Cultural Landscape Analysis of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, Chiang Mai

Nantawan Muangyai and Vitul Lieorungruang

Abstract

Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, one of Thailand’s great cultural landscapes, is the 24th national park located in Chiang Mai Province. This site can meet the international criteria due to its qualities in natural aspects as it is a place of biodiversity, along with endangered and rare species which can be found here. This site becomes a good place for the visit because of various natural and cultural attractions, especially Phra That Doi Suthep Temple, a highlighted destination. In addition, tribal people have also lived in the area, especially Hmong people, whose culture is not only unique, but also so authentic that it can show how their ways of life have been since their first settlement. Thus, conservation is important for this valuable cultural landscape, both natural and cultural aspects due to its potential to be the world heritage. It is, moreover, worthwhile being studied so as to retain its cultural significance.

Key Words: cultural landscapes, Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, biodiversity
Background and context of the site

Context of the site:

Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is the 24th national park, located in Chiang Mai Province. This site is on the top rank of national park for visitors because of various selections for the visit, both natural and cultural features. The place is very meaningful, especially its historical and archaeological significance concerning the establishment of the city of Chiang Mai and its history of more than 700 years. In addition, local people have lived in the area side by side with Hmong people, near the royal residence, with the Ranger Unit for the security reasons.

Doi Suthep-Pui National Park study area covers Doi Suthep and Doi Pui mountain ranges which are dominated on the western part of Chiang Mai city.

Physiographic context

Topography: Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is a part of the greater Thanon Thongchai mountain ranges. It is characterized by complex features and high cliffs, with a geological profile of granite, quartzite and sand stone (The Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2000). Owing to its mountainous and forest features, this national park is the source of several rivers, streams, and basins providing water for use and consumption for the city of Chiang Mai.

Climate: Because of the high altitude, the weather on the upper slopes of the mountain ranges is cool and pleasant all year even in hot season. An average temperature is about 20-23°C. In cool season, the temperature may drop to 6°C in February. August and September are the wettest months with daily rain (http://www.Doichai\Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, Royal Forest Department, Online Reservation for Accommodations of Thai National Parks.htm).

Flora and Fauna:

a.) Forests: There are different altitudes from 330 metres to
1,685 metres ASL, causing a great variety of flora in the national park. Some rare plants are found here. The plant community consists of five different types of forests in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park:

1. Diptocarpus forests are found at an altitude lower than 800 metres ASL, or around the hills and dry mountain ridges, particularly on the east and south side of the national park.

2. Mixed Deciduous forests are found at an altitude of 330-950 metres ASL, on the plains at the foot of the mountain.

3. Dry Evergreen forests are scattered at an altitude over 600 metres ASL in valleys and by water sources with high moisture around Monthathan Waterfall, Sanpayam Waterfall, and Mae Luad Waterfall. Trees are taller than 35 metres.

4. Hill Evergreen forests are found from an altitude of 1,000 metres ASL and cover most of the areas of the Doi Suthep-Pui National Park up to the peak of Doi Pui Mountain.

5. Pine forests are found around Doi Pui Mountain and areas nearby at an altitude above 1,000 metres ASL along the ridges of the mountains.

b.) Birds: Doi Suthep-Pui National Park comprises the mountain ranges with altitudes ranging from 330-1,685 metres ASL, rendering it an area of biodiversity and a location for various kinds of birds. The mountain ranges provide habitats for over 326 species of birds (http://www.Doi Suthep\Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, Royal Forest Department, Online Reservation for Accommodations of Thai National Parks.htm).

c.) Wildlife: Most of wild animals in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park are small ones since the bigger ones had been heavily hunted. There are about 31 species of mammals remaining. Some rare species of amphibian can only be found in four localities in
Thailand, and one is in this national park (http://www.Doisutheph\DOI SUTHEP NATURE STUDY CENTER.htm).

d.) Insects: They are in great number, especially butterflies. It is reported that there are over 500 species of day butterflies (The Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2000).

Accessibility: Car may be the most convenient way to Doi Suthep-Pui National Park. Motorbike is suggested for adventurous visitors. Rental car and motorbike services are provided in the downtown. Red -truck taxis can generally be found and hired.

Places (starting from the access point to the peak of Doi Pui Mountain, approximately 30 kilometres):
1. Doi Suthep Nature Study Center, Chiang Mai University
2. Chiang Mai Zoo
3. Signs indicating the boundary of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park
4. A memorial statue of Khru Ba Sri Vichai
5. Huay Kaew Waterfall
6. Sri Soda Temple
7. Seismology research stations (Chiang Mai Seismological Station and the Royal Thai Navy Seismic Research Station)
8. Huay Kaew Checkpoint 1
9. Wang Bua Ban Waterfall
10. Monthathan Waterfall
11. Pha Lad Temple
12. Forest Fire Control Station
13. View point and rest area 1
14. Sirindhorn Observatory, Chiang Mai University
15. Huay Rub Sadet Waterfall
16. Pra That Doi Suthep Temple
17. Doi Suthep-Pui National Park Headquarters
18. Sri Sang Wan School
19. Television transmission stations by the Public Relations Departments, and the Mass Communication of Thailand
20. Water supply stations
21. Helicopter pad
22. Bhubing Palace
23. Doi Pui Research Station 1, Kasetsart University
24. Ranger Unit
25. Doi Pui Research Station 2, Kasetsart University
26. Doi Pui Hmong village
27. Sri Nehru School
28. Doi Suthep Peak: San Ku Archaeological Site
29. View point and rest area 2
30. Doi Pui Checkpoint 2
31. Khun Chang Khian Hmong village
32. Doi Pui Peak

Fig. 1 Doi Suthep-Pui National Park location map (drawn by Vitul L., 27-06-06)
Cultural context

Despite all the stunning natural beauty, the main reason many visitors come to Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is to visit Phra That Doi Suthep Temple. For Thais, this site is a must for the visit, as it is a sacred place to pay homage to the Lord Buddha’s relic at the temple, a venerable and venerated temple that is one of the most holy Buddhist sites in Thailand. This is a major pilgrimage destination.

This temple is a sacred place of both indigenous and local Chiang Mai people. Furthermore, Doi Suthep Mountain and Chiang Mai urban planning are related to each other, due to Feng Shui concept (Lieorungruang, 2000).

Fig. 2 Phra That Doi Suthep Temple from the bird’s eye view
(from “Thailand’s Chiang Mai, the Bird’s Eye Views”)

Historical context

San Ku, an archaeological site on the peak of Doi Suthep Mountain, is believed to be used for ritual during Queen Chammathewi period as Hariphunchai artefacts were found (Na Chiang Mai, 1999).
More than 500 years ago, the traditional arrangement of temples started at Fai Hin Temple at the foot of the mountain, then to Pha Lad Temple, which is in the middle, and finally to Phra That Doi Suthep Temple on the highest point as there is the relic of the Lord Buddha. People walked up more than 10 kilometres to make merit and pay homage to the relic. Khru Ba Sri Vichai, a local monk, thought that the temple needed a better access. With people’s cooperation, the new road, for vehicles as well, was finished within six months in 1934. There is a statue honouring Khru Ba Sri Vichai at the base of the mountain as he was the one who made it more convenient and comfortable to Doi Suthep Mountain. However, the old hiking trail does still exist, but has not been used anymore.

After the creation of the new road, the new arrangement of temples starts at Sri Soda Temple, initiated by Khru Ba Sri Vichai.
as well, then to Pha Lad Temple, which is in the middle, and finally to Phra That Doi Suthep Temple.

**Analysis of the site history and existing conditions**

**Landscape characteristics and cultural landscape units (CLUs)** (http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications):

**Natural systems and features**

Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is a flourishing forest ecosystem, consisting of diptocarpus forests to tropical evergreen forests and countless flowers. Inhabiting this bountiful biosphere is a number of animal species, mostly birds and small mammals.

**Fig. 4** Spatial organization and land use in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park (drawn by Vitul L., 27-06-06)

**Spatial organization**

The overall space of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is well-organized by the Department of National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, thus the check points are prepared for security and prevention of risks that may occur. That is why people are not allowed to enter some areas in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park.
Some areas served for religious and educational purposes are open to public, such as temples. However, these organizations must be responsible for the areas they undertake.

Most area of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park specifies the exact time for people to visit, generally 8 am – 6 pm for recreational areas like parks and waterfalls, and 8.30 am – 4.30 pm for some offices. However, for some special occasions, like the temples’ yearly ceremony, people are allowed to stay late.

Some areas are used as residential area, such as Hmong and some old local villages as they have been living there for a long time, before the area is nominated as a national park. There are also houses for the staff of the national park. Visitors who want to stay overnight need to ask for permission from the national park’s staff for camping in the area provided, or make a reservation for guest houses provided.

One area, Bhubing Palace, is the royal area for the members of the royal family and their guests, including the servants and royal guards only.

Fig. 5 Doi Pui Hmong village (taken by Nantawan M., 27-06-06)
Land use

Most of the area, 100,662.50 Rais of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, is the protected area, restrictedly used for nature conservation. As the area is steep, every kind of construction must be permitted by the Department of National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (http://www.Doi Suthep/Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, Royal Forest Department, Online Reservation for Accommodations of Thai National Parks.htm). Some areas are allowed for recreational and tourism purposes such as parks, waterfalls, nature study trails like bird watching, mountain biking. Some areas are for public and service such as water supply stations, reservoirs, and the national park’s check points.

Cultural traditions

A. Buddhism and beliefs:

Fai Hin Temple, Sri Soda Temple, Pha Lad Temple, and Phra That Doi Suthep Temple are places of Lan Na culture and traditions, especially Phra That Doi Suthep Temple, a sacred site to Thais with its history. It is considered being one of the holiest areas in Thailand. Lan Na-style buildings, Viharns and the ornaments are authentic and distinctive.

Generally, at the temples, people behave politely and dress properly. They take off shoes when going into the inner part of the temples. Phra That Doi Suthep Temple is the most significant place for religious purposes. Both local people and visitors come to pay homage to the relic of the Lord Buddha. On Maka Buja and Visaka Buja’s Day, local people walk up to the temple, they do not use the cable car like tourists do.

B. High-hierarchical places:

The buildings of Bhubing Palace, including the overall landscape, are very well constructed and decorated with well-selected materials. This is a vacation palace for the royal family in the winter. There are exact office hours, 8.30 am – 4.30 pm, for the
visit. Some areas are not allowed to enter as they are personal areas, especially when the members of the royal family or their guests are staying. There are rules and regulations when visiting, especially how to behave. The guards and officials wear the uniform. Visitors must dress properly.

C. Governmental offices:

The offices including rest areas of the Department of National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and other offices like those of Chiang Mai University, Kasetsart University, Royal Thai Navy Seismic Research Station, and Chiang Mai Seismological Station are formal. The buildings are simple, but strong, with not much ornament, from easily found materials, as these buildings focus on the use. There are exact office hours for their offices, 8.30 am – 4.30 pm, and usually 8 am – 6 pm for recreational areas.

There are rules and regulations when visiting each attraction, such as at waterfalls and parks. The staff of the national park as well as the officials of other organizations always wear the uniform, as they can be easily noticed and asked for help by visitors.

![Fig. 6 Bhubing Palace (taken by Vitul L., 27-06-06)](image-url)
D. Vernacular buildings:

Hmong villages are vernacular and compatible with their traditions and environment, including its well-protected design for cold weather. Hilltribe people pay respect to their ancestors in their village, so they do not move to anywhere else. Hmong people have been living there, in the location of more than 1,300 metres ASL (Hongwiwat, 2000), before the area becomes the national park. This can be one reason they got permission from the authority to stay in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park. Doi Pui Hmong village is also visitors’ destination.

Fig. 7-8 Vernacular architecture in Doi Pui Hmong village (taken by Vitul L., 27-06-06)

Cluster arrangement

A. Religious places: (starting from the foot to the peak of the mountain)

The historic foot trail to the top of the mountain was for religious purposes and local people’s beliefs. The traditional arrangement of temples starts at Fai Hin Temple at the foot of the mountain, then to Pha Lad Temple, which is in the middle, and finally to Phra That Doi Suthep Temple on the highest point as there is the relic of the Lord Buddha.

Eventually when the road for vehicles was constructed in 1934, Sri Soda Temple has become the first temple. Fai Hin Temple and Pha Lad Temple has been disregarded. Finally Pha Lad Temple was abandoned.
San Ku, a more than 700-year-old archaeological site, is on the peak of Doi Suthep Mountain, due to the belief that the sacred place must be on top. The place had also been left unmaintained then was excavated by the Department of Fine Arts.

B. Governmental offices: (starting from the foot to the peak of the mountain)
1. There is the sign showing the entrance to Doi Suthep-Pui National Park.
2. The check point 1 is prepared to check visitors and prevent risks that may occur.
3. Information centre, with staff and guards, are generally found at recreational areas, such as waterfalls.
4. Forest Fire Control Station is prepared and ready for any circumstance.
5. The rest area and view point is prepared for visitors.
6. Doi Suthep-Pui National Park Headquarters can help visitors by giving general information, including providing accommodations, but visitors should make reservation in advance.
7. Water supply stations are for organizations and people in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park.
8. The Ranger Unit is also prepared to prevent unwanted turmoil that may occur.
9. Another rest area and view point is found near the peak of Doi Pui Mountain.
10. The check point 2 is also prepared at the Peak of Doi Pui Mountain, the highest point of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, for security reasons.
11. There is another sign showing the boundary of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park at the foot of the mountain on the exit lane.

C. Residential areas:
The areas are specified into areas of government officials such as those of Sirindhorn Observatory by Chiang Mai
University, Research Stations by Kasetsart University, Royal Thai Navy Seismic Research Station, and Chiang Mai Seismological Station.

Some areas have been used by traditional and hilltribe villagers as they have been living in the mountain ranges before the areas become the national park.

In addition, the national park gives permission to only traditional and hilltribe villagers, and the staff of the national park and organizations to enter Doi Suthep-Pui National park before or after the specific time for visitors.

**Fig. 9** Shops in Hmong village, main local income from tourism (taken by Vitul L., 27-06-06)

**Circulation**

Traditionally, there was the foot trail for people to walk from Fai Hin Temple to Pha Lad Temple, and finally to Phra That Doi Suthep Temple. This old route has still been existed, but cannot be used anymore. However, the use of this route to Phra That Doi Suthep Temple is the inspiration for local people at present to walk
up, along the present road, to pay homage to Phra That Doi Suthep Temple on Visaka Buja’s Day every year.

The present road, initiated by Khru Ba Sri Vichai, can reach Doi Pui Hmong village. But inside the village, the roads are still traditional, they are narrow and small for villagers and their bikes and motorbikes.

Phra That Doi Suthep Temple, visitors’ primary destination when visiting Chiang Mai, can be reached by the road from the city centre. From the temple’s parking lots, at the temple base, visitors can either climb 309 steps to reach the pagodas or use the cable car. Other places and attractions can be reached by car, mountain bike, or even walk.

In addition, there is the study and survey for the possibility of creating new ways for visitors to go to Phra That Doi Suthep Temple, such as the skylift or the cable car, as the number of visitors to Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is very high. However, the conclusion for this has not been made yet as there is the disagreement between local people and governmental organizations.

**Buildings and structures**

A. Temples:

a.) Phra That Doi Suthep Temple is in Lan Na architectural style. Some artefacts have been existing since the temple was first constructed.

b.) Pha Lad Temple is in Burmese architectural style, but has been abandoned. However, this temple can be considered as a good archaeological site.

c.) Sri Soda Temple is in contemporary Lan Na architectural style. There are also some buildings in a modern style, such as the building used as school for hilltribe monks.

d.) Fai Hin Temple is in Lan Na architectural style. Some remains have been existing.
B. Palace:
Bhuping Palace is in traditional Thai style. There is a group of buildings. The upper part is the residential area for the members of the royal family. The lower part is for the servants. There are also some houses located separately, used by each individual member who is the owner of the house. The guest houses are prepared to serve the royal guests. Most of the buildings are made of wood. Gardens and landscape are done neatly (http://www.palaces.thai.net/index_bb.htm).

C. Offices:
Most of the offices, for example Forest Fire Control Station, Sirindhorn Observatory by Chiang Mai University, Doi Suthep-Pui National Park Headquarters, water supply stations, Doi Pui Research Stations, are in modern style, focused on their use. There is not much decoration. The materials are easily found in order to be convenient for repairing and maintenance.

D. Schools:
There are only few primary and secondary schools in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, such as Sang Wan Wittaya School near Phra That Doi Suthep Temple, Chao Phor Luang School in Doi Pui Hmong village, and Sri Nehru School in Khun Chang Khian Hmong village. They are small and simple, made of easily-found materials such as wood.

Views and vistas
Along the road climbing the mountain ranges, visitors can take a panorama look of the city of Chiang Mai at the view points and rest areas, as well as at Phra That Doi Suthep Temple’s terrace.

At the view point 2, visitor can see the south of Chiang Mai in different perspective as most are mountainous areas, with the peak of Doi Pui Mountain and Doi Pui Hmong village in the valley.

However, at the same time, Doi Suthep-Pui National Park can remarkably be seen from every point of the city, especially Phra That Doi Suthep, the symbol of Chiang Mai.
Nantawan Muangyai and Vitul Lieorungruang

**Constructed water features**

Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is a good water supply source for the use and consumption all year round for people in both the national park and in the city of Chiang Mai. Built water features have been prepared, especially in villages, such as reservoirs.

One reservoir is constructed in Bhubing Palace. There are moving fountains inside the reservoir, created by the Tourism Authority of Thailand, for aesthetic and recreational purposes. The water kept there is for utilitarian function in the palace.

There are also water supply stations for organizations, offices, and people in the national park.

***Fig. 10-11*** The city of Chiang Mai from the view point 1 and mountainous view with Doi Pui Hmong village from the view point 2 (taken by Nantawan M., 27-06-06)

***Fig. 12*** Reservoir in Doi Pui Hmong village (taken by Nantawan M., 27-06-06)
Small-scale features

Most features, mostly pieces of sculpture, found in the temples, including the ornaments, can indicate how old and authentic those features are. Some old features in the national park, such as old signs are also found.

Fig. 13 One of ancient meaningful features in temples symbolizing people’s beliefs (taken by Vitul L., 27-06-06)

Fig. 14-15 Historic evidences: the remains of the bridges and the well in Pha Lad Temple (taken by Vitul L., 27-06-06)
Archaeological sites

San Ku is an archaeological site since 8th century. (Na Chiang Mai, 1999). It is on the peak of Doi Suthep Mountain due to the belief that holy thing and sacred place must be on the highest point. There are remnants of two big buildings portraying the attempt of people’s struggle to move and construct very big buildings with no technology at that time. This can also be the implication for the importance of people’s beliefs and ritual in the past.

Pha Lad Temple can also be another archaeological site of more than 500 years old. The remains found in the temple show well its prosperity in the past. This temple also reveals the importance of nature that it is in the forest, but people did not destroy nature, they adapted their lives to nature instead.

Fig. 16-17 Hmong utensils—cultural evidences in the folk museum in Doi Pui Hmong village (taken by Vitul L., 27-06-06)

Fig. 18-19 Historical remnants at San Ku (taken by Vitul L., 27-06-06)
Settlement themes:

Settlement themes of Chiang Mai people that are related to Doi Suthep-Pui National Park can be categorized into following aspects:

Landscape characteristics and historic/cultural context
Theme 1: Pre Lan Na Kingdom, Lua settlement period (1,400 years ago)

Wiang Jed Lin and Wiang Bua, at the foot of Doi Suthep Mountain, used to be the settlement of Lua, the ethnic people. Doi Suthep Mountain, or Doi Oi Chang Mountain at that time, was a sacred place for indigenous as it was the place of one hermit.

In addition, Hariphunchai’s artefacts were found at the archaeological site, San Ku, on the peak of Doi Suthep Mountain, and also many places in Chiang Mai. This can be the implication for the prosperity of Hariphunchai ritual, culture, and civilization during that period.

Theme 2: Early Lan Na Kingdom, King Mangrai period (700 years ago)

Doi Suthep Mountain, the mountain in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, has played very important role to Chiang Mai since the past. More than 700 years ago, King Mangrai founded the proper location for a settlement at the foot of Doi Suthep Mountain as it was an ideal location with good water resources.

Fig. 24 The location of the city of Chiang Mai, with natural resources from Doi Suthep Mountain, Huay Jed Lin (the seven-fountain stream), and the Ping River (drawn by Vitul L., 27-06-06)
It can be assumed that King Mangrai planned the city by making a thorough geographic exploration by considering natural waterways that have already existed. He rearranged them to make the city perfect in every aspect, reflecting the engineering wisdom and technology in constructing the city plan (Lieorungruang, 2000).

Theme 3: Late Lan Na Kingdom, Phraya Kawila period (200 years ago)

Unfortunately, Lan Na Kingdom went into decline during 1525-1558 when turmoil and inequality occurred. Finally, Chiang Mai was captured by the Burmese in 1558. Lan Na Kingdom collapsed and became deserted, ruled by the Burmese during 1558-1774. There was no construction of any new temple and no restoration of the old ones. Also, Doi Suthep Mountain was in the dark age. Everything on the mountain was abandoned. It was the place of wildlife only. Most of the citizens escaped the war tragedy to various places. However, the Burmese capture had very little impact on the architecture of Chiang Mai (Lieorungruang, 2000). When Phraya Kawila became the ruler of Chiang Mai, the city gradually came to prosperity, including Doi Suthep Mountain.

Theme 4: Khru Ba Sri Vichai period (80 years ago)

More than 500 years ago, people walked up more than 10 kilometres to make merit and pay homage to the relic of the Lord Buddha at Phra That Doi Suthep Temple. Khru Ba Sri Vichai, a local monk, thought that the temple needed a better access. With people’s cooperation, the new road, for vehicles as well, was finished within six months in April 1935. (Na Chiang Mai, 1999). There is a statue honouring Khru Ba Sri Vichai at the base of the mountain as he was the one who made it more convenient and comfortable to Doi Suthep Mountain. However, the old hiking trail does still exist, but has not been used anymore.
Chronological settlement patterns:

Pattern 1: Settlement of local people

The local people, such as villagers of Huay Kaew village, Pha Lad village, and Doi Suthep village have been living in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park since the past, before the area becomes the national park. The settlement of these local people is around the temples, Fai Hin Temple, Pha Lad Temple, and Phra That Doi Suthep Temple. Religious purpose is one main factor for them when choosing their location. In other words, they chose the area near or adjacent to the temples as the temples are their centres for activities, such as daily practice like making merit, including annual ceremonies like ritual on Maka Buja’s and Visaka Buja’s Day.

Pattern 2: Settlement of tribal people

Many more hilltribe people migrated from remote areas in Chiang Mai and Lamphun to Doi Suthep and Doi Pui mountain ranges. Tribal people found are Lua and Hmong. Hmong is the main ethnic group living there. They settled down there (before the area became a National Park in 1981) due to sufficient natural resources like forests and streams. This group of people has their own ways of living and traditions which are distinctive and still authentic. Their local wisdom can help them live happily on Doi
The villagers themselves have played the most significant role with their profound knowledge of the local resources. They also cooperate with government organizations to initiate forms of cultural and ecological tourism in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, such as the Hilltribe Museum, the management of waterfalls and parks, the centre of models demonstrating Hmong life as their culture and surroundings are unique and authentic. Doi Pui Hmong village has become a wonderful place for recreational purpose.

The integration of traditional and cultural activities related to natural resource conservation has increased the community involvement. Those people are able to focus the benefits and advantages derived from such cooperation through the process of self-realization in their own environment. This also enables the problem solution in natural resource management, drug addiction, conservation of hilltribe culture and traditions. The identification of community’s resources such as cultivation area, forests,
livestock area allows them to clearly understand the attributes of natural resource management. A deep sense of ownership and belonging is generated, resulting in conscious participation in resource conservation (http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/97605/conatrem/conatrem/html).

Pattern 3: Settlement of the royal status

In 1915, the area at the base of Phra That Doi Suthep Mountain used to be the location of Buak Ha Residence of Chao Dara Rasmi, the wife of King Rama V. There were a lot of buildings. However, when Chao Dara Rasmi passed away in 1933, the buildings were abandoned and finally demolished.

In 1961, at the area nearby the location of Buak Ha Residence, Bhubing Palace was constructed as the royal winter residence where members of the royal family stay during the winter. There is also the royal guesthouse for prominent state visitors from other countries.

Pattern 4: Settlement of the forests’ organizations

In the past, the overall area of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park was the sacred area of the local people of Chiang Mai. Only the staff of the Department of Forestry and traditional and hilltribe villages could stay in the area. Then, in 1949, the area became the restricted area, and became the national reserved forest in 1964. Since 1981, it has been the national park, responsible by the Department of National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

Evaluation of significance of cultural landscape

Cultural significance:

According to “the Burra Charter” (1999), cultural significance means “aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generation”. Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is a cultural landscape containing all values, as follows:
Aesthetic value
The beauty of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is generally found, both nature-made and man-made aspects as it is an ideal place of compatibility of nature and culture.

Hilltribe life can indirectly convey its intangibly aesthetic aspect. The lifestyle of Hmong people is distinctive but charming. This can attract visitors to appreciate lifestyle that cannot be found anywhere else.

Also, many buildings and constructions directly display the beauty created in this national park. For example, Bhubing Palace is neatly designed and constructed, both the buildings and its landscape. Phra That Doi Suthep Temple expresses well the beauty of Lan Na temple. Even though there are many northern temples in Lan Na style, none of them is perfectly built like this one.

Historic value
Doi Suthep-Pui National Park can help trace back to the past of Chiang Mai since the first settlement 1,400 years ago (Promsao, 1996).

Every component of constructions has its own story, giving useful informative history. For example, San Ku is an archaeological site indicating that people had been living in the nearby area since the 8th century. This group of people paid much attention to ritual and belief. That is why San Ku is very huge showing the grandeur. Pha Lad Temple can be considered as another archaeological site as it is an ancient remnant reflecting the importance of Buddhism to people in this area more than 500 years ago, as the remains found show well the magnificence of this temple. Phra That Doi Suthep Temple is another clear example displaying how this temple is historically significant. It also reveals people’s belief and the importance of Buddhism to their life.

Scientific value
As Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is very fertile, with various flora and fauna, it is an ideal place for studying ecology.
Different types of plants and wildlife are found at different levels of altitude. In addition, some kinds of plants, and rare and endangered species are found only in this national park. They are worth being studied and conserved.

This national park is also complete for many fields of study and research. Thus, many organizations ask for permission to make use of the area for educational purposes, for instance Sirindhorn Observatory by Chiang Mai University, Doi Pui Research Stations by Kasetsart University, including Chiang Mai Seismological Station, and the Royal Thai Navy Seismic Research Station.

In addition, scientific value can be found in Hmong villages. As their location is in the valleys and most of the area is steep, with cold climate, there must be techniques have been used for the construction in such location. This is their local wisdom in engineering.

However, this kind of value had been existed since the past when King Mangrai settled down by considering the area of Doi Suthep Mountain as one main factor. The King tried to make the city perfect in every way, and this reflected the engineering wisdom and technology in planning and constructing the city. For example, the irrigational system, consisting of the pond and well, was prepared for water from the west of the city running from Doi Suthep and this could block the water from flooding the city.

**Social value**

Doi Suthep-Pui National Park still is a place where people pay attention to, as it is not only an attractive site for visitors, but it is also a place for everyone in Chiang Mai, including tribal people. This stimulates their sense of belonging.

The positions of constructions and buildings can reflect the social structure in the past. For instance, San Ku, which used to be a sacred place, is at the peak of Doi Suthep Mountain as it was for holy ritual.

Phra That Doi Suthep Temple is another good example. As there is the relic of the Lord Buddha, this temple is at the higher
point, with Pha Lad Temple in the middle, and Sri Soda Temple and Fai Hin Temple at the foot of the mountain.

This kind of structure can be related to hierarchical social status, comprising the king or the governor, general people, and servants.

Phra That Doi Suthep Temple, like other temples, is still a place for people in community to gather. Moreover, there is an annual Buddhism ceremony called “Tieo Khun Doi,” when people walk up to the temple to pay homage to the relic of the Lord Buddha. This has been yearly held on Visaka Buja’s Day at this temple as it is a holy place. Although the road is very convenient for all vehicles, with modern cable car to the entrance of the temple, local people in Chiang Mai society at present still walk to Phra That Doi Suthep Temple, more than 10 kilometres along the steep mountain. This also shows well that people still pay attention to this traditional ceremony. Moreover, many visitors tend to join this ceremony.

Cultural landscape values, additional to “the Burra Charter”:

Interpretative value

Doi Suthep Mountain can stimulate people to feel its importance as both a sacred mountain and a great influence and factor for the location of the city of Chiang Mai. Doi Suthep Mountain can convey many various aspects from different layers, like history, architecture, ecology, astrology, etc. For instance, it helps study ecological system by its flora and fauna. It is a good location for agricultural, astrological, and seismic researches. It can narrate the history of Chiang Mai people’s first settlement, including the urban planning. The buildings and constructions on this mountain can explain architectural styles of the past. In short, it is the place where important events have occurred; it has coincided and is able to explain what incidents have occurred; it is the witness when memorable events occurred; it also
accompanied people who involved in important events; and it can clarify why traditions, culture, and civilization occurred.

People who come to Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, especially Phra That Doi Suthep Temple, both Chiang Mai people and visitors, can feel its importance even though their feelings might be slightly different that Chiang Mai people can absorb strong sense of ownership and belonging, and visitors can feel the sense of this place as a holy area. However, it can be said that Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is one main factor that makes Chiang Mai a complete city.

**Associative value**

Doi Suthep Mountain is a great cultural landscape showing how the society had been in the past. It has also been one meaningful symbol of Chiang Mai city since the old days. Thus, visiting Doi Suthep-Pui National Park can give good thought and better understanding of the predecessors of Chiang Mai who got involved, because anyone, both local people and visitors, can strongly feel the compatibility of culture in nature. Deep relationship has occurred inside the mountain ranges. It is a place where human beings and nature depend on each other. In other words, it is a place where lives begin and grow up happily. Undoubtedly, this is why the city of Chiang Mai has been existed.

**Integrity of landscape fabric**

The archaeological site (San Ku) since 8th century, the ancient Pha Lad Temple, the remnants found in Phra That Doi Suthep Temple, the old route, or the settlement of hilltribe people are just some tangible examples showing existing historic evidences and their authenticity. These physical aspects can link with people’s memory of the great Doi Suthep-Pui National Park of how it has been very important and can still be a grand cultural landscape at present.

Phra That Doi Suthep Temple, the focal point on Doi Suthep Mountain as well as visitors’ primary destination, is an evident
example that can well clarify all types of value that were found in the cultural significance, and also interpretative value, associative value, and integrity of landscape fabric above.

**Evaluation of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park:**

The outstanding significance of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is that it is a great cultural landscape reflecting good compatibility between nature and culture of people who have involved in it. In other words, the authenticity of tangible aspects, both in nature and culture of people like those of Hmong people who have lived there as well as intangible aspects, like Chiang Mai people’s sense of belonging, and visitors’ sense of place stir when visiting this cultural landscape, due to its historic evidences.

Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is also a perfect place of nature where biodiversity is found. The good examples of this are some endangered species or rare species that can only be found here.

The fertility of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park makes this site meet some criteria in natural aspects specified by “the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention”¹ as follows:

¹ Criteria for the inclusion of natural properties in the World Heritage List:
(i) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth’s history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of land forms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features; or
(ii) be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals; or
(iii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance; or
(iv) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation
The above universal qualities of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park make it a potential study site for studying not only ecology, but also culture. For instance, Hmong people are good samples for case studies like traditions due to their unique lifestyles, including their costumes, housing, tools, utensils, etc. Many places in the national park are good sources for history, archaeology, and anthropology, for example San Ku, an archaeological site, Phra That Doi Suthep Temple, or Pha Lad Temple.

According to Leslie Sponsel’s research project, “Sacred Places in Nature as a Catalyst for Spirituality,” it is stated that life histories will be contextualized with geographical, ecological, cultural, religious, and historical background on the sacred place employing standard scientific methods including ethnography (http://www.anthropology.hawaii.edu/resources/projects/thailand/spirit.htm). It is also mentioned that Uluru (Ayres Rock) in central Australia is sacred by indigenous while Doi Suthep in northern Thailand is sacred to Buddhists.

Therefore, Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is not only a marvelous cultural landscape of Thailand, but their universal values and qualities can make it one of the world’s excellent cultural landscapes.

Criterion ii  Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is an outstanding example representing significant ecological and biological process in the evolution and development of ecosystems and communities of plants and animals.

Criterion iii  Doi Suthep-Pui National Park contains superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

Criterion iv  Doi Suthep-Pui National Park contains the most important and significant natural habitats for the in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science and conservation.

The above universal qualities of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park make it a potential study site for studying not only ecology, but also culture. For instance, Hmong people are good samples for case studies like traditions due to their unique lifestyles, including their costumes, housing, tools, utensils, etc. Many places in the national park are good sources for history, archaeology, and anthropology, for example San Ku, an archaeological site, Phra That Doi Suthep Temple, or Pha Lad Temple.

According to Leslie Sponsel’s research project, “Sacred Places in Nature as a Catalyst for Spirituality,” it is stated that life histories will be contextualized with geographical, ecological, cultural, religious, and historical background on the sacred place employing standard scientific methods including ethnography (http://www.anthropology.hawaii.edu/resources/projects/thailand/spirit.htm). It is also mentioned that Uluru (Ayres Rock) in central Australia is sacred by indigenous while Doi Suthep in northern Thailand is sacred to Buddhists.

Therefore, Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is not only a marvelous cultural landscape of Thailand, but their universal values and qualities can make it one of the world’s excellent cultural landscapes.
References


The Royal Thai Survey Department Supreme Command