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WEERAPHAN SHINAWATRA : THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATED  
WITH THE OLD TOWN OF CHIANG SAEN: THE INTERPRETATION AND  
CONSERVATION OF A FORGOTTEN HERITAGE. THESIS ADVISOR : PROF. ROSS KING.  
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This paper reveals the story of the cultural heritage of the Lanna Kingdom in the Chiang Saen basin, to increase understanding of this area through the integration of different aspects of information and knowledge about the old town of Chiang Saen and its cultural landscape. The significance of this landscape has been compromised by inappropriate urban development, deriving from globalization trends whose effects have sprawled into the region over time. These threats have somehow erased tradition, challenged cultural coherence, and caused physical and social changes that have affected the local inhabitants ways of life, environment and life support system, and harmed social and cultural values in the Chiang Saen basin area.

An important part of the research is the interpretation and reinterpretation of the old chronicles, by interviewing experts and local gurus about the significance of Chiang Saen's cultural landscape elements associated with its spiritual values and represented in the chronicles.

The results of this study indicate that the spiritual values of the cultural landscape in the Chiang Saen basin inhere especially in the old Panna (rice fields), the ancient Muang Fai irrigation system, Doi Tung, Phra That Doi Tung, the Mekong River, Wiang Nong Lom and Chiang Saen lake. Further, these are important elements of its heritage, every bit as much as the old town of Chiang Saen itself whose significance has been accepted by diverse stakeholders. In addition, the study suggests the importance of Phra That Doi Tung as a fundamental area where Buddhism was very early established and intermingled with the old precepts and beliefs of Lua and Tai in this region, before the Lanna period. It is believed that the fusion of Buddhism and tribal beliefs allowed the Lawa Chakaraj reign to legitimately rule the Lanna Kingdom and to continue to burgeon until its most prosperous era in the 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. This fusion underpinned the local wisdom of the Lanna ancestors, which emerged in the spiritual beliefs informing their state.

The reinterpretation of "the forgotten heritage" would be the key to initiate a "cultural heritage map of the Chiang Saen basin" as a tool to inform social and cultural realms. The research also supports the conservation of the cultural and natural heritage through public participation to achieve a good balance between conservation and development in the Chiang Saen basin under the concept of "The Chiang Saen basin: A Special Cultural Promotion Development Zone".

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