

Natural Indigo Craft City : Sakhon Nakhon



Khong River

Himalaya Range

Tibet Plateau and Qinghai

Sichuan

Yunnan

Myanmar

Lao

Thailand

Cambodia

Vietnam



Origin : Himalaya Range

Flow through : Tibet Plateau, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan in China. Named Lanchang River (very rapid River)

Myanmar, Named Kong River

Lao PDR, Named Kong River

Thailand, Named Khong River

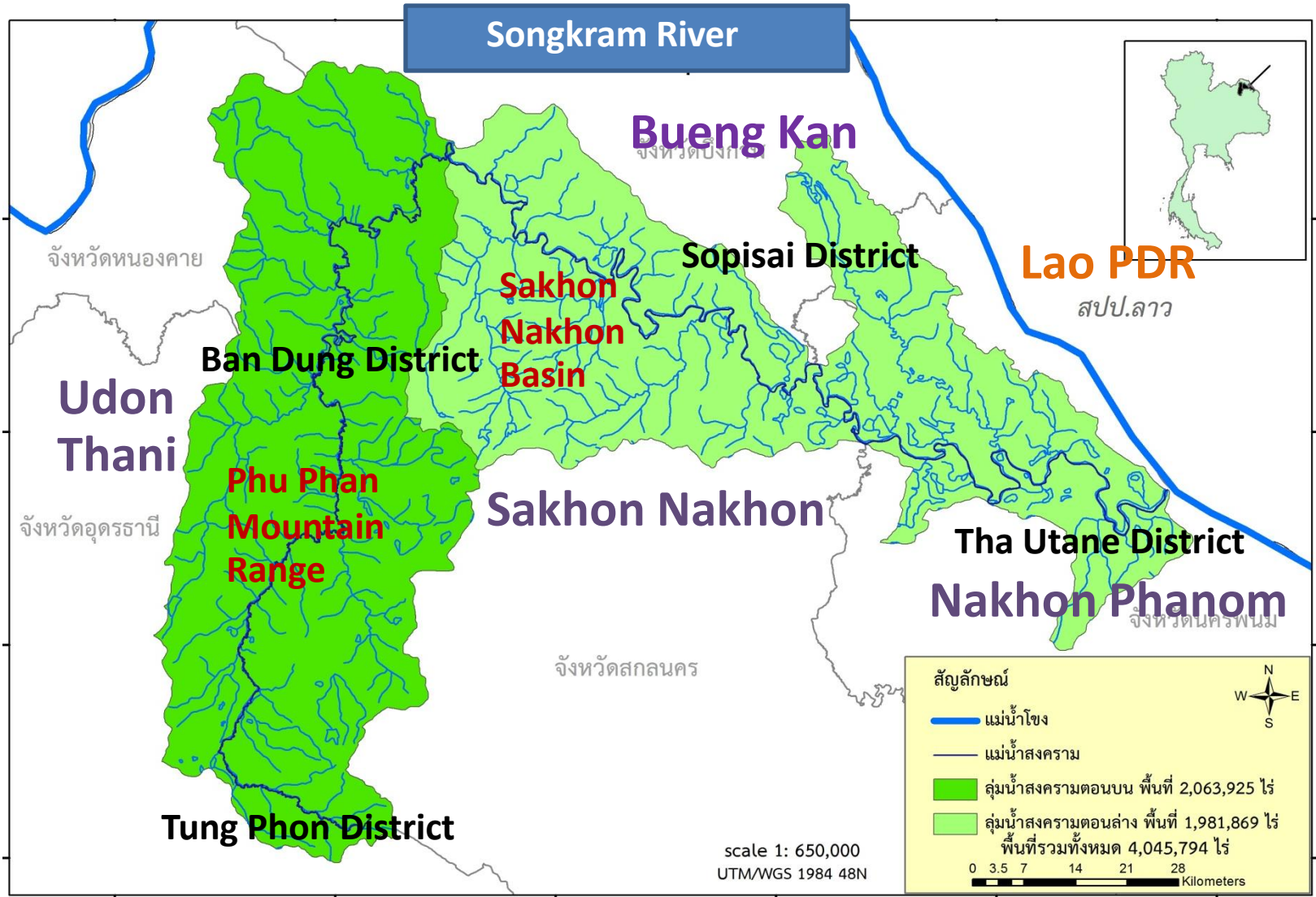
Cambodia, Named

Vietnam , Named Mê Kông

Finally go to China Sea

Total length 4,880 km (2,130 km is in China)

Registered : World Heritage with Yantse and Salween Rivers as the **Protected Three Parallel Rivers Area** according to its fertility and high biodiversity.





It is an important river in Northeast of Thailand.
Total length 400 km, cover area 13,001 sq.km.
During rainy season, water in Khong River increases quickly, flows to Songkram River and flooding over the area of 100 sq.km. as a lake.
During this period, many kind of fish from Khong River come and lay their eggs. This cause fertility and biodiversity to the area.



In Thai, Indigo (*Indigofera tinctoria*) is called khram. It is widely grown along the Songkhram River.

The local know-how of indigo dye can be found along the waterway.

Sakon Nakhon is famed for its local wisdom of natural indigo dye which is handed down through generations.



With the discovery of synthetic dyes in 1856, the use of natural indigo fell dramatically and became limited to a few ethnic groups.

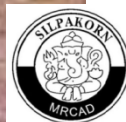




The visionary Her Majesty Queen Sirikit ; *National Costumes be Made Using Hand-Woven.*

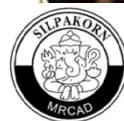
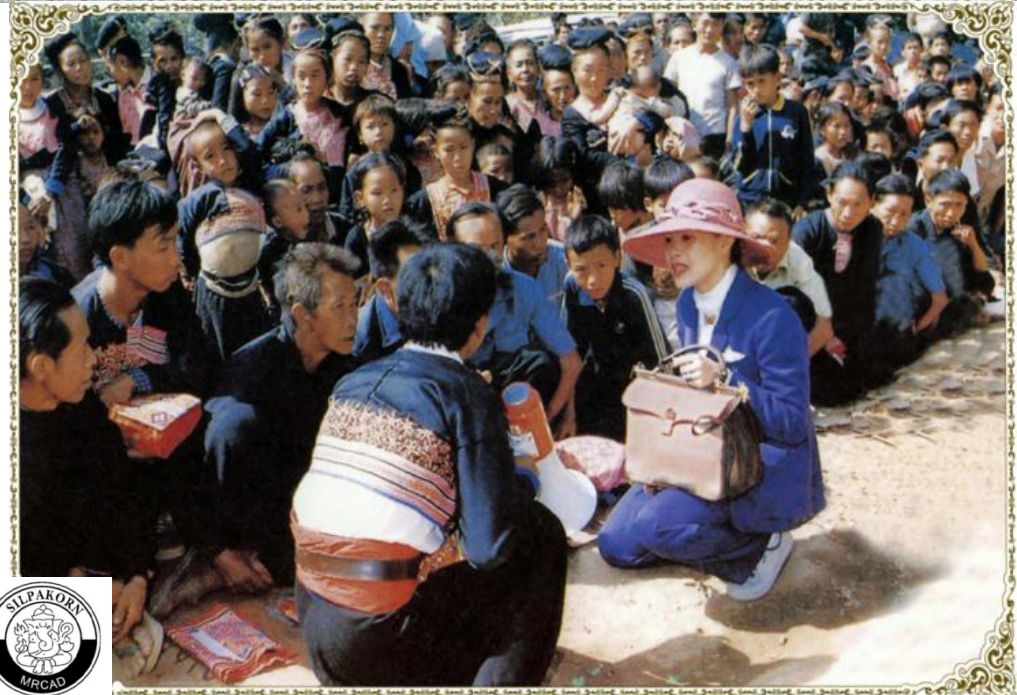
Thai fabrics which, in turn, inspired global and local communities even among the Thai celebrities who usually favoured only imported products.

Thai woven textiles have since earned their places on Thai export list, generating decent income for those who are involved in sericulture as well as the artisans working in weaving communities around Thailand.





The intricate textiles with ethnic accents have become strong magnet which draw successive crowd of tourists looking for exotic souvenirs to the villages.







In 1998

The endeavor of the communities generated high interest. Their production was sponsored by the Office of Community Development and a researchers from Rajabhat Sakon Nakhon University.

The Workshop of Revival of Natural Indigo Dye, sponsored by UNESCO and Department of Industrial Promotion , Ministry of Industry, Thailand was held on September 21st-25th in Chiangmai, Thailand



In 2005, the indigo textile products became popular internationally as well as domestically and gained One Tumbol One Product (OTOP) stars.



The indigo-dyed cloth is honoured as a major part of the identity of Sakon Nakhon.

The governor encourages every civil servant to wear indigo-dyed clothes on Fridays, and supports locals to form groups to produce indigo-dyed cloth.

There are more than 50 groups of villagers who produce indigo-dyed products in the province.

The villages offer workshops where visitors can be part of the dyeing culture.





In 2017 with the support of Sakhon Nakhon Trade Chamber, Ratchabhat Sakhon Nakhon University, Rajamangala University of Technology Isan Sakhon Nakhon Campus, Silpakorn University and AHPADA, Sakhon Nakhon applied to be the Craft City from WCC.



In August 5th-6th 2017, the committee from WCC explored the facilities and activities in Sakhon Nakhon.

In September 2017, Dr. Ghada, the President of WCC-APR has let us know that Sakhon Nakhon was approved as Natural Indigo Craft City.











Weaving communities cultivate their own indigo plants using the traditional processes and use local cotton and silk yarns.



They have the system of sharing facilities. Instead of everyone investing in their own dyeing facilities, some simply pay others by dyeing at their centres; this has not only cut down cost, it has created a close relationship within the community.





The Government assists them in marketing, including the special practice of the two day Weekend Market in the Indigo Street.

The collaboration between the state entities, the university and the community has brought great success to Sakon Nakhon.



Making Indigo Paste

1. The indigo plants are planted in April and take about 4 months to reach maturity.
The entire plant, branches and leaves, is harvested .
2. Fold the indigo stem and leaves into a handful bundles.
Put the bundles of indigo into the container .
Add water until cover all the indigo bundles.
Let it stand for 18-24 hours.





3. Squeeze bundle of indigo in water several times to extract indigo from the stem and leaves to water as much as you can. Then take the solid part out of the container.



4. Mix the lime or red lime or both with water,
1 kg of lime : 20 kg of indigo leaves and stems.



- 5. Pour the lime solution into the indigo container.
Continuously beat with basket-head bamboo stick up & down for half an hour to let oxygen from air diffuse into the indigo solution.**



- 6. Let the indigo precipitation and rinse off the clear liquor part out.**
- 7. Keep it as indigo paste in a closed container.
It can be kept up to 1-2 year.**

Traditional Preparation Natural Indigo Dyeing Bath

The dye recipe is

- 1 kg of indigo paste
- 1 kg of natural lye water
- 100 g of tamarind paste.



One key element of traditional knowledge is the inclusion of tamarind paste.

This acts to make the dye more durable and keep the colour bright.



Preparation of Natural Lye Water



4-5 holes are made at the bottom of ash container. Put the ash in and press it until pack. Normally, the ash is made from discard waste such as banana root, coconut brunch and kapok shell.

Add water until cover the ash.

Let the water pass through the ash into an empty container at bottom. Add water to cover the ash again when the water is dried. Mix the 1st and 2nd lye solution together.



This lye solution will have a specific gravity **1.05**. Most villagers say that it has a salty taste and slipper touch.

These ingredients are mixed in a clay pot and diluted with water and allowed to rest.

Over the course of 10-15 days, the mixture is scooped some of it, lifted up and poured back to the container. Repeat doing this 4-5 time both in the morning and in the evening.

Observe the bubble, if it is rupture quickly, add small amount of lime. If the bubble can stand still last long , it indicates the proper composition.





Once the mixture has a pleasant odour and is a green/yellow colour and the froth is a deep shade of blue, the dye is ready for cloth.



If a grey-coloured of mixture is observed, it is a sign of decay. This can be remedied by adding 50 grams of tamarind paste and one tablespoon of lime.



The recipe of one community may differ from another in terms of the ingredients used.





