FOLK DANCES IN SAKON NAKHON PROVINCE, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT
This article examines the forms of folk performance in Sakon Nakhon Province, focus on Ban Muang District and Tha Rae through documentary research and descriptive analysis. The findings identify eight ethnic groups in the province: Phu Thai, Tai Kaleung, Tai Yor, Saek, Tai Kha, Tai Yo, Kula, and So. Their folk performances are closely connected to community life, beliefs, rituals, and traditions. These performances can be broadly classified into two types: (1) traditional folk performances rooted in ethnic beliefs, religion, rituals, ways of life, and traditions; and (2) creative folk performances, which are developed or influenced by other cultures while retaining community identity. The latter are presented on important social occasions to express cultural identity, promote tourism, and contribute to the development of the creative economy.
Keywords: Folk Performances in Sakon Nakhon Province, Folk Performing Arts, Ethnic Groups in Sakon Nakhon Province

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INTRODUCTION

Folk performing arts are an important component of cultural heritage, reflecting communities' beliefs, ways of life, and local knowledge. They provide entertainment, transmit stories, knowledge, and values across generations, and offer a means of expressing cultural identity and a sense of belonging (Rattanawut, 2017). In community settings, elements such as dance movements, music, costumes, and presentation styles express the distinctive cultural characteristics of each locality (Phumchirot & Busabong, 2023). Studying folk performing arts can therefore deepen understanding of community values and identities and provide a foundation for preserving and transmitting cultural heritage amid social change.

Thailand is characterized by considerable ethnic and cultural diversity, expressed through differences in language, beliefs, traditions, ways of life, dress, and folk arts. Located in northeastern Thailand, Sakon Nakhon Province is home to diverse ethnic communities that have sustained and transmitted their local knowledge and cultural heritage (Pongsak Thansinphon, 2026). Thawatchai Phaiphai (2019) identifies eight ethnic groups in the Sakon Nakhon Basin: Phu Thai, Tai Kaleung, Tai Yor, Saek, Tai Kha, Tai Yo, Kula, and So. Each group has its own history, language, beliefs, traditions, and performing arts. This diversity is reflected in the varied performance traditions found across the province, which express the communities' ways of life, religious beliefs, and cultural identities (Sumonmarn Nimmaneatiphan & Sumanaratee Nimmaneatiphan, 2008). Through movement, music, costume, language, and ritual, these performances embody the distinctive identities of the province's ethnic communities and provide valuable material for the study of Thai performing arts.

Folk performances among the ethnic groups of Sakon Nakhon serve several shared functions: they accompany rituals honoring sacred beings, contribute to the atmosphere of festivals and social events, and are performed to welcome visitors (Kingkaew Atthakorn, 1976). The principal performances associated with the eight groups are described below. (1) The Phu Thai perform *Fon Phu Thai*, a prominent feature of provincial festivals and cultural events. It is presented particularly during the annual worship ceremonies for Phra That Choeng Chum and Luang Pho Phra Ong Saen, when it is offered as an act of Buddhist devotion in January. (2) The Tai Kaleung perform dances to *pong lang* music in traditional Kaleung attire, especially at events held in January. (3) The Tai Yor perform *Fon Tai Yor*, wearing distinctive ethnic attire and using movements that express the community's way of life and culture. The dance is presented at festivals and major traditional events. (4) The Saek perform *Ten Sak*, a folk dance in which bamboo or wooden poles are struck rhythmically as dancers move in time. The performance conveys joy, solidarity, and community life and is commonly featured at traditional and cultural events. (5) The Tai Kha, also known as the Bru, perform *Fon Palong Khaen Kiao Ka Mun*, a courtship dance between men and women accompanied by the *khaen* and other local instruments. (6) The Tai Yo perform *Yoi Klong Leng* and dances offered to Pu Ta, which are featured during the annual Tai Yo Tradition Day in April. (7) The Kula perform *Fon Mong Choeng*. According to the cited account, it began as gong playing accompanied by simple movements called *tham mong choeng* and later developed into a lively, graceful dance presented at merit-making festivals. (8) The Tai So, or So, perform *So Thang Bang*, which is associated with So rituals and beliefs and is presented at the annual So Remembrance Festival in Kusuman District on the fourth waxing day of the third lunar month (Thawatchai Phaiphai, 2019; Ministry of Culture, 2022; Pongsak Thansinphon, 2026).

The performing arts of Sakon Nakhon have evolved from the ways of life, beliefs, traditions, and cultural practices of the ethnic groups that have long inhabited the region. Many of these groups migrated from the Mekong River basin and areas on the left bank of the Mekong before settling in the Sakon Nakhon Basin. In their early forms, local performances were not intended solely for entertainment; they were closely integrated into community life and belief systems,

particularly rituals honoring ancestral spirits and other sacred beings, as well as religious practices. As society changed, these performances developed into more varied forms, accompanying merit-making ceremonies and celebrations and serving to welcome visitors. Ethnic diversity has also given rise to distinctive performance traditions in different communities, shaped by the skills and creative decisions of their originators. Although local performing arts in Sakon Nakhon were generally not governed by fixed conventions, performers gradually established movement patterns to achieve greater coordination.

Sakon Nakhon's ethnic diversity and rich range of performing arts demonstrate that folk performance serves both as entertainment and as an expression of cultural heritage, reflecting the histories, ways of life, beliefs, traditions, and identities of the province's ethnic groups. In contemporary society, technological advances and the influence of popular culture have contributed to rapid social change and shifts in community lifestyles. Younger generations, in particular, may have fewer opportunities to learn about and participate in folk performances, creating challenges for the transmission of knowledge by local scholars, folk artists, and cultural practitioners. Consequently, some performance traditions may be less integrated into everyday life and increasingly presented on special occasions or at major festivals.

Accordingly, this article examines folk performance forms in Sakon Nakhon Province through documentary research and descriptive analysis to provide a systematic account of their diversity and cultural value.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

This section reviews concepts and theories of performance, cultural identity, and sociocultural change, together with relevant previous studies on folk performances in Sakon Nakhon Province.

Singer's Concept of Cultural Performance

Singer (1972) conceptualizes cultural performance as a unit of cultural analysis that can be observed and examined empirically. The concept encompasses not only artistic and entertainment events but also religious activities, rituals, festivals, and social events through which a group's beliefs and values are expressed. Each performance is characterized by (1) a limited time span with a clear beginning and end, (2) an organized sequence of activities, (3) performers, (4) an audience, and (5) a place and occasion. This framework shows how cultural meanings, beliefs, and values become visible through enacted activities. Accordingly, folk performances in Sakon Nakhon can be analyzed in terms of their forms, participants, activity sequences, venues, and occasions.

Cultural Identity and Its Representation

Hall (1990) argues that cultural identity is neither static nor fixed; rather, it is shaped and transformed through history and processes of representation and meaning-making. It involves both a sense of shared experience and cultural heritage that connects people, and an ongoing process through which identities are constructed and rearticulated in response to historical circumstances and social relations. Identity therefore reflects how individuals and groups understand themselves and how they are distinguished from others in particular social contexts. From this perspective, folk performances by the ethnic groups of Sakon Nakhon Province can be examined as expressions of cultural identity conveyed through dance, music, costume, beliefs, and ways of life.

Social and Cultural Change

Social and cultural change involves the adaptation of a group's ways of life, beliefs, traditions, and cultural practices in response to changing economic, social, and environmental conditions. Boonpeng Sittivongsa et al. (2024) found that cultural change among ethnic groups in Sakon Nakhon Province is associated with economic, cultural, and social factors. In a study of sociocultural dynamics in the Phu Thai Katak community of Ban Non Hom, Sakon Nakhon

Province, Pokkasin Chatiphot (2019) reported that some traditions and rituals had changed under the influence of modern society and globalization. At the same time, community members continued to sustain their culture by preserving their language and revitalizing traditional practices. Folk performances are closely connected to community life and its sociocultural context. They may retain inherited features while adapting to changing conditions. Accordingly, research on folk performances in Sakon Nakhon should examine both the practices that communities continue to transmit and the documented changes within each ethnic group.

Related Research

Phobutdee (2015) examined the choreographic identities and changing forms of Phu Thai dance in four provinces: Kalasin, Sakon Nakhon, Nakhon Phanom, and Mukdahan. The study found that the dance varies across communities and that both its movements and functions have changed. In addition to its customary roles in local traditions, it has increasingly been adapted for cultural tourism.

Munmueangsaen (2024) examined the arts, music, and performance traditions of the Phu Thai Kata community, focusing on *Fon Klong Tum*, a dance associated with local rituals and traditions. The study also explored the development of music and choreography as strategies for cultural revitalization. The findings showed that *Fon Klong Tum* expresses Phu Thai Kata ethnic identity through distinctive costumes and musical practices and plays an important role in the community's rituals and traditions in Ban Dan Muang Kham, Khok Si Suphan District, Sakon Nakhon Province. Revitalization efforts included documenting local knowledge, composing a procession song for the *Klong Tum*, and developing choreography in collaboration with community members.

Sitthivongsa et al. (2024) examined cultural change among ethnic groups in Sakon Nakhon Province using a quantitative research design with a sample of 400 participants. The findings indicated a moderate overall level of cultural change, with economic development and social mobility significantly associated with this process.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This documentary study examines folk performances among eight ethnic groups in Sakon Nakhon Province: Phu Thai, Tai Kaleung, Tai Yor, Saek, and Tai Kha, Tai Yo, Kula. Data were collected from documents and cultural materials, including photographs, films, video recordings, websites, and social media. The study also included observations of ritual performances in Sakon Nakhon Province, focus on Ban Muang District and Tha Rae, beginning on February-October, 2026 as well as the researcher's field experience. Research instruments comprised a document-recording form, an observation form, and a data-analysis form. Documentary analysis covered each group's history, performance characteristics and components, beliefs, traditions, and performance occasions. Observations focused on performance concepts, components, presentation methods, and distinctive features. The data were analyzed descriptively.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Folk Performing Arts in Sakon Nakhon Province

The performing arts of Sakon Nakhon are rooted in community life and have evolved in relation to local beliefs, religious practices, and shared social experience. Most residents of the province adhere to Theravada Buddhism while also maintaining traditional beliefs in ancestral spirits, guardian spirits associated with homes and communities, *pu ta* spirits, and other local sacred beings. These belief systems have shaped rituals and traditions specific to different ethnic groups, including the *Yao* ritual, the *bai si su khwan* blessing ceremony, ancestral spirit offerings, and agricultural rites (Munmueangsaen, 2024; Banlue et al., 2025).

Observations of folk performances among the province's ethnic groups indicate that each tradition has distinctive features reflecting the community's cultural identity, way of life, beliefs, customs, and traditions. Performance forms, movement styles, music, costumes, and contexts also vary. Accordingly, the performing arts of Sakon Nakhon may be broadly classified into two categories: Traditional Folk Performances, and Creative Folk Performance.

1) Traditional Folk Performances

Traditional local performances are passed down across generations and rooted in community life, beliefs, and rituals. Their movement styles and musical elements are closely shaped by the cultural contexts in which they are performed. Beyond entertainment, these performances help transmit beliefs, strengthen community ties, and sustain ethnic identity. Examples include:

1.1 The Tai Kaleung Ethnic Group

Tai Kaleung folk dance reflects the way of life, beliefs, and traditions of the Tai Kaleung people, who live in Kut Bak District and surrounding areas. It is commonly performed at merit-making events, traditional festivals, and religious activities. The choreography is relatively simple, emphasizing coordinated movement, graceful execution, and respect for tradition rather than complexity (Kut Haet Subdistrict Municipality, 2023).



Figure 1 Tai Kaleung folk dance
Source: Sakon Nakhon Provincial Cultural Council, 2022

1.2 The Saek Ethnic Group

Ten Sak is associated with the ritual honoring of ancestors known as "Ong Mu." It is performed on the second and third days of the waxing moon in the third lunar month as part of the Saek Kin Tret tradition. Red-and-white wooden poles are placed on a platform and struck together rhythmically, accompanied by fast-paced drumming. Male and female performers step in time with the poles. The performance reflects Saek ancestral beliefs and the transmission of the group's ritual and cultural traditions (Nakhon Phanom Provincial Cultural Office, 2024).

1.3 The Tai Kha (Bru) Ethnic Group

Fon Palong Khaen Kiao Ka Mun is a courtship dance performed by men and
women to the accompaniment of the khaen and other local instruments. The dance is an expression of Tai Kha cultural identity; its name refers to courtship and reflects the community's way of life and gender relations (Wisit Siri Choosakul, 2016).

1.4 The Tai Yo Ethnic Group

Yoi Klong Leng is a folk performance that reflects the distinctive identity of
the Tai Yo people. It combines singing, dancing, and instrumental music, with the klong leng serving as the principal rhythmic instrument. The performance features call-and-response singing and free-flowing movements, creating a lively atmosphere. Performers may invite audience members to join the dance, adding to the festive mood. It is commonly presented at merit-making events, traditional festivals, and village celebrations (Pongsak Thansinphon, 2026).



Figure 2 Tai Yo Day Activities
Source: Traditional Folk Performance to Creative PerformancePublic Relations Department, Sakon Nakhon Provincial Public Relations Office, 2026

1.5 The Tai So (So) Ethnic Group
The Yao ritual is a traditional healing practice found particularly in Kusuman
District, Sakon Nakhon Province. It is performed to treat illness, restore a person's khwan (vital essence), and communicate with sacred beings in accordance with Tai So beliefs. As part of the community's belief system, the practice also serves a spiritual and social function. Rather than prioritizing choreographic aesthetics, it combines singing, dance, instrumental music, and ceremonial acts. It expresses Tai So spiritual and cultural values, including a worldview in which humans, nature, and supernatural forces are interconnected. The practice also embodies local knowledge and reflects kinship ties and mutual care within Tai So society (Ratchaneekorn Waikla, 2019).



Figure 3 The Yao ritual
Source: Natthaphong Prachakun, 2022

2) Creative Folk Performances
This category comprises performances that adapt traditional dance movements,
music, and other cultural elements for presentation at festivals, receptions, and cultural events. These adaptations emphasize aesthetic appeal, coordination, and formal structure while re-presenting community identity. They illustrate how folk performing arts may change in response to social contexts while retaining elements linked to their cultural foundations. Examples include:
2.1 The Phu Thai Ethnic Group
Fon Phu Thai reflects the cultural identity of Phu Thai communities in Waritchaphum, Phanna Nikhom, and Phang Khon districts of Sakon Nakhon Province. The dance is characterized by graceful, coordinated movements inspired by the manners, daily lives, and distinctive demeanor of Phu Thai women. Its gentle, refined choreography features stylized hand gestures, extended arms, bent knees, and precise steps. Today, Fon Phu Thai is performed at merit-making events and traditional festivals, as well as to welcome distinguished guests (Surachit Chantarasakha, 1989).



Figure 4 Phu Thai Dance Performance in Sakon Nakhon
Source: Naruebotin Saleepan, 2026

2.2 The Tai Yor Ethnic Group

The Phra Wetsandon Procession Dance is associated with Bun Phra Wet, also known as Bun Phawet, an important merit-making tradition in northeastern Thailand. Performed as part of a procession welcoming Phra Wetsandon into the village, the dance commemorates the Vessantara Jataka and expresses Buddhist devotion. It also reflects Buddhist and moral values and reinforces a sense of community solidarity (Rattiya Komintharachati & Wipharat Khuangthip, 2025).



Figure 5 Phra Wetsandon procession dance
Source: Thailand Tourism Directory, 2026

2.3 The Kula Ethnic Group

Fon Mong Choeng is derived from fon choeng, a Tai Yai performance tradition
associated with sword dancing and traditional martial arts. It is characterized by graceful movements and playful vocal exchanges between cymbal and drum players. The performance reflects the community's adaptation of external cultural influences and its efforts to preserve a distinctive local art form (Saramai, 2018).

Traditional Folk Performance to Creative Performance

1) Phu Thai (*Fon Phu Thai*)

Significance: Expresses Phu Thai identity, customs, and ways of life through graceful, synchronized movement and costume.

Traditional form: Performed at merit-making events, rituals, and community activities.

Traditional characteristics: Movements follow the music and may depict nature or daily life; choreography varies by community and occasion.

Adapted form: Choreographed for stages, festivals, receptions, and cultural events.

Adapted characteristics: Movements, sequence, duration, formations, music, and costumes may be standardized or adjusted while retaining Phu Thai elements.

Cultural Identity**:** *Fon Phu Thai* expresses Phu Thai identity through graceful movements, synchronized choreography, and distinctive costumes. Movements associated with nature and daily life convey aspects of the community's cultural heritage. Arranging these movements into a staged performance also illustrates how cultural traditions are transmitted while being adapted to contemporary settings.

2) Tai Kaleung (*Fon Tai Kaleung*)

Significance: Reflects community life, beliefs, and traditions through group participation and coordinated movement.

Traditional form: A group dance performed at merit-making events, festivals, and religious activities.

Traditional characteristics: Simple movements coordinated with local music.

Adapted form: May be arranged for cultural events or stage presentation.

Adapted characteristics: Choreography and formations may be systematized; locally woven shirts and *sin* skirts may represent Tai Kaleung identity. Specific adaptations require supporting evidence.

Cultural Identity: Fon Tai Kaleung reflects the community's way of life, beliefs, and traditions through group dancing and movements coordinated with local music. The dancers' coordination conveys communal participation, while locally woven shirts and *sin* skirts connect the performance with local textile knowledge and identity.

3) Tai Yor (*Phra Wetsandon Procession Dance*)

Significance: Expresses Buddhist devotion, recalls the Vessantara Jataka, and welcomes Phra Wetsandon into the community.

Traditional form: Performed in the procession during Bun Phra Wet, or Bun Phawet.

Traditional characteristics: Dancers coordinate their steps and gestures with the procession's route and rhythm.

Adapted form: Elements may be arranged for cultural presentations.

Adapted characteristics: Movements and formations may be adjusted to the venue and duration; document such adaptations only when supported by evidence.

Cultural Identity: The Phra Wetsandon Procession Dance expresses Tai Yor religious and cultural identity through its association with Bun Phra Wet, also known as Bun Phawet, and the Vessantara Jataka. Dancing as part of the procession demonstrates community participation and the transmission of Buddhist traditions. The performance therefore functions both as a dance and as a shared expression of religious devotion.

4) Saek (*Ten Sak*)

Significance: Linked to ancestral beliefs and the *Kin Tret* tradition.

Traditional form: A pole dance associated with *Kin Tret* and ancestral rites.

Traditional characteristics: Performers step between rhythmically struck wooden poles, requiring precise timing and balance.

Adapted form: May be presented at cultural events or on stage.

Adapted characteristics: Duration, sequence, and formations may change, while the pole rhythm and characteristic footwork are retained. Distinguish stage presentations from ritual practice.

Cultural Identity: Ten Sak reflects Saek identity through its connection with ancestral beliefs and the Kin Tret tradition. The use of wooden poles to produce rhythm, together with the dancers' coordinated footwork, gives the performance distinctive characteristics. Its collective nature also supports the transmission of ritual knowledge and cultural practices within the community.

5) Tai Kha (*Fon Palong Khaen Kiao Ka Mun*)

Significance: Portrays courtship and relationships between men and women.

Traditional form: A courtship dance accompanied by the *khaen* and other local instruments.

Traditional characteristics: Performers face one another, approach and retreat, and use gestures in time with the music.
Adapted form: May be arranged for cultural events in pairs or groups.
Adapted characteristics: Roles, choreography, and stage positions may be clarified while retaining the courtship theme and local music.
Cultural Identity: Fon Palong Khaen Kiao Ka Mun expresses aspects of Tai Kha social life and relationships between men and women through courtship movements and responsive gestures. The accompaniment of the *khaen* and other local instruments connects the dance with the community's musical heritage.
6) Tai Yo (*Yoi Klong Leng*)
Significance: Expresses Tai Yo identity and encourages community participation.
Traditional form: Singing, dancing, and *klong leng* drumming at merit-making events, festivals, and community celebrations.
Traditional characteristics: The drum sets the rhythm; performers sing responsively, move freely, and may invite the audience to dance.
Adapted form: May be arranged as a stage or cultural performance.
Adapted characteristics: The sequence and formations may be made more concise and structured while retaining the drum rhythm and call-and-response singing.
Cultural Identity: Yoi Klong Leng represents Tai Yo identity through its combination of singing, dancing, and *klong leng* drumming. Call-and-response singing and free movement evoke the atmosphere of community celebrations. Inviting audience members to join the dance encourages interaction and a sense of belonging, while helping sustain local musical traditions.
7) Kula (*Fon Mong Choeng*)
Significance: Reflects the adaptation of neighboring performance traditions and efforts to preserve a distinctive local art.
Traditional form: A community dance accompanied by gongs, cymbals, and drums.
Traditional characteristics: Movements are agile and graceful, sometimes accompanied by vocal exchanges between cymbal and drum players; forms may vary.
Adapted form: May be arranged for festivals or cultural events.
Adapted characteristics: Choreography and music may be organized for the audience and venue while retaining characteristic movements and musical exchanges. Claims about origins require specific sources.
Cultural Identity: Fon Mong Choeng reflects an identity shaped by the adoption and adaptation of performance traditions from neighboring groups, while retaining distinctive local features. Its dance movements and musical exchanges between cymbal and drum players demonstrate the connection between choreography and music. The continued performance of this dance helps preserve and promote local performing arts.
8) So (*Yao* ritual)
Significance: Associated with healing, restoring *khwan* (vital essence), and communicating with sacred beings.
Traditional form: A ritual conducted according to So beliefs and practices.
Traditional characteristics: Combines singing, movement, music, and ceremonial acts; practitioners and participants have distinct roles.
Adapted form: The available information does not establish a distinct newly created version.
Adapted characteristics: If presented as a demonstration, distinguish it from an actual ritual and support the account with direct evidence.
Cultural Identity: The Yao ritual expresses the spiritual beliefs of the So people, particularly beliefs concerning healing, restoring *khwan* (vital essence), and communicating with sacred beings. Singing, movement, music, and the sequence of ceremonial acts are connected to the ritual's purposes. The distinct roles of practitioners and participants also reflect community

knowledge and relationships. If the ritual is demonstrated or staged, the presentation should be clearly distinguished from an actual ritual.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Community Identity in the Folk Performances of Ethnic Groups

Sakon Nakhon Province is home to eight ethnic groups, each of which has folk performances that express its distinctive identity through performance forms, movement, music, props, and the contexts of related traditions and rituals. Examples include the Saek Ten Sak, in which wooden poles mark the rhythm; the Tai Yo Yoi Klong Leng, which combines singing, dancing, and drumming; and the Tai So Yao ritual, which integrates vocal performance, movement, belief, and ceremonial practice. These examples suggest that community identity is expressed not only through dance movements but also through music, rhythm, ritual practices, and shared values. Folk performances thus transmit ethnic groups' experiences, beliefs, and collective memories while fostering a sense of belonging. This interpretation is consistent with Singer's (1972) concept of cultural performance, which enables performance events to be analyzed in terms of their activity sequences, performers, audience, venue, and occasion. It also accords with Hall's (1990) account of cultural identity as shaped by shared experience, cultural heritage, and social processes of meaning-making. Folk performance is therefore both a product of community culture and a medium through which community members communicate their ethnic identity to audiences within and beyond the community.

Changes in Community Identity and Performance in Response to Social Contexts

Folk performances among the ethnic groups of Sakon Nakhon Province can be classified according to their modes of presentation into two broad categories: (1) traditional local performances associated with community life, beliefs, and traditions; and (2) newly created or culturally influenced performances that adapt or reorganize existing cultural elements into more structured presentations. This classification suggests that ethnic identities are not fixed but are continually reinterpreted and represented in response to changing social contexts, including receptions, traditional festivals, and cultural events. Changes in how a performance is presented or in the role it serves do not necessarily entail the loss of ethnic identity. This interpretation is consistent with Hall's (1990) view of cultural identity as involving both shared heritage and experience, and the continuing construction of meaning within historical and social contexts. Identity may therefore be reworked through representation and interaction with other groups. The discussion also accords with Phobutdee's (2015) study of Phu Thai dance in several provinces, including Sakon Nakhon. The study found that the dance varies across communities and that its elements and functions have changed, extending from customary contexts to cultural tourism. These findings illustrate how changes in the context and purpose of a performance may also affect its form and the ways in which community identity is represented. In the present study, the two categories are used as an analytical framework; a single performance may combine traditional and adapted elements.

Factors Influencing Changes in Community Identity and Folk Performance

Considered in relation to sociocultural change, the findings suggest that folk performances among the ethnic groups of Sakon Nakhon Province are shaped by changes in ways of life, community relationships, intergenerational knowledge transmission, evolving traditions and rituals, and presentation to audiences beyond the community. These factors may influence performance forms, activity sequences, and purposes. Consequently, performances may become more concise and structured while retaining distinctive features that communicate each group's identity. This interpretation is broadly consistent with Sittivongsa et al. (2024), who found that cultural change was associated with economic factors and social mobility. It also accords with Munmueangsaen et al. (2024), whose study describes efforts to document cultural

knowledge, develop songs, and create choreography as part of community cultural revitalization.

Finally,The findings show that folk performances among the ethnic groups of Sakon Nakhon Province are diverse and express each group's cultural identity, way of life, beliefs, and traditions through movement, choreography, music, and performance context. These performances can be classified into two broad categories: (1) traditional local performances associated with community life, beliefs, rituals, and traditions; and (2) newly created local performances that adapt and reorganize existing cultural elements into more aesthetically refined and structured forms for presentation at significant social occasions.

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