

Guidelines for Cultural Heritage Tourism in Uthai Thani Province

Chutipapha Tasapak

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand

mamthungthong@hotmail.com

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Abstract

The objectives of the research article were: 1) To study problems and obstacles in development of cultural heritage tourism in Uthai Thani Province. 2) To propose the cultural heritage tourism development guidelines in Uthai Thani Province. The research methodology approached by qualitative study with three steps, the first step, to study problems and obstacles of development in cultural heritage tourist attractions in Uthai Thani Province through interviewing with ten targeted and key informants, the second step, to study the cultural heritage tourist attractions in Uthai Thani Province with the related document and evidence of cultural historical sites in Uthai Thani Province through on site data collection by observation and in-depth interviewing and the preceding step, to analyze, synthesis the obtained information from two steps above and propose the guidelines of development in cultural heritage tourist attractions.

The finding found that 1) problems, obstacles of Uthai Thani Province to development for cultural tourism represented the unclear organizing of provincial tourism administration and no responsible committee, unclear development guidelines of cultural heritage tourist attractions and not attracted tourists and 2) the guidelines of Uthai Thani Province cultural tourist attractions development consisted of (2.1) the potential and organizing of cultural tourist attractions development, solving the weaknesses of tourist attractions by government and private agencies, private organizations and related agencies including experience or expertise in tourism with pride and sense of ownership creation of the local people (2.2) the coordination with relevant agencies and experimentation on tourism provincial activities, the research recommendations represented the joint development of potential and organizing of the cultural heritage tourist attractions management model especially in the matter of establishing rules and regulations as guidelines for local people and tourists, publicizing tourist attractions to be known more as well as creating pilot cultural heritage tourism activities program.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage Tourism, Uthai Thani Province



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Introduction

Cultural heritage attractions represented tourist attractions with aesthetic and cultural heritage values that ancestors created and inherited as a heritage. The tourist attractions consisted of traditions, folk ways of life, cultural heritage and art exhibitions, local products, local clothing, tribal languages. The examples of important tourist sites in Thailand, Damnoen Saduak floating market, Changrai Elephant show, Surin Elephant Show, Bo-sang Umbrella work, Phuket Fantasy, Loy-kratong festival and Songkran festival.

Cultural heritage tourism represented the tourism for cultural displays such as castles, palaces, temples, ancient monuments, antiques, traditions, lifestyles, all kinds of art and various things that showed prosperity the folk life of people in each period, the cultural history, beliefs, views, ideas from the past to the present. Tourism revenue caused the investment in cultural tourism and service businesses that contributed the career, income for the participants and improving the quality of life of the population. The World Heritage Tourism Organization surveyed the world occupations of people and found that the 8.8 percent of global working-age population represented in tourism industries, and the tourism industry represented approximately 12.12 percent of the domestic economic growth. The World Tourism Organization estimated that the year 2020, international tourists will increase to 1.86 billion and 1.2 billion of regional traveling people, while another 378 million will be regional traveling to other regions. Europe represented the classified region with the largest number of 817 million of tourists, East Asia and the Pacific with 397 million, America with 282 million, Africa with 79 million, Middle East with 79 million and South Asia with 20 million with respectively. The World Heritage Tourism Organization also stated that the Asia-Pacific region represented the second ranking in tourism in the world after Europe with a market share of 21.0 percent of the aggregate number of tourists in the world.

Cultural tourism and Sports Office of Uthai Thani announced the 9,954,949 tourists visited Uthai Thani Province with increasingly 12.81% from previous year, 6,287,741 Thai tourists with increasingly 15.81% and 3,866,204 foreigners with increasingly The total revenue 15.091 billion Baht with increasingly 9.63% generated from Thai tourists 7.919 billion Baht with increasingly 16.42%, the foreigners 8.173 billion Baht with increasingly 7.87% with the daily expense 2,150.21 Baht with increasing 2.94%. The most native tourists who visited Uthai Thani represented French, German, American, British and Spanish with respectively.

The research was interested in studying on mentioned important issues of problems, obstacles and development guidelines for cultural heritage tourism in Uthai Thani Province with research's questions as following:

1. How did the problems and obstacles in development of cultural heritage tourism in Uthai Thani Province?



2. What were the cultural heritage tourism development guidelines in Uthai Thani Province?

Research objectives

1. To study problems and obstacles in development of cultural heritage tourism in Uthai Thani Province.
2. To propose the cultural heritage tourism development guidelines in Uthai Thani Province.

Literature Reviews

Uthai Thani City, 417 years of an ancient kingdom was established capital by King Ramathibodi 1 or King Uthong in 1883, consisting of five dynasties, 21 monarchs namely the UThong dynasty, Suphan Bhami dynasty, Sukhothai dynasty, Prasat Thong dynasty and Ban Pluluang dynasty. During 165 years, Uthai Thani was peaceful and allowing a foreign trade dealing that made Uthai Thani the wealthiest city in Asia, but after 12 years after the death of King Ramathibodi II in 2092, Uthai Thani was first invaded by Burmese and many more and dependence on Burma in 1568, but 15 years later, King Naresuan the Great resurrected the independence. Uthai Thani gained peace again and contacted with foreigners 116 years and was destroyed hardly again by the Burmese in 1767. The city was ruined hardly that it was difficult to recover.

The ancient city Uthai Thani, the ancient capital and the significant heritage tourist attractions, had many impressive heritage tourist attractions that many arts and ruins could be seen in this ancient city. There are many attractive archaeological sites that indicated Uthai Thani remained a capital city that had flourished since the past and the most prosperous city on the Indochina Peninsula. The Uthai Thani Historical Park was spacious, located in the heart of Uthai Thani and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site on December 13, 1995. Uthai Thani retained an area of approximately 3,546 square kilometers and located about 174 kilometers from Bangkok.

The business analysis, SWOT represented the managerial tool that analyzed and evaluated the environment and potential of organization, then used the SWOT information to set direction of works and goals. SWOT was an acronym of each word as the following meaning.

Strengths: S meant the various internal factors that contributed the strength of organization and led to be competitive advantages like financial strengths, production, human resources and product quality.

Weaknesses: W meant the various internal factors that caused weakness and led to be disadvantages to competitors, problems or defects within internal conditions.

Opportunities: O meant the various external factors that were beneficial to the organization, which was an opportunity to promote business operations, like the expanding



economy. The difference between strengths and business opportunities was strengths were factors that occurred from the internal environment, while opportunities were the result of the external environment.

Threats: T meant the various external factors that were the obstacles to operations, limitation caused by the external environments.

Research Methodology

The research methodology approached by qualitative study with three steps, the first step, to study problems and obstacles of development in cultural heritage tourist attractions in Uthai Thani Province through interviewing with ten targeted and key informants, the second step, to study the cultural heritage tourist attractions in Uthai Thani Province with the related document and evidence of cultural historical sites in Uthai Thani Province through on site data collection by observation and in-depth interviewing and the preceding step, to analyze, synthesis the obtained information from two steps above and propose the guidelines of development in cultural heritage tourist attractions.

Results

The finding was classified two aspects as following.

1. The finding of problems, obstacles to develop the cultural heritage tourism.

Tourism represented the unclear organizing of provincial tourism administration and no responsible committee in organization, unclear development guidelines of cultural heritage tourist attractions and not attracting to tourists.

The opinions of informants about significant problems and obstacles "the readiness to be a cultural heritage tourism province" represented a matter that had been discussed for a long time but no one dared to make it concrete due to the lack of many factors. At the currently, the development could be considered to be enthusiastic. The people involvement model was developed with the people and having a good highly response. People joined together in the development very well and desired Uthai Thani to remain the cultural tourist attractions because the local possessed adequate potential to remain a cultural tourist destination but lacked of supporting and publicity.

The consideration details of five studied aspects in problems and obstacles in the readiness of communities as following.

1.1 The information providing aspects in heritage tourism, local participation and grouping found there was no training to local leaders and local people from the governmental agencies, private sectors, experts or relevant offices.



1.2 The aspects of heritage tourism attractions, jointed data analysis in potential, constrains, opportunities and risks found that there were the potentials of heritage tourist attractions development to remain cultural heritage and historical sites, but the ancient development of various places were slow because of having permission from the Fine Arts Department. The participants on meetings, creating projects or analyzing various problems were the local leaders and the operational group without the local people.

1.3 The involvement of development of potential and the organizing of heritage tourist attraction found that the lack of committee and operators in systematic tourist attraction development.

1.4 The coordination with relevant agencies and pilot projects found there was no agency or expert to perform the pilot project to local leaders and local people.

1.5 The aspects of evaluation, organization development and training to local people or other local group found there had been no evaluation of the activities regarding tourism and training for local people in heritage tourist destinations.

2. The guidelines of cultural heritage tourism development found two main purposed guidelines to be realistic developed.

2.1 The aspects of potential development, tourism organizing and the weakness solving of heritage tourist attractions by government agencies, private organizations and related agencies, including tourism expert created a participatory process of local people involvement for heritage tourism development, providing knowledge, thinking, creating, sharing and planning with pride of local wisdom and cultural heritage for sustainable tourism development that did not affect changes in the way of life of people in the community.

2.2 The aspects of coordination with relevant agencies, pilot projects performing and evaluation that should organize cultural tourism activities in tourist spots by training people to become familiar with the cultural tourist and specified directions or frameworks as well as physical preparation, external environment. In addition, the development support from government agencies, private sectors and people with experience especially the budget supporting for the local villages.

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