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Laos



About Laos

Laos is located in Southeast Asia. The country's origins trace back to the ancient Lao kingdom of Lan Xang. From 1970 to present day,

Key Events

1893-Laos becomes a French protectorate until they became involved with Japan in the end of World War II till 1945

1946- French controlling Laos is back

1954- Finally Laos gets full independence as a constitutional monarchy and also civil war happens between the communist group and royalists

1960- the US tried to blow up the Vietnamese supply lines and sanctuaries and resulted with more bombs being dropped on Laos then all the bombs used in WWII

1973- Vietnam stop attacking and separates Laos into Communists and Royalists then two years later Communists take over

1997-Asian financial crisis that decreases the Kip, Laos currency

2005- US finds a Normal Trade Relations that cause the punitive import taxes to end

2008- Laos becomes a full member of the World Trade Organization

2016- five year congress at the National Assembly elects Bounnhang Vorachit as the leader of the ruling of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party and President

Economics

Laos has a private enterprise economy and is very reliant on exporting natural resources. Private enterprise is based on a competitive free market controlled by private owners looking for profit; not government controlled. Advantages include high quality and low prices from competition, a wide selection

of goods, and flexibility to changing demand. Disadvantages include an uneven distribution of wealth, unemployment, could cause higher taxation, political pressure, and corruption. The economy of Laos was established when they fell to the Communist rule after they gained independence from France in 1975. The country is relatively poor and reliant on foreign aid, but is increasing its financial status through trade and exportation.

Political and Physical Structures

Political Structure

The President of Laos is Bounnhang Vorachith and has been in leadership since 2016. Before he was president he was the prime minister of Laos from 2001 to 2006, then was vice president from 2006 to 2016. He became the leader by being elected by the Laos Communist Party as their secretary general which led him becoming the leader of Laos. Laos has been a communist government since 1975, resulting from communist forces overthrowing the monarchy and changing the isolation years. The country is under control by the Laotian People's Revolutionary Party, but they do not want to be overly communist. Things that are working for Laos within the government is that they are increasing tourism, giving more people jobs and shelter. The disadvantages of this is that it is causing pollution to the rivers, such as the Mekong River.



Physical Structure

The Southeast Asian country is relatively small; slightly larger than the state of Utah. Laos is landlocked, or has no coastline. The terrain is mountainous with a few plains and plateaus. The average elevation is 710 meters, the lowest point being the Mekong River (70 meters) which forms a boundary with Thailand. Over half of the country is occupied by forests (67.9%). The population of Laos has dramatically increased from 2.685 million in 1970, to about 7,019,073 people due to high birth rate and one of the lowest death rates. This change is important because it introduced new cultural and increased tourism, positively affecting the economy.

Cultural and Social

Culture and Social Aspects

The people of Laos speak Lao. Sticky rice and soups are their main source of food. They do not have an official religion, but traditional beliefs and buddhism are common among the citizens. Buddhism plays a role in historical culture of Laos, influencing art, clothing and music among other aspects. Laos was colonized by the French in the 19th and 20th century, which introduced the establishment European culture among the traditional Laos culture and integrated Vietnamese culture. The country is very ethnically, religiously, and linguistically diverse.



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