

**Transformation of urban and rural landscapes of Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province,
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The historical Dai kingdom Sipsongbanna was integrated into the People's Republic of China in 1953. Historically, culturally and geographically, the area has more in common with its Mountainous Southeast Asian neighbours than with "China proper", particularly the ethnic diversity and the social structure. Since Sipsongbanna has become a Dai autonomous Prefecture, social, political and economic institutions have been altered, leading to significant transformations of urban and rural landscapes. Han Chinese migrants have played an important role in the transformation processes. The first wave of migrants was sent to rural Xishuangbanna to establish State Rubber Farms in the 1950ies and 1960ies. This form of guided migration, including former soldiers and also "Urban Youths", aimed to cultivate landscapes. Furthermore, migrants should bring achievements of Han civilization to the remote border lands and the uncivilized ethnic groups. After gradual liberalization of the economy and migration regulations in the 1980ies, a second stream of migration has started flowing into Banna. Particularly the urban areas have expanded rapidly in size and population. Closely linked particularly to this 2nd wave of rather undirected, but politically welcomed migration is the expansion of trade and the tourism sector.

Rubber cultivation was initiated by the national government in order to gain autarky in natural resources and to secure sensitive border areas. The expansion of rubber was further boosted by the adoption of rubber cultivation in small-holder plantations after the introduction of the Household Responsibility System in 1982. Since then, Xishuanbanna has become the 3rd richest prefecture in Yunnan Province. Both urban and rural areas have profited from the development of different economic sectors. The former capital Jinghong has turned into a modern, Han-dominated, consumption oriented city. The rural landscapes have lost much of their agricultural and biological diversity and resemble more and more a huge rubber monoculture.