## History and Traditions of Muay Thai

## Muay Thai Chronology



## MuayThai in the Sukhothai Era

Thailand's capital was situated at Sukhothai from around the Buddhist years 1781-1951 (1238-1408 CE). Inscriptions in stone columns at Sukhothai indicate that Sukhothai fought with its neighbors quite often. Consequently, the city had to instill in her soldiers knowledge and skills concerning the use of weapons such as swords and spears, and also how to use the body as a weapon in situations of close person-to-person combat. Skills such as kicking, kneeing, punching, and elbowing were thus developed.

During peacetime, young men in Sukhothai practiced MuayThai to build character and their self-defense skills. These skills would serve them well during their time in the military and thus the practice of MuayThai became a good custom. MuayThai training centers arose around the city, for example, the Samakorn Training Center in Lopburi. Some were in temple areas where monks doubled as instructors.

During this period, MuayThai was considered a higher art and was a part of the royal curriculum. It was intended to develop good and brave warriors with great physical fitness into great and brave rulers. The first King of Sukhothai, Phokhun Sri In Tharatit, believed in the benefits of MuayThai so much that he sent his two sons to train MuayThai at the Samakorn Training Center to prepare them to take the throne. In B.E. 1818-1860 (1275-1317 CE) Phokhun Ram Khamhaeng
wrote a war text that included the teachings of MuayThai as well as instruction in other fighting skills.

## MuayThai in the Krungsri Ayutthaya Era

The Ayutthaya Era lasted from B.E. 1988-2310 (1445-1767 CE). This period was characterized by frequent wars between Thailand, Burma, and Cambodia. Therefore, young men had to prepare themselves by developing self-defense skills. These skills were taught by experienced masters. The training spread from the Royal Palace out to the public. The Phudaisawan Sword Training Center was very famous in that era, and it had many pupils. They were trained with wicker swords in the arts of sword and pole fighting. They were also trained to fight barehanded and thus learned MuayThai skills. In addition to fighting, such training centers also gave education in everyday matters.

## King Naresuan The Great Era (B.E. 2133-2147, 1590-1604 CE)

King Naresuan would call for young men of his age to train with him. They were trained to be brave, self-confident warriors. They had to be skilful with all weapons and in boxing. King Naresuan set up the Scouting Corps to fight in guerrilla warfare. It was this Corps of soldiers that were able to free Thailand from Burma during this time.

## King Narai The Great Era (B.E. 2147-2233, 1604-1690 CE)

During this period Thailand was very much at peace and there were many developments in the Kingdom. King Narai supported and promoted sports, especially MuayThai, which became a professional sport. At this time there were many boxing training centers. The boxing ring was set up in regular playgrounds where a rope would be laid out in a square shape to indicate the fighting area. Boxers wrapped their hands with threads that were dipped in thick starch or tar. This technique was called Kad-Chuck (wrapped with threads) or Muay Kad-Chuck (boxing with thread-wrapped hands). Boxers wore a head band, called the mongkon, and an amulet, or pa-pra-jiat, wrapped around their upper arms when they fought. Boxers did not fight according to weight, height, or age. The rules were simple: Fights lasted until there was a clear winner. Gambling accompanied the bouts. Villages would often challenge each other to boxing matches and boxing became an activity central to folk plays and festivals.

## King Prachao Sua Era (B.E. 2240-2252, 1697-1709 CE)

King Prachao Sua, also known as the Tiger King as well as Khun Luang Sorasak, loved MuayThai very much. Once he went, dressed in plain clothes, to a district called Tambol Talad-guad with four royal guards. There he entered a boxing competition. The promoter did not recognize the King, but knew that the boxer came from Ayutthaya. He let the King fight against very good fighters from
the town of Wisetchaichan. They were Nai Klan Madtai (killing fists), Nai Yai Madlek (iron fists), and Nai Lek Madnak (hard fists or punches). The Tiger King won all three fights. King Prachao Sua also trained his two sons, Prince Petch and Prince Porn, in MuayThai, sword fighting, and wrestling.

During the early part of the Ayutthaya period the Department of Royal Boxing was founded. One of its responsibilities was to recruit young talented boxers to fight for the King's entertainment. The top boxers were chosen for the Royal Quarries, called Thani Lir (chosen guards). They were responsible for the security of the royal palace and the King at all times. These boxers were to become the boxing masters who trained the soldiers and the Princes.

In the later part of the Ayutthaya Period, after the second loss to Burma in B.E. $2310(1767 \mathrm{CE})$, there was one boxer of note.

## Nai Khanomtom

Nai Khanomtom was a prisoner of war captured by the Burmese when Ayutthaya was sacked for the second time in B.E. 2310 (1767 CE). In B.E. 2317 ( 1774 CE), the Burmese King, King Angwa, wanted to hold a celebration for the Great Pagoda in Rangoon. Boxing was included in the celebrations. Good Thai boxers were called on to fight with Burmese boxers. On the $17^{\text {th }}$ of March of that year, Nai Khanomtom fought and defeated 10 Burmese boxers in succession with no rest period between fights. It was the first time that MuayThai was used in competition outside of Thailand. For his achievements, Nai Khanomtom was honored as the Father or MuayThai or the Inventor of MuayThai, and the $17^{\text {th }}$ of March is now named MuayThai Day.

## MuayThai in the Thonburi Period

The Thonburi period extended from B.E. 2310-2324 (1767-1781 CE). It was a period of reconstruction after the restoration of peace in the Kingdom. MuayThai training was primarily for man-to-man conflict during wars and or military service.

The arrangement of competitive boxing bouts during that period involved the matching of different training camps, usually from remote areas of the country. There is no evidence of rules or regulations, and it is thought that boxers fought without any official points system. So, they would fight until one dropped or gave up, leaving the man standing as the obvious winner.

Bouts took place on open grounds, mostly in temple areas. Boxers wrapped their hands and wrists in thread, wore a head band or mongkon, and an amulet or pa-pra-jiat usually around their right arm.

## MuayThai in Ratanakosin Period

The first era of this period encompasses the rule of King Rama I to King Rama IV (B.E. 2325-2411, 1782-1868 CE). At this time, MuayThai was considered the national fighting art. It was an essential part of every festival.

Eventually, it was decided that rules and regulations were necessary, especially regarding the length of rounds. An intriguing method of timekeeping was then developed. A coconut shell would have a hole punched in it and be floated in a water tank. When the coconut shell sank, a drum signaled the end of the round. There was no limit to the number of rounds, so the boxers fought until there was a clear winner or until one of them gave up.

## King Rama I Period

## Pra Puttha Yord Fa Chula Loke, The Great (B.E. 2325-2352, 1782-1809 CE)

King Rama I, himself, trained as a boxer from a very early age. He expressed keen interest in, and often watched, boxing matches. In B.E. 2331 (1788 CE), two foreigners, brothers who traveled around the world trading goods, arrived in Bangkok. The younger of the two proved to be quite a good boxer and won prizes from matches around the world quite often. He told Pra Ya Pra Klang that he wanted to fight for prizes against Thai boxers. This request was relayed to King Rama I and, after consulting with Pra Raja Wangboworn, the Director of the Boxing Department, a bet of 50 changs ( 4,000 Baht) was agreed upon. Pra Raja Wangboworn selected a good boxer named Muen Han to fight the foreigner in a ring set up behind the Temple of the Emerald Buddha at the Grand Palace. It was 20 by 20 meters square and there was a reception area set up nearby. The fight was not to be scored, but to continue until a decisive winner emerged. Before the fight, Muen Han was oiled with herbal ointment, and he wore amulets on his upper arms. He was then carried to the ring on the shoulders of a friend.

When the fight began, it was clear that the foreigner was much heavier, taller, and stronger than Muen Han. When the foreigner got in close he employed wresting tactics to try to break the Thai boxer's neck and collarbone. To counter these tactics, Muen Han tried kicking and using stepping kicks. He tried to control the fight and his footwork was very quick. Eventually, the foreigner began to tire and it seemed he was going to lose. His brother, realizing this, jumped into the ring to help his younger brother. This caused a riot to break out among the spectators. Many foreigners were injured. The two brothers, after recovering from their injuries, left Thailand.

## King Rama II Period

## King Pra Buddha Lert La Napa-Lai (B.E. 2352-2367, 1809-1824 CE)

While young, this King trained as a boxer at Bang Wa Yai Training Center (Wat Rakangkositaram) with the boxing master, and army general, Somdet Prawanarat (Tong You). At age 16, he learned more about MuayThai from the Boxing Department. He changed the sport's name from its previous name, Ram Mad Ram Muay, to MuayThai.

## King Rama III Period

King Pra Nangklao (B.E. 2367-2394, 1824-1851 CE)
King Rama III learned MuayThai from the Boxing Department. During his reign, Thai boys loved to fight, and they learned MuayThai and the sword of Khun Ying Moe. Khun Ying Moe is renowned for leading many brave women to defeat the invading soldiers of Prince Anuwong from Vientienne, Laos, who were attacking the city of Korat.

## King Rama IV Period

## King Chomklao (B.E. 2394-2411, 1851-1868 CE)

When young, King Rama IV loved to dress himself up as a boxer. He also loved sword and pole fighting. Often, he would box and compete in sword and pole fighting during festivals in the grounds of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. During this time, Thailand saw the growth of western sports and culture. However, MuayThai remained a popular activity and a strong symbol of Thai culture.

## King Rama V Period

## King Chulachomklao (B.E. 2411-2453, 1868-1910 CE)

King Rama V learned MuayThai from the Boxing Department with boxing master Luang Pola Yotanuyoke. The King loved MuayThai and loved watching boxing matches. From time to time he would order Royal officers to arrange for good boxers to fight for him. Such tournaments were used to recruit men for His Majesty the King's Royal Guards.

King Rama V recognized the value of MuayThai. In order to promote interest in Thai sports, the King encouraged MuayThai tournaments. He also encouraged the promotion of Muay Luang, or royal boxing centers to train youngsters. These Muay Luang also organized and controlled MuayThai tournaments. The royal office would also send official invitations to the heads of Muay Luang inviting
their boxers to participate in particular events and festivals. Winners at such events were promoted by His Majesty the King to a position callen 'Muen', or first-rank officer.

In B.E. 2430 ( 1887 CE), King Rama V established the Department of Education. MuayThai was a subject in the curriculum of the physical education teacher's training school and at Prachufachomktao Royal Military Cadet School. This period is considered the golden age of MuayThai.

## King Rama VI Period

## King Mongkhut Klao Chao Yu Hиa (B.E. 2453-2468, 1910-1925 CE)

During this period, Thailand went to World War I. The Thai army was stationed in France with General Praya Dhepasadin as Commander. He loved MuayThai and he organized a bout to entertain the European servicemen and laymen. They enjoyed the bout very much and thus was born European interest in MuayThai.

In B.E. 2464 (1921 AD), after the war, the first permanent boxing stadium was built on the football ground at Suan Khulab School. It was named the Suan Khulab Boxing Stadium. At first, spectators would sit or stand around the ring.

The ring itself was a square, 26 meters by 26 meters. Boxers wrapped their hands with cotton threads, wore a head band or mongkon, and an amulet or pa-prajiat around their upper arms. They wore shorts with a protective cup and their waists were belted by a long piece of cloth. They wore neither a shirt nor shoes. The referee would wear an old style Thai dress uniform with a royal white shirt and white socks.

One great fight from this period was between Muen Mad Man, aged 50, and Nai Pong Prabsabod, a tall man aged 22 who came from Korat. The younger man fought to avenge the death of his father who was killed in a bout with Muen Mad Man that took place at the funeral of Khun Marupongsiripat. Two minutes into the grudge match, Muen Mad Man was knocked out by Nai Pong. The spectators became very excited and went mad trying to congratulate Nai Pong. It took some time for the situation to calm down.

This kind of scene was clearly a problem and a committee was set up to solve it. Finally, it was decided that the ring should be raised to a height of four feet above the ground, be covered with grass mats tied together, and surrounded by a 1 inch think rope. There was to be a space for each boxer to enter the ring near its corner. The referee began wearing a full scouting uniform and there was now a time keeper with two watches. A drum was used as the round signal and a match was established at 11 rounds of three minutes each. Boxers were to break when the referee so ordered, and it was now forbidden to bite one's opponent or to attack
him while he is falling. Boxers had to go to a neutral corner when their opponent fell down. Music for the fights was played by the orchestra of Muen Samak Siangprachit.

## King Rama VII Period

King Pok Klaochao Yu Hua (B.E. 2468-2477, 1925-1934 CE)
General Dhepasadin built a boxing stadium called Lak Muang at Tachang (near the present day National Theatre). The ring rope was thicker and tighter and without a space to protect the boxers. Bouts were organized regularly.

In B.E. 2472 (1929 CE) governmental orders required all boxers to wear boxing gloves. Boxing gloves were introduced to Thailand by a Philippine boxer who came to Thailand for an international boxing match. Prior to the introduction of boxing gloves there was a tragic and fatal accident when Nai Pae Liangprasert from Ta Sao, Uttaradit province, killed Nai Jia Kakamen in a boxing match which was fought in the Kad-Chuck style where boxers' hands were wrapped in cotton strips.

In November B.E. 2472 (1929 CE) Chao Khun Katatorabodee first organized a boxing bout along with other festivities at a fun park in Lumpini Park. He chose only good boxers to fight every Saturday. An educated and worldly man, he built an international standard boxing ring with three ropes and a canvas floor. There were red and blue corners, two judges, and a referee in the ring. It was here that a bell was first used as the round signal.

To celebrate on New Year's Eve of that year, a match was scheduled between Samarn Dilokwilas and Det Poopinyae, accompanied by a special bout between Nai Air Muangdee and Nai Suwan Niwasawat. Nai Air Muangdee was the first boxer to use a metal protective cup. It has since been in general use.

## King Rama VIII Period

King Ananddhamahidol (B.E. 2477-2489, 1934-1946 CE)
Between B.E. 2478-2484 (1935-1941 CE), a rich and well-known man built a boxing stadium on Chao Chate's ground. It was called Suan Chao Chate Boxing Stadium. At present it is the Department of Reserved Officers Training Corps.

The stadium was run by military personnel and it did very good business. Some of the income was donated to support military activities. After several years, the Second World War broke out. At that time the boxing stadium was closed. Japanese troops arrived in Thailand on December 8 B.E. 2484 (1941 CE).

From B.E. 2485-2487 (1942-1944 CE), while the war was still going on, boxing bouts were organized in movie theaters during the daytime. There were boxing stadiums at Patanakarn, Ta Prachan, and Wongwian Yai where the public could be entertained.

On the $23^{\text {rd }}$ of December, B.E. 2488 (1945 CE), Ratchadamnern boxing Stadium was opened officially. Mr. Pramote Puengsoonthorn was its chairman and Praya Chindharak was its administrator. The promoter was Mr. Chit Ampolsin (Kru Chit). Bouts were organized every Sunday from 4 to 7 p.m. The rules were those of the Department of Physical Education. Bouts were five three-minute rounds in length, with two minutes rest between rounds. The boxers were weighed by stone. Two years later, weight was measured in kilograms, and in B.E. 2491 (1948 CE) pounds were adopted as the measure of a boxer's weight so as to be in accord with international standards. Divisions were assigned by weight, for example, not over 112 pounds. International names were given for each weight group, such as flyweight, and bantamweight. Matches were arranged to select a champion for each class, following the international style. Many additions have been made to the regulations of Muay Thai. It is forbidden now to hit the private parts since this technique has become quite infamous as a form of attack and is considered debasing for the fine art of Thai boxing.

Muay Thai remains a national art form. If all parties concerned help to uplift and conserve this form of martial arts, and pass it onto following generations, it will remain a valuable possession of the Thai nation.

## Muay Thai Traditions and Rituals

## Thai Musical Instruments for Boxing

Muay Thai is still developing, but what remains unchanged is the use of the pipe and the drums as musical accompaniments for the matches, and is considered a unique characteristic of Muay Thai.

For dancing one may use a record player, but for thai boxing it is imperative to have live music. For the prefight rituals and during the fight itself the tempo of music is increased to encourage the fighters to put forth their best efforts. There are three Thai musical instruments for boxing.


Traditional Thai instruments used during and before the fights are the Pi , the Ching and the Glawng Khaek.

## The Pi



The Pi Chawa or Java Pipe, it is believed, owes its origin to India where the Javanese secured their model. It appears that the instrument was used in both

Royal and Army processions and in accompanying the traditional Thai fencing bouts. The stirring sound which it makes is somewhat like the Chanta on Scotch Bag

Pipes.
The Pi Chawa is made in two sections; a cylindrical body $103 / 4$ " in length and a bell or horn in $51 / 2$ "long.It is made of hardwood or ivory or both. Along the body are seven finger holes. Four pieces of reed in double pairs are tied to a small metal tube. The end of the tube is inserted into the body of the instrument and wrapped with thread to make the connection sung. At rhis end of the tube there is also a small round convex piece of metal or coconut shell to support the performer's lips.

## The Ching



The Ching which is a percussion instrument of the cymbal type comes in pairs and is made of a thick metal shaped like a tea-cup or hollow cone. The Ching is played by hitting the two pieces together. Each one measures about 6-7 cm, 2 1/2"-2 3/4: in diameter.

At the apex of each there is a small hole through which a cord is passed. A knot at each end of the cord fits inside the apex of the cymbal and prevents the cord from slipping through. The cord fastens the two cymbals together and holds them in playing positions. The function of the Ching is to keep time and to beat out the rhythm.

The name Ching is onomatopoetic, coming from the sound made when the two edges of the cymbal are struck together and the sound is allowed to persist. It is a melodious and chiming sound. When the two cymbals are struck together and then held together, it is produces a dull clapping sound.

## The Glawng Khaek



The Glawng Khaek has a long cylindrical body which is made of hardwood and is 58 cm . (23") in length. The heads are of unequal size, the larger being 20 cm . ( $8^{\prime \prime}$ ) in diameter called Na rui (literally "loose") and the smaller 18 cm . (7") in diameter called $\mathrm{Na} \tan$ ("outer head"). The two heads are made of calfskin or goatskin. Originally the two heads were tied down with cane or rattan which was split in half and tied apart, but now owing to the difficulty obtaining good rattan and cane, leather tongs are usually used. The drums are used in pairs and are of different pitches. The higher toned drum is referred to as tua pu (male) and the lower toned drum as tua mia (female).

They are played with the palms and the fingers of the hands and both drumheads are used. There is one player for each drum. A complex rhythmic line is created by the inter-mingling and alternating of the sounds of the two drums.

## Beginner Initiation Ritual

Thai boxers are prone to believe in magic spells, and the occult in the believe that such ploys could stop the opponent who would be too puzzled to fight. Fighters are known to have gone as far as to recite spells in graveyards particularly those reputed to be haunted, so as to facilitate meditation, strength, courage and increase readiness to face a man.

In general, students of Thai boxing are usually initiated into a camp via an initiation ceremony. The chosen day is usually Thursday, (Thursday is considered the day of the god of arts and skills). The student would bring flowers, incense sticks, candles, towels and a water container to the teachers house. He would also bring with him 6 twenty-five Satang coins and 6 pieces of white cotton cloth. Depending on the amount of students who are to be initiated, a small feast is prepared, with pork, duck, and chicken with other foods and fruits.

The teacher would pick up either a glove or the sacred cotton laurel and raise it above his head, then the students to be initiated would bow to the teacher three times and put out his arm to be held by the teacher while holding the glove or laurel. Both the teacher and the student should be holding the article while the teacher begins to incite the blessing of knowledge;

## "Buddhang Prasit Dhammang Prasit Sangkang Prasit, Narayana is Chao Prasit Pawantute" (Meaning the one who confers knowledge).

When the teacher releases the hands of the student, then holds the article above his head to pay respect to Rama, where he bows three times, he then faces the teacher and bows three more times towards him. The teacher then makes the following blessing;

## "Siddhi Kijang, Siddhi Kammang, Siddhi Techo, Chaiyo Nijang, Chaiya Siddhi Pawantute"

If there is pork or duck etc., then the teacher will take a knife and slice a piece offering this to the student, while reciting "This object is given by Narayana to all his pupils so that they could be powerful and enjoy lasting happiness". The student makes another sign of respect and eats the piece of meat. There is always a large container of holy water and a statute of Buddha, which is placed in the middle to bear witness to the ceremony. Holy water is sprinkled on the student and the teacher would offer the student the wearing of the holy cotton laurel, which is governed with the following spell;

Om Sri Siddhi Deja Chana Satru Na, Ma, Pa, Ta You see me. Your mind should be gloomy, worried, without sense Namo Buddhaya makes you captivated, believing that I am Ong Promma Chaiya Siddhi Pawantume".

One of the spells used by King Naresuan during his march against the Burmese, is often used in this ceremony; "Pra Chao 5 Pra Ong" (Five Gods) Namo Buddhaya;

Na Yan Bot Songkram (Na the region of the war), Ma Tid tam Satru (Ma follow the enemy) Bud Tor Su Pai Rin, (Bud fight the foes) Cha Sin Pol Krai (Dha conquer all forces) Ya Chok Chai Chana (Ya glorious victory).

When fighting at close quarters King Naresuan used the following spell in engaging the enemy in battle.

Na Dej Rukran (Na, might invades), Ma Tao Harn Fan Fad (Ma, courage in striking), Pa Pikat Home Huek (Pa, destroy without fear), Ta Prab Suek Toi Tod (Ta, repel the enemy)."

## Pre-fight Ritual

When fighters enter the ring, they traditionally are seen wearing a Mongkon on their heads, and Pong Malai around their necks.


The Mongkon (or Mangala) is the traditional head band which is always worn by Muay Thai fighters . It is usually made from a special cotton yarn, which has been carefully bound together in a special way. This item is used to represent the gym that you are fighting out of. It is essentially a crown. Fighters never own the Mongkon themselves, it is gym property. Also, fighters are not to touch the Mongkon. It is placed on their heads and removed by their Kru or trainer. It serves to remind the fighter that he is in the ring representing his gym or camp, not himself. In the past, each gym had a distinct Mongkon, and one could identify what gym a fighter was from by the Mongkon worn.

Pong Malai are the floral wreaths worn around a fighter's neck when he enters the ring. Pong Malai literally translates to "Group of Flowers". It is almost identical in purpose to a Hawaiian Lei. Pong Malai are given to a fighter by friends and fans as a good luck gesture. Pong Malai are also commonplace in Thai culture outside of the boxing ring. Again, much like a Hawaiian Lei.

When the fighter steps into the ring, they always go over the top rope. They NEVER duck under or between the ropes to enter or exit the ring. This is a symbolic gesture that is closely related to Thai culture. In Thai culture, a person's head is considered to be the most important part of the body, practically a holy object. The feet, by contrast, are considered lowly and dirty. A fighter should ALWAYS enter the ring over the top rope so as not to allow his head to go beneath anything.

When the fighter is in the ring, he goes to the center to bow to each of the four sides of the ring, paying his respects to the audience who has paid to see him fight.

The fighter then returns to his corner and if he is wearing a robe, his trainer removes it for him to begin the real pre-fight ceremony.

Beginning in his own corner, the fighter places his right hand atop the uppermost ring rope and walks counter-clockwise around the ring, symbolically "Sealing the Ring". The act of sealing the ring represents a statement to your opponent: "It's just you and me now." This act represents you sealing out the crowd, your trainers, the judges, and everyone from this match. It's just you and me buddy! Mano a mano.

Upon completion of sealing the ring, the fighter then positions himself in the center of the ring and kneels facing the direction of his home town, or his gym/camp. He performs three bows, touching his forehead to the floor. This is called the Wai Kru (bow to the teacher Wai means bow, Kru means teacher.). These three bows can take on a different significance with each fighter, but in our gym, we think of them as paying respect to your teacher and gym, your family, and finally to your deity.

The fighter then begins an elaborate dance-like ritual called the Ram Muay. The fighter goes through many complex motions, which often imitate animals or professions. In the SuriyaSak Ram Muay, we go through motions imitating a swallow, a hunter, a soldier, and an executioner.

The Ram Muay originated back in the days before there were rings. Initially, these motions were just the fighter warming up, stretching, and testing the ground of the predetermined fighting area. Over time, these transformed into the elaborate rituals that they are today.

The Ram Muay still serves a practical purpose in fight preparation besides the cultural "ritual". The motions are designed so that they stretch out the major muscle groups of the body. The Ram Muay is also used as a fighters "personal time", allowing him a minute or two right before the match to collect his thoughts and focus on the match.

Once the Ram Muay is completed, the fighter/s bow towards their opponent's corner to pay respect to their opponent and his gym, and they return to their own corners for final blessings by their coach/Kru/trainer. The Kru then removes the Mongkon from the fighter's head and the Pong Malai from around his neck and hangs them on the ring post.


Paprachiat
Fighters also commonly wear a cord around their bicep called the Kruang Ruang (armband) or Paprachiat (Good Luck Charm). These are usually given to the
fighter as good luck charms by close family or by monks as talismans to ward off harm. These armbands are worn throughout the entire fight.

The practice of wearing Mongkons and Kruang Ruang/Paprachiats is believed to have originated during Thai medieval ages when the Thai's often found themselves at war. Soldiers commonly wore headbands and armbands made from material that had special meaning to them, such as the hem of a parents Pakima (a skirt-like outfit worn by both men and women) or even strands of a loved ones hair wrapped in cloth. Sometimes little religious artifacts were wrapped up and worn, such as little Buddha figurines.

Anyway, the above traditions and rituals are the most common practices associated with Thai boxing. Though all of these traditions and rituals have been influenced by Thai religion (Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam), they are not religious in nature. These rituals and traditions transcend a Thai's religious beliefs, as they are part of the greater culture that is Thailand.

## Wai Kru

Wai Kru is a demonstration of the pupilrs respect and gratitude to his teacher in submission to the teaching training. Wai Kru is traditionally practiced by Thais of various professions and arts, e.g., dancers, sword fighters, musicians, as well as academic students, and of course Muay Thai boxers are no exception. "Wai" means to pay respect by putting both hands together in front of the chest. The demonstration of Wai Kru does not only imply paying respect to the present teacher, but also includes homage to all the teachers of the discipline.

Wai Kru ceremonies are preferable held on Thursday, which is believed to be the teachersis day. On that day, pupils present certain offerings, usually flowers, money, cloth, etc., to the person who has accepted them as his students. The pupils make a vow that they will study seriously and patiently, respect him and behave fairly to their fellow students and will use the knowledge gained properly.

Wai Kru is called Kheun Kru (the initial ceremony of paying respect to the teacher). Subsequently. they will pay respect to their teachers ceremonially each year, which is called "Yohk Kru" But whenever the pupils intend to use the knowledge taught to them. they will always start by paying respect to their teacher; this action is called Wai Kru or Bucha Kru (to pay respect to a teacher).

In Muay Thai, the boxer will always preface the fight with Wai Kru and this tradition is still practiced nowadays. This ceremony is usually performed to rousing Thai music from pipes and drums, and with the initial Ram Muau (the boxing movement). The Wai Kru and Ram Muay are useful, since the boxer gains encouragement from paying homage to his teachers and feels that he is not on his own: he has his teacher and the other teachers of the discipline to support him. The Wai Kru process will also give him time to concentrate and revise what he has learned, as well as display the nature of his weapons and the high degree of his skill. The steps, movement and use of his weapons are designed to warm up the bodyrs muscles, survey the field of play, and conceal the contestantrs style of fighting

## Hong Hern



After being in sitting manner until standing up in Dhepnimitra manner and then turn to the right.

Step 1: raise the right foot and straight it backward. Standing on your left foot. Bend your body to the front. Start to perform the dance by sprawling your arms, kneel down while turning the face side of your palms down.

Step 2: kneel up and bend up the wrist to raise up the fingers.
Step 3: lay your right foot on the floor then straight your left foot backward, continue to perform the dance alike the flying bird. The movement of body, arm and palm must correspond with the music.

Step 4: lay down your left foot then "Yang Sam Khum" (walk powerfully in three step) to change the direction. By turning you around to the "left direction" then step out your left foot, bend your body down to " wai " the "Pra-Bhrama-tis" (the direction of Bhrama ) at the left side just one time. Repeat to perform the " HongHern" dancing styles by starting the first step to the third step again but in the fourth step you must turn to the backside "Wai Bhrama" and then repeat to perform the dance. The last time turn to the front side. (which is the original direction while you sit in the "Dhep Pha-nom" form) And then "Wai-Bhrama" perform the dance called "Hong-Hern" and "Bhrama Si Na" then you play "Yang Sam Khum" and bend your body down to salute your counterpart. It is the finish of the "Wai Kru" and the dance called "Hong-Hern"

## Yoong Fon Hang

To perform "Yoong-Fon-Hang" style, you must start from "Wai Kru" from the sit form called "Dhep Panom" to the stand form called "Dhep Nimitra" respectively.

Step 1: turn your body to right side, Wai Pra Bhrama for one time.

Step 2: step out your left foot forward. Raise up your right foot then straighten it backward bend down your body forward simultaneously. Put the hands together in salute at the chest level.

Step 3: turn the face side of your palm upward and slowly move your arms go through the armpits to the backside of your body until your arms are straight. All of tip fingers are closed together.

Step 4: move your hands out to the side of the body alike straighten your arms. Then move it round to come gathering at your face. Lift your chest and your face up while your hands were put to touch your head, while your right legs still stretch backward.

Step 5: hold down your right foot to stand straightly. Raise up your left foot then straighten it backward. Stand on your right foot and then repeat the step 1-4 (it's just switch the right side to be the left side). Repeat to perform the dance for all 4 directions. Then get back to the corner with "Kow Yang" and bend down your body to salute your counterpart.


## Yoong Ram Pan

To perform the "Yoong Ram Pan" style.

Starts with "Wai Kru" from "Dhep Panom" form and other form respectively until raise to stand up in the "Dhep Nimitra" form.

Step 1: turn around your body to the front direction "Wai Pra Bhrama" one time.

Step 2: step out your left foot forward. Raise your right foot and straighten it backward bend down your body to the frontward simultaneously. Which your hand clasping at the chest level.

Step 3: turn the face side of your palm upward and slowly move your arms backward through the armpit to the backside of your body until your arms are straight, move your hands out to the side of the body alike straighten your arms and move it round to come gather at your face. Repeat this way three times.

Step 4: move your right legs perpendicular to the floor. Raise the right foot up.

Step 5: raise your left foot and straighten it backward, repeat the step 1-4 and then perform the dance the same way in every direction. Then go back to your corner with "Kow yang" manner, bend down your body to salute your counterpart.

## Sod Soi Mala



To perform the "Sod Soi Ma-La" style, starting with "Wai Kru" in sitting "Thep Panom " until standing up in " Dhep-Nimitra".

Step 1: turn round your body to the right direction. Perform "Wai Phra Brahma" one time.

Step 2: step out your left foot forward. Raise your right leg and straighten it backward, lift it to the same level of your chin. Bend your left arm perpendicular to the floor. Stretch the tip of your fist up.

Step 3: insert left fist up inside of the right arm and beyond it up until right elbow parallel to the level of your chin.

Step 4: repeat the third step but change the right arm to be the left arm instead.
Step 5: repeat the steps 2-4 but change to stand by your right foot instead.
Step 6: repeat the dance for every direction. And then "Kow Yang" and bend down to salute the counterpart and go the your corner.

## The King Rama Pheang Sorn .

To perform the "Phra Rama Plang Sorn" style.
Phra Rama Phlang Sorn style generally perform the dance just one direction. It's the direction of the counterpart.

Step 1: turn round your body to the right direction. Wai Phra Brahma one time.

Step 2: step your left foot frontward raise your arms alike you catch an arrow rod in your left hand.

Step 3: move your right hand to the backside alike you pick an arrow from your neck to the rod. Then pull the tendon backward 2-3 times but act alike not release the arrow repeat this for 2 time but in the third time you perform alike you lift the rod up high at the level of your ears. Stand still look straight at your target then release the arrow.

Step 4: while your release your arrow lay down your right foot on the floor and raise your left foot up frontward simultaneously. After that raise your hand at above the face. Act alike you are looking at the arrow
 you released. And waiting to see the result. If you are disappointed at the result cause from the mistargeted shot. You express by shaking your head right and left. if you are pleased with the result then you smile and nod your head up and down to show your appreciation.

Step 5: you say the prayer "Sake Ka-Tha" such as "Na Jung Ngung" three times. And then stamp down the floor three times.

Step 6: "Yang Sam Khum" to your corner then bend your body down to salute the counterpart.

## Payak Dom Kwang

To perform the "Payak Dom Kwang" style.
Start with Wai Kru from the Dhep Phanom form until stand up with the Dhep Nimitra form.

Step 1: turn round your body to the right direction to wai "Phra Brahma : the right direction" for one time.

Step 2: from the Kow Yang, while the left foot is front, bend your body down frontward tighten the fist, raise your elbow to block the front side and instantly turn around to look at the backside which is look at the counterpart , the right arms and right foot are behind. Nod your head up and down to the counterpart one or two times

Step 3: repeat step 2 but switch the use the right foot front instead. And then repeat the step 2 and 4 , which turn to perform until complete all 4 directions. Then go back to your corner with "Kow Yang" and bend body down to salute the counterpart. The "Payak Dom Kwang" and " Kwang Leow Lung" perform similar style.

## Sue Lak Hang

The "Sua Lak Hang" style. It has own way both sitting version and standing version. Start with "Wai Kuru" from the "Dhep Pha-nom", "Tha-Vai BungKom", " Pha-Thom" and " Bhrama" form respectively in the same way with others.

## Sitting version :

Step 1: while sitting in the "Bhrama" form which the left foot perpendicular to the floor. Raise the tip of your hand and wave your arm up and down for all time. Then stretch your arm out wave it up and down. Shake your head to the counterpart. In the same time move up and down harmoniously. Your weight is focus on the left foot and move your right foot help to keep the balance. And move your body along the rhythm.

Step 2: move your body backward to take your weight focusing on your left foot. Your right foot still stretch forward. Move both of your hands up and down in the same way as step 1: you probably change to use your right foot instead.


## Standing Version

Stand up from the sitting form of the "Sua Lak Hang" dancing style.
Step 1: stand up, keep in balance with your right foot, bend your left foot backward. Raise up the tip of your foot and bend your body frontward, raise both of your hands perpendicular to the floor. Wave your hand up and down similar to the sitting version, which is move the whole arms simultaneously. Wobble Body, tip of foot, face alike to mock the counterpart.


## SOW NOY PRA PANG

To perform the "Sow Noy Pra Pang" style.

## The first direction (front direction)

The boxer start at sitting in the "Dhep Pha-nom" form and bend down to prostrate 'Pra Ratanatrai three times. Clasp and put your hands at the chest. Say a Pali verse "Na Pidta MoMaiHen Bhuddha Pidta ThaPidhoo Ya" 3 times. Realize the gratefulness of Buddha, Dhamma and Buddhist monk, the gratefulness of mother, father, masters start to 'Tha-wai-Bung-Kom' for the first round from the clasp at the chest level form.

Step 1: bend your body forward simultaneously stretch your arms forward until the tip of your fingers touch the floor. Use both of your thumbs to insert and combine preventing separation from each other. wai "Phra Mae Dharanee"

Step 2: perform alike you use your hand to pick some " Mae Dharanee" up to the chest. Then be in the "Dhep Phanom" form.

Step 3: perform "Wai" by raising your hand up to touch the face as the "Tha Wai Bung Kom" form. Bend your elbow, turn up your face up move your body backward. Keep your two thumbs touching your forehead. Stretch up your index finger and bend your body backward a bit. Then let your hands down at the chest level.

## The second "Tha Wai Bung Kom",

Step 1: bend your body forward a bit. Let your face side of your palm outward. Stretch the tip of fingers out. Bend your body lower simultaneously slowly move round your hand out backward. Then move it back through your elbows.

Step 2: then move your hands out of your body at each of both side. Slowly move your hands round to meet each other at the front side.

Step 3: let the face of your palms downward. To pick up "Phra Mae Dharanee" by move round your palms frontward just one time. Then turn the face of the palms up and lay them on the floor.

Step 4: move your palms scoop "Phra Mae Dharanee" into your chest to be the " Phanom Meo Samer Og"

Step 5: raise up hands up to "Wai" then let your hands down to PhaNom at the chest level. Perform the "Tha Wai Bung Kom" for the third time by start from Phanom Meo at the chest level, repeat the same step with the Tha Wai Bung Kom at the second time.

Start to perform the boxing dance. From the sitting put the hand together in the chest level to be the ' Pa-thom' and Brahma form'

Step 1: raise your body up a bit from the tip of your foots. Step out the right foot frontward. Bend your right knee perpendicular to the floor. Sit on the left heel. Right hand lay on the right knee, tighten your hand lay downward. Bend left elbow raise the left hand put it at the chest level

Step 2: from the 'Pa-Thom', bend your body frontward. Your weight focus on right foot. Kneel your left knee down. Stretch left legs straight backward. Bend your foot up above the floor. Hit the fist frontward, eyes look straight on.

Step 3: hit the fist backward simultaneously step back to sit on the left heel, stretch the right foot ahead raise up the tip of the foot.

Step 4: spin your left fist out of the body raise it up high above the right side of the head. (similar to the 'Bung A-Bai Berk Far' form). The right arms is on the same level as the chest. Right elbow still lay on the right legs.

Step 5: bend your body forward and then backward. Repeat this step 2 times.
Step 6: while bend your body frontward for the third time, but not bend body back yet. Raise your right heel up from the floor a bit. (as spring )

Step 7: focus your weight on the right knee, right arm lay on the right knee. Kneel left knee on the floor. Raise left foot which is behind up. Raise up the tip of the left foot. (bend up the tip of the foot). Raise the left hand above the head, look at high level, turn the head left and right then turn to look straight on.

## The first round of 'Chak Pang Pad Nah',



Step 1: raise body up from sitting on the left heel. Bend your body forward. Raise your tip of left foot up from the floor. Bend the tip of the left foot. Set down your left hand lower than right knee a bit alike to scoop up the ' Phra Mae Dharanee' in the left hands.

Step 2: set the right hand down from the knee. Perform alike batching up the powder that is 'Phra Mae Dharanee' into the left hand. Repeat this step for 3 times.

Step 3: perform alike bringing powder from the left hand to cover the face at the upper part of the face at left cheek and right cheek. Repeat this step 3 times.

Step 4: raise up your left hand and stretch palm up turn the palm to the face perform alike it's a mirror and look into the mirror. The right hand is at the same level of the chin to be 'Tha Khunpan Song Kra-jok' (Khunpan look into the mirror)

Step 5: raise up your right hand over the head and perform alike to comb your hair 3 times, then perform alike roll the bun by using the right hand roll the hair around from right to left 3 rounds. Perform the roll as 'Tak-si-na-vatra'. Your left hand perform alike press the hair down.

Step 6: right hand press the bun up above the head 3 times. This form was called 'Mae Phra Dharanee Beeb Muay Phom'. Repeat this step 3 times.

Step 7: put your left foot on the floor simultaneously bend your body back to sit on the left heel. Left hand push back the hair up over the head. Right hand press or smooth the hair down to the right knee. The lower part of the arm lay on the knee. Raise up the tip of the right foot perform alike pressing the bun or smooth and lift it high. Repeat this step 3 times. The second direction (backward direction),

Step 8: you must repeat it three times, before complete the round 3, you must raise up your left elbow high. Raise your body up by stand on your tip of left foot, use it as a fulcrum point to turn around your body. Then lift your left knee up (turn around by twist your left knee as fulcrum) and move your right knee by twist it along the left knee.

Step 9: kneel your knee down on the floor simultaneously use left hand to lift up your bun over the head, right hand press or pull the bun from the upper part to the lower part of your head and go further to the right calf. Look along the left hand while it's moving up.

Step 10: while your right knee sit on the floor. Lift up the right foot and bend up the tip of the right foot along your body. Now your left hand perform 'Rum Bung Nah' high above the face,

Step 11: bend your body back to sit on your right heel, set down the lower part of your arm to lay on the left knee. Slowly swirl your right hand from the frontward to the backward one round. Slowly 'rum' from lower to higher level, from the beside to the front side. This form is called 'rum soong' since you must turn the palm side to the front side and raise your right hand up high above your head. And twist your palm toward the front side alike 'rum nar' but it must be higher than your head.

## The third direction (the left side direction),

Chuk Pang Pud Nar for the third time. (perform the same as the first time)
Step 1: turn round your body to the right hand. Twist your body to the right side and kneel down your left knee. Raise up your right knee high and put your right foot beyond the left knee. Raise the tip of the right foot up. Lay your right arm on the right knee. Raise up your left hand above the head. Perform the dance called 'Rum Nar Soong Berk A-Roon' or 'Bung A-bai Berk Far Fiuk Fiunt Jai Muang' raise your left hand up high above your head. And your eyes look anything high. Turn your head left and right then straight on.

Step 2: let your left hand down. Use the right hand preparing to 'Chuk Pang Phad Nah' for the second time. Scoop 'Mae Phra Dharanee' into hands three times. Repeat the same step as the first round of 'Chuk Pang Phad Nah',

## The fourth direction. (the right direction),

When finish the second time of "Chuk Pang Phad Nah" your face is now turn to the right direction. That means the direction you perform the first time "Chuk Pang Phad Nar" is the front direction. Which you must turn around to the back direction continue to dance until completing the first round of "Chuk Pang Phad Nar". The second round "Chuk Pang Phad Nar" will turn to the left direction. When you press
the bun and turn round to the backside the same as the first round "Chuk pang Phad Nar", you will turn to the right direction

Step 1: Then bend you body backward to sit on the right heel. Which your left knee stretch up the tip of your left foot raised high. Your left arm lay on your left knee. Knee your right knee down on the floor. Raise right hand above head. Lift the face up and your eyes watch something high above. Sit with your right heel.

Step 2: stand up let your hands down along your body. Now your left foot lay beyond your right foot. The right foot lay skew behind.

Step 3: step out your right foot to lay beyond the left foot. Then turn left which is turn your face to the front direction. Then go back to your corner by "Kow yang" or " step backward with the " yang Sam Khum" or "Yang Suk Ka-same " then bend down your body to salute the counterpart one time. Then it's the completion of the dancing performance

## Muay Thai Terminology

Below you will find common words used during training and or within the environment of the Thai culture. Please note that the transition from Thai to English often changes depending on pronunciation.

Common Phrases.

| Hello | Sa wadee |
| :--- | :--- |
| Goodbye | La kon |
| Good morning | Aroon sa wadee |
| Good evening | Sayan sa wadee |
| Good night | Ra tree sa wadee |
| My name is | Chan shue |
| Thanks, very much | Khob chai mark |
| You are welcome | Thob ton rub tharn |
| You are welcome | Chan pood dai tae pasa |
| Anglish |  |
| I speak English | Chan ma chark saha rat |
| I can't speak Thai | Prode pood hai sah kwa nee |
| Please speak more slowly | Chan mai khao chai |
| I don't understand | Shuay chan noi doi ma |
| Can you help me | Chan ma chark saha rat |
| I am from the U.S. | Tharn wa yarng rai? |
| How do you say | We la tao rai |
| What time is it |  |

Gym, Studio environment

| Boxing teacher | Kru Muay |
| :--- | :--- |
| Teacher accepts new student | Khuen Kroo |
| Respect to teacher | Wai Kru |
| Promote | Jad |
| Anklet | Aenken |
| Block | Bat |
| To kick | Dtae |
| To hit | Dtee |
| Throw | Ting |
| To box / boxing | Dtoi |
| Shadow boxing | Dtoi Lom |
| To thrash | Faad |
| To duck | Lop |
| To dodge/evade | Pang nga |
| Left/to left | Saai |
| Right/to right | Kwaa |
| Camp | Kai |
| Boxing Camp | Kai Muay |
| Boxing Stadium | Sanam Muay |
| Professional boxing | Muay acheep |
| Novice bout | Gawn welaa |
| International boxing | Muay sakon |
| Main bout | Koo ek |
| Ring ropes | Sangwien |
| Weight category | Run |
| Rating | Andap |
| Jump | Kradot |
| Referee | Gamagan |
| Break (referee) | Gaek |
| Judging | Gaan Dadsin |
| To judge/decide | Nak Muay |
| Champion |  |
| Boxer |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |


| Fight | Chok |
| :--- | :--- |
| Box up | Mud Soei |
| Red corner | Faidaeng |
| Blue corner | Fainamnerng |
| Boxer's shorts | Gangkeng Muay |
| Gloves | Nuam |
| Fight music | Dontree Muay |
| Groin guard | Grajaab |
| Weight | Namnak |
| Punching | Garsawb |
| Ring of Charms | Kruang ruang |
| Ceremonial headband | Mongkon |
| Ring | Weh tee |

## Upper Body Techniques

| Swing | Sawing |
| :--- | :--- |
| Block | Bat |
| To hit | Dtee |
| Jab | Yaeb |
| To punch | Dtee mat |
| Hook punch | Hook |
| Straight punch | Mat drong |
| Swing punch. | Mud Wieng |
| Uppercut | Mat at |
| Elbow | Sawk or Sok |
| Jab Elbow | Sawk Tad |
| Levering Elbow | Sawk Hud |
| Smashing <br> Downward Elbow | Sawk Tong |
| Diagonal Elbow | Sawk Chieng |
| Chopping Elbow | Sawk Sob |
| Double Elbow | Sawk ku |
| Reverse Elbow | Sawk Klab |
| To Elbow | Dtee Sawk |

Lower Body Techniques

| Turning kick | Chaoraked faad |
| :--- | :--- |
| Knee kick | Dtae kao |
| Kick with foot | Dtae tao |
| Roundhouse | Dtae wiang |
| Over arm knee kick | Kao kong |
| Jumping knee kick | Kao lov |
| Frontal knee kick | Kao drong |
| Jumping kick | Kradot dtae |
| Push with sole foot | Teep |
| Foot thrust to rear | Teep dan lang |
| Heel push | Teep dueh son |
| Forward foot push | Teep drong |
| Stop kick | Neb |
| Knee | Kao |
| straight knee | Kao tone |
| Jumping knee | Kao dode |
| Small knee to the leg | Kao Noi |
| Fast or rabbit knee | Kao Kratai |
| to legs | Kao La |
| Farewell knee | Kao Loi |
| Flying knee | Kao Lod |
| Lower knee |  |

Basic Body Anatomy (Also Main Targets)

| Head | Hua |
| :--- | :--- |
| Top of the head | Grammon srisa |
| Forehead | Na paag |
| Temples | Kamab |
| Jawbone | Kagangai |
| Chin | Look kang |
| Adam's apple | Look gradueak |
| Eyes | Dtaa |
| Nose | Baak |
| Mouth | Taitoi |
| Neck area | Chaikrong |
| Floating rib | Huajai |
| Heart | Daihauchai |
| Region under the heart | Limpee |
| Solar plexus | Tong |
| Stomach | Tong noi |
| Lower stomach | Dtai |
| Kidneys | Mat |
| Fist | Sawk or sok |
| Elbow | Kaa |
| Leg | Kao |
| Knees | Tae |
| Shin | Kang tao |
| Foot |  |
| Instep | Knee |

Basic Numbers 1 Thru 10

| One | Nueng |
| :--- | :--- |
| Two | Sorng |
| Three | Sarm |
| Four | See |
| Five | Ha |
| Six | Hok |
| Seven | Ched |
| Eight | Paed |
| Nine | Kao |
| Ten | Sib |

