

An Analysis Study of Khmer Dialect in Buriram Province

គិតជា឴ារិក្រារ៍ភាសាខេមរភិនិន័យនៃខេត្តបុរិរាយ

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were: 1) to study Khmer dialect in Buriram province, 2) to study the existence of population who speak Khmer dialects in Buriram province and 3) to analyze the difference and similarity of Khmer dialect spoken in each district of Buriram province. This research is qualitative research. The tools of research are document studies and an interview with sampling 30 people, analyzing data and then summarizing the data onwards. The findings were descriptive.

The research results found that:

1. Khmer dialect in Buriram province belongs to the Austroasiatic language family. It is an isolating language, classified in the Mon-Khmer family, with 21 consonants and 17 vowels. There are four ways to form words: 1) affixed form, 2) infix form and 3) reduplicated form, and 4) rhyming form. The Khmer language is similar to the word order in Thai, consisting of subject, verb, and object (S+V+O).

2. The Thai-Khmer population in Buriram comprises about 50 percent of the total provincial population, most of them living in the southern part of the province, namely Prakhon Chai District, Nang Rong District, Pakham District, Lahan Sai District, Krasang District, Satuk District, Huay Rat District and Mueang Buriram District.

3. Khmer dialect compared with Standard Khmer, Khmer in other provinces and Khmer in Buriram province found that there were not the same vowel phonemes and consonant phonemes, the division of functions of the words is the same, the spoken pronunciation is different depending on the terrain.

Keywords: Khmer Dialect, Buriram Province, Standard Khmer

ได้รับบทความ: 9 กรกฎาคม 2567; แก้ไขบทความ: 15 สิงหาคม 2567; ตอบรับตีพิมพ์: 19 สิงหาคม 2567

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) ศึกษาภาษาเขมรถี่นที่พูดในพื้นที่จังหวัดบุรีรัมย์ 2) ศึกษาจำนวนประชากรที่พูดภาษาเขมรถี่นในจังหวัดบุรีรัมย์ และ 3) วิเคราะห์ความเหมือนและความต่างของภาษาเขมรถี่นในแต่ละอำเภอของจังหวัดบุรีรัมย์ งานวิจัยนี้เป็นงานวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ โดยใช้แบบสัมภาษณ์เป็นเครื่องมือในการวิจัยสำหรับสัมภาษณ์กลุ่มตัวอย่าง 30 รูป/คน วิเคราะห์และสรุปข้อมูลแล้วนำนำเสนอเป็นเชิงพรรณนา

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า

1. ภาษาเขมรถี่นในจังหวัดบุรีรัมย์จัดอยู่ในตระกูลภาษาอสโตรເອເຊີຕິກ เป็นภาษาคำโดยดั้ง จัดอยู่ในตระกูลมอย-ເຂມຣ มีพยัญชนะ 21 ตัว สระ 17 ตัว การสร้างคำมี 4 แบบ คือ: 1) แบบเติมวิภาคติปัจจัย 2) แบบลงอาคม 3) แบบคำช้ำ และ 4) แบบคำสัมຜັສ ภาษาถี่นเขมรมีการเรียงลำดับคำลำภาษาไทย ประกอบด้วย ประธาน กริยา และกรรม (ປ+ກ+ກ)

2. ประชากรไทย-เขมรในจังหวัดบุรีรัมย์ประมาณร้อยละ 50 ของประชากรจังหวัด ทั้งหมด ส่วนใหญ่อาศัยอยู่ทางตอนใต้ของจังหวัด ได้แก่ อำเภอประโคนชัย อำเภอหนองร่อง อำเภอปะคำ อำเภอละหานทราย อำเภอกระสัง อำเภอสตึก อำเภอหัวยรา และอำเภอเมืองบุรีรัมย์

3. ภาษาถี่นเขมรเปรียบเทียบกับภาษาเขมรมาตรฐาน ภาษาเขมรจังหวัดอื่น และภาษาเขมรในจังหวัดบุรีรัมย์ พบร่วมกัน มีหน่วยเสียงสระและเสียงพยัญชนะไม่เหมือนกัน การแบ่งหน้าที่ของคำเหมือนกัน การออกเสียงพูดแตกต่างกันขึ้นอยู่กับภูมิประเทศ

คำสำคัญ: ภาษาเขมรถี่น, จังหวัดบุรีรัมย์, ภาษาเขมรมาตรฐาน

1. Introduction

Language is an essential tools that humans use to express their opinions and communicate within society is the development of culture and the process of communication between humans of the Khmer people. This language is mainly spoken in the northeastern region of Thailand and southern Vietnam (Krisana Yodmongkhon, 1986: 1).

The Khmer language in Thailand became a separate dialect of Khmer: the dialect of Surin and Chonburi. Another Khmer dialect spoken in Vietnam was Khmer Krom. During the period of French domination, many French words were borrowed in Khmer and became a part of colloquial language, especially in urban areas. There were also Chinese and Vietnamese loanwords mostly to be colloquial speech later. In the 20th century, words used to express new ideas and concepts in many fields had to be invented up. The Buddhist Institute in Phnom Penh was responsible for creating much of the new vocabulary based on Pali, while many

words derived from European languages, especially French words are popular much more (Wichat Promrat, 1999: 4).

Cambodians referring to southern Vietnam means Khmer Krom, and they probably are called the Khmers in Thailand Khmer Lue. So, saying briefly, Northern Khmer and Central Khmer are genuine socio-linguistic entities. Southern Khmer is apparently not a linguistic entity, but for opinion of some people, it is mere a social entity; so it would be right or wrong when using the term Southern Khmer, but don't call it a language'. From the mention above, Khmer people in Cambodia call Khmer people in Thailand Khmer Lue, and call Khmer people in Vietnam Khmer Krom.

Talking about foreign influence in the Khmer language, an Indian language influence is taken to use the vocabulary of Khmer. Native Khmer words are either monosyllabic or disyllabic. Words in literature, administration, royalty, religion and technical terms specific subjects in the field of academic are mostly borrowed from Pali and Sanskrit. From 14th to 16th centuries, Thailand had political superpower taken over Cambodia. And their many Cambodian people and Buddhist monks come to study in Thailand. Therefore, Thailand had influence about Khmer language, literature, culture and administration. Later, the western and north-western provinces became colony of Thailand.

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Khmer does not have tones. Unlike its neighbors, Thai and Vietnamese, which have tones and essentially are monosyllabic, Khmer has a high percentage of disyllabic words. The typical stress pattern in disyllabic words is an unstressed presyllable followed by a stressed main syllable. Even polysyllabic loan-words from Pali and Sanskrit tend to be assimilated to this pattern of alternation between

an unstressed and a stressed syllable. Khmer has no special indication of gender or number. Generally speaking, for living creatures, gender is indicated by a word denoting the sex. Plural is likewise indicated by auxiliary words. The position of words in a sentence, together with intonation and pauses, determines their grammatical function. The Khmer alphabet had been borrowed from one of the languages which were used in South India in the 6th century. There are three types of alphabet: the italic type, the straight type, and the round script type. The italic type and the straight type are used for handwriting and printing. The round script type is used in transcribing religious texts from the Pali languages and also commonly used as capital letters for titles of books, general notices and commercial advertisement boards.

The word “Northern Khmer” is a linguistic term defined by Smalley (Smalley, William, 1976: 43-48) referring to the sizable number of Khmer-speaking people and Khmer language is spoken in Thailand. Northern Khmers usually refer to Khmer people called Upper Khmer/khme: rly:/, as they live on higher land of the Khorat Plateau. They are called the Khmer of Cambodia Lower Khmer /khme: r kro: m/, since the geographical area of Cambodia is mainly on the plain and lowers in elevation than that of Khmer in Thailand. Khmer people in Cambodia, however, use the word “Lower Khmer” for the Khmer in Southern Vietnam right now.

Smalley (1976: 43-48) classifies Khmer language into three sub-groups, according to the political boundaries. The first group is Northern Khmer, which refers to the Khmer language and the Khmer-speaking people in Thailand. The majority of people in this group are the inhabitants of three provinces in Northeast Thailand, Surin, Buriram and Srisaket. Achan Suwilai Premsrirat (1995: 1) claimed that the Northern Khmer speakers are recently found in at least 12 provinces both in Northeastern and Eastern Thailand, including Surin, Buriram, Srisaket, Ubonrachathani, Roi-et, Nakhonrachasima, Mahasarakham, Prachinburi, Sakaew, Chanthaburi, Trad and Chachoengsaw. The second group is the Central Khmer, which refers to the language and the people of Cambodia.

The last group is the Southern Khmer, the language and Khmer-speaking inhabitants of the parrots Beak area in South Vietnam. The Khmer of Thailand are also known as **The Thai Khmer** which is equivalent to the Thai term /khme: n thin thai/. They were so made by the delegates of Northern Khmer speakers from Surin, Buriram and Srisaket provinces in Thailand, at workshop on Northern Khmer

Orthography in 1987, hosted by the Institute of Language and Culture for Rural Development of Mahidol University and chaired by Suwilai Premsrirat. The term **Northern Khmer** in this study refers to /khme:n thin thai/ or **The Thai Khmer** (Prakorb Phon-ngam, 1999: 14).

Various studies of the historical Background of Northern Khmer have been conducted by distinguished linguists and archaeologists. Chinese records show that Khmer was the language spoken by the habitants of ancient kingdom of Funan, the most ancient of the Indian kingdoms that occurred since the first half of the third century AD to approximately 550. The earliest recorded inscriptions in the Khmer language were found in the old Funan region, beginning from 628-629, about the time of the annexation of Funan to Chenla, one of the ancient Khmer kingdoms (Prakorb Phon-ngam, 1999: 14). According to Etientenne Aymonier the term “Funan” is the Chinese transcription of a Khmer original “banam” /phnom/ as in Phnom Penh which means ‘mountain.’ The Chinese identified as “Chenla” a Funanese vassal that lay to its North on the Mekong. About the middle of the sixth century, Chenla, which apparently had become independent, reduced Funan to vassalage and later annexed it. As the people of the two kingdoms were ethnically nearly the same, the transformation took place without the troubles than often accompany a change of dynasty; and the language spoken by the inhabitants of Chenla was identical to that of Funan. The center of Funan was assumed to be located on the lower course and delta of the Mekong, but its territory must have encompassed much of Southern Vietnam, the central Mekong, and the large part of the Menam Valley and the Malay Peninsula. According to Coedès (1966: 65), the capital city of Funan was situated in the vicinity of the hill of Ba Phnom, and the village of Banam.

In the Northeast region of Thailand there are many tribes living together. They have a way of life; culture and language are their own. But when the information technology, communication, transportation and public utilities system was grown, the population has been immigrating for lost work, education or trade etc. in the large cities with stable economy. It has gradually changed the way of life of villagers. Thai is a common language, the official language of Thai people. It comes with the education and progress of the country. It has a greater influence, gradually swallowing the dialect that once existed in many parts of the country. Even the new generation does not know the language of their identity.

2. Objectives of the Research

- 1 To study the Khmer dialects spoken in Buriram province.
2. To survey the population who speak the Khmer dialects in Buriram province.
3. To analyze the differences and similarities of the Khmer dialects spoken in Buriram province.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

This dissertation entitled "This dissertation, titled 'A Study of the Khmer Dialect in Buriram Province,' is a qualitative research study. The researcher has studied documents and related research by collecting data with the research tool. It is the in-depth interview form and the target group in the research area and then presents the research format as follows.

1. Documentary Study The researcher has compiled data from relevant documents such as books, research report, minutes, photo and document that shows the background of Khmer dialect both domestically and internationally, which has conducted this research as follows:

1) Studying, researching and collecting data from relevant evidences including books, research reports and other documents, based on the concept of the Khmer dialects from home and abroad, covering the content according to the objectives of the said research.

2) Analyze background, history, way of life, and culture which are explain the relationship of Khmer dialects in Buriram province.

3) Synthesize background, history, way of life, and culture which are explain the relationship of Khmer dialects in Buriram province.

4) Summary of the study shows the relationship, similarity, and difference of Khmer dialects in Buriram province.

2. Qualitative research the researcher collected data in the field to know the background, history, way of life, and culture which are explain the relationship of Khmer dialects in Buriram province in the target area with the study and research steps as follows

1) The interview is an open-ended question form which is an in-depth interview the language about way of life, careers, culture, religion, arts,

agricultures, and music of Khmer dialects in Buriram province from three districts, namely, Prakhonchai, Plapphlachai, and Krasang District.

2) Focus Group Discussion, the researcher requested to meet with experts and target groups in asking, discussing, exchanging opinions on way of life, careers, culture, religion, arts, agricultures, music, phonology and morphology of a Khmer dialect in Buriram province.

Gather all the data and analyze it for synthesis in order to categorize the research summary and present the target group for further use.

3.2 Research area and key informants

1. The areas that the researcher used to collect data in the field were Buriram province, where the researcher selected the area in the city district by selecting the community that has the potential in handicrafts, unique local wisdom, unique folk art, a community with many learning centers and phonology and morphology. Participate in interview research studies, namely in Prakhonchai district 10 people, in Plapphlachai District 10 people and in Krasang District 10 people, total 30 people. The target groups for qualitative research are key information providers in the interview were purposive sampling.

Criteria for selecting a language speaker

1. The speaker is 30 years old or older.
2. The speaker has never migrated.
3. The speaker has an educational level. Grade 6-Bachelor's degree.
4. Language speakers have complete vocal organs.
5. The linguist has plenty of time for the researcher.
6. The speaker must have good physical and mental health.

Key informant

This research study is a qualitative research; the interviewing is focusing on the executive officers in the Prakhonchai District 10 people, in Plapphlachai District 10 people and in Krasang District 10 people as follows: a government official, a state enterprise official, an economic group, a private sector group, cultural and temple personnel, an educational personnel group, total 30 people.

3.3 Research Tools

The research tools included an indepth interview form focused on various aspects of Khmer dialects in Buriram province, including way of life, careers, culture, religion, arts, agriculture, and music.

3.4 Data Collection

The researcher personally conducted data collection with the assistance of first and second-year students from Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, dividing the team into groups to conduct interviews and gather data for analysis

In each group, there will be experts in data collection together to lead the team to the interview with the courtesy of the researcher is the team leader in each group to meet and interview to collect data.

3.5 Data Analysis

With this research study has documented, empirical data and In-depth interviews, a qualitative research process. The researcher has conducted the data analysis according to the content and summarized according to the objectives set as follows

1. Study, analyze, language about phonology, morphology, way of life, careers, culture, religion, arts, agricultures, and music of a Khmer dialect in Buriram province.

2. Analyze and synthesize phonology, morphology, way of life, careers, culture, religion, arts, agricultures, and music of a Khmer dialect in Buriram province.

3. Use the results of the qualitative data analysis to analyze the relationship, similarity, and difference of a Khmer dialect in Buriram province.

4. Analysis of data synthesis by linking relationship, similarity, and difference of a Khmer dialect in Buriram province for the relevant agencies to apply for further.

3.6 Presentation

The presentation of the information is in the form of a description of the composition of the table and the descriptive description of events related to basic information and the background of a Khmer dialect in Buriram province, with emphasis on taking lessons out to study the components, forms, processes, and methods to see more clearly.

4. Research Results

From the various data analysis, the researcher, therefore, summarizes the findings according to the following important points:

4.1 Summary of Khmer dialect spoken in Buriram province as follows:

Khmer dialect (Northern Khmer) is a linguistic term defined by Smalley (1976: 43-48) referring to the sizable number of Khmer-speaking people and Khmer language is spoken in Thailand. Northern Khmers usually refer to Khmer people called Upper Khmer /khme:rly:/, as they live on higher land of the Khorat Plateau. They are called the Khmer of Cambodia Lower Khmer /khme:r kro:m/, since the geographical area of Cambodia is mainly on the plain and lowers in elevation than that of Khmer in Thailand. Khmer people in Cambodia, however, use the word “Lower Khmer” for the Khmer in Southern Vietnam right now.

Khmer language classified three sub-groups, according to the political boundaries. The first group is Northern Khmer, which refers to the Khmer language and the Khmer-speaking people in Thailand. The majority of people in this group are the inhabitants of three provinces in Northeast Thailand, Surin, Buriram and Srisaket. The Northern Khmer speakers are recently found in at least 12 provinces both in Northeastern and Eastern Thailand, including Surin, Buriram, Srisaket, Ubonrachathani, Roi-et, Nakhonrachasrima, Mahasarakham, Prachinburi, Sakaew, Chanthaburi, Trad and Chachoengsaw. The second group is the Central Khmer, which refers to the language and the people of Cambodia.

The last group is the Southern Khmer, the language and Khmer-speaking inhabitants of the parrots Beak area in South Vietnam. The Khmer of Thailand are also known as The Thai Khmer which is equivalent to the Thai term /khme:n thin thai/. They were so made by the delegates of Northern Khmer speakers from Surin, Buriram and Srisaket provinces in Thailand.

4.2 The existence of population who spoken Khmer dialect in Buriram province as follows:

The population who spoken Khmer dialect in Buriram province about 50 percent of the entire province's population. Most of them live in the southern part of the province, namely Prakhon Chai District has 16 sub-districts, 199 villages, and population of 132,141 people, Nang Rong District has 15 sub-districts, 204 villages, and population of 108,143 people, Pakham District has 5 sub-districts, 74 villages, and population of 43,446 people, Lahan Sai District has 6 sub-districts, 95 villages, and population of 70,825 people, Krasang District has 11 sub-districts, 167 villages, and population of 103,043 people, Satuek District has 12 sub-districts, 190 villages, and population of 109,221 people and Mueang Buriram District

has 19 sub-districts, 320 villages, and population of 207,249 people (The 2022 Household Socio - Economic Survey Buriram). Therefore, in Buriram province, there is 84 sub-districts, 1,249 districts, and population that can speak Khmer dialect about 774,068 people. Approximately 50 percent of the population in Buriram province speak the Khmer dialect.

Due to the diversity of ethnicities that exist in Buriram Province, each district has a mix of the three ethnic populations, it would be impossible to identify in this district that all Khmer-speaking populations are inhabited, so the data obtained Therefore, it is not 100% correct because there may be discrepancies due to factors such as political, economic, education, immigration, etc.

4.3 The difference and similarity of Khmer dialect spoken in Buriram province

By comparing consonant phonemes, vowel phonemes, and morphemes, it was found that comparing consonant phonemes, vowel phonemes, and morphemes, it was found that the Khmer dialect in Buriram province had fewer phonemes and morphemes than the standard Khmer, had the same grammatical structure, and the spoken accent was different according to Terrain. For example, if there is an area adjacent to Vietnam, it has a Vietnamese-like accent, while the standard Khmer in Cambodia is an accent that is similar to the French colonial country, if it is adjacent to Thailand; it has a Thai-like accent. Like the Khmer language in Buriram. The comparison revealed that the Khmer dialect in Buriram province has fewer phonemes and morphemes than Standard Khmer, with variations in spoken accents depending on the terrain.

5. Discussion of Research Results

In the Northeast region of Thailand there are many tribes living together. They have a way of life; culture and language are their own. But Immigrants caused by the information technology, communication, transportation and public utilities systems grow for lost work for education or trade in large cities with stable economy It has gradually changed the way of life of villagers. Thai is a common language, the official language of Thai people. It comes with the education and progress of the country. It has a greater influence, gradually swallowing the dialect that once existed in many parts of the country. Even the new generation does not know the language of their identity. For this reason, the researcher is interested in

studying Khmer dialect and exploring the number of people still known and uses Khmer dialects in Buriram province to be used as information in studies and references about current ethnic groups.

In Buriram province, besides Khmer language, there are also many interesting things to study, such as history, cosmology, theology, architecture, folk literature, performing arts, lifestyle, economy, and social, political, aesthetic and other aspects. Another important feature of Buriram is Prasat Hin which has several famous places in the province. The most beautiful and well known is Prasat Hin Phanom Rung which has a great value and influence on the way of life of Buriram people. Such identity is worth studying for future generations to know and be aware of the greatness of the ancient Khmer in this area has been around for a long time.

Therefore, the researcher would like to suggest other points that are worth studying in Buriram Province, such as the traditions and way of life of the communities of Khmer, Kuay, Isan, and Thai Korat people who live together in Buriram Province in order to spread the good culture of ethnic later on.

Today's racial ethnicities, inevitably indigenous to Khmer-speaking ethnic groups, may be due to political changes, and possibly due to climate change, emigrating,. It is difficult to determine which ethnic group the indigenous people belong to, but the archaeological evidence that has been excavated is good, the long-standing Khmer accent, the traditional Khmer culture and living traditions are inherited. Well, it was confirmed that there is a group of people living in Buriram province from the past to the present.

6. Suggestion

Further study would be useful in the field of language change. Inscriptions allow the history of the Khmer dialect to be traced back for many centuries; the language keeps changing with time. Comparison of Khmer dialect or a certain set of sounds between given periods of time would be informative and educational. The language of any people is among its most preeminent and cohesive features. Further research into the Khmer dialects which different area may be telling us much about Khmer population themselves, their past, their present and how their language may evolve in the future.

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7. Knowledge Received

Buriram Province has a mix of ethnic groups in many areas. The details can be classified as follows:

7.1 Thai Korat

Most of the Thai Korat lives in Amphoe Pakham, Amphoe Nang Rong, Amphoe Nong Ki and Amphoe Lam Plai Mat, accounting for about 20 percent of Buriram's population. Thai Korat people have a unique style of dress, namely, they wear a loincloth for both men and women, round-necked shirts, loincloths over the left shoulder, and women prefer to wear flowers on their ears. As for the traditions that Thai Korat people do, they are the tradition of making merit or merit-making in the tenth month of Thailand Fourth Thai New Year and Twelfth Month.

7.2 Thai Isan (Laos)

The part of Thai Isan is distributed in Phutthaisong District, Na Pho District, Satuek District, and Lam Plai Mat District. Ban Mai Chaiyaphot District Nong Ki and Khaen Dong districts account for approximately 35 percent of Buriram's population. Characteristics of the dress, men prefer to dress in khaki or sarong, prefer to wear halter robes, most popular to wear indigo loincloth, zebra loincloth for men and silk over the shoulder for women, Isaan Thai people are unique. One example is Respect and obeys the elders; the traditions are all the succession of Buddhism, such as merit-making in the third month of Khao Jee. The merit of the fourth month, the merit of Songkran in the fifth month, the merit of Bang Fai

in the sixth month, the merit of the Buddhist Lent, the merit of Khao Pradabdin, the ninth month, and the merit of the tenth month.

7.3 Thai Khmer (Khmer Dialect)

The Thai-Khmer population accounts for about 50 percent of the entire province's population. Most of them live in the southern part of the province, namely Prakhon Chai District, Nang Rong District, Pakham District, Lahan Sai District, Krasang District, Satuk District and Mueang Buriram District. Thai-Khmer people have a distinctive identity in superstitions, talismans, enchantments and prescription drugs, while the dress is unique, that is, traditionally; they used to wear a loincloth, using a sabaiman cloth similar to Thao Suranaree (Ya Mo). At present, elderly women will wear loincloths, wear khakis or ready-made shirts, strap or draped over the shoulders with white and black loincloths, while men will wear khaki pants, loincloths or sarongs, do not wear shirts while at home, if going outside, the merit ceremony wears a long-sleeved sarong, a white horse with a waist or long trousers, as for the Thai-Khmer tradition that has been preserved from generation to generation. Making merit or making merit for the deceased.

7.4 Thai Kuay (Suay)

Thai Kui, or sometimes called Kui, the Thai Kui population accounts for about 2% of the entire province's population. The dress of the Thai Kui people, if a man does not like to wear a shirt, wear a sarong or joong kraben, dress like Khmer, when there is a merit ceremony in the village or at the green temple black or blue, while women wear sarong, have a sabai sabai and wear flowers on both ears, most Thai Kui people live together in large families and respect each other with a senior system, Thai Kuay people are strictly respecting the people. For example, during Songkran festival, children must bring water for parents and grandparents to bathe, and find new clothes to change every year.

Summing up, Today's racial ethnicities, inevitably indigenous to Khmer-speaking ethnic groups, may be due to political changes, and possibly due to climate change, emigrating. It is difficult to determine which ethnic group the indigenous people belong to, but the archaeological evidence that has been excavated is good, the long-standing Khmer accent, the traditional Khmer culture and living traditions are inherited. Well, it was confirmed that there is a group of people living in Buriram province from the past to the present.

Reference

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