

Where the water falls wonderfully

Not far from the urban areas of Tha Ngio municipality lie refreshingly natural settings

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During the hot-weather season, one thing that can cool you down is to dip yourself in water. In Trang, there are at least two waterfalls locals like to visit, both located not far from the city. First is the newly launched Bo Ched Luk waterfall, or Seven-Ponds waterfall.



“We officially opened the waterfall to the public on Feb 14 this year. We named it after its geography because we found seven ponds along the waterfall,” said Thamsatat Keesoon, the mayor of the Tha Ngio municipality.

The ponds may remind one of those at Sam Phan Bok in Ubon Ratchathani. The largest pond they found in the waterfall is 3m in diameter while the deepest hole is 4.5m, he said.

The waterfall originated in the Banthat mountain range. The most convenient way to reach it is to ride a boat from the Khlong Tha Ngio Reservoir in Huai Yot, about 40km north of the city. The boat-cruise service is owned and operated by the Tha Ngio municipality. It

aims to promote natural beauty as a tourist attraction in Trang.

About 16 of us boarded two motorboats from the bank of the reservoir. Locals have their fish pens in the lake. They raise Nile tilapia, red Nile tilapia and naked catfish.

“We allow up to 100 fish pens in the reservoir in order to maintain the quality of the water. So far, there are 80 fish pens,” said the mayor.

The reservoir was initiated by King Bhumibol Adulyadej in 1990 to store water from Tha Ngio River for farmers during the dry season. The reservoir can hold 18.5 million cubic metres and can supply water for irrigation to five tambon, covering 60,853 rai of farmland, according to the mayor.

Before the launch of boat cruise, locals can visit the reservoir for a picnic. They used to paddle boats and ride a banana boat to entertain tourists. But for tourist safety, the municipality has stopped the service and offers the cruise instead. After 10 minutes, our boats

stopped at a concrete pier, where we would start our trekking to see the waterfall.

The trail is set along a stream. Sometimes we had to climb river rocks, slide down slippery slopes or walk over a dead tree to advance.

“We don’t want to build any concrete walkway in the forest because it will not blend in with nature. We want visitors to admire the nature as it is,” said the mayor.

The trail was not difficult to walk, but it could make anyone sweat profusely. Fortunately, there were no leeches. After 20 minutes of trekking, the mayor told us to look for four ponds below a viewpoint.

The ponds scattered around in the cascade. I didn’t want to believe that we’d reached the waterfall because it is not high. In fact, it looked to me like nothing more than a strong stream.

One thing I admired is the richness of nature. Amid the birds’ chirping, I spotted small flowers, mushrooms, a toad sitting quietly on a rock and schools of small fish in the stream. I also saw a snake swimming across the waterway.

A municipality staff member told me that sometimes he was surprised to see visitors with snorkels. They swam in the stream to see fish, he said.

On the way back, we climbed up a little cliff to see the remaining three ponds. Those who love adventure can climb the mountain further. In the dense forest is the remains of a large communist camp site, said the mayor.

He said Ban Tha Ngio used to be a red zone where there was a major clash between the authorities and members of the resistance in 1980. Students and rebels fled to the forest and set up a large camp from 1976 to 1984. They dug tunnels, farmed vegetables and grew rice. There is still a broken milling machine in the forest.

“The communist camp is located about a few kilometres from the origin of the Bo Ched Luk waterfall in Ban Sai Ya Kha, in the protected area of the Khao Pu-Khao Ya National Park,” he said.

The site is not fully developed to be an attraction, and visitors must have permission and a guide, he

noted.

Another popular waterfall among locals in Trang is Kachong. It is located in the Khao Chong Botanical Garden in Na Yong, about 20km east of the city.

The waterfall is easy to reach. It is located only 500m from the car park, and about 1km from the headquarters of the botanical garden.

A historical record shows that the waterfall was visited by at least two kings: Rama VII in 1928 and Rama IX in 1959. It was the year King Bhumibol Adulyadej visited the South for the first time with Her Majesty Queen Sirikit. Their Majesties made the royal visit to Kachong waterfall, which is also known as Ton Plio waterfall, on March 16, 1959.

They also had their initials depicted on the large stone below the initials of King Rama VII.

When you reach Kachong waterfall, look for the stone on your right near the top of the waterfall. You will find the large white letters. You can also climb the mountain to reach the stone, but the trail is quite steep.

The waterfall has several pools where visitors can swim or dip themselves in the cold water. There is not yet a rule prohibiting visitors to bring food, so you will also find locals bringing a mat, food and drinks for picnics near the waterfall.

From time to time, finding a chance to dip yourself in natural water will refresh you and maybe even somehow make you feel young again.