverage establishments in the province, of which 150 establishments are concentrated in Tuyen Quang city.

Accommodation and food establishments have been initially invested in construction and upgrading, basically meeting the needs of tourists. However, they still have not satisfied the needs of high-end tourists and have not provided enough for tourists during festivals.

Transportation infrastructure and tourist transport: the province has implemented transportation infrastructure projects.

Additional services: As for entertainment, shopping, and other services, this is the weakest part of the province. These establishments are not clearly defined throughout the province, with only a few entertainment spots appearing, such as Vincom, Dien May Xanh.

2.5. Spiritual tourism market

Tuyen Quang has many temples and pagodas with hundreds of years of history. Many of these have been recognized as national-level heritage sites and are famous throughout the country, such as the Ha temple, the birthplace of the Thoai Mother Goddess, also known as the Thoai Phu Mother Goddess Third. The Ha temple is the origin of the Dum Temple (Thuong temple) and the Y La temple. These are a group of temples worshipping the Thoai Mother Goddess

with a common origin. The Canh Xanh temple, which worships the Thuong Ngan Mother Goddess (Lam Cung Mother Goddess), whom people often call the Thuong Ngan Lady, is responsible for managing the forest, mountains, and thousands of trees. It is a place where people express their respect for the Thuong Ngan Mother Goddess and their aspirations for peaceful and prosperous lives in the Son Cuoc region.

Tuyen Quang province has approved a plan to develop spiritual tourism for the period 2019-2025. The general goal is to gradually turn spiritual tourism into the center of spiritual tourism in the North Central and Northern Mountainous regions, and to link the development of spiritual tourism with the province's characteristic and strong tourism products such as historical, cultural, festival, ecological, and community tourism

2.6. Human resources for spiritual tourism

Table 1: Human resources in Tuyen Quang during the period of 2017-2021

Type of labor	Year				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Direct (person)	2.480	2.550	2.700	2.300	2.500
Indirect (person)	11.320	11.650	11.900	13.700	15.000
Total	13.800	14.200	14.600	16.000	17.500

Source: Tuyen Quang Department of Culture, Sports, and Tourism

The workforce in Tuyen Quang's tourism industry has made new progress in recent years. In 2021, the tourism industry provided jobs for about 17,500 workers in the tourism service sector, an increase of 3,700 workers. Indirect labor has accounted for a much higher proportion than direct labor over the years. The human resources with university or college degrees in tourism are very few, mainly trained from other majors

3. Conclusion

Tuyen Quang is an area with many advantages in terms of cultural tourism resources. With the attention of the Party and government at all levels, the agreement of the people of Tuyen Quang, the infrastructure and technical facilities serving tourism are gradually being improved. The local government has been proactive in mobilizing the participation of the local community in cultural tourism activities. People at basic tourism sites have awareness in preserving traditional culture and landscapes. The promotion of cultural tourism has gradually become more professional, with the renewal of forms and content. The planning and development of cultural tourism are relatively synchronized. However, there are still obstacles to the development of spiritual tourism in Tuyen Quang such as being a mountainous province located inland, far from border gates, ports, and major economic centers of the country. The income is still low, and the market demand is unstable. The potential has not been fully exploited. There are some unfavorable natural factors such as droughts, floods. The detailed planning of tourist sites is still slow, and the workforce has not met the requirements, with a shortage of specialized personnel in cultural tourism. Promotion and advertising activities have not been comprehensively implemented. The conservation and development of ethnic cultures still face some limitations, with some cultural heritage sites being degraded. The government at all levels still lacks the correct

view on cultural preservation

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