

# Huong Son Cultural and Historical Site

## Alternative site name(s)

Chua Huong, Chua Huong Tich, Perfume pagoda

## Province(s)

Ha Tay

## Area

4,355 ha

## Coordinates

20°34' - 20°38'N, 105°43' - 105°49'E

## Agro-ecological zone

Red River Delta

## Decreed by government

Yes

## Management board established

Yes

## Investment plan prepared

Yes

## VCF eligibility criteria met

C

## Social screening criteria met

None

## Conservation needs assessment prepared

No

## Operational management plan prepared

No

## Tracking tool completed

No

## Map available

Yes

## Management history

The site was included on Decision No. 194/CT of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, dated 9 August 1986, which decreed the establishment of a 500 ha cultural and historical site named Chua Huong Tich (MARD 1997). The cultural and historical site was established to conserve "limestone forest for renowned landscape protection" (Cao Van Sung 1995).

In 1992, an investment plan for the cultural and historical site was prepared by FIPI (Anon. 1992). This investment plan proposed establishing a 4,354 ha cultural and historical site named Chua Huong (Anon. 1992). The investment plan was approved by MARD on 14 April 1993 and by Ha Tay Provincial People's Committee on 6 May 1993, following Decision No. 230-QD/UB (Huong Son Cultural and Historical Site Management Board *in litt.* 2000). The following year, a management board for the cultural and historical site was established by Decision No. 316/QD-UB of Ha Tay Provincial People's Committee, dated 19 March 1994 (Huong Son Cultural and Historical Site Management Board *in litt.* 2003).

The management board currently has six permanent members of staff and 50 contracted workers, based at seven guard stations. The cultural and historical site is currently under the management of Ha Tay Provincial

DARD (Huong Son Cultural and Historical Site Management Board *in litt.* 2003).

Huong Son is included on a list of Special-use Forests to be established by the year 2010, prepared by the FPD of MARD, as a 4,355 ha cultural and historical site (FPD 2003); this list has not yet been approved by the government.

## Topography and hydrology

Huong Son Cultural and Historical site lies 60 km south of Hanoi, in My Duc district, Ha Tay province. The cultural and historical site is centred on Chua Huong Tich, the Perfume Pagoda. The landscape of the cultural and historical site is dominated by Huong Tich mountain, a limestone karst outcrop, which reaches a height of 381 m. To the north and east, the site is bordered by the low coastal plain of the Red River Delta. The lowest altitude in the site is 20 m. The site is situated in the watershed of the Day river.

## Biodiversity values

According to the investment plan (Anon. 1992), the cultural and historical site supports 1,723 ha of limestone forest. A total of 350 species of plants have been recorded at Huong Son, including several that are listed in the *Red Data Book of Vietnam*, such as *Fraxinus chinensis* and *Dalbergia tonkinensis*.

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There is little information available about the importance of Huong Son for animal conservation. However, the site was confirmed to support a small population of the globally critically endangered Delacour's Leaf Monkey *Trachypithecus delacouri* during a survey in 2000 (Nadler *et al.* in prep.).

## Conservation issues

The buffer zone of Huong Son Cultural and Historical Site has a population of 24,000 people, while a further 1,500 people live inside the cultural and historical site (Huong Son Cultural and Historical Site Management Board *in litt.* 2003). The main economic activities at the cultural and historical site are agriculture and tourism.

Huong Son Cultural and Historical Site Management Board (*in litt.* 2000) consider the biggest threats to biodiversity at the site to be exploitation of forest products, forest fire, shifting cultivation, the impact of tourism, and livestock grazing in the forest during floods. As for many popular visitor destinations in Vietnam, solid waste management and pollution are two of the biggest management issues.

## Other documented values

The cultural values, specifically the religious values, of Huong Son are the main reasons for its designation as a cultural and historical site. Chua Huong Tich, the Perfume Pagoda, is a popular destination for pilgrims and other domestic and foreign visitors. Rather than just one pagoda, the site actually contains a complex of pagodas and Buddhist shrines, nestled within the limestone outcrops of Huong Tich mountain. Dodd and Lewis (1996) describe the area as "north Vietnam's most famous pilgrimage site". Additional recreational and amenity values can also be assumed.

## Related projects

No information.

## Conservation needs assessment

A conservation needs assessment has not been conducted for the site.

## Operational management plan

An operational management plan has not been prepared for the site.

## Eligibility against VCF criteria

The site is ineligible for VCF support because it does not meet the criteria for supporting forest biodiversity of international importance. In addition, the site is not under appropriate conservation management.

Criterion	Eligibility
A <sub>I</sub>	
A <sub>II</sub>	
B <sub>I</sub>	Decision No. 194/CT, dated 09/08/86
B <sub>II</sub>	
B <sub>III</sub>	Under provincial management
C <sub>I</sub>	Management board established
C <sub>II</sub>	

## Social screening requirements

A social screening report has not been prepared for the site.

Criterion	Eligibility
A	
B	
C	
D	

## Literature sources

Anon. (1992) [Investment plan for Huong Son (Chua Huong) Cultural and Historical Site]. Hanoi: Forest Inventory and Planning Institute. In Vietnamese.

Dodd, J. and Lewis, M. (1996) Vietnam: the rough guide. London: Rough Guides.

Nadler, T., Nguyen Xuan Dang, Lormee, N and Momberg, F. (in prep.) Vietnam primate conservation status review part 2: leaf monkeys. Hanoi: FFI Vietnam Programme.