

# MEKONG UPDATE & DIALOGUE



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## The Australian Mekong Resource Centre

was established at the University of Sydney in 1997 to promote research, discussion and debate on development and environment issues in the Mekong Region. The AMRC is a focal point for information, dialogue and activities in support of an equitable and sustainable development path for the Mekong Region.

The *Mekong Update & Dialogue* provides:

- lead article on the key topic of the issue
- responses to the lead article
- news of current developments in the region
- news from the AMRC
- information on Mekong-related conferences and events in Australia

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## READER CONTRIBUTIONS

The Mekong Update & Dialogue welcomes the comments of its readers on issues raised in the Feature article and in the Responses to the Feature. If you do wish to make comment please email us at mekong@mail.usyd.edu.au. Comments should be sent by early May and should be limited to 1-2 paragraphs.

## EDITORIAL - Politics of the Commons

The Mekong River is a common property resource par excellence. It is a shared resource, used and abused, held and accessed in common by six countries, some 70 million people and as diverse a set of resource users as can be found competing and cooperating over any resource on our planet. Yet, the very scale of the Mekong and the fact that it is shared by sovereign states tends to keep its management out of the commons discourse and more firmly in the realm of inter-state relations, formal institutions and agreements.

The Mekong Commons are more generally conceived of at a much more local scale, in line with much of the literature, action and activism associated with common property concerns. In this edition of Mekong Update and Dialogue, we focus on a gathering of several hundred intellectuals and activists in Chiangmai in July 2003 under the conference title, "Politics of the Commons: Articulating Development and Strengthening Local Practices". While this was an international meeting and included significant numbers of non-Southeast Asian scholars and practitioners, the Mekong was never far from the proceedings. Further, the very attention to political aspects of common property tended to shift the scale focus well beyond the local, as did the themes surrounding "articulation".

Conferences can set out to achieve many things, whether they be a consolidation and exchange of existing work or a redefining of research and advocacy agendas. Clearly the Chiangmai meeting aspired more to the latter objective, and in a number of ways it achieved its aims. At the very least, for the great majority of academics to respond affirmatively - with relatively little hesitation - to a public invitation to represent themselves as "scholar-activists" demonstrates a level of engagement not found hitherto in academic meetings on common property.

In some ways this is odd, because the commons theme itself emerged as a critique of orthodoxy, most notably the statist and what we now call neo-liberal mainstream implied by the now (in)famous tragedy of the commons analysis. The entrenchment of the critique in a new orthodoxy, the translation of its analysis into institutional rules, game theory and discourses that sit as easily in World Bank documents as they do in critical social science treatises has in part triggered a concern to re-politicise the commons. Hence the alternative branch of commons thinking on which Peter Vandergeest and Chusak Withayapak reflect in the following pages.

Perhaps what we forget most in all this, though, is that the politics of the commons were introduced most unabashedly right at the beginning - by none other than Garrett Hardin!

# FEATURE

## Common and uncommon themes in the Politics of the Commons

by *Peter Vanderveest*

The theme of this conference was “The Politics of the Commons: Articulating Development and Strengthening Local Practices.” It was both a regional meeting of the International Association for the Study of Common Property (IASCP), and an opportunity for Chiangmai University faculty and their associated scholarly networks (including both myself and the AMRC) to assemble some of the most interesting scholar-activists working in South and Southeast Asia.

Perhaps the best way of understanding the excitement generated by this conference is by locating it in relation to Craig Johnson’s presentation on themes in common property research. According to Johnson, there are two bodies of thought in common property research: The “tragedy” school is mostly concerned with defining institutional arrangements for collective action through which Hardin’s Tragedy of the Commons can be avoided. The “entitlements” school is more concerned with creating and sustaining resource access for the poor and vulnerable in society. According to Johnson, the IASCP has been dominated by the first school. The Chiangmai network, however, is organized around the second school, and the conference was thus an occasion where questions of entitlements for the marginalized could be foregrounded.

Nancy Peluso effectively set the tone at her plenary address by asking audience members to identify themselves if they considered themselves “scholar-activists”—and by her observation that most conference participants saw themselves this way. Almost every presentation in one fashion or another addressed the politics of entitlement. This was perhaps why the sessions organized as the “local voices” forum fit so easily into the conference—in most academic settings, sessions profiling community activists often sit awkwardly with academic work more concerned with advancing the state of knowledge. In one way or another all the sessions that I attended were less concerned with the “how-to” of building local common property institutions than with the larger struggles around access to forests, water, or fish; and with dam building, citizenship, ethnicity, and so on.

At the same time, the entitlement school of common property scholar-activism comes with some limits. Although the conference organizers were aware of some of these and worked to overcome them, they were nevertheless apparent in many presentations. In good part, these limits emerge from the way that the theory and practice of common property has been firmly located in the local. Common property, it is believed, emerges from the local—and with only a few exceptions, common property scholarship has been an argument that the local is intrinsically separate from and opposed to state or private property. The tragedy and entitlements approach are united in this—what separates them is that the tragedy school usually stays with the local level, while the entitlement school also tries to systematically understand non-local threats to local access.

What are the threats to local access? Usually, the twins known as private property and state property. Thus the tendency to see both central states and commercialization as inimical to strong local practice. There are some voices that question this framework, but this perspective arguably has remained dominant among entitlement school scholar-activists.

In Southeast Asia, moreover, the historically strong role of the state in claiming ownership of forests, water, and fish means that the politics of common property has come to be seen through the lense of the relationship between resource-hungry central states, and threatened local communities. Again, Nancy Peluso set the tone with her discussion of territorialization as a way that states try to take control of forests and other resources, and counter-mapping as a way for local communities to contest these claims. My own publications with Nancy Peluso are similarly implicated, and the majority of conference presentations were organized around this theme of community entitlements versus state claims.

All this is a way of leading to my comments below regarding future research agendas. But before I get to that, what did I learn at the conference? I will write primarily about the panels on tenure reform, governance, and decentralization, which I helped organize. Other contributors to this newsletter who attended different sessions might speak to other themes.

The prognosis that central states undermine local common property has led most common property and community scholar-activists to believe that it is essential to break the grip of centralized state resource agencies. A near-consensus has emerged around the idea that this can be achieved in part through decentralization. This consensus extends to many other influential actors: Although they differ with respect to the desirability of privatization, common property advocates have in effect formed an unintended alliance with promoters of neoliberalism, who see selective decentralization as one way of cutting into the inefficient allocation of natural resources by centralized state resource management. Only the “dinosaur” resource agencies in capital cities continue to resist.

All this pressure from diverse groups is one of the reasons that almost every state in Asia has embarked on some kind decentralization program. The conference was a great opportunity to learn about and compare efforts to decentralize natural resource management in South and Southeast Asia, although I will focus my comments on Southeast Asia. Taken together, there were three themes that struck me about the presentations that I heard. First, almost all of them described problems and failures, although a few presenters pointed to limited benefits. Second: the kinds of problems described by the presenters were very different in different political contexts. In Vietnam, forest devolution increased local inequality in access to resources (Nguyen Quang Tan). In Lao PDR, land and forest allocation was a way for the central state to intensify control over village use of forest resources (Fujita). In Indonesia, the uncertainty and volatility created by decentralization has led to accelerated logging, and created limited space in which assertive villagers can assert claims on resources (McCarthy, Tony Djogo).

Third, there was a near consensus that decentralization should not be abandoned. Several times during the sessions I asked participants if they thought that it was time to throw the entire

project out, given the litany of negative consequences described by the presenters. Each time I was met with an affirmation of the necessity of decentralization.

What then is a scholar-activist to do? There are in effect two responses to this situation.

The first is to find ways of making decentralization more effective. Jesse Ribot's paper outlining the minimum conditions for effective decentralization with respect to the accountability and power of the local state was useful in this regard. A local state that is not democratic and does not have real decision-making powers is unlikely to strengthen local common property practice. Most scholar-activists in Asia, however, understand this. What Ribot's model did not tell us is how the gap between existing local governments and this ideal might be closed. But his contribution at least directed our attention to the question of re-engaging with local government, something that has been missing from a lot of common property scholar activism. Although I may have missed it, for example, to my knowledge none of the many presentations on Thailand seriously considered how the Tambon Administrative Organizations might contribute to strengthening local practices—despite the fact that these organizations are supposed to be run by democratically elected representatives and have some jurisdiction over the use of common property resources.

One reason for this relative lack of attention to local government is that many scholar-activists in Southeast Asia think that local government organizations are too tainted by both central state politics and local commercial interests to have any role in strengthening local common property practices. The second response is to look to community-based people's organizations and NGO community work to fill the gap. The hope is that breaking the power of centralized resource agencies might create more opportunities for community groups to seize control of resource management. Conference presentations showed that this strategy has had some successes. As with effective local government, however, these kinds of successes might be difficult to generalize. Not all localities are characterized by the presence of strong community institutions, while NGO networks barely exist in some countries. Perhaps the only conclusion is both effective local government and strong community institutions are important for decentralization to actually strengthen local common property practice, although which will be most important depends on political context.

I will finish by pointing to three areas that could use a lot more sustained attention in future common property scholar-activism. First, common property scholar-activists could broaden out from their common focus on state-local articulations, and pay more attention to how diverse translocal networks articulate with local practice. In comparison to the scrutiny given to state resource agencies, there was relatively little careful analysis of the ways that environmental, mainstream, and alternative NGO networks articulate with and transform localities. Almost completely absent was attention to many other networks and their effects on localities, for example, networks formed through the circulation of commodities, professionals (foresters, engineers), people (though migration), money (credit, remittances), and certification (organic, green, etc.).

For reasons outlined by Johnson, there was a noticeable emphasis in the conference on marginalized peoples, especially those living in upland areas and identified with forests and

watersheds. Although I have not counted systematically, forestry and watershed management accounted for probably about half the presentations, while water and fisheries management encompassed a good proportion of the remainder. In some ways this is not surprising: these resources and themes have long been the staples for common property research and community based natural resource management initiatives in Asia. Chiangmai University, moreover, has become an important centre for Southeast Asian scholarly and activist networks concerned with upland, watershed, and forestry issues. It does raise the question, however, of whether common property research might not be extended to help understand and strengthen local practices in urban areas and intensive agricultural zones. Where were the papers studying the use of water resources by commercially-oriented lowland farmers, or the struggles around access and use of urban space among the urban marginalized?

The sessions on postcolonial and postsocialist thinking seemed to invite papers on the cultural politics of the commons, nature, and natural resource management. I was not able to attend very many of these sessions, however, a quick look at the papers presented in these sessions suggest that very few scholars actually took up this invitation. More importantly, the presentations that I did attend suggested to me that common property scholarship could benefit from more explicit attention to cultural politics. By this I mean an understanding of politics which does not abandon, but goes beyond the idea that politics are about governments, or about a broad range of actors each of whom is trying to control resources or otherwise acting to achieve given interests. Many of the presentations, including those in the themes that I helped organize, could have benefited from more attention to the myriad ways that the identities of these actors as well as their interests are negotiated and produced through struggles not just over resources but also meanings.

Common property research—both the entitlement and tragedy schools—is often based on the assumption that community, common property, and localities exist outside of and opposed to states, private/state property, and the global. But development articulations are in practice a lot more mixed up and complex than the common accounts which treat these actors as separate, opposed, and articulated. Increased attention to the cultural politics of common property and locality would allow us to pull apart these apparent oppositions. Another approach, for example, would treat the local not as a given defined through its opposition to global, but as a set of materially-embedded practices which are continually remade through articulations with translocal networks that work through, not outside of, localities. Community could be understood less as a pre-given actor than as an effect of the articulations of community residents, states, NGOs, agribusiness, CBNRM programs, the media, courts, and more. Common property is similarly an effect of articulations which include private and state property. This is one way of interpreting the subtitle “Articulating Development and Strengthening Local Practice,” and it is an interpretation that deserves our attention as scholar-activists.

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# RESPONSES TO FEATURE

## Politicization of politics of the commons

by *Chusak Wittayapak*

The following is my reflection, as host and organizer of the Politics of the Commons Conference, on Peter Vandergeest's commentary and on the conference in general. The conference was originally born out of the Regional Centre for Social Science and Sustainable Development (RCSD)'s intention to organize a small international conference as a venue for its alumni to have an opportunity to participate in and maintain networks with regional scholars. Later, the conference evolved and expanded when RCSD and its partners (including AMRC and York's Center for Asian Research) submitted an unsuccessful proposal to host the International Association for the Study of Common Property (IASCP) biennial conference for 2004, which went to Mexico. IASCP instead asked RCSD to organize a regional meeting for Southeast Asia. The conference organizing committee decided to combine the original idea with the ideas assembled in the IASCP conference proposal. In short, the conference title - the Politics of the Commons - contains the ideas in the proposal for the IASCP international conference and the subtitle - Articulating Development and Strengthening Local Practices - simply represents the original idea of RCSD's conference.

I concur with the way Peter conceptualized the bodies of thought in common property research drawn from Craig Johnson's paper, i.e. the tragedy school and the entitlement school. Although the conference theme was clearly to move away from the former toward the latter, it would be remiss not to recognize that the common property debates have been pioneered by the tragedy of the commons critiques. The theme and merit of the conference were immediately reinforced by Nancy Peluso's keynote address, which set the tone for the whole conference. Prior to the conference, we were debating among the organizing committee whether this kind of conference should not only present the voices of academics but also the voices of the most affected people from the commons issues. The scholar-activists, as Nancy put it, seemed to resonate with our reputation among the Bangkok-based intelligentsia as "the Chiang Mai School" when we come out to support the community forest movement and other local protests. The "Local Voices" forum thus intended to offer space for marginalized people to present their own voices in an academic space. The organizing committee also invited the newspaper media to cover the conference so that the dialogues were made public.

To avoid the syndrome of a series of papers and case study presentations, the conference tried to diversify into a variety of plenary sessions, roundtable discussions, local voices, and public forums. This was intended to keep balance between theory and practices. In terms of geographical coverage, the conference, although focusing on Southeast Asia, brought in

some participants from South Asia for a comparative discussion. It hoped that the Southeast Asian scholar-activists would benefit from the post-colonial studies from the South Asian scholars. Besides, the Mekong region has become an identity that ties many countries together as a regional commons. Nevertheless, an old habit of looking for the variety of the commons (resource sectors such as forest, land, fish, coastal marines, and so on) still found its way onto agendas of the conference coverage. This tradition was noted by a bad-tempered remark elsewhere as too much of the commons and too little of the politics suggested by the conference title.

Both the keynote address by Nancy Peluso and the roundtable discussion organized by Thomas Sikor revisited the "territorialization" concept originally proposed by Peter Vandergeest and Nancy Peluso in 1995. Perhaps, this is the way the conference tried to really politicize the politics of the commons. It sent the message that commons research is embodied in the political process.

In Southeast Asia, nation-state building, development discourse, wars, and revolutions have set different contexts for reform. These complicated contexts are the terrain on which the commons are fiercely contested nowadays. Institutional reform through the new constitution in the case of Thailand has been a setback for the commons when encountering the old style court system as lamented by Pichet Maolanonda's presentation. Forest and land policy reforms in Vietnam and Laos, the socialist countries, have generated a new form of differentiation and state control. The conference had hoped that the articulation of development would play out in the commons' debates like these and more. We also heard the anti-climactic voices of concern over politics of community forests in Thailand from Andrew Walker's newly-coined arborealization of agriculture. Peter Vandergeest's article places all these problems under the decentralization issue. I feel that decentralization is too big a word, as it means different thing to different people. That is why no one would disagree with it. The problem is how to go about it. The conference was far from finding a definitive answer to this question. As far as I am concerned, from the experience of the community forest movement in Thailand, what the local people really have in mind is some kind of devolution of power.

From the organizer's point of view, we all had some aims and wishes for how the conference would turn out. What actually happened may not have fulfilled all those hopes. We recognize all the efforts of the scholars of the commons in the past who have been persistently pushing the voices of the commons and the commoners in both academic and policy debates. The Chiang Mai conference has only taken another step to echo the voices and works of the scholar-activists into the realms of power relations through various forms of negotiation. We need to have more face to face dialogues with a range of concerned agencies and individuals to establish more direct forms of communication.

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Chusak Wittayapak is a lecturer in geography at Chiang Mai University, Thailand.

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Fisheries along the Se Bung Hiang River as in many other parts of the Lower Mekong Basin are managed by local communities. Village committees set rules and regulations to restrict fishing activities of people within their own community. They also negotiate a system of restricted access to village fishing grounds by nearby villages. There is also a range of well respected animist beliefs which prohibit or restrict fishing in some parts of the river protected by *pii* (spirits). While there is implicit control over these local resources by communities, in some cases conflict arises. The fishers in the photo are government staff posted to a sub-district office from Vientiane. By law all resources in Lao belong to the state. As such, these officers fish the locally managed 'deep pool' of the river without permission from the local community. Minor localised conflicts of interest, such as this, illustrate underlying challenges as the government tries to promote decentralisation and community control over resources, while maintaining centrally planned governance over resources often assumed to be common property.

*photo & caption by Simon Bush*

## NEWS FROM THE REGION

### Trans-Asia railways

In October 2003, ASEAN railway managers met in Hanoi to exchange views on the proposed Trans-Asia railway mega-project. The railway will stretch from Singapore to Kunming (Yunnan), cost some \$2.5 billion and take three years to build. In addition, India is considering building a railway connecting New Delhi with Hanoi, as part of an initiative to increase trade with ASEAN member countries.

-- 2003 "India considers building railway link with Vietnamese capital", Vietnam News Briefs, 9 September 2003

-- 2003 "ASEAN railways try to keep mega-project on track", Vietnam News Briefs, 14 October 2003

### Dams update

#### The massive Son La dam in Vietnam

Construction of Son La dam in the northern Muong La district of Vietnam will commence next year. The site is 200 kilometres upstream of the existing Hoa Binh dam on the Da River. The project was approved by the Vietnamese National Assembly in December 2002. Son La is to be the largest hydroelectricity plant in Southeast Asia with a capacity of 2,400MW. The human and ecological impacts are considerable; resettlement started early last year. Completion is scheduled for 2015.

Lang, C. 2003 "Vietnam starts resettlement to make way for massive Son La dam", World Rainforest Movement Bulletin, April 2003

-- 2004 "Vietnam to build \$2.3 billion Son La hydropower plant in 2005", Vietnam News Briefs, 11 February 2004

#### Laos plans 15 dams on Mekong tributaries

There are plans to construct 15 hydropower dams on tributaries of the Mekong. The Lao government has stressed that main-stream dams will be avoided if possible. Most of the electricity produced will be exported. One of these proposals is for the Nam Theun 3 dam in Bolikhamsay province. A MOU has been signed between the Theun Hinboun Power Company Limited and the Lao government requiring environmental and social impact studies for the dam.

-- 2004 "Dam construction to power export plans", Vientiane Times, 27 February 2004

Edaphone Phouthonesy 2004 "Theun-Hinboun to develop Nam Theun 3", Vientiane Times, 8 March 2004

#### Debate rages over downstream impact of Yunnan dams

As at early March, a serious decline has occurred in water levels in the lower Mekong. Water levels have also been fluctuating more frequently. While climate change has been cited as the cause of this predicament, this conclusion is contested by SEARIN (Southeast Asia River International Network), among others, which blames the Chinese dams on the Upper Mekong (Lancang) in Yunnan for downstream changes to the water regime.

Kamol Sukin 2004 "Mekong River basin on drought alert", The Nation, 5 March 2004

## AUSTRALIAN MEKONG NEWS

### Mekong Curriculum initiative

In December 2003, AMRC coordinated and facilitated a brain-storming/inception workshop for a new regional curriculum development initiative. The workshop was held at Can Tho University and was facilitated by AMRC staff Nattaya Tubtim, Andrew Wyatt and Phil Hirsch. The initiative currently involves two staff from each of nine higher education institutions in the Mekong from China, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. The initiative will involve sharing and development of curriculum materials on environment, natural resource management and rural social change. The aim is to assist each participating institution to develop curriculum material within their existing syllabus in a Mekong-relevant way, taking advantage of the local knowledge and materials available to their counterparts in different countries. The three day inception workshop came up with a range of ideas and practical ways forward. It also included a field trip within the Mekong Delta. The program is being supported by Oxfam America through the Mekong Learning Initiative and by the Open Society Institute's learning across borders program. The next meeting will be a hands-on curriculum materials development workshop at Khon Kaen University in late April 2004.

### Risk and water resource development

AMRC Director Phil Hirsch visited three sites that are part of AMRC's study on the political ecology of risk in water resources development – Nan River Basin in northern Thailand, specifically looking at implications of the proposed Kok-Ing-Nan diversion for the headwaters of the receiving river system; Sanasomboun District in southern Laos to look at dry season irrigation development; and Jinghong in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan to look at the implications of the Jinghong Dam. Construction has started on Jinghong Dam despite the fact that the Environmental Impact Assessment has not yet been approved at a central level. Communities that are due to be flooded along the 110km reservoir face uncertainties over their resettlement options. Another highlight of this visit was a forum at Yunnan University on 24 February 2004, where about 150 students, academics and journalists heard a number of speakers reflect critically on the implications of dams along the Nujiang (Salween River) and more generally. There has been an unusually public and candid debate over the Nujiang dams within China in recent months. The forum speakers included Phai Deetes from the Southeast Asia Rivers Network, who had just returned from a 10 day visit to Nujiang with a group of local village leaders from the Salween Basin in Burma and Thailand.

## NEWS FROM THE CENTRE

### Mekong Quest CD-ROM just out!

The *Mekong Quest* CD-ROM is AMRC's first outreach to high school education. The multimedia program is designed to provide an entry point to the geography of the Mekong River and the people, countries and ecosystems that are connected to



it. It includes interactive material about Mekong issues and geographic concepts regarding Australia's neighbouring Asian countries, as well as the role of Australia in the Mekong Region.

If you are interested in purchasing *Mekong Quest* please visit our website <http://www.mekong.es.usyd.edu.au/>

## Visiting scholar

Caroline Garaway joined the AMRC in October, 2003 as a visiting scholar. Caroline is a human ecologist with particular interest in the human ecology of living aquatic resource use (especially in SE Asia) and the development of integrated approaches to living aquatic resources management and research. For the past 9 years she has been involved in UK DfID funded research projects in South and South East Asia (including Thailand, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh). Lao PDR has been a principal focus of her investigations into the nature and importance of fishing, the impact of development initiatives (such as fish enhancement and agricultural development) on living aquatic resource use, and learning approaches to management under uncertainty. On 24 October Caroline gave a presentation to the Mekong Discussion Group on "Adaptive learning in fisheries in Lao PDR". Caroline returned to London in December last year to take up a position as Lecturer in Environment & Development within the Department of Anthropology at UCL.

## Recently published Working Papers

During 2003 and early 2004 the AMRC published four Working Papers:

- **WP#7** *Civil Society and Internationalized River Basin Management* by Fiona Miller & Philip Hirsch
- **WP#8** *"Give a man a fish..." Contextualising Living Aquatic Resources Development in the Lower Mekong Basin* by Simon Bush
- **WP#9** *Security Developments in the Thailand-Burma Borderlands* by Desmond Ball
- **WP#10** *Ecotourism and Community-based Ecotourism in the Mekong Region* by Anucha Leksakundilok

All are available in both hard copy (for a charge) and pdf form (free of charge). Please visit our website for details...  
<http://www.mekong.es.usyd.edu.au/>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### The 15th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia

29 June-2 July 2004, Canberra, Australia

Contact: GPO Box 2200, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia

Tel: (+61 2)6257 3299

Fax: (+61 2)6257 3256

Email: [asaa@ausconvservices.com.au](mailto:asaa@ausconvservices.com.au)

<http://coombs.anu.edu.au/ASAA/conference>

### International Symposium on Transboundary Water and Ecological Cooperation

18-25 July, 2004, Kunming & Lhasa, China

Contact: Ms Zhao Wenjuan, The Asian International Rivers Center (AIRC), 6th flr. Wenjing Building, Yunnan University, Kunming, Yunnan 65009, China

Email: [wjzhao0772@sina.com](mailto:wjzhao0772@sina.com)

[http://airc.ynu.edu.cn/English\\_site/Eng\\_news/eng\\_news\\_symposiummain.asp](http://airc.ynu.edu.cn/English_site/Eng_news/eng_news_symposiummain.asp)

### Conference: Impact of Globalization, Regionalism and Nationalism on Minority People in Southeast Asia

15-17 November, 2004, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Contact: Dr. Prasit Leepreecha, Coordinator, Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, 50200, Thailand

Email: [Leesia@chiangmai.ac.th](mailto:Leesia@chiangmai.ac.th)

### 7th Asian Fisheries Forum: the triennial meeting of the Asian Fisheries Society

30 November-4 December, 2004, Penang, Malaysia

Contact: The Secretariat, 7th Asian Fisheries Forum, School of Biological Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Minden, Penang, Malaysia

Tel: ++ 60-4- 6533888 Ext. 3961/2932/4005/4009

Fax: ++ 60-4- 6565125

Email: [7aff2004@usm.my](mailto:7aff2004@usm.my)

<http://www.usm.my/7AFF2004/>

The events listed above are changed with each issue of Mekong Update & Dialogue. For a complete list of upcoming events please go to our website at [www.mekong.es.usyd.edu.au](http://www.mekong.es.usyd.edu.au). For submission of new events please contact the AMRC Administrator at [mekong@mail.usyd.edu.au](mailto:mekong@mail.usyd.edu.au)

# Politics of the Commons



*Conference field trip to Mae Sa Mai tourist village, Thailand. (Source: RCSD)*



*Politics of the Commons conference participants. (Source: RCSD)*

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