

# MEKONG PRESS

BOOKS & PUBLISHING IN THE GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION



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2008



## Annotated Bibliography on the Mekong

Editors: Charnvit Kasetsiri and Chris Baker

ISBN 978-974-8276-30-4, 328pp, 15x23 cm, B650

The Mekong is the focus of wide-ranging debates over development strategy, governance, legal issues, and environmental management. In recent years the river and its surroundings have become a “development corridor” and a framework for thinking about trade, investment, energy, transportation, and telecommunication within a perspective broader than the nation-state. This bibliography is a contribution to understanding the Mekong in its new setting as a subregion. It concentrates on works published since 1950 that have a geographical spread or conceptual framework that transcends national concerns. The focus is not on individual member countries as such but on their role as part of the Mekong subregion.

The bibliography has been compiled and annotated by a team of experts actively involved in the issues affecting the region—scholars based in the Mekong countries themselves or their Asian near-neighbors. It thus offers a home-grown perspective that highlights many works that might otherwise remain little known outside the region. The entries include works not only in English and other European languages but also in Burmese, Japanese, Mandarin, Thai, and Vietnamese, giving publication details and commentary on more than a thousand titles across a range of subject areas covering the culture, natural resources, economics, social issues, and politics of the region. There are also more than two hundred additional entries that provide information about other bibliographies, leading journals, multimedia titles, websites, and organizations working in the area.

This book is an indispensable aid for anyone interested in the Mekong. It is also a companion volume to *The Mekong Arranged and Rearranged* (Mekong Press, 2006), which explores the concepts that underpin the Mekong as a subregion historically, politically, and economically.

CHARNVIT KASETSIRI is a distinguished historian, former Rector of Thammasat University, and long-standing activist on social, political, and intellectual issues. CHRIS BAKER is a highly respected independent writer, editor, and translator who has lived in Thailand since 1979.



## Imagining Communities in Thailand: Ethnographic Approaches

Editor: Shigeharu Tanabe

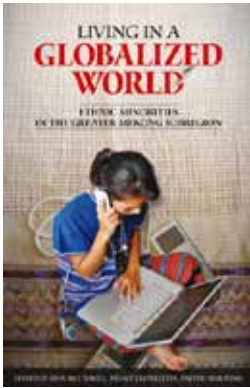
ISBN 978-974-13-3964-8, 232pp, 15x23cm, B495

This book explores newly emerging communities and the new practices, knowledge, and power relations that can no longer be explained adequately by the conventional conception of community. In the early 1980s, Benedict Anderson coined the term “imagined communities” to examine the creation and global spread of the nation-state as a collective fiction constructed in the homogeneous and empty time of modernity. Set against this conceptual background, the present volume focuses on the processes of “imagining communities” to explore how people imagine and create their own sense of knowledge, power, and identity.

The essays in this volume consider the communal relations and properties of newly emerging or transforming communities, associations, and networks: the “imagined family” in shaping the modern Thai nation-state, the Asoke community of a new Buddhist movement, a Karen millenarian Buddhist community on the Thai-Myanmar border, networks of producers and sellers in the Night Bazaar of Chiang Mai, female factory workers in Lamphun, and HIV/AIDS self-help groups of northern Thailand.

Taken together, these case studies demonstrate the possibilities of new communities in Thailand and provide a key reference for both students and scholars concerned with a critical approach to sociology, history, development studies, Southeast Asian studies, and anthropology.

SHIGEHARU TANABE is Professor of Anthropology at Otani University, Kyoto. He is one of Japan's leading social anthropologists and has worked in Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia for nearly four decades. His recent works include *Ecology and Practical Technology: Peasant Farming Systems in Thailand* (White Lotus, 1994), *Wearing the Yellow Robe, Wearing the Black Garbs: A Story of a Peasant Leader in Northern Thailand* (Chulalongkorn University Press, 2004, in Thai), and the edited volume with Charles F. Keyes, *Cultural Crisis and Social Memory: Modernity and Identity in Thailand and Laos* (RoutledgeCurzon, 2002).

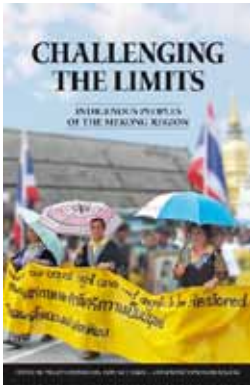


## **Living in a Globalized World: Ethnic Minorities in the Greater Mekong Subregion**

Editors: Don McCaskill, Prasit Leepreecha, and He Shaoying  
ISBN 978-974-8276-63-2, 386pp, 15x23 cm, 450g, B895

This book is the result of an innovative cross-border comparative project jointly conducted by an international team of scholars to address questions such as: To what degree and exactly how are groups like the Dzaio, Dai, and Akha holding on to their traditions, rituals, and identities? What happens when they move into ethnically mixed lowland areas, convert to a world religion, or go to school? How are they adapting? Are they using common strategies? Are new identities emerging? The authors focus on a variety of phenomena, including religious conversion, the media, healing practices, rituals, hydropower projects, and tourist-oriented ethnic enclaves.

DON MCCASKILL is Chair of the Department of Indigenous Studies at Trent University in Canada. PRASIT LEEPREECHA is Researchers at the Social Research Institute of Chiang Mai University, Thailand. HE SHAOYING is Professor and Vice President of Yunnan Nationalities University.



## **Challenging the Limits: Indigenous Peoples of the Mekong Region**

Editors: Prasit Leepreecha, Don McCaskill, and  
Kwanchewan Buadaeng  
ISBN 978-974-8418-20-9, 390pp, 15x23 cm, B795

Except on tourist brochures, the indigenous peoples of Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and southern China (Yunnan) are the least visible, and most excluded, of citizens. All these countries have used similar strategies to classify, include, or exclude minority peoples from the project of nationalism. Understanding the cultural and economic trajectories of key minorities such as the Dai, Hmong, Lahu, Akha, and Karen is critical to apprehending the construction, workings, and future of each of these nation-states, indeed of the Mekong region as a whole.

Conversely, as vividly demonstrated here, the minority peoples—many spanning more than one country—have adapted and accommodated to, or actively resisted, majority culture and state policy alike. There continues to be undeniable impoverishment, cultural loss, and “social suffering” in some communities, particularly amongst ex-swidden based upland ones in Vietnam and Laos; the

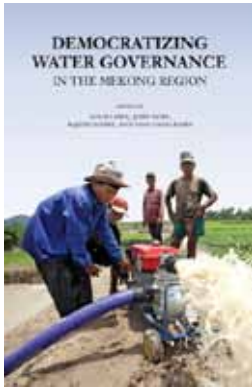
rearranging or reconstituting of trading and social networks; the over-commodification of aspects of culture, often for domestic tourism; and struggles to maintain language, rituals, and belief systems.

The studies here bring alive these communities in transformation, pointing out those in near dissolution, such as some Akha villages in Laos affected by overzealous opium-eradication programs, as well as those hopefully reclaiming and expanding their cultural space, such as the Dai in Sipsongpanna/Xishuangbanna engaged in a cross-border revival of Theravada Buddhism and Dai culture.

This is essential reading for anyone who wishes to uncover the nuances and interplay of ethnicity, nationalism, and change in the Mekong region, and serves as a companion volume to *Living in a Globalized World: Ethnic Minorities in the Greater Mekong Subregion*, edited by Don McCaskill, Prasit Leepreecha, and He Shaoying (Mekong Press 2007).

PRASIT LEEPREECHA and KWANCHEWAN BUADAENG are researchers at the Social Research Institute of Chiang Mai University, Thailand. DON MCCASKILL is Chair of the Department of Indigenous Studies at Trent University, Canada.

## 2007



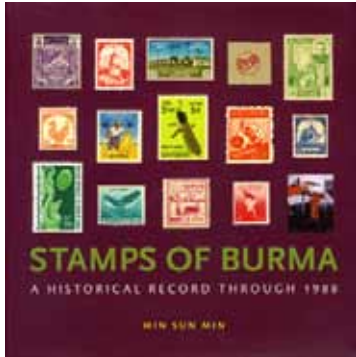
### **Democratizing Water Governance in the Mekong Region**

Editors: Louis Lebel, John Dore, Rajesh Daniel, and Yang Saing Koma  
ISBN 978-974-9511-25-1, 304pp, 15x23 cm, 450g, b/w photos, maps, B825

Over the last few decades, the Mekong region has been facing complex pressures and challenges in water governance driven by a range of economic integration efforts and relationships motivated by national self-interest. This book, the first in a three-volume series, brings together the work of researchers, scholars, activists, and leaders in the Mekong region to provide a baseline, state-of-knowledge review of the contemporary politics and discourses of water use, sharing, and management, and their implications for local livelihoods.

The chapters critically analyze contested discourses on such topics as regional hydropower development, floods, and irrigation, along with the broader yet interrelated issues of gender, media, dialogue, and impact assessment. The writers explore the interplay of power relationships between actors such as state planners, regional institutions, the private sector, and various water users, in particular, politically marginalized groups including women, urban and rural poor, and ethnic peoples. The diverse array of topics and perspectives provides a sound basis for engaging in policy-related action.

Written in straightforward language that elucidates complex issues from hydrological modeling to energy planning and reform, the volume presents the evolving study and knowledge of water governance in the Mekong region. It will appeal to a broad readership and, at the same time, contribute to the Mekong region's democratic search for water governance options.



## **Stamps of Burma: A Historical Record through 1988**

Min Sun Min

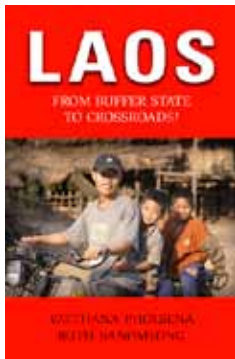
ISBN 978-974-810-24-3, 86pp, 21x21cm, 350g, B595

The postage stamps of Burma, like stamps of other countries the world over, are a colorful visual record of its unique history, from the British colonial government through the Japanese occupation, the British military administration, Burmese independence, the revolutionary council, and the Burmese Way to Socialism.

But no stamp depicts the most significant event in Burma's modern history—the pro-democracy uprising of 1988. To fill this void, Min Sun Min has designed a few of his own stamps to record the truth of this untold story in his country's historical narrative.

MIN SUN MIN is a freedom fighter, writer, educator, and artist. He is currently teaching graphic design at various colleges and universities in New York.

## **2006**



## **Laos: From Buffer State to Crossroads?**

Vathana Pholsena and Ruth Banomyong

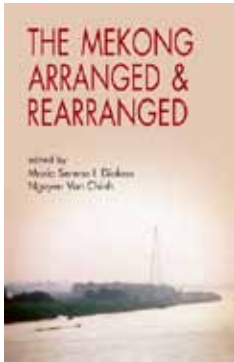
ISBN 978-974-94805-0-2, 255pp, 14x21 cm, 300g, B525

Can Laos emerge from the shadows of its more powerful neighbours after being carved up by colonial powers in the nineteenth century and dragged into devastating revolution and war in the twentieth? A frank and engaging look at Laos today, assessing its history, prospects, and hopes.

The authors investigate the country's unwanted role as a buffer state devastatingly drawn into the Indochina wars and the Cold War, its

recent accession to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and its bilateral relations with Vietnam and Thailand. The current catchcry of Mekong regional development, with Laos as a central node in “transport corridors”, or as a major source of hydroelectric power through large dams, is critically examined. Clearly, change is everywhere in Laos, with the opening up of its borders to its more powerful and numerous neighbours on all sides. How is this affecting its people, its economy, its culture, and its prospects as a nation?

This lively and accessible book on contemporary Laos is an essential read for scholars, policy-makers, NGO personnel, and anyone interested in coming to grips with the country today.



## **The Mekong Arranged and Rearranged**

Editors: Maria S.I. Diokno and Nguyen Van Chinh

ISBN 978-974-94804-9-6, 205pp, 14x21 cm, 300g, B425

Flanked by a fast-growing China hungry for markets and energy and other resources, the Mekong region is a target of competing local, national, regional and transnational as well as commercial interests. There are many “Mekong Regions,” and claims to its water, heritage sites, and other resources affect one or all the countries. Fascinating and provocative views on the history and current dilemmas of the Mekong region:

- ARMANDO MALAY, Jr surveys the legacy of the nineteenth century French explorations of the Mekong
- VATTHANA PHOLSENA looks at how present-day governments in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam are facing post-Indochinese realities
- NGUYEN PHUONG BINH points out the significance of individual national interests within the formal frameworks for development cooperation
- DOUNG CHANTO SISOWATH traces how joining ASEAN is affecting the way the Mekong countries relate to each other
- HE SHENGDA explains Yunnan’s—and China’s—participation in the Greater Mekong Subregion
- MYA THAN examines the lively cross-border trade and migration in the Mekong region and how this has interesting domestic gravitational effects
- CHAIYAN RAJCHAGOOL takes on one of the most powerful donors in the region in his unravelling of the text of the ADB’s discourse on poverty and water

# MEKONG PRESS

## *Books & Publishing in the Greater Mekong Subregion*

There are more than 250 million people living in the geographically, linguistically, and historically affiliated “Greater Mekong Subregion”: Cambodia, Laos, Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Vietnam, and the Yunnan province of China. However, very few books from or about the region are known internationally, and a great majority of what is available is dominated by books on the Indochina wars.

The lack of a “book culture,” poor literacy rates in many Mekong countries, the centrifugal tendencies of a global publishing trade dominated by media conglomerates, and the lack of a common language are some of the obstacles to increasing the number of internationally available books from the region.

## *Mekong Press Objectives and Goals*

- To publish a small number of selected titles featuring cross-border themes in English each year.
- To support translation work.
- To encourage local writers.
- To encourage professional collaboration with other local publishers and nonprofit organizations that focus on book publishing.

Mekong Press provides training programs for publishers, editors, and other professionals in the book industry in the Mekong subregion. The workshops are designed to meet the needs of subregional publishers by encouraging cooperative relationships and creating an opportunity for sharing special knowledge and skills in order to raise the standard of publishing in the areas of editing, production, marketing, and distribution.

Mekong Press is ready to consider manuscripts for publication by writers who are citizens residing in the Greater Mekong Subregion. All submissions should comply with the submission guidelines listed at [www.silkwormbooks.com](http://www.silkwormbooks.com).

Mekong Press is an initiative of Silkworm Books, an independent press in Thailand, and is supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. For more information please visit our website. [www.mekongpress.com](http://www.mekongpress.com), or write to [info@mekongpress.com](mailto:info@mekongpress.com).

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