

Mekong River

needs a serious common action

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~ Mekong length: 4,180km (old data: 5,500km)

Amazonia: 7,025Km

Nil: 5,600Km)

~ Source: Tibet Plateau or Tu-Fan

~ Mouth: Ca Mau, South Vietnam

Mekong with several names

Old Chinese records:

- Hai Chuoi (in the source)
- Lan-tsang (Lan from Lan-chou district, Tsang from Lou-tsang District)
- Lo Chuoi (Lao River)

Old Lao records:

- Houei Khay
- Mahanathi (Great River)
- Thana manitheva (From U River mouth to Mun River mouth)

Prince Khamman datas:

- Mahanathi (Lao Name)
- Kongho (Taechiu name)
- Diaowu (Chinese name)
- Lan-tsang (Yunnanese name)
- Tongle Thom (Khmer name)
- Cuu Long / Songlon (Nine Dragon / Great River- Vietnamese name)

Van Wusthof Report in XVII Century:

- Lao River

Occidentals in XV-XVI Centuries:

- Cambodia River

Mekong: *international name representing all different names from its source to its mouth*

Birth of Mekong

- Around 45 millions years old (After the birth of Himalaya and Tibet created by the big shock between Indian Island and the Continental Asia)

Mekong Basin created:

- Plains, plateaus, Mountains, rivers
- Rich biodiversity, flora, fauna, sources of life
- Geologic Creatures (Fossils, Dinosaurs- 200-65 millions years)
- Homo Erectus (500,000-200,000 years)

Civilization Cradle

- Primitive Men (Monolithic and Neolithic, Ceramic and Bronze Industries)
- Carrefour of Tribes and Peoples Association (Diversity of Ethnic Groups and Nations, Diversity of Cultures, Mixing of peoples and cultures)
- Meeting Carrefour of Civilizations, Beliefs and Cultures between East and West (Cities, Towns, agglomerations, villages, Temples, Languages, Philosophy, Modes of life, Customs, Traditions, Arts, Music...)

Mekong Sources of Life and Neighborhood Peoples:

- Foods (Rice, water, wildlife, fish, manioc, fruits, vegetable...)
- Construction material (Soil, sand, rock, woods...)
- Mineral richness (Gold, silver, copper, bronze, Steel, coal, salt, gas, phosphate...)
- Neighborhood Coexistence (Big Union Basin of Societies, Big way of communications and relations, Good amity and relationship...)
- Cultural enrichment and exchange each other (Mode of life, experiences, knowledge, life philosophy and ethic, arts, literature, languages...)

Mekong faces the development trend:

- **Hydro-power Dams (in Upper Mekong)**
 - + Energy need
 - + Energy commercialization (to sell, to buy then to sell, to get a commission)
- **Large exploitation of natural resources:**
 - + Wood exploitations
 - + Farms and plantations
- **Infrastructure Development:**
 - + New Agglomerations, Casino/Hotels, roads and fluvial ports constructed
 - + Factories and works constructions
- **Mekong International Statute:**
 - + Trade between China and Thailand
 - + Big tonnage ships of goods
 - + Reefs of rock destruction (9/14 destroyed)

Impacts to the Lao Biodiversity

Forests:

- 1985 = 47%
- 2000 = 42%.
- 2009 = around 35% (Non official)

Wildlife:

- Now, more than 100 wildlife species are endangered, among them 56 species are threatened to disappear.

Heavy effects for ecological systems

- **Water dried up, rapid stream:**

- + Small traditional boat can't reach the northern of our territory
- + Frequent heavy accidents for the small boats along the Mekong
- + Kinds of small fishes can't accede to the North as usually
- + Lao riverside destroyed by the big tonnage ships waves

- **Pollution and effects:**

- + Dirtiness poured out to the river from the agglomerations, casino/hotel, restaurants, public buildings...
- + Plastic box, plastic bags...
- + Consumable algae and riverside vegetables affected
- + Catfish and some other fish species will disappear
- + Big catastrophic situation will come soon for all the riverside countries. The Delta in the South will be seriously affected by deluges and invasion of the sea which level become more and more higher due to climate change.

Main remarks on Mekong River

- Mekong is not the Maha Mathis(Giant River) as before, its watershed in Luang Namtha and Bokeo Prov. is smaller than usual, especially in dry season.
- At the same time, favoured by 60-70% of watershed from 20 small and big tributaries in Laos territory, it become more large in the South of Laos.
- At that present time, nobody could not comeback to the big stream of water in the North portion of Mekong which was called the “Lan-Tsang Kiang”, faces the global climate change and the big exploitation of water for hydro-power installations and agriculture.

Possible solutions

- To safeguard the watershed of the Mekong tributaries in Laos territory should be a unique chance for maintaining the reasonable level of Mekong stream in its middle and south portion, and for mitigating the further negative impacts to the South Indochinese peninsular.
- To stop the disorder and illegal exploitations of woods by the Lao and transnational societies, to stop the land concessions for large rubber plantations, banana plantation etc... to reduce the shifting cultivation by enhancing the living condition of the Lao people in remote areas, are the key of Mekong stream safeguard.
- It is main time where our neighboring peoples and governments in Mekong riversides, should have a reasonable conscience and find a common decision to resolve the unexpected and imminent further catastrophic dangers by the Mekong water crisis and climate change.

Common position

- Conscience and comprehension toward the common interest and danger;
- Common resolution and actions facing the imminent danger;
- Step down of ambition and pecuniary interests;
- International and regional regulations for the use of Mekong resources;
- Common decision and close cooperation between riverside countries for preserving the Mekong entity and richness;
- Common decision and close cooperation for resolving the poverty problems, even all the unjust and illegal forms in this region.

*“Your gesture will be precious for
preserving our sacred Ganga”*

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