A HISTORY OF LAOS
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For my parents-in-law
Maurice and Rose Cavalerie
former proprietors of the
Hotel Constellation, Viang Chan
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CHRONOLOGY

1353 Foundation by Fā Ngum of the Lao kingdom of Lân Xáng.
1479 Vietnamese invasion of Lân Xáng.
1548 Xêthânhirat briefly unifies kingdoms of Lân Xáng and Lân Nà.
1560 Capital moved from Luang Phrabâng to Viang Chan.
1563–75 Series of Burmese invasions of Lân Xáng.
1638–95 Reign of Surinyavongsa.
1641–42 First Europeans to leave records arrive in Viang Chan.
1707, 1713 Division of Lân Xáng into three kingdoms of Luang Phrabâng, Viang Chan and Champásak.
1779 All three Lao kingdoms reduced to tributaries of Siam.
1826–28 Chau Anuvong’s war of independence results in destruction of Viang Chan by Siam.
1820–40 Earliest Hmong migrations into Laos.
1861 French explorer Henri Mouhot arrives in Luang Phrabâng.
1867 French Mekong expedition maps river through Lao territories.
1887 Auguste Pavie, first French vice-consul, arrives in Luang Phrabâng (February).
1893 French seize Lao territories east of Mekong, ceded by Siam. (Treaty signed 3 October.)
1899 Administrative reorganization of Laos under Résident Supérieur.
1901–07 ‘Holy Man’s revolt’ in southern Laos.
1907 Franco-Siamese treaty establishes present frontiers of Laos.
1908–10 Leu insurrection in northern Laos.
1914–16 Leu revolt in Luang Namthâ, and Hô-Tai revolt in northeast.
1919–22 Hmong insurrection in northern Laos.
1923 First session of Indigenous Consultative Assembly (30 August).
1934–36 Revolt of Kommadam in the Bölavên region.
1941 Franco-Thai war leads to loss of Lao territories on the west bank of the Mekong.
1945 Japanese intern French (9 March).
King forced to declare Lao independence (8 April).
Japanese surrender (15 August).
Prince Phetxârât proclaims unity and independence of Laos (15 September).
Lao Issara provisional government formed (12 October).
1946 French reoccupy Laos (March–April).
Thailand returns Lao west-bank territories (November).
CHRONOLOGY

1947  Promulgation of Lao Constitution (11 May).

1949  Suphânuvong breaks with Lao Issara (May).

1950  United States recognizes Laos as independent state (7 February).

1951  Suvanna Phûmâ forms his first government (November).

1953  Vietminh invade Laos (April, December).

1954  French surrender at Dien Bien Phu (7 May).

1955  Formation of Lao People’s Party (22 March).


1957  Negotiations with Pathêt Lao to form coalition government.


1963  Assassination of Kinim Phonsêna signals de facto collapse of Second Coalition (1 April).


Political crisis leads to new elections (September).

1968
Combined forces of the North Vietnamese Army and the Lao People’s Liberation Army take Nam Bâk, Phú Phà Thị (January).
Third Congress of Lao Patriotic Front (25 October).
Hmong ‘Secret Army’ forces take Plain of Jars (September).
Combined forces of the North Vietnamese Army and the Lao People’s Liberation Army retake Plain of Jars (February).
South Vietnamese forces launch operation Lam Son 719 against Ho Chi Minh trail; heavily defeated (February).
Elections for National Assembly (2 January).
Second Congress of the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party held secretly in Viang Xai (February).
Negotiations on cease-fire and coalition government (October–February).
Cease-fire comes into effect (21 February).
Agreement on formation of Third Coalition (14 September).
Third Coalition government takes office (5 April). National Political Consultative Committee adopts Eighteen-point Political Program (24 May).
National Assembly dissolved by royal decree (13 April).
Demonstrations force rightist leaders to flee (9 May).
‘Liberation’ of Viang Chan (23 August).
Pathet Lao hold local and provincial elections (November).
Abdication of King Savangvathana (1 December).
Proclamation of Lao People’s Democratic Republic (2 December).
Lao People’s Revolutionary Party embarks on socialist phase of revolution.
Hmong uprising; former King imprisoned at Viang Xai (March).
Interim Three-year Plan.
Agricultural cooperativization program launched (May).
Laos sides with Vietnam over China over Cambodia (July).
Formation of Lao Front for National Construction (20 February).
Suspension of agricultural cooperativization program (July). Seventh Resolution of Party Central Committee endorses new economic policy (December).
First Five-year Plan
Third Congress of the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party (27–30 April).
Suwanna Phum dies in Viang Chan, aged 82 (10 January).
Border conflict with Thailand over three villages (June).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Foreign Ministry announces all Vietnamese troops withdrawn from Laos (23 November).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>First elections for Supreme People’s Assembly (26 March).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Visit of Chinese Premier Li Peng marks warming of relations with China (15–17 December).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Further economic reforms and environmental protection law passed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>First bridge spanning the Mekong opened (8 April).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Sixth Congress of the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party (18–20 March).</td>
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ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN  Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BSEI  Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises
CDNI  Committee for the Defence of the National Interest
CIA  Central Intelligence Agency
DRV  Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam
ECAFE  Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
FBIS  Foreign Broadcasts Information Service
FRUS  Foreign Relations of the United States
ICP  Indochinese Communist Party
ICSC  International Commission for Supervision and Control
IMF  International Monetary Fund
LPDR  Lao People’s Democratic Republic
LPF  Lao Patriotic Front
SEATO  South-East Asia Treaty Organization
UNDP  United Nations Development Program
USAID  United States Agency for International Development