

The Khmer Krom—Between Southeast and East Asia

境界に生きるクメール・クロム

アジアとヨーロッパの境がどこかで諸説があるように、東南アジアと東アジアの境についても実はいくつかの説がある。たとえばベトナムは通常東南アジアの北端とされているが、中国に1000年も従属していて、文化圏としては東アジアに入れるのが当然という考え方がある。こういうベトナムに、間違いなく東南アジアのカンボジア系民族のクメール・クロムが住んでいる。ここでは、東南アジアとは何か、が浮かび上がる。



The Mekong River is 4,020 kilometers long and is the largest river in Southeast Asia. It starts in the Tibetan highlands, runs through Yunnan province along the border of Laos and Thailand, through Cambodia and flows into the South China Sea in southern Vietnam. This is where the Khmer Krom have lived since ancient times.

There are two names for this minority group in Vietnam. The first one is the Khmer Krom, which means "lowland Cambodians" in Cambodian. The second one is Khó-me, which means "Khmers of the southern area" in Vietnamese. The Khmer Krom are basically Cambodians, a Southeast Asian race, but since the land they live on

became Vietnamese territory, they are regarded as East Asians. In other words, they are a unique race living on the border of East Asia (Chinese cultural area) and Southeast Asia (Indian cultural area).

The Khmer Krom do not have family names. Take, for example, a man whose name is Chau Khum. Chau is his father's given name and Khum is his own given name. This lack of family names is also a characteristic of Cambodians and other