

ต้นฉบับ หน้าขาดหาย

2.1.1 Muay Thai History

Muay Thai has been in the process of development since time immemorial according to some adherents of the art. However, evidence for the development of Muay Thai has its earliest date in the Sukothai period from 1238 - 1377(Kat, 2001). Never static, the Thai art of unarmed combat has been refined over the centuries into the Muay Thai tradition.

The origins of Muay Thai are unclear but within the historical period it appears that its progenitor was *Krabi Krabong*. *Krabi Krabong* is the Thai method of armed combat. These two Thai martial arts were combined to create the art of Thai warfare. Muay Thai was used in turn with *Krabi Krabong* while in battle and used exclusively when a soldier had been disarmed during combat.

In the Sukothai period (1238 - 1377) Muay Thai was reportedly practiced at court by royalty and used to select the palace guards. It was used in combat and no special accouterments were worn, fighting was done bare-fisted. The art more fully developed in the Ayutthaya period from 1350 - 1767. During this era several of the mythic heroes of Muay Thai gained their places in Thai history including the so-called father of Muay Thai, Nai Kanom Thom. Due to the sacking of the capital city of Ayutthaya in 1767, most of the historical records about the Thai for this era come from foreign sources including the Burmese who were responsible for the destruction of the Thai capital.

According to the Chiang Mai annals in 1411 Muay Thai was used to decide the future ruler upon the death of King Sen Muang Ma. The king had two sons, Yi Kumkan and Fang Ken, who were both in contention for the throne. After successive military battles for the crown had proved inconclusive the two brothers decided to stake their claims for the kingdom on a single Muay Thai competition. Each brother selected his own champion and it was agreed that the fighter to show first blood would be the loser. The fight was reported to have lasted several hours with both opponents appearing equally matched. Finally, Fang Ken's fighter sustained a cut on his foot and shed blood; the throne went to Yi Kumkan according to the agreement.

In the reign of King Ramathibodi II from 1491- 1529 the Thai military was restructured. In the course of this restructuring a military manual was developed, entitled *The Chuppasart*. The manual combined instruction on both armed and unarmed combat and influenced the development of Muay Thai.

King Naresuan the Great reigned in Ayutthaya from 1590 - 1605 and required that Muay Thai be a part of military training("History of Muay Thai" Available From www.muaythai.com/history/index.shtml). The Burmese had taken Naresuan hostage in 1569 when he was just a boy of nine. He gained his freedom and returned to Ayutthaya in 1574 after defeating a Burmese boxer with his Muay Thai skills. Thus strengthening the future kings' loyalty to the art and the beginning of foreign exposure to the Thai art of unarmed combat.

The most famous royal supporter and participant of Muay Thai was Phra Sanpetch VIII, also more commonly known as Phra Chao Sua (The Tiger King), who ruled from 1703 -1709. During his reign all members of the military trained in Muay Thai and he himself fought in bouts. Due to the conventions of royalty at the time, touching the king was an offense punishable by execution, the king was forced to seek out fights incognito throughout his kingdom. He is known to have fought and beaten the best Muay Thai fighters the kingdom had to offer.

Next up on the historical roster of notable Muay Thai fighters is Nai Kanom Thom who later became known as the father of Muay Thai. In 1767 the Burmese took prisoner Nai Kanom Thom, a commoner, when they razed the city of Ayutthaya. Three years later in 1770 King Mangra of Burma attended a temple fair in Rangoon where many festive activities were held including Thai boxing. The King proposed a fight matching a boxer in the Thai style with one in the Burmese, which is known as *Parma*. Unlike Muay Thai, *Parma* relies mainly on the fist as its weapons. The best fighters were called upon and of the Thai prisoners Nai Kanom Tom was chosen due to his renowned skills in Muay Thai.

Nai Kanom Tom handily defeated ten of the Burmese best fighters. It must be said that as well as a different fighting style focusing mainly on the actions of the fists the Burmese were also at a disadvantage due to their attire. The Burmese fighters wore the traditional Burmese sarong, which was ankle length while the Thais wore a type of loincloth. The Thai fighter had much greater freedom of movement and a wider repertoire of movements.

King Mangra was impressed by the Thai fighter and did not spare his compliments or his royal benevolence. The King reportedly said, " Every part of this man is blessed with venom. Even empty - handed, he could defeat nine or ten opponents"(Kat, 2001, p.51). Nai Kanom Tom was granted his freedom and returned home to a heroes welcome. The legendary fight of Nai Kanom Tom was recorded in Burmese texts and is a fundamental example of the long held Thai belief that nothing can defeat Muay Thai. Muay Thai stadiums across the nation dedicate every March 17th. known as "boxer's night", to Nai Kanom Tom.

The Ayutthaya period was besotted with war and conflict. The art of Muay Thai was inevitably affected by the constant need for military training. It was during this time that the *Kaad cheuk*, a type of fist binding, was adopted for use in Muay Thai contest. The *Kaad cheuk* was made of hemp thread and was a length of about twenty meters. It was wrapped around the fighters' fist in much the same way as fighters use hand wraps today. The story of Nai Kanom Tom highlights the manner of dress of Muay Thai fighters at that time. A statue depicting the legendary "Father of Muay Thai" has the fighter wearing both the *mongkon* (headband) and *prajied* (armband). It is unknown if there is factual evidence for such a depiction of a Muay Thai fighter from this period but the *mongkon* is clearly part of the Muay Thai costume in the illustrations of Muay Thai fighters in the unarmed combat manual compiled under the reign of Rama III, which will be discussed below. The development of Muay Thai as a spectacle also occurred during this time as well as the practice of fighting for a purse and the custom of gambling on the outcomes of matches all of which are components of the more in depth story of the Tiger King.

The Burmese destruction of Ayutthaya in 1767 ends the Ayutthaya period and begins the Ton Buri period from 1767 - 1782 and the reign of King Taksin. In the days before King Taksin established the kingdom of Ton Buri he was Lord or *Praya* of Tak. While in the capacity of Praya Tak he arranged for Muay Thai competitions and was awed by a contender by the name of Tong Dee. He was so pleased by this young fighter that he conveyed upon him the lordship of a neighboring town, Kampaeng-phet. Shortly thereafter the two men went into battle against the invading Burmese. Praya Kampaeng-phet, as Tong Dee was now known, was pitted against a Burmese general when his sword broke. Despite being

unarmed he killed the general using his Muay Thai skills. In the days that followed Praya Tak became King Taksin and rewarded Praya Kampaeng-phet with the lordship of his hometown, Pi-chai (Kat, 2001). From then on he was known as Praya Pi-chai Dab Hak (Lord of Pi-chai with the Broken Sword).

The last of the legendary Muay Thai heroes is Muen Plaan a royal guard in the court of Phra Phuttha Yotfa (Rama I) during the early Rattanakosin period (1782 - 1868). In 1788, two French brothers were traveling throughout Indo-China in search of prizefights. They had already defeated many opponents when they arrived to challenge the Thais. The fight purse offered by the king was set at 4000 baht and the king chose Muen Plaan to defend the honor of Siam.

The match took place on palace grounds with the king in attendance. The younger of the two French brothers was the first challenger to face Muen Plaan. He opened the fight with a powerful attack but was foiled at every assault by Muen Plaan's defensive ability. Eventually the older brother joined in the fight in an attempt to end the Muen Plaan defensive strategy. This breach of etiquette created a melee of royal guards entering the fight to aid their comrade. The Frenchmen were soon carried off and treated for their injuries by order of the king. Shortly thereafter, Muen Plaan was given that honorary rank and name by King Rama I, which means, "Knight of Destruction".

The reign of Rama III (1824 - 1851) saw the compilation of another manual of instruction in the martial art of Muay Thai. The text written on *Khoi* paper has many illustrations of Muay Thai techniques and poses. The fighters depicted are wearing the traditional *pannung* and the *mongkon*.



The history of Muay Thai, prior to the reign of King Chulalongkorn is difficult to authenticate. This is true for most of pre-modern Thai history. Few texts exist that can verify the numerous myths and legends associated with Muay Thai. Like many facets of Thai history, the history of Muay Thai is based on fact embroidered by oral tradition.

The reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1868-1910) and his successor King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, 1910-1925) spanning the

years 1868 - 1925 has been called both the golden age of Muay Thai and the Muay Thai renaissance and in accordance with the time divisions made thus far: the Mid-Rattanakosin period ("History of Muay Thai" Available From www.wmtc.nu). The Ton Buri and early Rattanakosin periods saw stagnation in Muay Thai innovation. The only point of interest is that, as mentioned previously, the *mongkon* is clearly in use.

Rama V had a great interest in Muay Thai and sponsored his subjects' participation in the art by means of Royal Command fights. Winning fighters at these events were often given military titles by the king. These titles, such as Pra Chai Choke Shok Channa (Lord Lucky-Fight-and Win), were highly respected and were a means for personal advancement in Thai society.



Rama VI was a strong promoter of the Thai martial arts in his campaign to militarize the youth of Thailand. He founded the Boy Scouts and the Wild Tigers, both of which trained in Muay Thai. In 1921, he sponsored the construction of the first boxing stadium at Suan Kularb in Bangkok. In this time of peace, Muay Thai was promoted as a means of: fitness, self-defense, recreation, martial training, and national pride. The apparel of the Muay Thai fighter is little changed during this period but the *prajied* is now definitely present.

I have given a brief historical account of the heroes, royal patrons, costume, and functions of Muay Thai throughout the Sukothai period down to the Mid-Rattanakosin period and here I end the historical discussion. From the 1920's onward Muay Thai, as well as Thailand in general, has been subjected to the forces of modernization. I will discuss the developments in Muay Thai from this time on under that rubric in the section of this thesis entitled Muay Thai Development in the Modern Era.

2.1.2 Muay Thai Traditions

In the art of Muay Thai aspects of traditional Thai literature and religion are found. Traditional Thai literature is mainly based on religious narratives including

the ancient Indian epic the Ramayana, known in its Thai form as the Ramakian. The Ramayana, attributed to the Indian poet Valmiki, is the story of the epic struggle of Prince Rama against the demons that inhabit the domain of Langka. The abduction of the prince's wife, Sita, leads him on a voyage of conquest aided by the great monkey warrior Hanuman. The story is based in the world of Hindu gods and has been the basis of Thai traditional dance, drama, and puppetry. The influence of this story can be seen throughout Thai culture including the very title of kings; Rama.

The Ramayana epic has acquired a distinctly Thai flavor over the millennia since its creation, approximately 2000 years ago. The Ramakian version of the story has been modified to reflect Thai culture. In 1807 King Rama I wrote an account of the Ramakian that was not a translation of original Indian epic but a unequivocally Thai rendition of the tale (Hoskins, Available from <http://www.mahidol.ac.th/Thailand/art/ramakian.html>). The story is also represent in bas-relief at Bangkok's oldest and largest Temple complex; Wat Po next to the Grand Palace. The Ramakian is also portrayed in mural paintings in Wat Phra Keo within the grounds of the Grand Palace. These paintings were rendered in the reign of Rama III (1824 - 1851).



Characters and actions from the Ramakian are an intricate part of Muay Thai. Many of the traditional names for Muay Thai techniques are derived from the epic tale. *Pra Rama Tam Gwang* (Rama follows the deer), *Hak Kor Erawan* (breaking Erawan's neck), *Mon Yan Lek* (Mon supports the pillar), *Bid Hang Naga* (twisting the Naga's tail) and *Hanuman Tawai Waen* (Hanuman presents the rings) are all parts of the Muay Thai fighters repertoire of moves whose names come from scenes of the Ramakian (Panya, 1988). In addition to fight techniques, the Ramakian is reflected in the *Ram Muay*, the pre-fight dance ritual that will be discussed more fully in the segment detailing the rituals of Muay Thai.

The Javanese classic, Inao, has also been adapted and adopted into the Thai literary tradition. It is a romance story of a Javanese hero prince that has been known to the Thai peoples since the Ayutthaya period. The story was rewritten by Rama II in the early Rattanakosin period and has been used as a source in Thai

dramas. In Muay Thai it is used, like the Ramakian, in the naming of boxing forms. *Inao Taeng Kris* (Inao stabs his dagger) is a term describing a defensive move used to avoid a straight punch to the face in addition to a counter measure which results in landing the fist below the opponents ribs.

Buddhism, Hinduism and Animism coalesce to form the Thai religious tradition. All three traditions are currently manifested in Muay Thai traditions, practice, and beliefs. As previously noted the influence of Thai religion can be seen in the names of the Muay Thai fighting techniques. In addition to the boxing forms related to traditional literature there is also a move called *Tel Kwad Larn* (Monk Follower sweeps the floor) indicating the presence of Buddhism in the Thai belief system (Panya, 1988).

Traditional religious aspects of Muay Thai are more obviously visible in the practices of body tattooing, the wearing of charms and the recitation of prayers and incantations. The belief in magic is a powerful aspect of Thai culture and a significant part of Muay Thai. Body tattoos incorporating symbols of Buddhism and written prayers were once common among Muay Thai competitors. The tattoos were inscribed by monks within Buddhist temples and offered protection to the fighter. The incantation, *Gam Ban Nak Muen* (Clenched fist weighing 1,000 kilograms), was frequently tattooed on the back of fighters' hands. In the present day, tattoos are rarely seen on the bodies of Muay Thai combatants.

Muay Thai fighters integrate numerous charms into their attire. These charms are believed to hold magical properties that will both protect the fighter from evil and help ensure a victorious outcome to the match. The *mongkon*, as noted earlier, is the headband worn by all Muay Thai fighters. At present the *mongkon* is removed after the *Ram Muay* ritual but this was not the case in the past when fights were disrupted by the need to replace a dislodged *mongkon* to the head of fighter (Kat, 2001, p. 70).



The *mongkon* is composed of either a narrow band of cloth or strands of thread woven into an oval coil about the thickness of a thumb that will fit on the head of the fighter.

Within the weave of the *mongkon* magical letters, symbols, *waahn* (a type of herb) and *pra-krueng* (amulets) are placed. The *mongkon* is the property of the Muay Thai teacher and is given to the fighter for use while under his tutelage. Unsubstantiated legend also reports the use of a dried poisonous snake as the inner component of the *mongkon*.

The *prajied* is a band of woven cloth that is worn around the upper arm between the deltoid and bicep muscles. Like the *mongkon*, it is used to ward off danger, protect the fighter from harm and produce strength. It too contains elements believed to bring good luck and protection. The fighter may incorporate more personal items into this talisman such as his fathers' hair and /or a piece of his mothers' *paa-tung* (sarong) as well as *pra-krueng*, *waahn*, *paa-yan* (cloth with magical inscriptions) and *dhagrut* (bronze sheet with magical inscriptions).

The *pirod* is also worn around the upper arm although never worn on the same arm as the *prajied*. This armband made of rattan is typically worn on the less dexterous arm of the fighter. The woven rattan band is narrow and not always worn.

Small Buddhist amulets or *pra-krueng* are commonly used by Muay Thai fighters. They are placed within both the *mongkon* and the *prajied*. Belief in the magical powers of these Buddhist images are an intricate part of Thai culture and many Thais, other than Muay Thai fighters, incorporate them into their daily attire usually in the form of a necklace. However, it is up to discretion of the individual fighter whether or not to use *pra-krueng* in his accouterments whereas the *mongkon* and *prajied* must be worn. Accordingly, Thai Muslim Muay Thai fighters do not use these Buddhist accessories nor do they acquire tattoos, such as mentioned above, which is forbidden by Islamic law. (informal interview in Krabi province: Muslim Muay Thai coach)

The *dhagrut* is a small piece of beaten bronze or silver on which are written magical words and symbols. The metal sheet is tightly rolled while incantations are recited. A thread is placed through the scroll and tied about the waist of the fighter or within the *prajied*. A variant of this is the *pitsamorn*, which is made of palm leaf rather than metal. Again, the magic inherent in these amulets is thought to protect the fighter.

Waahn is an herb that is used by the Muay Thai fighter either within the confines of the *mongkon* or *prajied* or physically internalized through chewing the herb or drinking an infusion made from it. A fighter may also wash their bodies with the same infusion. The herbs' powers are enhanced by incantations. It is believed to increase virility and endurance.

A small piece of cloth inscribed with magical symbols is called the *paa-yan*. Incantations are recited while performing the process of inscription. The cloth is later incorporated into the *prajied*. As with all other amulets mentioned above it provides protection for the fighter and is worn during the match.

Incantations, both spoken and written, used to protect the Muay Thai fighter are based on the various religious traditions of Thailand. Buddhist incantations are used to instill magic into many of the amulets listed above as well as at the moment in the pre-fight ritual when the Muay Thai teacher removes the *mongkon* from the fighters' head. During the *Ram Muay* ritual fighters' may recite incantations invoking the name of Hanuman, the great monkey warrior from the epic Ramakian. Furthermore, some fighters may recite prayers before walking up the steps leading to the ring. As mention previously, incantations may also be tattooed on the body of the fighter.

The traditions of Muay Thai are implicitly linked to the religious life of the Thais. Muay Thai techniques derive their names from traditional Thai literature, which is based on religious narratives. The magical charms used by fighters for protection and success in the ring are imbued with magic through the use of mystical incantations based in the traditions of Buddhism and Hinduism. Believe in the magical properties of such items as the hair of one's father is rooted in animism. Tattooing, a practice now gone out of fashion for most fighters, is performed by Buddhist monks who are versed in the Brahmin tradition. Religious practices, such as these, are an essential part of the Muay Thai tradition.

2.1.3 Muay Thai Rituals

The many rituals of Muay Thai are based around a display of respect to the teacher or *Khru Muay*. The main category of these rituals falls under the general heading of *Wai Khru* of which there are four types: *Yok Khru* (trainee initiation),

Wai Khru Prajam Pee (yearly homage), *Krob Khru* (teacher initiation), and *Wai Khru Ram Muay* (dance of homage). *Wai Khru* is an ancient tradition of the Thai culture, which embodies the concept that all teachers should be treated with great respect.

The *Yok Khru* ritual is when a teacher has accepted a prospective student. The students may have already undergone an apprenticeship period lasting a period of several months to several years in order to convince the teacher that they are a worthy student. This practice of long apprenticeship before fighter initiation has mostly vanished in the era of modernization.

The *Yok Khru* ritual consists of a formal request made by the student to the teacher seeking permission to become his pupil. The ritual is generally held on a Thursday, which is traditionally considered teachers' day or *Wan Khru*. The student offers symbols of respect to the teacher, which may include flowers, incense, candles, and money. The teacher then officially accepts the student into his care and the student pledges his duty towards the teacher in the following speech:

We have come today to worship the teacher and solemnly promise the teacher to be your honest disciples. We respect you and have complete trust in you. We will treasure all traditions, rules and everything we will learn from you. We will make your style and techniques our own. We will never think, say, or do anything that could harm the reputation of the teacher, our camp, and our mates. We swear that our words are honest and to be kept forever. Earth, heaven, and the four directions are our witnesses. We beg you to protect us always. With our bodies, our souls, and our words, we surrender to you and obey you as your disciples with the highest respect. Thus, we beg you to teach everything you know, to help us succeed, to protect us from dangers and to bless us with love and happiness, forever (Stockmann, 1979, p.22).

The students are now officially part of a Muay Thai family. They regard their teachers as their parent and the other fighters in the camp as their siblings. Life revolves around the camp and the fighter acquires a new identity including a new name assigned by the *Khru Muay*.

Wai Khru Prajam Pee is a traditional ceremony observed yearly throughout Thailand wherever learning occurs. According to the traditions of Muay Thai, this annual homage paying usually takes place on March 17th. A gathering of teachers and students is held and an offering of tradition symbols of respect is given to teachers of the past. Then students honor the teachers who are present and receive a sacred mark on their foreheads inscribed by the teachers with powder. Finally, all students perform a dance of homage and sacred vows are taken by all those in attendance.

The teacher initiation ceremony or *Krob Khru* occurs when students have acquired the necessary knowledge to become teachers themselves; the existing *Khru Muay* assesses this. The incoming teachers offer the traditional symbols of respect to their teachers and then are officially proclaimed *Khru Muay* in the following manner. The *Khru Muay* recites this speech while the fighters kneel before them in a position of respect known as the *panom mue wai* (hands in prayer positioned at chest, bent at waist):

Today is a propitious day, and this hour of good omen. You have proved yourself to be a person of virtue and knowledge, skilled in the art of Nuay Thai, to the extent that you are now worthy of becoming a teacher yourself. I therefore appoint you a newly-created Muay Thai teacher at this Krob Khru ceremony, capable of instructing others in this noble art. Always remember your duty to preserve the traditions and the art of Muay Thai. Be a person of good conduct and apply your knowledge and abilities in such a way as to benefit both yourself and the community (Kat, 2001, p.84).

Upon completion of this recital the fighters respond with their own speeches pledging to uphold the legacy of Muay Thai, the obligations to ones' teacher and the honor of their new position as *Khru Muay*. A *mongkon* is then placed upon the supplicants' head and the tradition dance of homage is performed. In the final step of the ceremony, the teacher gives the student the *mongkon* after the student has once more performed the *panom mue wai* and prostrated three times at the feet of their teacher.

The *Wai Khru Ram Muay* is part of all Muay Thai fighters' pre-fight rituals. The intention of this ritual is to honor ones' teacher, opponent and fight spectators.

In addition to these purposes, the *Ram Muay* also helps the fighter concentrate on Muay Thai skills, serves as a warm up exercise, and demonstrates the graceful control of body and mind inherent in the traditions of both Muay Thai and the national religion Buddhism. In the past, the *Ram Muay* was used to indicate the origins of the boxer as each Muay Thai camp had its' own distinct style.

Prior to the commencement of the *Ram Muay*, the *mongkon* is placed on the head of the boxer by the teacher and then the fighter proceeds to the center of the ring where both opponents kneel and prostrate themselves three times. These prostrations or *Kraab* are in dedication to the popular nationalistic triad of country, king and religion. According to earlier texts, the *Kraab* was dedicated to the Lord Buddha, Dhamma, and teachers including parents, Kru Muay and the Kings of Thailand.



The *Ram Muay* or dance of homage has many variations and styles. The many movements and positions incorporated into the dance are named according to literary and cultural traditions of Thailand. The *Wai Khru* in the *Pra Ram Gwang* (Rama follows the deer) style is based on the Ramakian epic. The fighter portrays the god Rama in his hunt for *Ma Reet*, a fictitious deer. Yet another form of the *Wai Khru* is the *Hong Hern* (swans' flight) movement, which mimics the graceful motion of a soaring swan. There is also the *Wai Khru* in the Royal Salute movement, which may include positions attributed to the unfurling of a peacock tail, Narai throwing a disc and homage to mother earth.

2.2 Development In The Modern Era

Muay Thai has been in a constant state of development since the earliest days of unarmed combat. It was not until the middle of the last millenium that

Muay Thai was a recognizable art form. Changes to the art of Muay Thai have been the most dramatic in the last century, which constitutes the modern era in Thailand.

The physical transformation of Muay Thai affects the equipment a fighter uses both in matches and training, the rules and regulations of the bouts, the area in which a fight is staged, and the training methods at Muay Thai camps. The modern Muay Thai fighter wears satin shorts (often emblazoned with the camp name or a sponsoring company such as M-150), boxing gloves, inner hand wraps, mouth guard, groin protector, ankle supports (worn at personal discretion), *mongkon*, and the *prajied*. In addition to this there is also the costume of the amateur Muay Thai fighter, a category of boxer which didn't exist prior to the modern period. The amateur fighter wears, in addition to all of the above accoutrements, a head guard, vest, elbow guards, shin guards, and a heavily padded body protector. Of all of these, the only recognizable portion of the traditional Muay Thai outfit is the *mongkon* and *prajied*. In the past these plus the *kaad cheuk*, *paa nung* and a groin guard fashioned from a sea shell or tree bark made up the attire of the Muay Thai fighter.

Changes to the Muay Thai attire, like most of the transformations of Muay Thai in the modern era, occurred in the inter war period during the 1920's and 1930's. In 1926 the ring death of Jia Kaengkhamen at Suan Muay Gularb provoked the introduction of boxing gloves in Muay Thai competitions (Kat, 2001). The shift from *kaad cheuk* to gloves was not instantaneous and took more than a decade to completely implement. It should be noted that in Britain gloves were first used in the mid-1700s but not officially mentioned in British boxing rules until 1865 in what is known as the 'Queensbury rules' thus demonstrating the long process of modernization of the sport of boxing in the west (Dunning, 1999).

In 1929 a metal groin guard replaced the traditional groin protection offered by sea shells and tree bark (Kat, 2001, p. 42). The *gra-jap*, as it is known in Thai, was imported from Singapore. Muay Thai fighters readily adopted the *gra-jap* due to its' safety.

By the 1930's Muay Thai fighters' were wearing western style boxing trunks during competitions. In 1937 the Department of Physical Education promulgated the official rules of Muay Thai, which included the dress code of fighters. Boxing

shorts, boxing gloves, and groin protectors are included within the dress regulations as well as the traditional *mongkon*.

Prior to the 1920's there were few official rules governing Muay Thai. Muay Thai matches had no time limits, no weight classes, no rings, and no professional and amateur designations. When Muay Thai changed from a martial arts exercise to a contest held before a crowd of spectators, presumably during the reign of the Tiger King according to historical accounts, competitions were held in the open on the bare earth. The first permanent Muay Thai arena was opened at the Suan Gularb School in 1920, which later housed the first elevated and roped Muay Thai ring.

In the 1930's at the Suan Sanuk Muay Thai arena the modern boxing ring was created. Cloth covered the floor of the ring whereas the floor of the Suan Gularb ring was made of wooden boards covered by bamboo mats. Three parallel ropes surrounded the ring and the corner colors were standardized to red and blue.

Rudimentary time limits were placed on Muay Thai matches prior to the modern era. Fights were divided into rounds but the number of rounds was not predetermined. The length of a round was determined by an ingenious time keeping method utilizing a coconut. A coconut, with a puncture in the bottom, was placed in a jar of water. The water entered the coconut and the round was over when the coconut was submerged. Obviously, the time of rounds would vary from fight to fight due to the inability to standardize both the coconut size and the puncture dimensions. In the 1930's, when Muay Thai competitions began to employ standards, modern timepieces did the time keeping.

Weight divisions were first introduced to Muay Thai in 1928. It was not until 1950 that a fully developed ranking system with eight weight divisions was implemented. This system of divisions was developed with the assistance of an American GI stationed in the Philippines, one Major General Sullivan (Stockmann, 1979). Currently there are nineteen weight divisions ranging from mini fly weight at 47.62 Kg. (105 pounds.) to super heavy weight at 95 Kg. (209 pounds.) and upwards. Thai fighters are mainly confined within the first eight of these divisions.

These specifications as well as the addition of an official timekeeper, score keeper, and fight penalties met the international standards of western boxing according to Queensbury rules. Many older Muay Thai devotees cite the adherence

to international boxing standards as the death of the traditional Thai martial art form. In the past a fighter had to face all opponents no matter the size and they trained accordingly. The addition of timed rounds is also blamed for weakening the skills and endurance of the fighter. According to international rules, many of the tactics used by Muay Thai fighters were banned. Old style Muay Thai is reported to have 108 basic techniques, more modern accounts convey a total of 60 major attack moves, yet another modern source refers to only five punches, four elbow attacks, three knee kicks, and five foot techniques (Stockmann, 1979).

The training methods used to produce Muay Thai fighters have changed over the last century due to the introduction of western products, technology, and terminology. In the years before modernization influenced Thailand and the martial art of her people one of the key pieces of Muay Thai training equipment was the banana tree. This abundant natural resource was the precursor of the punching bag. Fighters forged their kicking and punching skills against the banana stalk. Lemons were hung from trees so the fighter could practice hitting and kicking a small moving target. Small logs were rolled across the shins to increase their strength. Jumping in and out of pits enhanced leg muscles and cardiac endurance. Coconuts floating in water were used for punching practice increasing the fighters' ability to hit a moving target. In the presence of modern training equipment, these techniques have gone out of use.

The 1920's and '30's was witness to the death of the training techniques listed above. Muay Thai gyms developed training methods based on the western form of exercise using weights, punch bags and balls. At present, most Muay Thai gyms are equipt with skipping ropes, boxing gloves, punching bags, speed balls, weight-lifting equipment, and mirrors to practice shadow boxing.

Western technology and terminology has replaced the old techniques and vocabulary in Muay Thai training. As previously mentioned, fight rounds became standardized with the use of clocks. In modern training sessions stopwatches are used to time bouts and exercise routines. The nomenclature of Muay Thai techniques based in traditional Thai literature and religion has been replaced by terms adopted from international boxing.

On the social front, Muay Thai has been transformed from the sport of kings to the domain of the poor peasant. Throughout the history of Muay Thai, it was an

activity that was both participated in and observed by kings. Heroes and kingdoms were made by prowess in the art of Muay Thai. The accomplished fighter could obtain noble titles and promotion within the court. Fighters could use their abilities to gain social status in the hierarchical social structure of Thai culture. In the modern era the background of the participants changed and the social status of the Muay Thai fighter fell drastically. Muay Thai is no longer actively practiced by kings or members of royalty. Generally speaking, most modern day Muay Thai fighters come from poor rural families at the bottom of the social ladder. The process of modernization has changed Thai peoples' attitude towards work i.e.: physical labor. Many Thais feel that to accomplish work by means of mental rather than physical exertion is preferable and worthy of increased social status. The Muay Thai fighter is the embodiment of physical labor; a life ruled by a rigorous physical training schedule and pay for physical combat. Thus, the combination of family background and current perceptions about physical labor in Thai society has reduced the social standing of Muay Thai fighters. Again it should be noted that this is very similar to the British experience where boxing was once the practice of the educated elite of Oxford and aristocratic gentlemen in general and now is the domain of the lower classes (Dunning, 1999).

In addition to social and physical changes to Muay Thai in the modern era, the art was further transformed into a sport by the process of commercialization. The opening of Ratchadamnoen Stadium in 1945 was the first phase of Muay Thai commercialization. The stadium could house large numbers of paying spectators, which increased the drive for ticket sales. Large crowds meant bigger fight purses and an increase in the business of fight promotions. In 1955 the stadium hosted the first televised Muay Thai bout. In subsequent years marketing of consumer products within the stadium, in the ring and on the fighters has become common place. Thai television stations carry broadcasts from Ratchadamnoen and Lumpini (opened in 1956) Stadiums. Big companies such as Caltex and the M-150 sports drink manufacturer currently sponsor these weekly programs. Food vendors, fight program hawkers, and various other economic activities surround and are supported by the stadiums.

When Muay Thai entered the big stadiums of Bangkok another traditional Thai pastime followed: gambling. The economic spin-offs of major Muay Thai

competitions were further fueled by the prevalence of gamblers at the matches. Gambling has helped shape the sport of Muay Thai due to the practice of betting not only on the outcome of a match but also on the ability of a fighter to perform certain moves. The fighter is often offered a stake in the winnings for executing specified techniques during a fight. Muay Thai traditionalists cite gambling as having a negative impact on Muay Thai that reduces fighters' skills and discredits the sport due to accusations of corruption.

In the 1970's there was a resurgence of interest in Muay Thai throughout Thailand and the world. The Tourism Organization of Thailand and some independent Muay Thai associations began a drive to promote Muay Thai overseas. They distributed films and sent demonstration teams to countries in Asia, Europe and the United States. Thais petitioned to have Muay Thai as an exhibition sport at the 1976 Olympic games in Montreal, Canada but they were refused. Exhibition bouts between Muay Thai and other martial art styles such as Karate and Kung Fu were popular and helped raise the profile of Muay Thai internationally. The overwhelming popularity of Bruce Lee Kung Fu movies in the West increased the interest of westerners in all forms of Asian martial arts including Muay Thai. Finally, the presence of American service men in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War was an impetus to the increase in popularity of Muay Thai in the United States.

The U.S. policy of containment of the communist threat through out the cold war created a co-dependant relationship with Thailand, which resulted in the U.S. having strong influence over Thailand's' defense policy and resources. The Indochinese conflict resulting in the Vietnam War brought thousand of U.S. servicemen to Thailand in the late 1960's and early 1970's. These servicemen were accompanied by U.S. dollars smoothing the way for U.S. troop deployment, establishment of bases and the designation of certain areas of Thailand as R&R destination for U.S. forces. In 1969 there were 48,000 American troops in Thailand (Corrine, 1984, p.36).

Stockmann (1979) gives several examples of American serviceman's involvement and interest in Muay Thai. Servicemen were keen spectators at Muay Thai matches. They also took up the challenge to learn the art and some such as Dale Kvalheim, became well known and had great success in the ring. The sport

became popular enough to sponsor the establishment of the USA Kickboxing Association in 1971 (Stockmann, 1979, p.13).

At the time of writing, there appears to be another Muay Thai renaissance. Muay Thai fights are broadcast several nights a week from Lumpini and Ratchadamnoen stadiums on local television stations as well as on cable sports channels. The cable broadcast includes English as well as Thai color commentary. There are thousands of Muay Thai training facilities in the country that forge tens of thousands of fighters. According to a recent survey there are 20,000 Muay Thai training camps in 98 countries across the globe (Nation 2/08/01). The World Wide Web is rife with sites dedicated to Muay Thai from camps and aficionados around the world. It has even reached my small home village in an isolated region of eastern Canada via satellite television.

In the push to gain global recognition and participation Muay Thai has embraced standardization and international competition. Foreign-trained Muay Thai fighters often travel to Thailand to train in the homeland of the sport and experience the Muay Thai tradition first hand. Although foreign fighters may excel in the skills and grace required in Muay Thai, it is more difficult for them to learn and accept the magic and religious aspects that are inherent in the Muay Thai tradition.

2.2.1 Modernization and Globalization

Muay Thai has undergone significant changes in the modern era. These changes are due to the influences of modernization and globalization, which have transformed Muay Thai from a traditional martial art to a sport. This vocabulary, modern, traditional, modernization and globalization, is frequently used but often misunderstood in regards to its' actual meaning and impact on society. Following is a brief definition of these terms as I use them in this instance.

The modern era in Thailand began under Kings Mongkut and Chulalongkorn. They are both well known and widely recognized as the modernizing monarchs of Thailand. Modernization as defined by C.E. Black is, "...the process by which historically evolved institutions are adopted to the rapidly changing functions that reflect the unprecedented increase in man's knowledge ,

permitting control over his environment, that accompanied the scientific revolution" (Black, 1966, p.7). The scientific revolution and subsequent modernization was initially a European phenomenon that was exported to the rest of the world through colonialism. The sportization of many folk games in Europe occurred with the rise of industrialization. Thailand, though never colonized, pursued modernization and industrialization of its' own accord and sport developed in much the same way it had in Europe under similar industrial conditions.

The traditional is often only defined in contrast to the modern. It is frequently used in a negative manner indicating, static, unimaginative, rigid, and backwards thinking. In truth traditional societies are as dynamic as modern societies, the difference lies in the technology available. However, the pejorative reputation of traditionalists is due to their own incognizance of transformations inherent in the ancient practices that they claim to uphold.

Globalization is a process of economic integration on a worldwide scale that has implications for political and social aspects of life. Ever since Marshall McLuhan coined the phrase "The Global Village" in the 1960's, the implications of integrated markets and global communications have come under increased scrutiny. In recent years there have been large scale anti-globalization protests at various world trade meetings and it has been invariably blamed for events such as the 1997 economic crisis in Thailand. The globalization trend is also responsible for bringing cultures into contact. This leads to cultural exchange and development on a scale unprecedented in human history.

The terms globalization and modernization have both been additionally defined as westernization, americanization, and neo-liberalism. These expressions are politically loaded and I choose not to use them in this discussion. Thailand has been influenced by America and the West but it has also been shaped by its' Asian neighbors and regional powers such as Japan and China.

The modernization of Muay Thai occurred in the inter war period during the 1920's and 1930's. New technologies were introduced to the art which aided in its' transformation into a sport. More important than the technologies introduced was the introduction of the scientific principle of standardization. Muay Thai standards did not exist prior to this period and they were imported from abroad as a pre-existing set of rules and regulations used by western style boxing.

The standardization of Muay Thai created changes in the techniques and training styles of fighters. The Thai government, in accordance with international codes, promulgated these changes in an effort to establish Thailand's reputation as a modern country. The brutalities of traditional Muay Thai fighting as well as other Thai customs such as the practice of chewing betel nut were deemed unpalatable to western cultures. In the late 1800's and early 1900's modern was equated with western and was unquestionably desirable. The modernization process had its' greatest impact on the transformation of Muay Thai from tradition to sport in this early period of the modern era.

Muay Thai has undergone two phases of globalization, the first during the 1970's and the second from the late 1990's to the present. The first phase of globalization was due in large part to the cold war and the resulting hot war in Vietnam, which engaged U.S. troops who were stationed here in Thailand during the conflict. Many American servicemen became interested in Muay Thai while living in Thailand. Some of them trained in the country and subsequently brought the sport home to the U.S.

The 1970's witnessed an increased interest in martial arts in light of the immensely popular kung fu films of Bruce Lee. Muay Thai was promoted throughout Asia and the West in order to take advantage of this global cultural exchange. Fighters from the martial arts traditions of China, Korea and Japan all took part in matches against Muay Thai fighters. These "Battle of the Styles" were popular spectator events that generally supported the claim of Thais that no other martial art could triumph over Muay Thai.

Thais sought to popularize Muay Thai internationally in order to capture foreign currency, increase the international standing, popularity, and renown of Thailand. The globalization of economies influenced the commercialization of Muay Thai. The overseas promotion of the sport was expected to bring in foreign tourist and boost the profile of Thailand on the world stage. As noted by Hargreaves .” political elites in the constituent states of the new world order have, for some considerable time, tended to intervene in and to promote sport as an important instrument for the creation of a sense of national identity and as a way of enhancing their state-nation's prestige and influence internationally” (2002, p.32).

The local resurgence of Muay Thai popularity during the 1970's may also be linked to a feature of globalization. The process of globalization includes the opening of borders and may result in undermining national sovereignty. Some Thais viewed the presence of American troops in Thailand as an assault on the sovereignty of the nation. The renewed interest in Muay Thai may have been a reaction to this feeling of disenfranchisement. Once again Hargreaves notes that it is, "...clear that the transformation of nation-based sport into globalised sport may help stimulate national sentiment and provide a rallying point around which it can be reinforced and reconstructed... (2002, p.33). National pride in the sport of kings, which could not be beaten, may have been the bandage over the wounded Thai self-esteem.

In the late 1990's the term globalization took on a negative connotation and was viewed as a disastrous process, which destroyed economies and cultures. The sport of Muay Thai has a schizophrenic point of view concerning the effects of globalization; some people criticize the loss of Muay Thai traditions due to global influences on the sport while others actively promote Muay Thai in overseas markets. In many minds the cultural exchange has become a battle to maintain Thai supremacy in the national sport. It is exported as a cultural industry of Thailand and is an important source of tourism revenue.

2.2.2 Consequences of Modernization and Globalization

The shift in Muay Thai from tradition to sport was a result of the processes of modernization and globalization. The effects of this shift has changed Muay Thai into an economic activity for all those involved in the sport, spectators, promoters, teachers and fighters. It has become a means of escape from the gripping poverty in rural areas, which is itself, a symptom of the modernization process.

The drive towards modernization in the late 1800's and the early 1900's led to the standardization of Muay Thai during the inter war years. The standards introduced changed Muay Thai into a sport with rules and regulations instead of a martial art, which conformed only to the needs of the combat situation. Standardization and modern technology resulted in the loss of many techniques and training methods that were traditionally used in the art of Muay Thai.

According to Sage, sporting practices that have long existed in national cultures and communities are no longer isolated from global changes. They, too, have become an integral part of the globalised economic and cultural world, and widening global interdependency is profoundly influencing traditional sports practices and values” (2002, p. 226). The process of globalization opened Thailand to the world and spread Muay Thai overseas. Muay Thai became part of the new cultural industry, which commercialized Thai culture in an effort to capture foreign capital and recognition. The sport was promoted as a tourist attraction and was modified to suit western taste.

Muay Thai grew locally, within Thailand, partly as a nationalistic backlash against the forces of globalization. Local interest increased the commercial benefits of the sport resulting in corporate sponsorship of matches, increased purse prizes, and gambling. At present, Muay Thai is marketed as a cultural product in the global marketplace, promoted abroad as the only unbeatable martial art form, and cherished at home as the sport of kings.