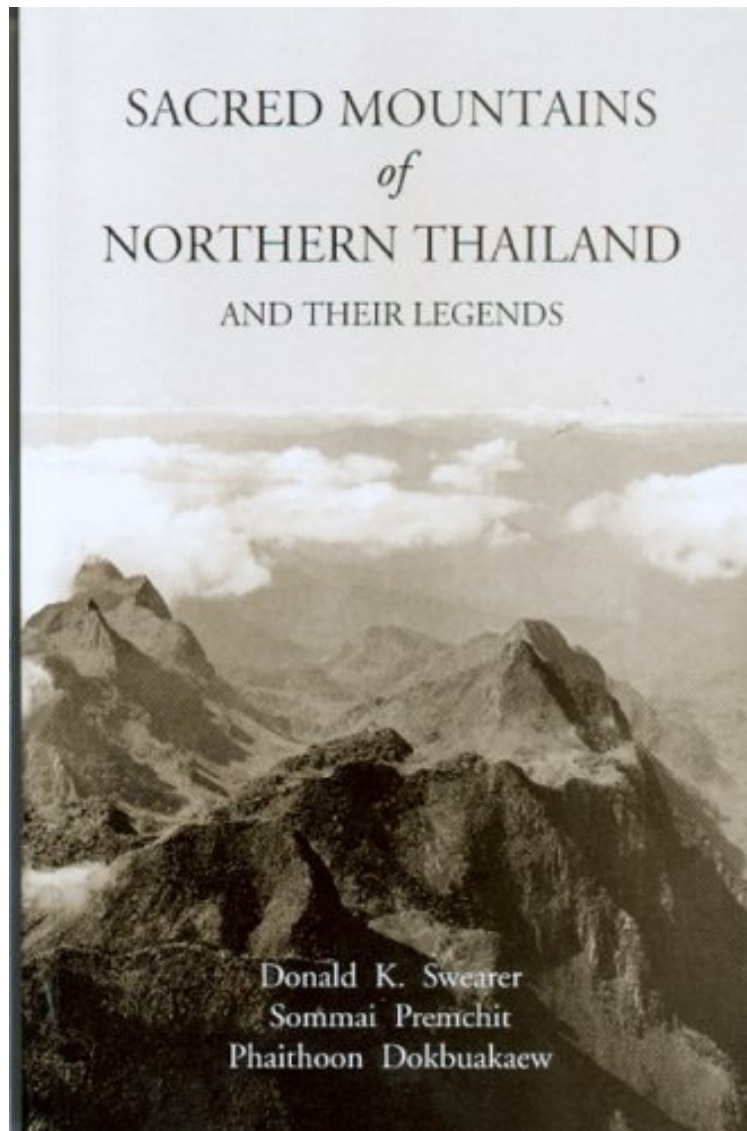


## Sacred Mountains of Northern Thailand: And Their Legends

*Donald K. Swearer, Sommai Premchit, Phaithoon Dokbuakaew*  
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**Donald K. Swearer, Sommai Premchit, Phaithoon Dokbuakaew : Sacred Mountains of Northern Thailand: And Their Legends** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sacred Mountains of Northern Thailand: And Their Legends:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Environment and LegendsBy Margaret A.I purchased this book hoping that it would have folklore about the mountains. It does, but only after a lengthy preface about Buddhist environmental philosophy and how it could help with "the global environmental crisis." (1) And the legends all relate to the Buddha visiting Northern Thailand and leaving relics. Although interesting, the lack of maps, and the somewhat

awkward translation of the traditional Thai Buddhist story made the book less useful than I had hoped. For a reader curious about religion and environmental philosophy, or the geography of religion, this would be a useful volume. However, because of the lack of maps and the somewhat jumbled-feeling translation, I can only give it four stars.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Legends in the Northern Thailand By Gert Bo Thorgersen Long ago I got interested in this book because it tells something about the region where I now live. But as there not was much information given about what's inside the book I first bought a copy after having had one in my hands and looking inside it. It's stated that the book contains 112 sides, but more precisely it shows up that it has 92 sides with the legends and pictures, and the rest of the sides, the 20, nearly only with explanations to words, names, or reference to from which old writing the actual telling comes. As mentioned there are pictures on these 92 sides, more correctly 26 photos, some of these being very small, but fine size to what they actual are showing. But back in the book we are missing the reference for on which side in the book to find what we are searching. But for me, what I in the book most am missing, that's a map, for by that getting an idea about the positions of the mentioned places. And that's the reason I only give it the character 4 instead of 5. The problem is that Thailand doesn't use Latin letters, and therefore the original Thailand names translated to western letters comes out to different spelling in different books and on different karts. And besides that many positions, and cities, have chanced their names during the passed time. So thereby while in the book not having just a small sketch cart not much are giving precise ideas about mutual positions, and which makes it more difficult to follow the person traveling in the stories. And beside, if being a tourist in Chiang Mai, it would make it easier to get an idea about if it is easy or not easy to visit some of these places. Of course we now a day have Google but I prefer being able to enjoy reading a book without needing a PC. The city Chiang Mai is nearly surrounded by mountains, by having mountains on most of the three sides. One of the three sacred mountains, Doi Suthep, is the one closest to Chiang Mai, and it's less than 10 km from the centre to the temple Wat Phra Thai Doi Sutheo positioned on it. And of this the last 6 km only being when driving up on the side of the mountain before reaching the temple. But by this not got to the top of this 1,602 meter high mountain. The city Chiang Mai is positioned around 600 meters over the ocean. But while reading the book I started speculating about the mountain Doi Kham (The Golden Mountain), and asked Thailand persons, but without result, and then went to Google and so on. But yesterday I discovered that this mountain, with the temple Wat Phra That Doi Kham, is what I've been looking at in now 9 years, only seeing a white point on the side of the mountain. But when we yesterday by car went up there, only 13 km from home, it showed up to be a temple build in 1270 after Christ, and there with a Buddha being around 15 - 20 meters high, looking down over the city. And also human beings from here are having an excellent viewing down on the city. And with this temple also only being around 10 km from the center of Chiang Mai, and then even build 26 year before the King Mangrai founded the city of Chiang Mai! And with nearly no tourist getting there as we are not told about it, opposite to the Wat Phra That Doi Suthep to where all persons go, and this temple, as I recall, only being around 90 years old. So by reading this book I learned something completely new to me, and to most citizens. One, not sacred mountain, which is also mentioned in the book, is the Doi Inhanon, which by it's around 2.530 meter is the highest mountain in Thailand. It's now having holy buildings for respectively the kings and the queens and it is positioned only 90 km South of Chiang Mai. Now Buddha by it self is the word meaning to be Enlightened, but most of the telling in the book has to do with the person Buddha we knows, and which we knows who was born around 2,550 years ago. That is The Lord Buddha, The Enlightened Buddha, and concerning his traveling in Northern Thailand. Even though nobody knows if he ever have been in what we now call Thailand. But in the book there also are a few shorter stories about local persons, and even one concerning an elephant. And many of the mentioned photos are showing the statues we now have of these persons at the places where they lived, including one with this elephant carrying a Buddha relic. After the elephant on Doi Suthep found a holy place for the relic it then died at the same place, and then there was buried. In the stories we sometime have persons traveling in the air, in one case when a holy man comes to help the sick Buddha (sick after eating duck meat which was sick. Strange as Buddha's normally don't eats meat). And in this case they also make a hole fore getting into the mountain, the cave. Now we around in Thailand have many hollow mountains, in which we have Buddha figures. But also in one case we se that the stories, or part of the telling, only can be a couple of hundred years old, for in this Buddha on his traveling meats some hunting person that wants to lend him a rifle. And we know that rifles did not exist when Buddha lived 2,500 years ago. In the old stories it repeats again and again that Buddha gives a single hair to persons that have done something good, and we read hove they takes care of the hair, and sometimes after this things are changed over in diamond, gold and silver. And also he many times makes a foot print, after persons having asked for this before he leaves again. And that is a big foot print in stones. And in books about Buddha it's told that he had big ears and fots, and around in Thailand we at different places find Buddha footprint which are around 1 meter long, and in these there are many small writings. And in the book we also have a prediction on the future in Thailand, and this being told from a White Rabbit to the Golden Deer. And then while telling the rabbit at one point laughs when looking at two pigs, and then tells when in the future these pigs will be born again as kings. But all together the book is at bit heavy, but that many times happens to be the case when it's a translating of some old writing. But it for me is highly interesting to have learned some history about the place I live, and especially when it shows up that the persons born here never have heard them.

As it's written "It's important for people never to forget their countries history".

The mountains of northern Thailand constitute part of northern Thai identity. They inspire fear and awe, respect and love, curiosity and creative imagination. They define both the physical and mental landscape of northern Thailand. Drawing on the legendary histories of three mountains in the region Doi Ang Salung Chiang Dao, Doi Suthep, and Doi Khamco author Donald Swearer explores the various ways that mountains in northern Thailand are seen as sacred space, and therefore as an environment to be respected rather than exploited. The volume presents, in English translation, the stories associated with these sacred sites as recorded in the legendary chronicles, or tamnan, of the story of the Chiang Dao mountain and cave, the account of the enshrining of the Buddha relic on Doi Suthep, and the interwoven legends of the hermit Wasuthep, the demons Pu Sae and Ya Sae, the chief Wilangkha, and the queen Chamathewi. In preserving the fascinating folklore of these sacred mountains, the authors contribute to the preservation of the mountains themselves.

About the Author Donald K. Swearer is the Charles and Harriet Cox McDowell Professor of Religion at Swarthmore College. Sommai Premchit is a consultant to the Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University, and professor of sociology and anthropology at the Mahamkut Buddhist University, Lanna. Phaithoon Dokbuakaew is a researcher at the Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University.