

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

Tourism is about people and landscapes, the locations which one group of people leave, visit and pass through, the other groups who make their trips and those groups they meet along the way. It is prone to continue developing in the future because more people seek opportunities for leisure and recreation away from their surroundings. Ecotourism is a type of a tourism industry, which is 'nature-based' travel to relatively undisturbed areas with an emphasis on education, which could be a promoter for socio economic growth of intermediate cities. The tourism industry is currently the world's largest and most diverse business sectors since it serves as a primary source for generating revenue, employment, private sector growth, and infrastructure development for many countries. Ecotourism projects have been established across the world (which includes ecotourism accommodation as well) since the concept was first introduced. In many cases these endeavors have been successful and present useful lessons. Tourism development not only stimulates the growth of the industry, but also triggers overall economic growth (Lee & Chang 2008). Hence, enhancing economic growth by promoting the tourism industry has become an important economic development strategy in most developing countries (Chen & Chiou-Wei 2009).

### 1.1 Historical Background

Southeast Asia is among the most rapidly thriving destination regions in the world (UNWTO 2016). Yet, an increase in the growth of tourism in the region took place because of the financial crisis of most traditional tourism destinations. The growth of tourism in Southeast Asia is concerned in part with the region's much greater overall economic performance (Weaver 1998). Chudintra (1993) found that approximately one million overseas tourists, largely from the western countries, visit the protected areas in Thailand with ecotourism-oriented activities. This accounts for 20-25% of international tourists. Furthermore, approximately 60% of the 50 million annual domestic trips

occurred in Thailand's nature-based tourism (Widener 1996). In the past decade, the tourism industry in Thailand has demonstrated two seemingly contradictory trends. On the one hand, rising demand for conventional tourist services and experiences has led to an enormous increase in the number of international tourist arrivals, from 9.5 million in 2000 to 22.4 million in 2012 (TAT 2013). On the other hand, since the early 2000s, demand has grown for alternative tourism experiences, including volunteer tourism (Mostafanezhad 2013), wildlife tourism (Duffy 2013) and ecotourism (Walter & Reimer 2012). Further, rather than existing entirely outside the realm of conventional tourism, companies in Thailand that offer novel, individualized, and small-scale experiences must often tap into mass tourism markets and marketing channels to succeed (Weaver 2002).

Thailand is a country with tremendous diversity and has a lot to offer in terms of ecotourism and related activities. In other words, heritage sites, cultural attractions, rivers, hills, mountains, flora, fauna, and herbs provide a huge potential for the tourism sector. Ecotourism entails the sustainable preservation of a naturally endowed region. This is becoming more and more significant for the ecological development of all regions that have touristic values. From wildlife viewing, to wilderness camps, hiking vacations and white-water rafting, world's ecotourism industry is flourishing. For tourists visiting Thailand from other countries, alternative forms of tourism are appealing not only because they offer novelty, but also because they help to alleviate the apprehension or guilt that some visitors feel when reflecting on or learning about the problems created by the influx of international tourists.

The most important reason for the growing demand for experiences such as ecotourism and volunteer tourism is a desire among international visitors to interact with Thai people and Thai natural environments in more authentic ways. By providing tourists with a glimpse into facets of Thai life concealed from most package tourists, alternative tourism experiences promise a certain level of authenticity. Since mass tourism is widely, albeit simplistically, perceived to destroy the cultural and natural authenticity of a destination, Westerners hoping for an authentic vacation in Thailand have therefore turned increasingly to the various alternatives made available in the past decade or so. While there is little doubt that international tourism has made great contributions to the Thai economy, or that international tourists have brought about long-lasting changes to the lives of many Thais working directly in the tourism industry, it is important not to

underestimate the significance of domestic tourism in Thailand, which in scope, impact, size, and implications is more important than tourism related only to international visitors (Kaosa-Ard, Bezic & White 2001). With rising incomes, improved infrastructure, and greater exposure to tourism marketing, Thais now travel in much greater numbers and with greater frequency than in the past. Though international tourists are more concentrated and visible in certain well-known locations, Thais account for approximately 80% of all tourist trips in Thailand, as well as 45% of total tourism revenues (Suansri & Richards 2013).

Table 1.1 Tourist arrival in Thailand and percentage of change (TAT 2015)

Year	Arrival	% of Change
2015	29,881,091	+20.44
2014	24,809,683	-6.54
2013	26,546,725	+18.8
2012	22,353,903	+15.98
2011	19,230,470	+20.67
2010	15,936,400	+12.63
2009	14,149,841	-2.98
2008	14,584,220	+0.83
2007	14,464,228	+4.65
2006	13,821,802	+20.01
2005	11,516,936	+0

The number of tourist arrived in 2005 was 11 million. The number increased to 13 million by 2006. From 2007 to 2009 the number remained same but in 2010 number increased to reach 15 million from 14 million. From 2010 to 2011 figure sharply increased from 15 million and reached 19 million. The number also increased from 19 million to 22 million in 2012 and became 26 million in 2013. In 2014 the number decreased by 2 million and increased in 2015 to become 30 million (See Table above).

## 1.2 Study Area: Doi Suthep-Pui National Park

Doi Suthep Pui National park includes not only the rich natural resources of plants, wildlife and spectacular landscapes, but also cultural resources featuring the interesting lifestyle of the hill tribe peoples and the Thai Lanna culture. The special natural and cultural features led to the establishment of the Doi Suthep Pui National park on April 14, 1981. The park covers 261.06 square km in the Mueang, Hang Dong, Mae Rim and Mae Taeng districts of Chiang Mai Province. Doi Suthep-Pui National Park study area covers Doi Suthep and Doi Pui mountain ranges which are dominated on the west part of Chiang Mai city. Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is very popular and interesting among tourist because it preserves rare plants and animals. It is only 6 kilometers from city (DNP 2015).

Table 1.2 Number of visitors in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park (DNP 2015).

Year	Tourists	% of Change
2015	285,915	+28.97
2014	221,689	+1.79
2013	217,783	-31.32
2012	317,144	+25.72
2011	252,260	-14.88
2010	296,374	-57.81
2009	702,522	-23.59
2008	919,461	-41.17
2007	1,562,962	-18.63
2006	1,920,923	-1.8
2005	1,956,274	+0

The number of tourist arrived in 2005 was 2 million and which was the highest among all. From 2005 to 2009 it gradually decreased from 1,956,274 to 702,522 but from 2009 to 2010 it sharply decreased to become 296,374 from 702,522. In 2012 the number reached 317,144 and in 2015 it reached 285,915.

### 1.2.1 Topography and climate

Many of the highest mountains of Doi Suthep Pui National Park are in the Thanon Thongchai Mountain Range and are considered foothills of the Himalayan Mountain Range. The mountains range from 330-1685 meter above the mean sea level, providing an environment that is high in biodiversity as well as being relatively cool and wet. The national park is composed of high cliffs and mountainous forest along with several rivers, streams and basins providing water for use and consumption for the Chiang Mai city. Because of the high altitude, the weather on the upper slopes of the mountain ranges is cool and pleasant all year even in summer season. An average temperature is about 20-23°C. In winter season, the temperature can drop to 6°C in February. August and September are the wettest months with daily rain (DNP 2015).

### 1.2.2 Natural habitat

At the highest elevations, the mountains are mostly covered in mountain rain forest that supports a dense growth of winter plants. Lower mountainous areas experienced by dry weather in the summer and have dry dipterocarp forest cover. At mid-level elevations, the mountains have thicker soil, experience more rainfall and are covered by mix deciduous and dry evergreen forest. Additionally, there are some palm forest stands that are found at high elevations where the weather is cold soil is sandy. The five forest types found in this park create a perfect habitat for wildlife specially birds. There are 360 bird species found including residents and visitor species that migrate in the winter from Siberia and Southern China. Other wildlife found in the park includes 31 mammals, 31 reptiles and 18 amphibian species (Liorungruang & Muangyai 2007).

### 1.2.3 Attraction points and accessibility

The most important attraction points in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park are Doi Pui Mountain, Doi Suthep Temple, Kruba Srivichai Monument, Bhubing Palace, Hmong Villages, Pha Lad Temple, Huay Kaew Waterfall, and Monthathan Waterfall. Car may be the most convenient way to Doi Suthep-Pui National Park. Motorcycle is suggested for adventurous visitors. Rental car and motorcycle services are provided in the downtown. Red taxi-truck can generally be found and hired. Mostly temples and cultural sites are the main attraction points in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park. There are camping grounds and accommodations for the tourist also (Liorungruang & Muangyai 2007).

1.2.4 Places starting from the access point to the peak of Doi Pui Mountain 30 kilometers

- i. Doi Suthep Nature Study Center, Chiang Mai University
- ii. Chiang Mai Zoo
- iii. Signs indicating the boundary of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park
- iv. A memorial statue of Khru Ba Sri Vichai
- v. Huay Kaew Waterfall
- vi. Sri Soda Temple
- vii. Seismology research stations
- viii. Huay Kaew Checkpoint 1
- ix. Wang Bua Ban Waterfall
- x. Monthathan Waterfall
- xi. Pha Lad Temple
- xii. Forest Fire Control Station
- xiii. Viewpoint and rest area 1
- xiv. Sirindhorn Observatory, Chiang Mai University
- xv. Huay Rub Sadet Waterfall
- xvi. Phra That Doi Suthep Temple
- xvii. Doi Suthep-Pui National Park Headquarters
- xviii. Sri Sang Wan School
- xix. Television transmission stations
- xx. Water supply stations
- xxi. Bhubing Palace
- xxii. Doi Pui Research Station 1, Kasetsart University
- xxiii. Ranger Unit
- xxiv. Doi Pui Research Station 2, Kasetsart University
- xxv. Doi Pui Hmong village
- xxvi. Doi Suthep Peak: San Ku Archaeological Site
- xxvii. Viewpoint and rest area 2
- xxviii. Doi Pui Checkpoint 2
- xxix. Khun Chang Khian Hmong Village
- xxx. Khun Chang Khian Homestay
- xxxii. Doi Pui Peak

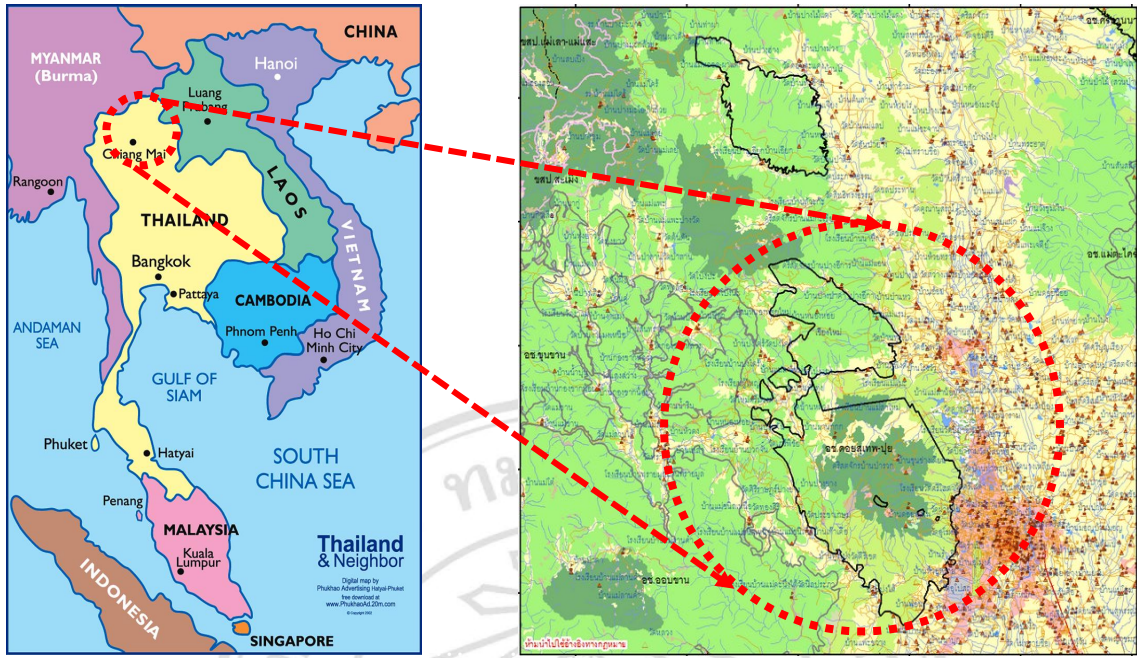


Figure 1.1 South East Asia map & Doi Suthep-Pui National Park (DNP 2015)



Figure 1.2 Location of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park (DNP 2015)



Figure 1.3 Doi Suthep-Pui National Park Map (Liorungruang & Muangyai 2007)

### 1.3 Statement of the Problems

Ecotourism typically involves travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. One of the goals of ecotourism is to offer tourists insight into the impact of human beings on the environment, and to foster a greater appreciation of our natural habitats. Responsible ecotourism includes programs that minimize the negative aspects of conventional tourism on the environment and enhance the cultural integrity of the local people. Therefore, in addition to evaluating environmental and cultural factors, an integral part of ecotourism is the promotion of recycling, energy efficiency, water conservation, and creation of economic opportunities for local communities. For these reasons, ecotourism often appeals to environmental and social responsibility advocates. Massive mountains, rolling hills, abundant vegetation and diverse wildlife is the main attraction. Eco-tourism can be both an effective conservation tool and a successful community development model. Inappropriate tourism development and practices can degrade habitats and landscapes, deplete natural resources, and generate waste and pollution. The local community is also in need of a better and healthy living. This has become a social, cultural, and economical issue prevalent for decades since architecture can be well integrated in a community that will base their knowledge on role



model site for the sustainability of a park and village. Knowing the issues of existing built environment and applying their good point in future could be helpful tool for sustainable ecotourism development. It is important to preserve the environment for several reasons. The forests are the habitat of numerous wild animals and destruction of the forests destroys this balance. Also, the forests act as catchment areas for rivers. Therefore, the rivers would dry up when we destroy the forests and ultimately flora and fauna disappears. Mass tourism increases the density of people in tourist area and degrades the quality of surrounding environment, increases pollution without considering the requirements and needs of the local people. So, ecotourism should be adopted to protect the environment, local cultural identity and to increase social awareness.

From the Table 1.1 and Table 1.2 above, it is very clear that total number of tourist travelling in Thailand is increasing every year from 2005 to 2015 but tourists in Doi Suthep-Pui is decreasing year from 1,956,274 in 2005 to 285,915 in 2015. Number is decreased in the rate of 70% in 10 years. So, the main investigation here is to find how and why visitor population is dropping and what the problems are. Is there any association with accommodation? The accommodation problems should be solved and for that guidelines are necessary. Analyzing the architecture and ecotourism problems also gives idea about sustainable development. The main investigation of research is into determining factors is on how and why we need the bond between ecosystem and ecotourism. What is the relationship between tourist and local on design development? How accommodation plays vital role in enhancing ecotourism?

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

Accommodation is a very important part of the tourism infrastructure and development. Accommodation is the largest and arguably the most important sub-sector of the tourism industry. The main objectives of this study are

- i. To analyze site history, formation, architecture, factors affecting ecotourism and its problem on accommodation
- ii. To study the sustainable development of accommodation for ecotourism and natural conservation
- iii. To develop design criteria for accommodation for ecotourism and natural conservation

### **1.5 Potential Benefits of the Study**

No doubt, eco-tourism is much suitable for Thai contexts. Natural surroundings are the main features of Thailand which are also the key elements of ecotourism. Today, tourism being a major and important industry as a source of foreign exchange has an important role in economic development of the country, like Thailand. Thailand's ecotourism, which is dependent on ecology, environment and host communities, is now being widely promoted by communities and the government. Doi Suthep Pui National Park is an appropriate place to investigate the roles that ecotourism can perform in visitor's rewarding experiences, environmental conservation and resident's local culture and way of life. The main objective of the study is to determine criteria for ecotourism accommodation. From the research objective, the advantages of study will be

- i. Able to understand the existing ecotourism conditions, culture, history and activities and the future of ecotourism in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park
- ii. Able to analyze the factors affecting the design and formation of accommodation and its landscape for ecotourism.
- iii. Able to create criteria and guidelines for new development in those areas and how to do it on a sustainable way.
- iv. Able to offer some suggestions for sustainable development of accommodation for ecotourism in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park.

### **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

This present study has been based on and limited to the tourism area of Doi Suthep Pui National Park of Chiang Mai Province. The study is as a case study. So, the conclusion drawn from this study was mere indicative rather than conclusive. The conclusions could not be generalized for the whole. But, the inferences might be valid to some extent to those areas which have similar geographical and environmental settings. Almost 90 percent of Doi Suthep- Pui National Park is protected area, restrictedly use for nature as there are national reserved forests, thus built environment (village, resort, campground, tourist center) is not allowed throughout the park. English is not the primary language of people in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park so there were some problems to have conversation in Thai. The questionnaires were taken during the low season (March-April) 2016 due to the limitation on research timing.