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**Thesis Advisors :** Dr. Sukaesinee Subhadhira, Mrs. Somjai Srila

### **ABSTRACT**

The objectives of this research were to study the belief in villagers' dog consumption and to investigate their behavior in such practice through qualitative research. Data were collected from related documents, in - depth interviews, both with groups and individuals as well as participating and nonparticipating observations. The interviewees comprised resource persons and informants at household level, chosen from different backgrounds of ethnicity and social status. Each household's representative with good knowledge in the issue was interviewed according to gender, range of age and education level. The study area was Ban Hinhae (an anonymous village), Muang District, Sakon Nakhon Province.

The findings revealed that dog consumption with a long history was inherited from ancestors with the Christian belief that such practice was not a sin. Moreover, the spread of this culture caused Ban Hinhae's every ethnic group, status and gender to eat dog meat. However, the belief in encouraging and not encouraging dog consumption existed with such difference, depending on age and education level: old villagers with low education believed in it more than other age groups, while young villagers with high education had the least belief because this group was more exposed to information, knowledge, value and modern belief from the outside domain. Yet the common belief that dog meat (especially black dogs) had a warmth effect on the body still existed. Dog oil was believed as ointment for skin burns and blisters. In contrast, a person with fever, internal inflammation or chicken pox could be worsened in condition or even had a fainting fit when consumed it.

The dog consumption culture has been developed through different periods: Period 1- dog meat was covertly or secretly consumed on special occasions, among the Vietnamese in the community (1884 - 1946). Period 2 coincided with the spread of dog consumption to other ethnic groups (1947 - 1971). Thai Yor and Phy Thai people got such practice from the Vietnamese on all occasions and all dog colors, specifically of the local breed. Period 3- marked the dog consumption to other communities (1972 - 1975). This consumption culture spreaded to other groups, inside and outside the communities with Thai - Isan

people to join in. Dog consumption later on increased as a result; both local and European breeds were overtly consumed, and dog trade was started at this point. Period 4- was when dog meat was exported to overseas (1976 to the present). Dog trade has increased, both searching and chopping board opening, thus extending the market to other districts, provinces and overseas. This brought about a petition among disagreeing groups, and, as a consequence, a conflicting image.

The change related to dog consumption in different periods is chiefly caused by three factors: 1) Cultural: The spread of dog consumption culture to other ethnic groups causes a change in original consumption; 2) Economic: The dog eating need, which increases, and encourages villagers to get dogs for sale instead of for eating themselves. This becomes an export network from provincial to national level; and 3) Social: The government's measures, in some periods, try to control dog killing and transferring as well as to collect tax from dog traders, thus having a great impact on traders and consumers.

At present, the process of getting dogs to consumers' mouth consists of several stages- searching dogs, delivering them to kennels, then to vendors' chopping board for transforming to the consumers' consumption with such successful factors as fund (pick-ups, cages, kennels, money for searching dogs) and other factors starting with dog catchers (pick - up owners and hire laborers for dog catching) catching and preparing methods, areas and time, things to barter for, transporting back, confinement and grade choice. Processed dog meat can be brought for cooking as delicacies: one - sunshine meat, sausages, intestines, grilled meat rib salami, dog rinds, uncooked paw hot and sour salad, baking or simmering as well as dog oil.

Ban Hinhae people's dog consumption practice has changed from delicacies to common food, but in the past, that belonged to the Vietnamese's culture with original recipe and careful preparation for special occasions or family reunions, specifically in the cold season. During the receptions of relatives and neighbors, dog meat became "social food," also with medicinal value. These people believed that such meat gave warmth to the body in the cold season. As time passed by, this consuming culture spread to other ethnic groups, resulting in wide consumption on all occasions, all colors and all kinds of dogs. Becoming common food, dog trade has extended as an important exporting product. As a result, people in Ban Hinhae view dog meat as a cheap protein source, especially for poor people. Further they also perceive dog trade as a way of earning income.