



NEWSLETTER

International Development Studies, National University of Laos

Issue 2



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ASEAN COMMUNITY & THE IDS PROGRAM

That Laos is a land-locked country is often the discourse used to explain the country's disadvantaged position in terms of economic development, but in reality, Laos is not and will not be disadvantaged as it enters the ASEAN community over the next four years. Even before the North-South and East-West corridors were completed, we saw flows of people, goods and commodities; technologies and money into Laos. Because of the country's natural resource wealth and cultural heritage, Laos is likely to more and more become a favored location for investors and a favored destination for tourists from both inside and outside the Mekong sub-region.

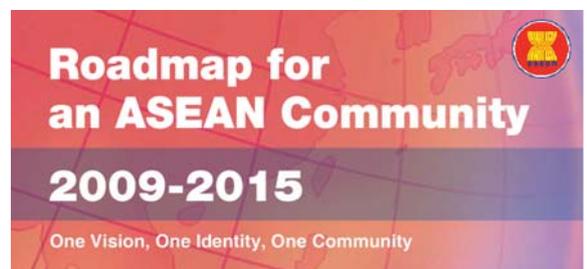
The ASEAN community's philosophy is neo-liberalist in nature, having been imported from western nations. It is believed that if economies in the area are merged and border regulations relaxed in order to allow the free flow of capital, goods and people, regional economic growth will be better achieved. In practical terms, this philosophy leads to greater levels of resource exploitation in the name of in-

dustrial development, as well as international and regional flows of capital across borders and into local economies, and as a consequence, many Lao workers are likely to have a greater opportunity to enter into the ASEAN labor market. This sounds good in theory, but in reality many of us feel uneasy and wonder to what extent Laos will gain from being part of this new regional community.

It is important that we use this opportunity to think seriously about the true meaning of development for Laos, as well as for the whole region. Can ASEAN develop its own economic development model? Should we re-think how natural resources in the region are used for development purposes, so that future generations will still be able to benefit from them? As part of this reflection, I believe we should pause for a moment to critically re-assess our recent experiences, such as the turning of forests into rubber plantations and corn fields and the damming of our rivers for hydropower purposes.

Mechanisms and measures are needed to evaluate mega-projects as and when Laos opens up for investment. We should also reflect upon our historical and cultural values and use these as core values when considering development projects and resource usage; not let projects only be considered in terms of their economic value.

We should proactively analyze the social and environmental problems that exist in the region and attempt to overcome them before they become too complex. Many people in Laos still live in poverty; they lack education opportunities and are deprived of access to their own natural resources. It will therefore be a challenge for us to find the will and the ways to resolve these problems before we enter into the ASEAN community.



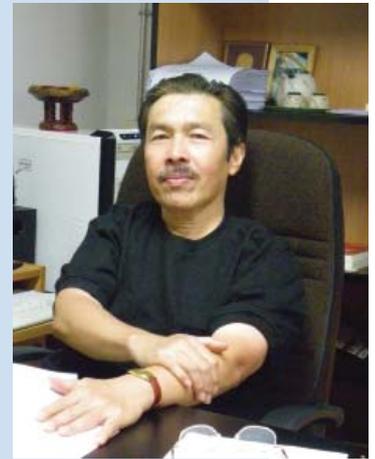


The IDS Program has been developed out of a concern for the impacts of the drastic socio-economic, cultural and environmental changes taking place in Laos and the Mekong sub-region. The coming of the ASEAN Community will be a challenge for the Program in many ways; we should try to understand the plans and the path that the ASEAN member countries wish to follow as they become part of this wider community. What strategies and tactics will be used by the different countries in pursuit of their own economic interests? In conclusion, I believe that the IDS Program should encourage students to learn about the strengths and weaknesses of the ASEAN community countries.

Chayan Vaddhanaphuti
RCSD and IDS

THE IMPACTS OF CHINA'S GROWING INFLUENCE: AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. YOS SANTASOMBAT

The IDS team had the opportunity to interview Dr. Yos Santasombat, a Professor in Sociology and Anthropology at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, and who is also a core teaching member of the IDS Program. The growing influence of China in the global market place as well as in Southeast Asia, has led to his interest in China's economic 'colonialism', and he recently launched a three-year research project entitled '**Variegated Dragon: Territorialization and Civilizing Mission in Southeast Asia**', which is supported by the Thailand Research Fund (TRF). As head of the research project, here he provides us with a fascinating insight into China's economic expansion and its implications for Southeast Asia.



IDS: Would you please give us details regarding the research project you are currently undertaking?

Dr. Yos: The research project aims to provide a greater understanding of the impacts of China's economic expansion. Over the past three decades, China has continued to grow at a rapid pace and is now ranked second in the world in terms of the size of its economy, having recently overtaken both Germany and Japan. The Yuan, China's monetary unit, is set to become a key global currency in the future, and so it is necessary for Thailand, as a country situated very close to China, to understand the Chinese way of thinking and way of life, plus their culture and development aims.

IDS: What are the key questions and issues tackled by the project?

Dr. Yos: We aim to understand China's policy towards the five Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) countries. We have seen the governments of these countries welcome large-scale investment from China; however, these same investment projects have been questioned and sometimes opposed by local people. For example, in Laos, China is building a shopping center on the site of That Luang in Vientiane, which is a sacred site with spiritual meaning for the Lao people. With doubts raised by the local people, the project has thus been scaled down towards its end.

The aim of the study is not to oppose China, but rather to understand China's emerging role in the region and across the GMS countries in particular. We understand that China has no hidden agenda in terms of interfering in the internal political affairs of GMS countries, and that their presence is purely based on economic interests. China simply wishes to elevate itself, through its economic status and influence, to a position as one of most powerful nations in the world.

A few years ago, China's economic expansion was termed 'peaceful civilization', a strategy based on peaceful development and a so-called 'civilizing mission'.



One major concern regarding China's economic expansion is that its impacts have been felt right across the GMS countries. In Vietnam, China's mining activities are being carried out in order to deliver valuable minerals back to home soil, where they cannot be found; therefore, natural resources are being extracted at the expense of local livelihoods. In Laos, land has been leased over long periods to Chinese investors in support of large scale banana and rubber plantations, as well as for casinos - at Bo Ten and Ton Pheung - the latter being located across from Chiang Saen in Thailand on the Mekong River. We are also interested in the behavior of the GMS countries towards China, particularly at the policy level. In Thailand, China generally does not have much influence; however, more recently, and as a result of the introduction of 'free trade' measures, investment from China has become a pre-eminent issue, through plans for the construction of a major exhibition center and a high-speed train network.

IDS: What research sites are used and what research sub-topics tackled by the project?

Dr. Yos: We are interested in studying transformations in Southeast Asia, those specifically influenced by China. As a result, research projects are being undertaken across the five GMS countries, including Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam. In each country, research projects will tackle

four major themes, namely: foreign aid, trade, investment and migration, with sub-topics based on each individual researcher's area of interest and the country context.

As we speak, Chinese migrants are moving into the GMS in large numbers - especially Laos and Myanmar, and this flow of migrants includes poor and landless laborers, engineers involved in mega-projects, construction workers and middlemen. I met one Chinese businessman in Yangon, Myanmar, who had worked in Shanghai, but after travelling in Myanmar decided to stay in Yangon and build an embroidery outlet, a business which now employs 20 to 30 workers. He has now been living in Myanmar for ten years, can speak Burmese and has a son at an international school there. The question is: do these migrants intend to stay, move or return to China?

In terms of the research sub-topics, some look at cultural exports, such as the establishment of Confucius Institutes in many countries, as funded by the Chinese Government and where Chinese language courses are offered free of charge. Such developments have helped erase the image of the Chinese as 'communists', and at the same time have constructed a new image for Confucius - as one representing virtue, honesty, hard work, perseverance and gratitude. This has been readily accepted by Asian societies and has created a positive attitude towards China in general.



China's role in Asia has increased since the 'tom yam goong crisis' of 1997, a financial crisis which began in Thailand and moved across Asia, and during which time China played a significant role by giving loans to countries in order to aid their economic recovery. Importantly, China is neutral militarily, which is different to many of the western countries, adopting 'soft power' by building relationships based on trust.



IDS: How many researchers are involved in this project?

Dr. Yos: There are altogether twelve researchers from various GMS countries on the project, including four from Thailand, two from Myanmar, Vietnam and China, and one each from Laos and Cambodia. The four Thai researchers include Dr. Pinkaew Lauangaramsri, Dr. Aranya Siriphon and myself from Chiang Mai University, and Dr. Romyen Kosaikanont from Mae Fah Luang University. It will take around three years to complete the first phase of the research, but hopefully the project will continue on after that, depending on funding sources being available.

CMU-NUOL Working Committee

The Project Management Committee has created a CMU-NUOL Working Committee in order to execute the International Master's Program in International Development Studies at the National University of Laos. The nominated members of the Committee are as follows:

Chiang Mai University

Dr. Sidthinat Prabudhanitisarn, Advisor
Dr. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, Chairperson
Assoc. Prof. Seksin Srivattananukulkit, Committee
Assist. Prof. Chusak Wittayapak, Committee
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Wattana Sugunnasil, Committee

The National University of Laos

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sounthone Phommason, Chairperson
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phouth Simmalavong, Committee
Dr. Silinthone Sacklokkham, Committee
Assoc. Prof. Dexanourath Saenduangdeth, Committee
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Khamla Punvilay, Committee
Dr. Bounlouane Douangngue, Committee
Dr. Sithong Thongmmanivong, Committee

Program Coordinators

Ms. Nisaporn Boonchaleo, Ms. Kulthida Phiphatanasukmongkhol and Ms. Kesone Kanhalikham

Committee Member Profiles



Associate Professor Dr. Sounthone Phommason is the current Director of the Research and Academic Office at the National University of Laos. He gives lectures on Math for Business and Economics, Math for Engineering, and Financial Math and Statistics for researchers and master's level students. He earned a Ph.D. in Physics-Mathematics from Rostov-on-Don University in Russia in 1990, and his recent research has included 'The Spectral Characteristics of the Sturm-Liouville Operator'. He is now Chairperson of the CMU-NUOL Working Committee on the IDS Program.

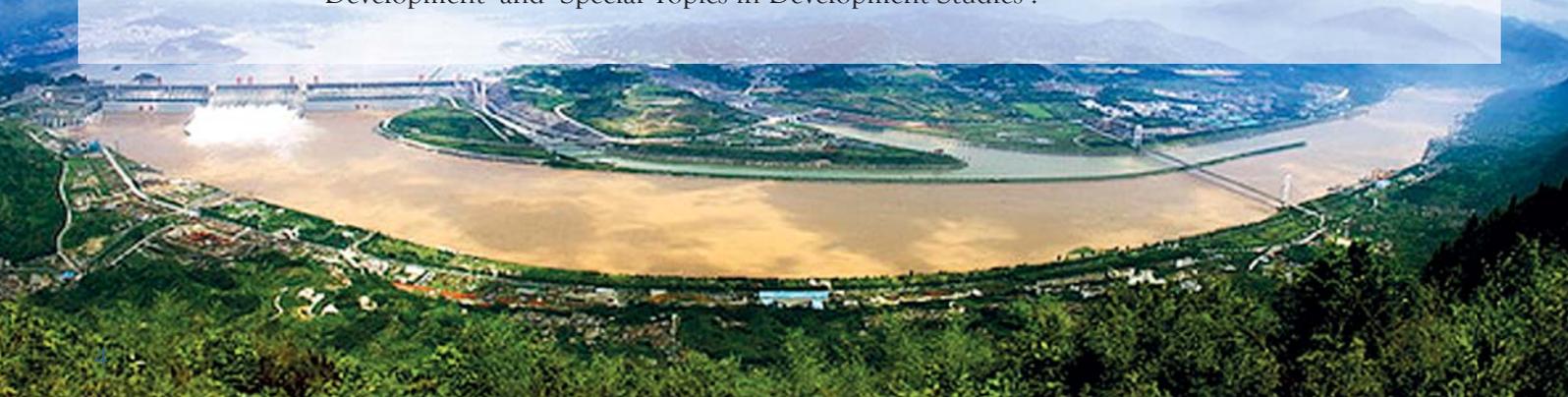


Associate Professor Seksin Srivattananukulkit is currently an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences and Acting Chairperson of the Political Economy Program, both at Chiang Mai University. He served as the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences over the period 2004 to 2008, and during the last year of his Deanship, he was instrumental in establishing the IDS Program and is now a member of the IDS Project Management Committee and the CMU-NUOL Working Committee. He is also involved in an important research project on Human Trafficking in the GMS.

Our Lecturer



Assistant Professor Chusak Wittayapak is a Professor at the Department of Geography, Chiang Mai University, having received his Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Victoria in Canada. His teaching and research expertise encompasses political ecology, community-based natural resource management, agrarian transitions, development geography and the geography of ethnicity. He is a co-lecturer on three IDS courses, teaching 'Regionalization of Development in the GMS', 'Rural Resource Management and Development' and 'Special Topics in Development Studies'.



GMS Development, Social Conundrums and the Concepts of ‘Spatial Fix’ and ‘Accumulation by Dispossession’

By Assistant Professor Chusak Wittayapak, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University

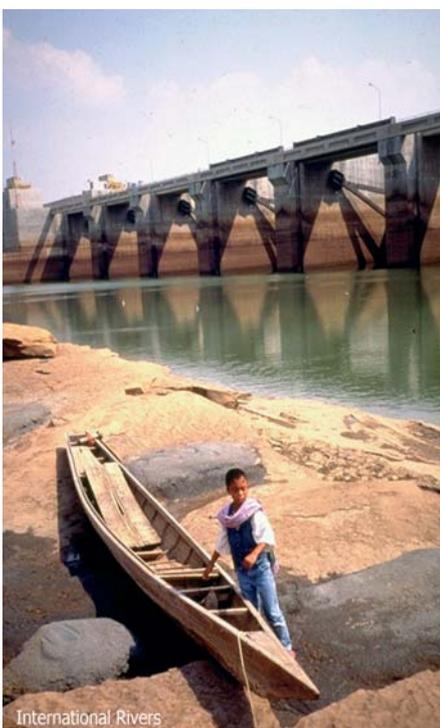
One may wonder why and how the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) has been created as a regional development bloc in the post-cold war era. When considering this issue, most development economists in the region have tended to praise the ideas of former Thai Prime Minister General Chatchai Chunnhavan, who had the idea of “turning the battlefield into the market place”, marking a turning point in the regionalization of the area in terms of spatial and economic integration during the beginnings of the recent globalization phase. The theory of capitalist development views this transformation as a regional expansion of capital through the switching of investments in response to a capitalist crisis limited by space – or one fixed in space. David Harvey (1981) invented the concept of ‘spatial fix’ and later developed this into ‘spatio-temporal fixes’, to explain

the double meanings of the capitalist crisis. Under this concept, on the one hand economic growth and capitalist development is literally fixed in terms of physical space, whilst on the other, to solve (or fix) this crisis requires expanding capital investment beyond nation boundaries into other regions in order to secure cheaper resources and labor, and to reach larger markets. The latter metaphorical fix is in one sense an improvised, temporary solution based on spatial reorganization and spatial strategies to overcome spatial barriers (Jessop 2006). One well-known mechanism used to achieve this is to invest and innovate in transportation and communications infrastructure. However, like cases elsewhere, capitalist expansion often causes tensions and conflicts, of varying scales. In the case of the GMS, the situation has become complicated, with a rise in the variety of capitalist systems present, such as those in Thailand, China and Vietnam, to name but a few.

To understand capitalist development at work using neo-liberal mechanisms, we need to look at the Marxist concept of primitive accumulation in a renewed sense, as “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey 2003). Marx’s view of primitive accumulation was based on the historical divorcing of producers from the means of production, as well as the transformation of the social means of subsistence and production into capital, plus the transformation of immediate producers into wage labor. In summary, these



processes were best known in terms of proletarianization, enclosure and privatization, concepts which often allow the exercise of violence, with the peak of primitive accumulation being the consolidation of “pigmy property of the many into the huge property of the few” (Marx 1967: 762, quoted in Glassman 2006). Harvey sees primitive accumulation as an ongoing process rather than a historical phase in capitalist development during a period of neo-liberal globalization. This new moment of primitive accumulation can be characterized as ‘accumulation by dispossession’. He specifically points to privatization as the cutting edge of accumulation by dispossession, with new forms of privatization ranging from the development of intellectual property rights to the depletion of global environmental commons; the corporatization of previously public assets (universities and public utilities), and the rolling back of regulatory frameworks. It is clear that Harvey uses the term accumulation by dispossession to make it fit a new moment of primitive accumulation, especially in the era of neo-liberal globalization, and he exemplifies the new mechanisms of primitive accumulation as financial capital, credit systems, stock manipulation and corporate



corruption. In addition, the commoditization of cultures, histories and intellectual creativity often entails wholesale dispossession, particularly in the contemporary era. All in all, these are the acts of a new form of imperialism, as he puts it in the title of his book.

Perhaps, the term 'primitive accumulation' is still relevant, because capitalist accumulation is often accompanied by coercion and violence. In the past, it was synonymous with conquest, enslavement, robbery and murder, though it required supplementation in the more complex arena of the globalized south (see Harvey 2003 and Hartsock 2006). In the GMS, the neo-liberal projects, like dams, land concessions, rubber plantations, free trade areas, transporta-

tion networks, the deregulation of borders and tourism development, have led to displacement, the trafficking of children, adults and wildlife, land expropriation, deagrarianization, the transnational migration of workers, and prostitution. Hartsock (2006) adds what she calls the "feminization of primitive accumulation" on to this list of misery. It remains to be seen how local people within the GMS will react to this capitalist development.



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STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Sengsouliya Chanthanakhone

A lecturer at Champasak University who was awarded a scholarship in 2009



My experience in Chiang Mai University as an international student

My name is Sengsouliya and I am from Champasak in Laos. In 2009 I received a scholarship from TICA in order to study at RCSD, and so would like to share with you some of my experiences from studying in Chiang Mai. Overall, I have found the RCSD program at Chiang Mai University very fulfilling; the professors on this international course are highly experienced and it has been a great opportunity for me to learn from them. The provision of reading materials and also the level of library access has been excellent, and I have been able to obtain plenty of information regarding my study topics. With people of different nationalities studying together in the same class, I have also learned about different cultures and the different styles of learning that exist. Before I came to Chiang Mai, I had little idea

of how to properly carry out research, but at RCSD I have learned a lot about the research process, as well as how to deal with the different groups of people who exist at research sites, such as mine in Bachiang District, Champasak Province in Laos, a site which forms art of my MA thesis entitled: 'Re-territorialization and Local Villagers' Responses: Changing Livelihood Strategies of the Suay in the Rubber Growing Areas of Champasak in Lao PDR'. Personally, I have to say that I have gained a lot of social science knowledge from the course, as before it started, I did not clearly understand the workings of society, but having finished my coursework in Chiang Mai, I now have a greater level of understanding of society and the power relations embedded within it.

GMS RESEARCH PROJECTS

Transforming Shifting Cultivation and Diversifying the Livelihoods of an Upland Peasant Community in Luang Prabang Province, Lao PDR (2006)

By Mr. Dexanourath Seneduangdeth, RCSD Alumni, Chiang Mai University and lecturer at the National University of Laos



This thesis is a study of the impact and consequences of state policies on rural development, particularly the policy of reducing and eradicating shifting cultivation that has been implemented in the rural and upland areas of Lao PDR. The study aims to: (1) analyze the power relations that have existed between the State and local people during the process of implementing the reduction and eradication policy, (2) investigate how different peasant groups have transformed their livelihoods in terms of their ways of life, the land tenure framework used and their social relations, and (3) identify the reasons why and ways in which the peasants have adapted to the policy.

The study is based on research that took place at Ban Nounsavath in Luang Prabang Province, and the analysis for the study was based on the concept of peasantry, the livelihood transformation process, the State's policy of reducing and eradicating shifting cultivation, and the issue of development as a form of social differentiation and spatial reorganization. The study has two main parts, as follows:

The first part examines the implementation of the reduction and

eradication of shifting cultivation policy, as a form of state power relations. The study find that this policy has been successful in terms of eradicating all shifting cultivators related to dry-rice farming; however, this policy has created unintended consequences; in particular, it has created livelihood insecurity among the local people, particularly in relation to land, work and the market. In addition, it has also caused changes in traditional social and cultural practices; for example, for labor relations it has changed the methods used from those based on reciprocity to the use of hired labor, plus has changed some of the moral facets and ritual practices.

The second section is focused on changes in the Ban Nounsavath villagers' livelihoods, as they have adapted and responded to the State's policies with the aim of maintaining their livelihood situations. The study finds that diversifying household income streams has been developed as an alternative livelihood strategy by the local people, and they now work as farmers and/or gardeners. In addition, within a situation of limited land being available to grow cash crops, most of the villagers have decided to plant teak trees, as a commodity crop. At the same time, some of them have sold their garden land, particularly the young teak tree gardens, so they now face agricultural landlessness, particularly in terms of the short-term cultivation practices.

In general, the State's policy of reducing and eradicating shifting cultivation has tended to benefit

only those people who have paddy fields (the richer farmers), rather than the poor. The poor have not been able to adjust themselves to the changing situation and have thus suffered landlessness and insufficient earnings. However, to cope with the socio-economic changes taking place, local people have negotiated within the State's policy framework in a number of ways; for example, indirectly avoiding official orders or instructions by looking for other ways to make a living, such as planting teak trees to gain ownership over land use, and thus make a space for their sustainable livelihoods.

My findings suggest that rural development policies should be more local-people centered; policy-makers should be aware of the importance of local needs and local knowledge, as well as local people's abilities and attitudes, in order to enhance local conditions and ensure local livelihood sustainability.



MA THESIS RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Anouxay Phomalath, an IDS student, has just come back from Gnang Pho Sy village in Suvannakhet Province, having conducted field research into the socio-economic impacts of a new road built there: Road No. 9 - which is part of the East-West Corridor linking Laos with Thailand and Vietnam. Armed with satellite images of the village from 1981, 2004 and 2009, Anouxay conducted a survey in early 2011 in order to identify the current situation in terms of land use, agricultural production and non-farm activities.

A Change of Rural Livelihood Patterns in Lao PDR: Case Study of Ban Gnagphosy, Kaisone-phomvihan District, Savannakhet Province

Non-Farm Occupations

Based on a sample of 52 households (totaling 413 members), he found something quite unexpected; out of a working population of 286 (those between fifteen and 60 years old), about half regularly migrate out of the village to find work, and of these 139 migrants, 55.4% are female. In total, 92% of the migrants work in Thailand, mostly in Bangkok, and the remaining 8% look for work in Suvannakhet, Pakse and Vientiane - other towns in Laos. The remittances these largely illegal migrant workers send back, most of whom work in restaurants, factories, and car and motorcycle repair shops in Bangkok, dominate the village economy, since on average they send home as much as US\$2,139 per household per year, as compared to US\$690 per household per year earned locally from agricultural production activities in the village.

Land Use Changes

Extensive and rapid land use changes have occurred over the last few years, with most land now used for rice cultivation and the growing of crops such as chilies, eggplants, pumpkins, cucumbers and bananas, both for household consumption and for the market. Shifting cultivation has been replaced by permanent agriculture, but cash crops did not actually play an important role in the agricultural

sector until a few years ago, when the village authorities and districts officials facilitated the conversion of communal forest land (within the conservation areas) and some privately owned land (for those with large holdings) into individual use land. The original aim of this move was to address the issue of landlessness, but this has not been fully realized since many of the households who received land had no labor to draw upon, so ended up selling the land to outside investors or the wealthier villagers at a price of about two to three million Kip per hectare (approximately 96 to 143 US Dollars).



Agricultural Production Systems

The level of land utilization is still relatively low and few chemical fertilizers are used, since agricultural production is still based on household consumption; nevertheless, villagers earn cash income from selling any excess rice, cucumbers, bananas or chilies they produce, and from selling animals such as cattle, pigs and poultry. Tractors have replaced cattle as the main form of farm labor since 1993, and new rice varieties plus the use of chemical fertilizers as well as hired labor, have appeared over the last four or five years.

Contract farming was first experimented with for eucalyptus trees in 2003, using largely informal contracts, but this regime has recently become more formal. Under this more formal regime, farmers receive eucalyptus seedlings and money from the contracting companies, but also have to buy fertilizers from these same companies for a period of seven years, until the trees are ready to be harvested. The contracts are even more detailed for sugarcane plantations, under which outside investors develop the large-scale plantations, rent-out land and cooperate with just a few farmers in the village. Given the new and increased interactions with outsiders, some villagers with their own farms have also started to grow rattan, agar wood and even rubber, utilizing know-how and experience acquired from Thailand.

IDS STUDENT PERSPECTIVES



I firmly believe that this program will create capable, innovative thinkers and excellent development workers into the future, and I would like to share this proverb on motivation which I always keep in mind: “learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere”.

If you find development work challenging then you will find the IDS course even more of a challenge. The IDS Master’s program is a must for those who wish to become development workers, as it provides its students with a better understanding of and broadens their perspective on development issues in Laos and in the region as a whole. Joining the IDS course has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life, as through this course not only have I met lots of knowledgeable and experienced professors committed to passing that knowledge and experience on, but I have also met some wonderful colleagues from many different sectors, all of whom have been very supportive during my studies. The lectures I have attended and the networks created have been more valuable than I can describe; so thank you very much TICA, Chiang Mai University and the National University of Laos for organizing the program.

Ms. Rakounna Sisaleumsak
IDS Student, year 2009

Studying on the IDS program has provided me with a tremendous perspective on development issues, especially in Laos but also in other countries in the region. I must therefore express my gratitude to all the professors for their patience, kindness and understanding in transferring their experience to us, the students, so that we can fully understand the meaning of the word ‘development’, from both a theoretical and practical perspective. I firmly believe that this program will create capable, innovative thinkers and excellent development workers into the future, and would like to share this motivation proverb which I always keep in mind: “learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere”.

Ms. Veomaniseng Phomthavixay
IDS Student, year 2009

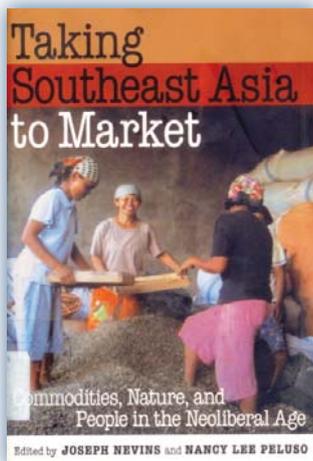
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Perhaps, I am the only or certainly the first ever Lao student who has travelled every weekend for three months, from Luang Prabang to Vientiane (which is eight hours by car and 35 minutes by plane), and using my own funds, to join the IDS program. I do not mean to imply that I am rich, but just want to tell you how strong my commitment is to studying on this program, even though I am already

52 years old. Actually, I have wanted to study in this field for a long time, but for many reasons have not been able to achieve my goal. I joined the course in 2009 and the results have undoubtedly been beyond my expectations, as I have become incredibly enriched by the sheer scale of theories, knowledge and experience on Lao development perspectives provided at the global, regional, national and local levels, even though the course covers only a limited time frame of one-and-a-half years. However, the time taken and effort used has been worthwhile, though there is ‘no great victory without scars’. As a part-time student, I have often had to read beyond midnight; my tip (warning or pre-requisite) for those who are interested in studying this course is *read*, otherwise, you will forget what you have learned. I would like to give thanks to all the knowledgeable and kind lecturers, support staff and classmates on this course - for the excellent instructions and support they have provided. Without them, I would not be where I am today.

Mr. Sisaveuy Chanthavisack
IDS Student, year 2009

BOOKS ON THE GMS



Taking Southeast Asia to Market

Edited by Joseph Nevins and
Nancy Lee Peluso

Published 2008

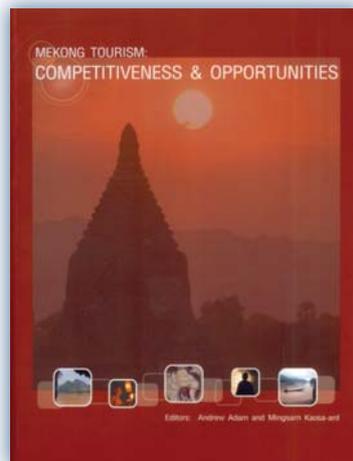
ISBN 978-0-8014-7433-0

“As one leans on a lovely Indonesian table, slips into a stylish T-shirt, sips a rare arabica coffee, or munches on delicious shrimp, one is in the new circuits of Southeast Asian economies. Most U.S. readers have largely forgotten about this region and hear of it mainly in references to the Vietnam war or threatened tigers. But the region has reconfigured itself, its politics, and its economies in highly complex, often unpredictable ways under this round of neo-liberal globalization. Taking Southeast Asia to Market does a superior job of showing how globalization is mediated by local institutions and actors. This is a useful and definitive collection on politics, socio-natures, and globalization.”

Susanna Hecht - Professor at the Regional and International Development, Institute of the Environment, School of Public Affairs, UCLA, USA

Reference:

http://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/cup_detail.taf?ti_id=4835



Mekong Tourism:

Competitiveness & Opportunities

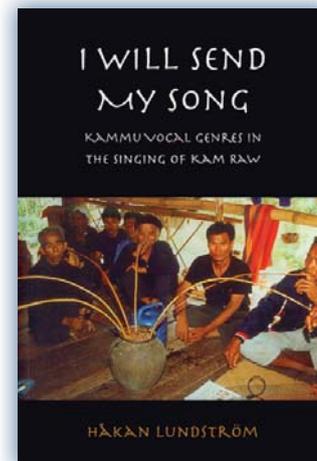
By Andrew Adam and

Mingsarn Kaosa-ard

Published 2008

ISBN 978-974-672-354-1

This book analyzes the strengths and management structure, service quality and logistics involved in the Mekong tourism industry, and does so using a benchmark international survey of more than 5,000 international tourists conducted in the GMS. Regional practitioners and academics provide their perspectives on the survey results, so that the GMS countries can better understand and capitalize on their strengths and minimize areas of weakness - maintaining or growing tourism in the face of an increasingly global, interconnected and competitive market. In addition, researchers analyze the issues associated with managing cultural tourism, one of the region's most important and threatened attractions, in the face of development and a rapidly booming tourist trade.



I Will Send My Song: Kammu Vocal Genres in the Singing of Kam Raw

By Hakan Raw

Published 2010

ISBN 978-87-91114-32-8

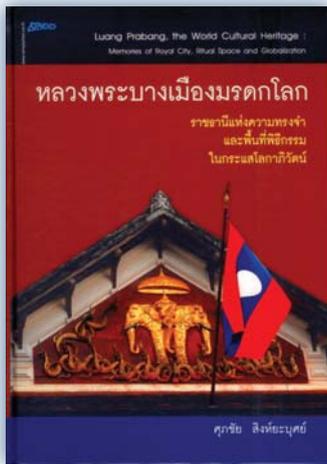
An ethno-musical presentation of one person's vocal performance using a highly varied set of words and styles, and the use of these competencies to communicate with other singers. Although this orally transmitted form of singing is unique to the Kammu of northern Laos, it is related to a much wider and complex tradition that exists throughout Southeast Asia, and thus will be of interest to a wide group of musicologists.

Reference:

<http://www.niaspress.dk/books/i-will-send-my-song>

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Luang Prabang and World Cultural Heritage: Memories of a Royal City, Ritual Space and Globalization (in Thai)

By Supachai Singyabuth

Published 2010

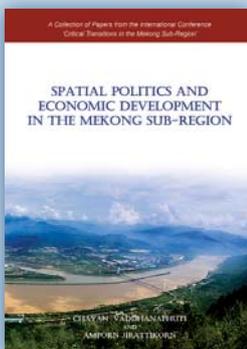
ISBN 978-616-7056-24-1

This book is based on a research study entitled ‘Luang Prabang - World Cultural Heritage: Ritual Space and Negotiating Identity within the Globalization Process’.

The Luang Prabang area has been inhabited since ancient times, and the town became the first capital of the Lan Xang Kingdom about 1,200 year ago - populated by the Lao, Kasak and Kamu ethnic groups. During King Fa Gnum’s reign, the cultural identity of Luang Prabang was shaped by the principles of Buddhism and old spiritual practices such as the ancestor and Naga worship ceremonies. During the colonial period, the French developed Luang Prabang as their center of colonial operations, and as a consequence Luang Prabang’s social structure and physical space were transformed. In 1975, Laos was transformed into a socialist country and the new government both excluded and ignored Luang Prabang town for a period; it becoming “a capital town in memory” for the people and in terms of social memories. After 1986, the Lao Government,

within the context of a ‘New Imaginary Policy’, established Luang Prabang as a “cultural tourism town”. The concept of a new Luang Prabang, one designed to support the cultural heritage of the country, has since changed the attitude of the Government, who are now much more positive towards it. During this latest period, and under the influence of cultural tourism, many of the old style buildings in the town have been turned into hotels and other tourism service locations, and some conservative officials have tried to conserve the old style architecture. In 1995, Luang Prabang was named a ‘world cultural heritage’ location, and since that time the town has boomed - the result of an ‘old town conservation’ theme, impacting upon the social patterns and ritual content within the town.

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For more information, please contact:

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