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Saphan Khoi Roi Pee at Tak Bai
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Let us take a stroll along a bridge in Tak Bai District, Narathiwat Province. Just its name alone is already interesting, as it is called “Saphan Khoi Roi Pee,” which is literally translated as the “Bridge of a Century-long Wait.”

Saphan Khoi Roi Pee was once a wooden bridge lying across Tak Bai River linking the mainland to Koh Yao. Nowadays, a strong and elegant concrete bridge has been constructed parallel to the old wooden bridge, and has become the main route used by locals.

Many people may wonder why it is called the Bridge of a Century-long Wait. The answer is actually based on a true anecdote from the past, when villagers from Koh Yao could only travel to the mainland by boat. At the time, there was no bridge and local people had to wait for a hundred years for the bridge to be built. Thus, upon the completion of the bridge, local villagers jokingly called it the “Bridge of a Century-long Wait.”

After crossing the 345 metre-long bridge, one will arrive at Koh Yao community, also known as Pulau Panyang in the Malay language (Bahasa Melayu). The small community is peaceful and the villagers have a simple way of life. Most are fishermen, sewing nipa palm leaves, and making shrimp paste from krill. Sutthini Salae, Chairperson of Koh Yao Housewives Group, informed that, in addition to traditional careers of the locals, the community also makes earnings from the One Tambon One Province (OTOP) Nawatwithi Community Tourism Project. This is due to the community’s exquisite beaches, preserved traditions, and simple way of life. Those who are interested in community-based tourism may visit Koh Yao community where they can enjoy nature and the local way of life, as well as participate in local activities. For example, making shrimp paste from krill, or going fishing with the local fishermen, so that they may embark on new exotic experiences together with the locals.

The locals in Koh Yao community are eager to invite tourists to experience their way of life, whether it is catching fish, or making small products to earn for their living, which is enough to sustain a comfortable life. If you visit Narathiwat Province, you will have the opportunity to meet many friendly communities and hospitable people in the southern border area.

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