

Chronological Timeline: Triads, the Golden Triangle, and Methamphetamine Trade

1600s–1800s: Early Secret Societies

1644 – Fall of Ming dynasty; Hung Mun societies emerge (resist Qing, restore Ming).

18th–19th centuries – Triads spread into Southeast Asia, mixing politics, smuggling, gambling.

1900s: Triads Consolidate

1949 – PRC crackdowns → Triads relocate to Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Southeast Asia.

1950s–60s – Key groups: 14K Triad (1945, Guangzhou), Sun Yee On (largest HK triad), Bicycle Brothers (loose Cantonese alliance).

1960s–70s – Golden Triangle heroin trade begins; Triads dominate smuggling routes.

1970s–1990s: Heroin Dominance

1970s – Golden Triangle is global heroin hub.

1980s – 14K and Sun Yee On central in heroin trafficking.

1990s – Methamphetamine production starts supplementing heroin.

2000s: Synthetic Drug Era

Early 2000s – Meth replaces heroin as Asia's main narcotic.

Industrial-scale meth labs established in Myanmar, Laos.

2010s: Sam Gor Syndicate

2010–2018 – Sam Gor (The Company) emerges, led by Tse Chi Lop; alliance of Triads including 14K, Wo Shing Wo, Sun Yee On.

Controlled ~60% of Asia-Pacific meth trade.

2017–2019 – Record meth seizures in Southeast Asia; Golden Triangle confirmed as core hub.

2020s: Arrests and Resilience

2021 – Tse Chi Lop arrested in Amsterdam on Interpol warrant.

2022 – Reports link Sam Gor to continued meth distribution networks despite leader arrest.

2025 – Tse Chi Lop extradited to Australia (CNN, BBC, Casino.org).

2025 – Philippines 'floating shabu' shipments tied to large Chinese syndicate (Manila Standard).

Ongoing – Law enforcement statements stress resilience: production continues in Golden Triangle despite major arrests.