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## The issue of preserving and developing fish sauce craft villages in Phu Quoc Island - Kien Giang province

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### Abstract

Phu Quoc island in southwestern sea of Vietnam, where it is natural for many things and have a real important position on the field all. Over 100 years ago, the Vietnamese residents who have settled here and formed large communities. In Phu Quoc, the trade village fish sauce production occupations are considered the most important traditional craft, providing income for local people and is regarded as one of the unique traditional crafts of Vietnam. In 2013, Phu Quoc fish sauce protected across Europe. After many years, Phu Quoc fish sauce has changed constantly, the protection and development is a very important job in the current period and in future to Phu Quoc is truly a destination important in Vietnam and Asia.

**Keywords:** Phu Quoc island, village fish sauce, preserving and developing, Vietnam

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### 1. Introduction

Phu Quoc is an island located in the Southwest Sea, where nature has blessed it with many products and has an important position in all fields, being a key point in tourism development in the Mekong Delta and the whole country. More than 100 years ago, Vietnamese residents settled here and formed a large community. In Phu Quoc, the fish sauce industry is considered the most important traditional industry, bringing income to local people and is considered one of the unique traditional industries of Vietnam... In 2013, the Phu Quoc fish sauce brand was protected throughout Europe for its geographical origin. Therefore, research on the history of Phu Quoc fish sauce village is meaningful in studying local culture in Phu Quoc - the first island city of Vietnam, a unique local culture in the island culture of our country. The traditional craft villages here are not only important tourist attractions of Phu Quoc in the context of Vietnam's sea and island tourism developing strongly, but also places to educate history and traditions for local children in the process of integration and development.

In addition, today, facing changes in the economy, society and environment, Phu Quoc fish sauce is facing great difficulties in maintaining and preserving its craft village, so the need for an in-depth study to propose solutions to help Phu Quoc preserve its craft village is a necessary and important requirement not only for the Mekong Delta but also for the whole country, so the topic has scientific significance in both theory and practice.

Current domestic and foreign studies mostly focus on economic and commercial development without clearly mentioning historical factors and making necessary recommendations for craft village preservation.

### 2. Research Results and Discussion

#### 2.1. About fish sauce production in Phu Quoc Island

The fish sauce making profession in Phu Quoc has existed for more than 100 years, brought by immigrants from Central Vietnam. After a long development process, Phu Quoc fish sauce is one of the most famous traditional products of Vietnam <sup>[1]</sup>.

To make Phu Quoc fish sauce, the most important thing is to make a fish sauce storage tank, or locally called "fish sauce tank", a house with many fish sauce storage tanks is called a "tank house". To make a fish sauce tank, you have to go through many stages, the most important of which is to choose good trees, with a high-tech process to assemble them into fish sauce tanks.

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In the past, when they started making fish sauce, local people often made fish sauce tanks from "boi loi" trees. The pieces of wood were assembled together with "May thread".

Regarding the raw materials for making fish sauce, the best fish sauce must be made from "anchovies" because this is a small fish, easy to decompose and has no scales. There are many types of anchovies: striped anchovies, chalk anchovies, red anchovies, flat anchovies, chalk-striped anchovies, charcoal anchovies. Among the types, striped anchovies and charcoal anchovies are the best, so local residents often choose this type as the main ingredient to make fish sauce.

During the French colonial period, fish sauce in Cua Can commune was more delicious than Duong Dong commune, because Cua Can had many of these types of fish while Duong Dong had many red anchovies and chalk-striped anchovies.

Regarding the method of producing fish sauce, fish sauce makers mix 2-3 parts of fish with one part of salt and leave it for 6 months or more to have delicious anchovy fish sauce. The longer it is left, the more protein it contains but the less aromatic it is, sometimes up to 1 year (nowadays, almost all fish sauce factories in Phu Quoc leave it for 1 year). According to local folklore, there is a type of fish sauce that people bury in the ground for a few years, when it turns black it is called "lu" fish sauce, used to treat hiccups and keep warm when going to sea <sup>[6]</sup>.

In 1973, a large barrel cost 210,000 Dong to buy fish and needed 4,050kg of salt, each large barrel produced 80 barrels (the type of barrel that collects finished fish sauce) of essence (or called "nhi" fish sauce), 350 barrels of medium fish sauce, each barrel had 19 liters. During the French colonial period, fish sauce had a lot of fish but little salt, later the French sold salt to fish sauce makers at a cheap price, from there there was a lot of salt so the quality was not as good as in the early period of making fish sauce. Before 1945, the salt sold by the French was taken from the islands of Hon Khoi - Ba Ria area, every year in December there were many north winds, many groups of junks guided by French ships docked at Phu Quoc port. White grain salt contained in heavy bags 60kg for 1 Dong. After 1945, salt was taken from Can Giot area in Cambodia. After the Geneva Agreement, local people bought salt in Saigon. In 1973, the price of 1kg of salt was 15 Dong, in January 1974 it was 17.5 Dong. Occasionally, there were salt boats from Phu Hai - Phan Thiet selling at a cheaper price, 1 Dong per kg, but this was very rare <sup>[6]</sup>.

## 2.2. The issue of preserving and developing Phu Quoc fish sauce craft village

### The issue of preservation

The issue of climate change is an important challenge in preserving Phu Quoc fish sauce craft village. According to the United Nations' recommendations, Vietnam is one of the 5 countries heavily affected by climate change, so the impact of climate change on Phu Quoc fish sauce craft village is very large. In recent years, the output of seafood in general and anchovies in particular has decreased significantly. According to a survey in 2013, the output of anchovies has decreased by more than 25% compared to 2005. The phenomenon of warming sea water threatening the reproduction of anchovies has been taken into account (there is currently no specific research to prove this, but there have been scientific publications showing that warming sea water poses a great threat to the habitat of marine life). This shows

that climate change is a cause that needs urgent research to implement the conservation factor of Phu Quoc fish sauce craft village <sup>[2]</sup>. Unpredictable weather factors such as storms and tornadoes also occur frequently, threatening the output of fishing. Therefore, in order to implement the conservation of Phu Quoc fish sauce craft village, it is necessary to develop a specific climate change response scenario for local craft villages in addition to the current general planning of the whole country.

The increase in the number of means and techniques for catching anchovies to make fish sauce is a factor that causes the anchovy output to decline. Previously, there were not many anchovy fishing boats on the island, and fishing was seasonal, and the output was high, so the issue of conservation was not taken into account. Currently, the anchovy output is decreasing, the number of fishing boats and storage boats is increasing (boats with a capacity of 50 tons to 100 tons are gradually being replaced by boats with a capacity of 200 tons to 300 tons), fishing means are becoming more and more modern, fishing all year round, this leads to competition in fishing, plundering, causing the anchovy output to decrease more and more seriously, pushing up the price... Recently, Chinese traders have been buying dried anchovies at sky-high prices, causing more and more competition in fishing, the anchovies cannot reproduce in time, this threatens and harms the conservation of Phu Quoc fish sauce village. I think that the authorities at all levels need to quickly intervene, plan production and fishing areas, plan fishing times to preserve marine resources, avoid the current rampant fishing situation, and at the same time have appropriate policies to avoid foreign traders with bad intentions, threatening the existence of Phu Quoc fish sauce village.

The issue of moving "fish sauce factories" out of the center of Duong Dong town. The relocation policy has been set by Phu Quoc district, the factories in the town center, along Duong Dong river will be moved about 7km further along Duong Dong river to avoid large amounts of wastewater and avoid air pollution when transporting fish sauce and to facilitate the bottling of finished products, however, currently in the middle of this river there is a very low Hung Vuong bridge located on the town's main artery, so the relocation is impossible, the construction of a new, higher, more convenient bridge is very important, so it is necessary to plan a specific time and a suitable route for the relocation, this is an urgent task, Phu Quoc is a locality that moves every day, develops rapidly, so if you want to preserve the craft village well associated with tourism activities, it is necessary to quickly and harmoniously carry out this relocation.

### The issue of preserving and developing

The issue of developing resources for Phu Quoc fish sauce craft villages to serve local tourism development. According to Decision QD178/TTCP, Phu Quoc will be a national key tourist area, and will be an administrative-economic special zone in the future, so Phu Quoc fish sauce craft village needs to be given due attention. When conservation issues are focused on, the direction of development will be quickly opened up, Phu Quoc fish sauce is a strength, a comparative advantage for Phu Quoc tourism, so the development of Phu Quoc fish sauce is the top important condition to bring Phu Quoc revenue from production, business and service activities.

Maintaining the Phu Quoc fish sauce brand that was protected throughout Europe in August 2013. Because there are many factories operating at the same time, competition inevitably occurs. If the quality issue is not focused on and quantity and profit are pursued, it will easily lead to the loss of the image and brand of Phu Quoc fish sauce. Currently, Thai manufacturers are still competing, even impersonating the Phu Quoc fish sauce brand, so developing product quality, investing in modern technology according to global standards, strict bottling processes, business activities, trading, and exporting, if supported and enthusiastically assisted by the authorities, will be a great driving force for the development of Phu Quoc fish sauce village<sup>[3]</sup>. Developing Phu Quoc fish sauce craft village is closely linked to tourism activities on the island, considering this a prerequisite for development orientation

Phu Quoc is the pearl island of Vietnam, a national key area for tourism and island economic development, in which the "smokeless industry" of tourism is the most important, so developing craft villages needs to be closely linked to tourism activities, it is necessary to diversify Phu Quoc fish sauce products, focus on exploiting craft village tourism, craft village history and focus on preserving craft villages<sup>[4]</sup>. Strengthening education for island residents about the importance of craft villages and pride in local craft villages. It can be said that if Phu Quoc is a string of pearls on the Southwest sea, then Phu Quoc fish sauce craft village is the brightest, rarest pearl that needs to be preserved and developed, that development is not only for the craft village itself but also for the prosperity of Phu Quoc island and Vietnam's tourism in the future.

### 3. Conclusion

From the past to the present, when mentioning the Phu Quoc fish sauce brand, people from all over the country remember the unique and characteristic flavor that not every region has. The rise and fall of Phu Quoc fish sauce over time are closely linked to the development of the pearl island in the southwest of the country. Phu Quoc fish sauce is a vivid expression of the resilient will in the face of nature, the sophistication in cuisine of Vietnamese immigrants through many generations who came here to explore, mentioning Phu Quoc fish sauce is mentioning the pride of those born on this island. Today, facing the strong changes of the country, Phu Quoc fish sauce is gradually rising higher and further with the country, contributing to enriching the beloved homeland of the sea and islands. Preserving and developing the resources of Phu Quoc fish sauce craft village is a necessary and extremely important task in the orientation of tourism development in Phu Quoc, a development center of tourism in the country and the whole region in the future.

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