

Researching Reports of Kampong Chheuteal High School Students

Led to research by

Mr Hin Sophoin

Vice director of Kampong Thom Culture and Fine Arts Department

Led in group by

Mr Sum Sun

Teacher of Kampong Chheuteal High School

Participators :

Mr Haon Hay	Student
Mr Tong Rathanak	Student
Mr Kin Phatana	Student
Mr Som Sokkhim	student
Mr Chhorn Phalle	Student
Ms Rin Sosamphois	Student
Ms Rin Tevy	Student
Ms Vang Kimsuy	Student
Ms Chay Soklen	Student
Ms Hav Serirath	Student

Researching Period: 26 days, started from 27th of November 2012 to 10th of March 2013

[Purpose of Project]

This project is the process of Khmer-Thai Youth's activities which aim to strengthen the relationship between the students from both countries in co-research and sharing knowledge to each other, especially in order to learn from each other about local cultures such as the historical sites, ancient heritages, traditions and lifestyles in their community which originated many hundreds of years. This project is made as the way to make good relationship between Cambodia and Thailand. On the other hands, in order to strengthen friendship, understanding and living peacefully together of people living in the Southeast Asia, to get ready for ASEAN Economic Cooperation which will be appeared in 2015.

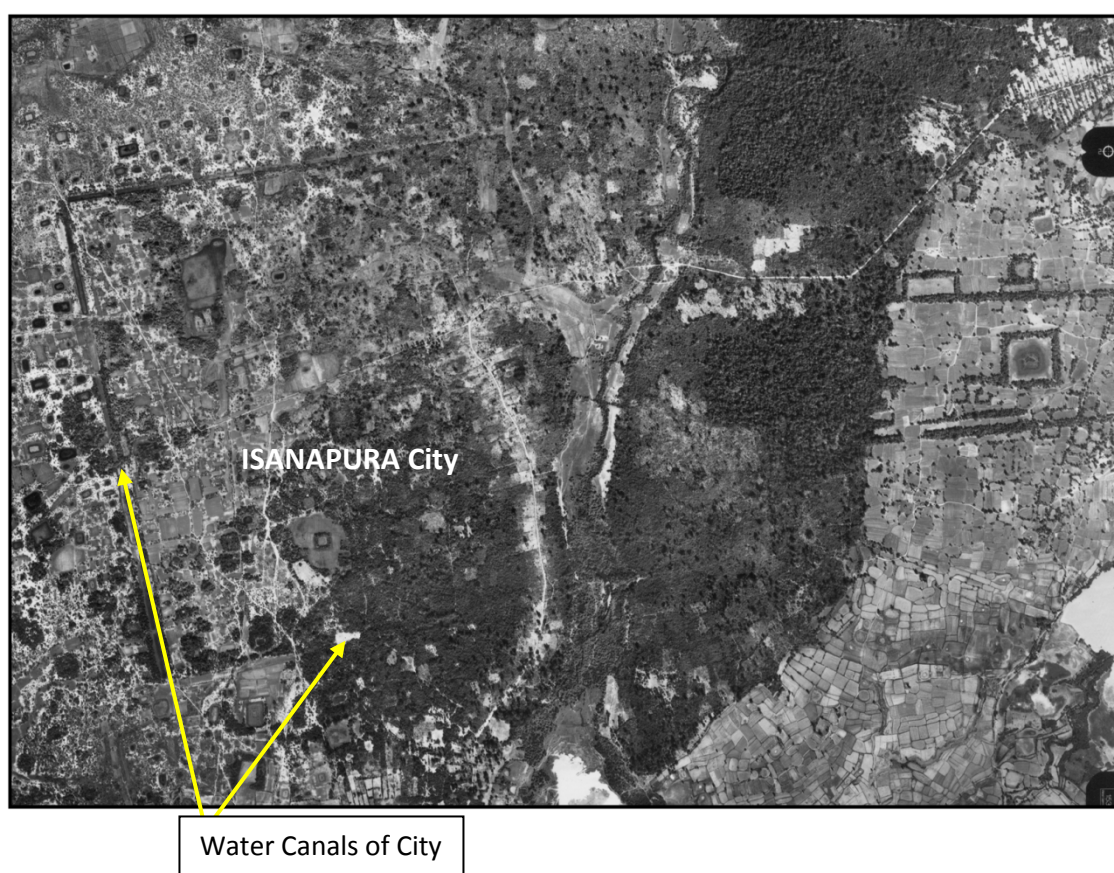
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I. Researching the ancient city ISANAPURA

ISANAPURA is the name the ancient city during Chenla time. Many people have being confused that Sambor Prey Kuk temple site is the ancient city. So we would like to discover the fact. Before we started making our research to there, we had been explained by Mr Hin Sophoin Vice director of Kampong Thom Culture and Fine Arts Department about it and had read some historical books.

This is the map showing the ancient city ISANAPURA from the space



Purpose of our activities

1. To check where the ancient city ISANAPURA is
2. To visit, study and set a record of the canals of the city
3. To find out temples and old structures in the area
4. To find out old poles of zone of borders to protect the ancient area
5. To find out the ancient roads and to walk along on them

6. To study situation , views , ponds ,old canals and people's plantations
7. To take part in setting up the prevented zone-poles
8. To take part in discovering and understanding the structures , ancient objects and people's equipments under the ground

The ancient city ISANAPURA is to the west of Sambor Prey Kuk temple site in Okrou Kae village. It is surrounded by the 2,000 meter long old canals for each side. We can find out only three canals of the south, west and north sides. Nowadays for the canals, we can take notice that there is water growing with some small plants. In this square-shaped area, there are 64 temples and are divided into many groups such as : Brasat ROUNG, Brasat Kong Rontash Banh, Brasat Baida, Brasat Tkass, Brasat Toek Sampauch, Brasat Daun MOUNG, Brasat Khnay Toul, Brasat Broeng and there are more single temples. Most of these temples stay in broken situations and become hills which we can understand that they were the old structures in that time.

When we walked to the west side of the ancient city, we could see the ancient road which was built in the time of this city. It links the city from Brasat Baida temple to Brasat Ondaet temple group (in San Kor village) towards Siem Reap province crossing Kampong Kdei ancient bridge in Chikraeng district. Along both sides of this road, in width about 23 meters long, are alongside many big and small reservoirs.



Nowadays the ancient city is surrounded by three districts, they are Brasat Balaing, kampong Svay and Brasat Sambor including seven villages, Okroukae, Boss Srormauch, Atsu, Cheay Sampov, Chamnachash and Dang Onteak. The people in these villages live with their old standard of lifestyles, customs and belief and they participate preventing this region and grow crops, do farms and plantations to support their livings.

Taking part in discovering and understanding the structures, ancient objects and people's equipments under the ground in the ancient city



Using GPR



Surveying where to excavate



preparing excavated-plot



joining the excavation



Under -ground structure



under-ground objects



making a record after excavation



In fact, around the ancient city ISANAPURA ,there are many groups of temples which were built both inside and outside . We can divide into three areas of temples located:

List of the temple groups in the ancient city ISANAPURA

★ Temples in the canal-walls of the city

Brasat Maort group

Brasat Ta Mom group

Brasat Khnach Toul group

Brasat Daunh Mong group

Brasat Baida group

Brasat Mak Pi group

Brasat Toek Sampauch group

★ Temples at the north of the city

Brasat Koh Rontash Banh group

Brasat Boeng Khjaov group

Brasat Broeng group

Brasat Boss Lauk group

Brasat ROUNG group

Brasat OnLungKrorkoh group

Brasat Srour Tech group

Brasat Pon NeakSey group

Brasat Tkass group

Brasat Chrouk Sa Uy group

Brasat OnLung Ror Meas group

★ Temples at the east of the city

Brasat Lieng Prash group

Brasat ChongKot Sampov group

Brasat LokYeay group

Brasat Ror Borng RorMeas group

Brasat TraPaing RorPeak group

TraPaingDomrei group

Brasat Srey KropLeak group

Brasat Yeay Puon group

Brasat KonkVaing group

Brasat KneaSarch group

Brasat Tor group

Brasat Reay Peay group

Brasat Sambor group

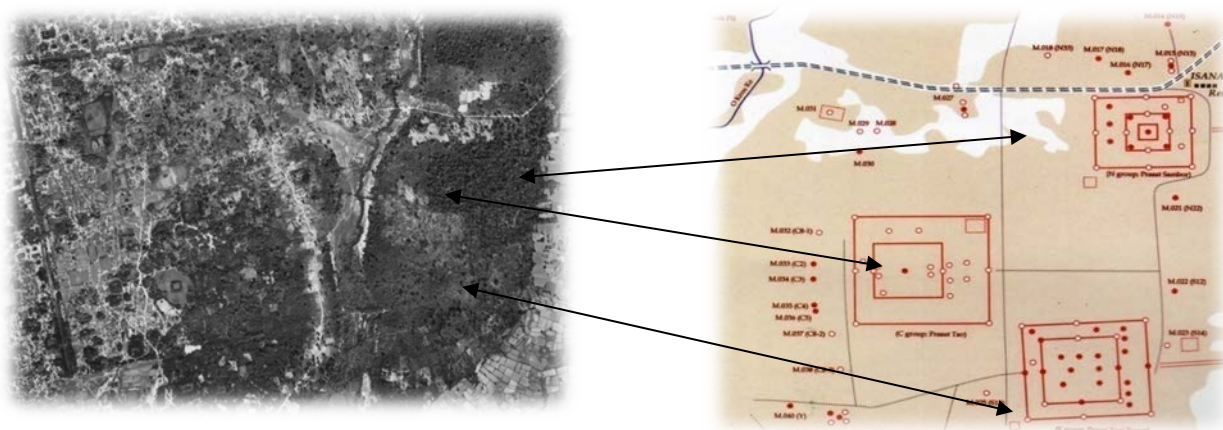
II. Researching Sambor Prey Kuk temple groups

Purpose of our activities

1. To discover the temple group walls
2. To discover the ancient structures and ponds in and out each wall of temple groups
3. To draw plans and maps of the temple groups on our own
4. To note situations ,manners and effects of the temples
5. To learn how to describe each temple
6. To discover the architectural decorations of each group and study about them
7. To find out the positions of the temples in the groups
8. To discover and study the inscriptions on and in every structure
9. To discover and study about sculptures and the ancient things and their histories
10. To learn how to draw the maps, temples, sculptures, architectural decorations and to measure the walls of each temple groups

Introduction : Sambor Preykuk is a cultural and historical site located in Sambor village, Sambor commune, Brasat Sambor district, about 30 kilometers northeast of Kampong Thom provincial town and 1 kilometer east of the ancient city. The site was once an old religious center of ISANAPURA for the worship of Shiva Brahmanism.

Many temples were built in Sambor Preykuk during the reign of King Isanavarman I (AD 616-635) in the 7th century. The temples of Sambor Preykuk constructed of solid bricks, late rites and sandstones and decorated by bas-reliefs. The lintel, pillars and the door frames are all made of sandstone. So far, 140 temples have been discovered in the forest and the site was divided into three complexes of the temples, they are Sambor temple group (North temple group), Tor temple group (Central temple group) and Yeay Puon group (South temple group)



Map of Sambor Prey Kuk temple position

We have divided students into three groups to work in target places of Sambor temple group, Tor temple group and Yeay Puon temple group.

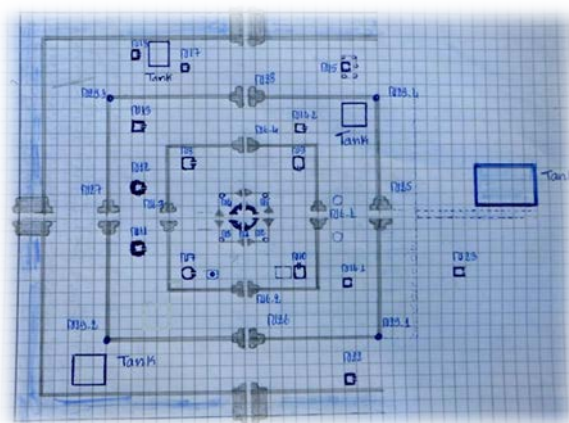
★ Sambor temple group:

Activities:

To discover the temple group walls .We walked through the area to find out and draw the walls of the temples and we met many kinds of temples, ponds made of stones. We measured the walls, some structures, sandstones and also bricks.



Researching to take notice by ourselves



Result of drawing Sambor temple group

After discovering, researching and walking through the complex, we made total result to describe this group: Sambor temple group is one in the northern of site which there is one big red gravel-road linking from Kampong Thom town to Brasat Sambor and Sandann districts. This complex has three walls surrounding.

Wall 1: It was made of late rites, four open-gates made of late rites, bricks and sandstones, in a distance from south to north 93, 40 meters long and from east to west in 92, 40 meters long. There are 13 temples in the wall and there is the biggest one in the middle of the group.

Wall2: It was made of late rites, four open-gates made of the late rites, bricks, and sandstones too. From south to north is 178, 50 meters long in distance and from east to west is 205, 60 meters long with one pond and 13 temples.

Wall 3: It was surrounded by the canals which were found only at the northern, western and southern as for the eastern is the flat area .We can see the western and southern gates that were built with bricks and sandstones. There are 8 temples and two ponds. Each side of canal-wall is 420 meters long. There is one causeway from the group to Kampong Chheuteal village.



N8



N9



N10



N11



N7



N22



N19



N18



N17



N14-1



N20

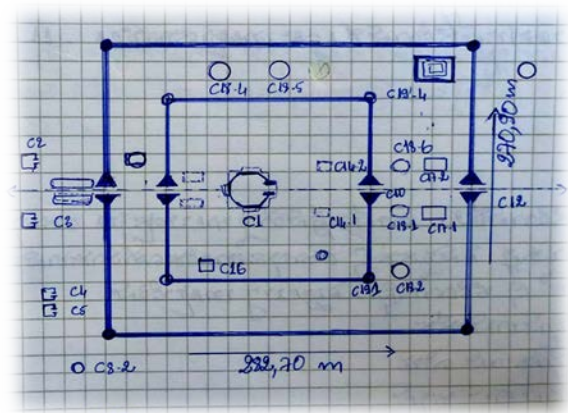
In Sambor temple group, there are 51 temples. Seven temples are in good conditions (N7; N8; N9; N11; N17; N21; N22). Eight temples are in half-good condition and others are under half condition and almost disappeared underground. There is one octagon temple (N7) decorated by floating temples on the walls and the temples (N11; N12) are also decorated by floating temples on their walls. In this north group, there are five places with inscriptions found; they are on the temples (N1; N14-1; N15; N18; N20)

Architectural decors: braced-columns, floating temples, gables, Sumasutra; stairs; garlands of flowers; doors and Linga.

★ Tor temple group (Lion temple)

Activities:

To discover the temple group walls. We also walked through the area to find out and draw the walls of the temples and we met many kinds of temples, pond made of late rites. We measured the walls, some structures, sandstones and also bricks.



After discovering, researching and walking through the complex, we made total result to describe this group: It is the central group that there is Lion temple in the middle of site. This is a Hinduism temple made in the 9th century and it's enclosed by double walls made of late rites and the gates made of the bricks and sandstones, and it has a reservoir which stores water in the rainy season and it's built with late rites and sandstone-stairs deep down the pond. Tor temple seems to be built when Jayavarman II subjugated his territory. This temple has many features; it has many signs which show that the bricks were fallen to pieces and the columns made of late rites are scattered about the land. That means there were the pillar halls.



The decorated doors and lintel are good condition, they are looked that they are made of concrete, but actually they are made of sandstones. The lintels having a plant pattern are seen from the 8th century to 9th century.

The statues of lions built in the center are most famous of this temple. For Cambodian, they are the main character here. They were built in 9th century, because they are similar to the statues of lions which were made in the same age of Kulen Mountain.



Lions in front of Tor temple

In the group of Tor temple, there are 51 temples, there is only one (C1) being in good condition. **Architectural decors:** braced-columns, floating temples, gables, stairs; garlands of flowers; doors, lintels, diamond columns; statues of lions.

☆ Yeay Puon temple group

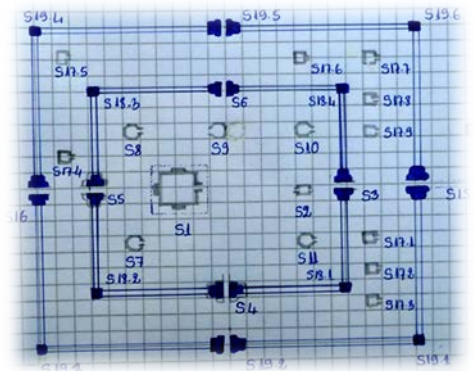
Activities To discover the temple group walls .We also walked through the area to find out and draw the walls of the temples and we met many kinds of temples. We learnt how to draw the temples, sculptures or temple decors. We joint drawing Yeay Puon's stairs and doors because the ministry of culture and fine arts will restore and repair it.



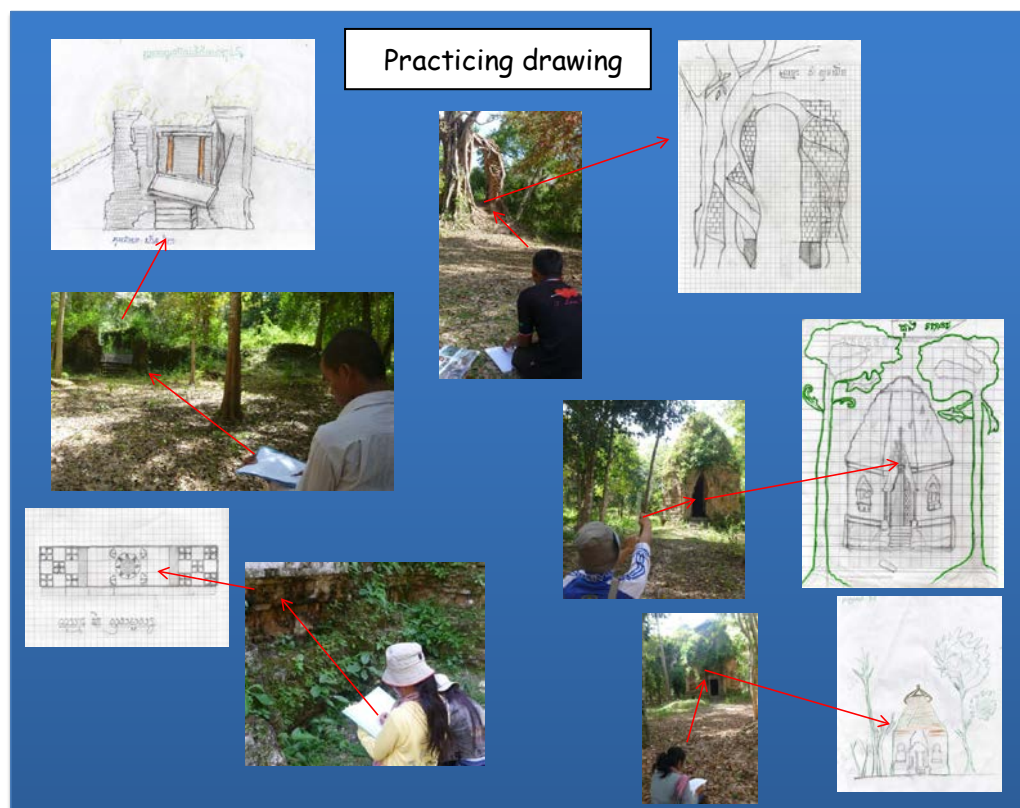
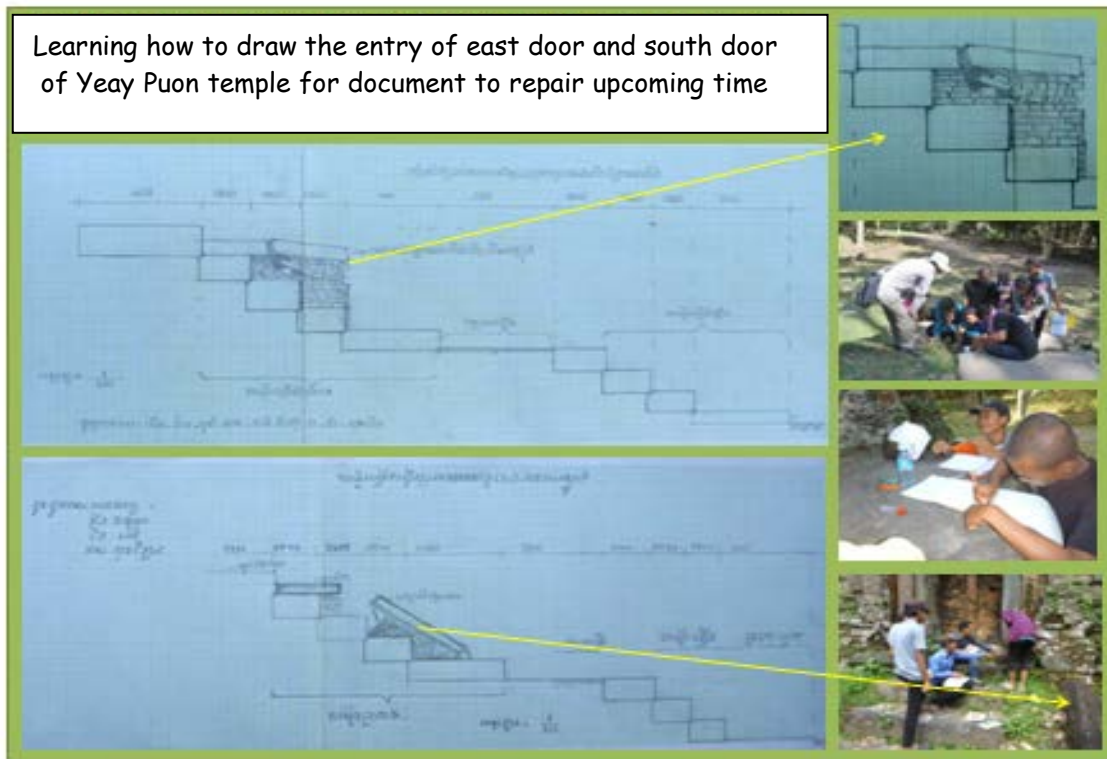
Yeay Puon temple



looking for inscription



Plan of Yeay Puon temple



Yeay Puon temple group (South group) is a temple group surrounded by two walls made of bricks and late rites. The epitaph is written that this temple was built by Isanavarman I in 627 for the worship of Siva. There are 35 temples in the south group. Most of the temples are octagon and almost all of them stay in good condition. A building in the east of a main small shrine was destroyed by a record rainfall, but there is a decorated plate called **Mandapa** in this building. A decoration called Kudou and a relief with a plant are excellent articles represented in this heritage. Those decorations are important articles influenced by Hellenism as to study the origin of Khmer culture.



S11



S10



S7



S8

The temples are decorated with architectural floating temples on each angle and also with other beautiful and interesting decors.

III. Researching trees in SPK

Purpose of Activities

1. To get to know the names of trees
2. To get to know the kinds of trees
3. To get to know the advantages of trees
4. To discover the trees which were written in inscriptions and their histories

We had interviewed Mr Kong Kim a conservator of Sambor Prey Kuk temples and walkd into the forest to find out the kinds of trees and he had explained to us about the names ,advantages and some descriptions related to their races, leaves, skins, size of body.



In Sambor Prey Kuk temple site is covered by forest with many kinds of small and big trees. Through our surveying, there are more than 300 names of trees and divided into four kinds of them. Some trees are written in inscriptions been able to read by Mr. Long Siem a professor and an archaeologist. They are also good for medicines which people who live around SPK always depend on when they have problem with health or other illness.

IV. Researching people's traditions around Sambor Prey Kuk

Purpose of Activities

1. To discover the villages following their belief ,custom,tagible and intagible cultures.
2. To find out guardian spirits' places (Guardian spirit = Neak Ta)
3. To study the ways how to celebrate guardian spirit ceremony in each place
4. To take a notes of presents for celebrating
5. To study the purposes of ceremony

Target villages: Sambor, Kampong Chheuteal, Okrou Kae, Cheay Sampov, Chamna Chass, Atsu,

Dorng Onteak.....

First ,we started our activities through going to meet old people or leaders of the villages. We Interviewed them, after we went to visit the places where there are guardian spirits, took some photos and noted some information in and around the places.



During we met up people whom we interviewed wasn't the time for celebrating guardian spirit ceremony. So we were waiting for 1 month until they did it in February. Remember that the villagers always celebrate the ceremony of the guardian spirit in this month. When the day of ceremony came, we joined to see all activities people doing.

Celebrating Guardian spirit in ChamnaChass



Interviewing music players



presents for Guardian spirit



offering cakes from guardian spirit group

Celebrating guardian spirit in Dornong Ontzak



In this ceremony, we noted that there is a sword which was made for a long time. Maybe they use it to show power or the position of the guardian spirit there. There are music group, presents for guardian spirit, and activity of offering cake and food children the same to ceremony in ChamnaChass too.

Celebrating Guardian spirit in Kampong Chheuteal village



Celebrating the ceremony in the village is quite different from others, although there are music group, presents for guardian spirit, the presents like food, cake, fruit and drink are more modern. We think it is because in the village, the people are sellers or live near the market or it is because in the past this place was one people came from many different places like China or the city. One more after ceremony, we got red cotton thread to tie around our wrists, it can prevent us from any diseases or we are taken care of by the guardian spirit.

We studied and joined all ceremonies in every target village around our ancient city. Some places they always celebrate many events during the ceremony like playing games, boxing, Choulchhoung, TeanhPreatr and dancing or so.

In fact, celebrating the guardian spirit ceremony of each village has the same purpose. It is celebrated in order to pray for well-being, happiness, wealthiness, good harvest and wish the gods take care of them in living and leading their lifestyles.