

The History and Development of Muaythai Boran

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Abstract: The purpose of this research was to develop the treatise of traditional Muay Thai (traditional Thai boxing). This is a document research conducted from documents, books, researches, journals and various data from websites. It analyzed traditional Muay Thai into 6 issues, including history and development, benefits and values, methodologies and traditions, Muay Thai practicing, traditional Mae Mai Muay Thai, as well as the identity of Muay Thai base on sport science. The results of this research indicated that the history and the development of Muay Thai have been starting since the Sukhothai period. Also, the practicing of Muay Thai is very significant for close range battle. During the Sukhothai period, almost of boys who are going to be teenagers like to practice Muay Thai as a weapon to protect themselves. The practicing of Muay Thai is also a part of fighting-skilled people which included qualification, courtesy, humanity, bravery, patience, power of black magic, energy, martial art in Muay Thai, and Krabi Krabong; traditional Thai martial art in combination with weapons. Moreover, Ayutthaya Kingdom had to make major war for 39 times related to the military conflicts and the resistance of an invasion from neighboring kingdoms such as Sukhothai, Burma, Khmer and Mon. Most of all was the Burmese–Siamese War. Consequently, the king and Thais had to practice the martial arts and to learn the strategies for defending the land. According to section one of the 112 law, Thais used their parts of body as a weapon to battle with enemies. In fact, this martial art has been playing since Somdet Phra Ekatotsarot reign. Furthermore, Somdet Phra Chao Taksin Maha Rat (King of Thonburi) at that time is really interested in Muay Thai. Also, he has good skills in Muay Thai, and Krabi Krabong. When he was 6, Somdet Phra Chao Taksin Maha Rat attended to study at Wat Kosawat (Wat Klang) and practiced his Muay Thai skill from the military in the grand palace. During Rattanakosin Period (1788), according to historical record, there were two French steersmen who have well-skilled in Muay that came into Thailand to battle Muay skill with Thais. At that time, there was Muen Phalan; who is a military in the grand palace that has well-skilled in Muay Thai, was selected to fight with the two French steersmen. Additionally, at this period, there was found major evidence which is really significant related to Muay Thai—the treatise of traditional Muay Thai.

Key words: Muaythaiboran (traditional Thai boxing), Muay Thai (Thai boxing).

1. Introduction

Muay Thai is the tactic and sport which is the martial art cultural heritage in Thai style in which pass on from the ancestors for a long time. Traced back to the past, we would find that Muay Thai is being with Thai people as a weapon to protect the land from other nations in every period such as Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Thonburi and Rattanakosin and is developed to the present.

Whenever the war is happening, all Thai men in the past had to work as a soldier to protect the land through using various kinds of weapons such as sword, spear, halberd, and mace, etc. Apart from equipments, the

Thais also used their part of body as a weapon to battle in the war such as punches, feet, knees, and elbows which is called “Muay Thai martial art”.

Consequently, Muay Thai is being accepted worldwide as a unique martial art of Thailand. The evidence of Thai history before the Buddhist era up to Rattanakosin period implied that Thailand had to battle with neighboring countries over and over in order to prevent the autonomy of the land. Not only Thai citizens had to practice skill in martial arts, the king of the land should also have the fighting ability [1].

In Ayutthaya era, Thailand lost the autonomy of the land for Burma; as a result, many Thais were herded to Burma as a prisoner. At that time, King Ang-Wa of Burma held the boxing competition and told the Thais to send the representative to battle with Burmese. Nai Khanomtom was selected to fight against the Burmese.

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He won all 30 Burmese Muay players; thus, King Ang-wa was so impressed that he allegedly remarked, “Every part of the Thai is blessed with venom. Even with his bare hands, he can fell thirty opponents. But his Lord was incompetent and lost the country to the enemy. If he had been any good, there was no way the City of Ayutthaya would ever have fallen.” So, Nai Khanomtom was named as the father of Muay Thai. Besides, Nai Khanomtom, there was another person; Phrachao Suea, who liked to fight with this kind of martial art. Therefore, Muay Thai was well known to all people. Most of all, the objective to practice Muay Thai at that time was to use as a weapon to fight with enemies [2]. Moreover, in Thonburi period, the soldiers who have a skill in Muay Thai were appointed to be the major soldiers [3]. Many Thais in the past liked to practice Muay Thai because they wanted to higher their

social status. Muay Thai was changed from the weapon in war into the battle to convey art up to King Rama the 3rd reign. At this time, there was evidence of Muay Thai pictures in Khoi (Thai long book made from Khoi paper) which is used as a mean to pass on the valuable cultural heritage to the Thai descendants [2]. Muay Thai was widespread both in the past and present because it is an ancient art and culture which has long flourished history. Additionally, Muay Thai is named as a martial art, national sport, traditional game which is unique and famous. There are several types of Muaythaiboran which are different in techniques and styles, but they came from the same root such as Muay Korat, Muay Chai Ya, Muay Uttaradit, Muay Lopburi, Muay Phranakhon, Muay Sakhon Nakhon, etc [4]. The ways to extend Muaythaiboran to still in Thai society are to study the root of Muaythaiboran, as well as to

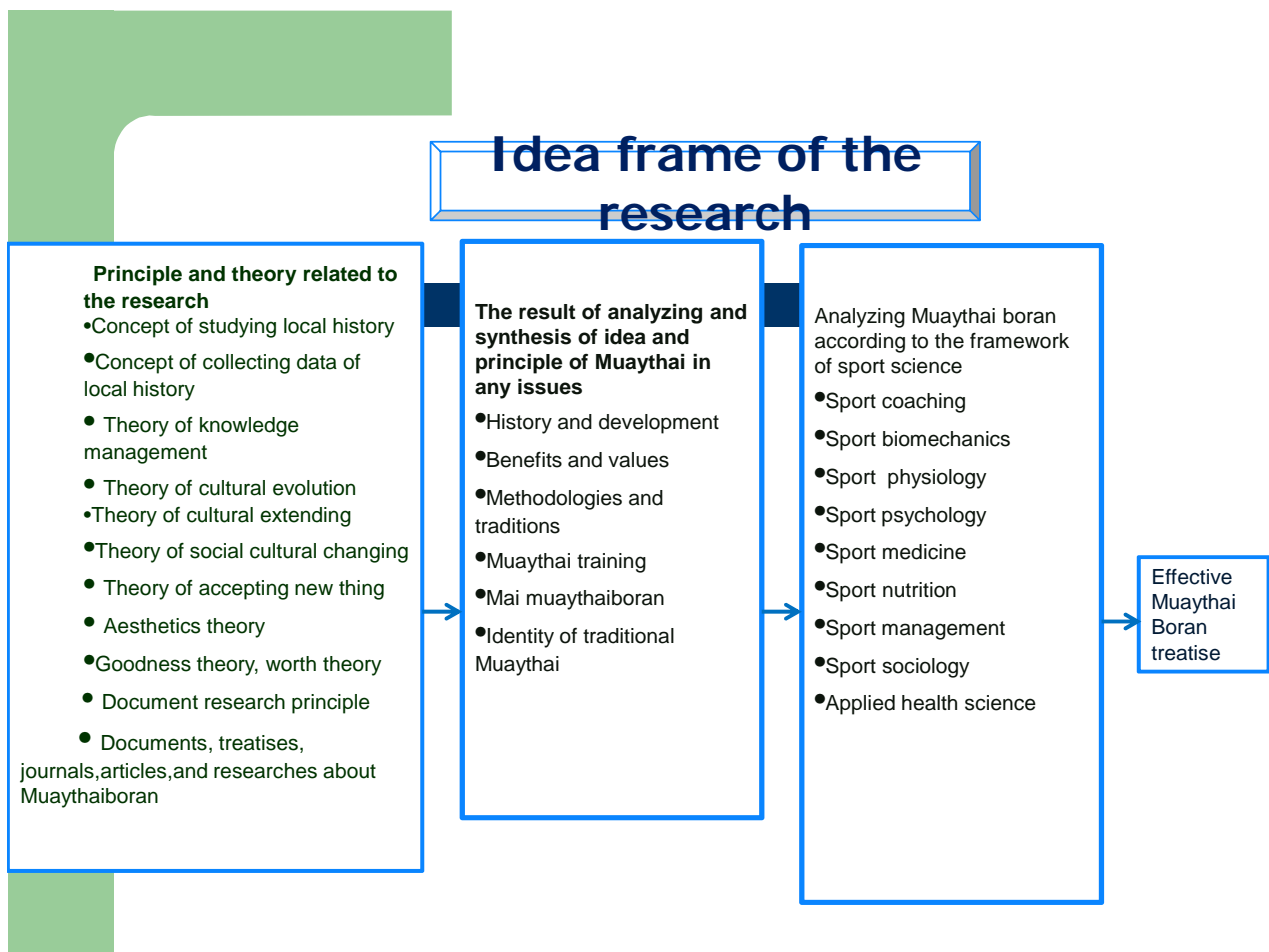


Fig. 1 Investigate the history of Muaythai Boran from past to present [9].

find out the history and the development of this traditional martial art in order to adapt those data to be apposite to the present community. On the whole, from these reasons, the researchers are interested to study the Thai Martial art—Muay Thai, in an appropriate way with considerable analyzing and apposite synthesis in order to enlarge this type of martial art for later Thai descendants in the most valuable path.

2. The Process of Creating and Evaluating the Research Tool

The creating and evaluating tool processes were as follows:

(1) Study the principle, theory and idea of Muaythaiboran from books, treatises, and related pieces of research.

(2) Adapt the knowledge from the study to create the form of recording and analyzing contents of Muaythaiboran which included topic, objective, and question research. Then, present all these data to professor for receiving feedbacks and comments.

(3) Bring the form of recording and analyzing contents of Muaythaiboran, which was guaranteed by professors to the 5 experts to make a content validity by finding Index of Item Objective Congruence: IOC. Then pick out the question which has an IOC at the rated from 0.5-1.0 [5].

3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

Study and find out the form of recording and analyzing contents of Muaythaiboran, as well as seek out the basic information as a mean to analyze and synthesize the principle and idea of Muaythaiboran. The processes were followed: documentary research is a study from secondary resources such as journals, books, documents, articles, and researches which are relevant to the topic both in Thai and foreign language. The main sources of finding out data were community library, national library, national achieves and web base on the internet.

Develop the form of recording and analyzing

contents of Muaythaiboran as well as analyze the quality of the form of recording and analyzing contents of Muaythaiboran in case of sport science which are Sport practicing, Sport biomechanics, Exercise physiology, Sport psychology, Sport medicine, Sport nutrition, Sport management, Sport sociology, and Applied health science.

Analysis and synthesis the documents of Muaythaiboran from the issue of an analyzing contents of Muaythaiboran in case of sport science which are sport practicing, Sport biomechanics, Exercise physiology, Sport psychology, Sport medicine, Sport nutrition, Sport management, Sport sociology, and Applied health science. Also, analyze and synthesize the documents from the issue of history and development, benefits and values, methodologies and traditions, Muay Thai practicing, traditional Mae Mai Muay Thai, as well as identity of traditional Muay Thai. Then, bring those data to the experts in order to ask for the feedbacks and comments of developing Muaythaiboran treatise.

Find out the quality of the draft of Muaythaiboran treatises from the feedbacks and comments from the experts. Besides, there should have at least 5 experts to evaluate the quality of Muaythaiboran treatise.

Revise the draft of Muay Thai treatises from the comments and feedbacks in order to launch an effective treatise about Muay Thai.

The researcher had analyzed data and content from documents, treatises, report of the researches, journals, articles, information from websites, and feedbacks from experts and professors in order that the research will be accurate and complete follow up its objective.

4. Results

According to the history and the development of Muay Thai in Sukhothai period, they pointed out that the practicing of Muay Thai is very significant for close range battle. In the Sukhothai period, boys who are going to be teenagers like to practice Muay Thai as a weapon to protect themselves. The practicing of Muay

Thai is also a part of fighting-skilled people which included qualification, courtesy, humanity, bravery, patience, power of black magic, energy, martial art in Muay Thai, and Krabi Krabong; traditional Thai martial art in combination with weapons. On the whole, Muay Thai or any kinds of martial art are very significant for people at that time to protect the land from enemies. Accordingly, the kings or the landlords who rule the country had to have the martial skill. Besides, people in the past had learned the skill in battle from the temples because temples are named as the center of everything for Thai citizens.

In the period of Ayutthaya kingdom, the land had to make major war for 39 times related to the military conflicts and the resistance of an invasion from neighboring kingdoms such as Sukhothai, Burma, Khmer and Mon. Most of all was the Burmese–Siamese War. Consequently, the king and Thais had to practice the martial arts and to learn the strategies for defending the land. According to section one of the 112 law, Thais used their parts of body as a weapon to battle with enemies. In fact, this martial art has been playing since Somdet Phra Ekatotsarot reign. Another good example to put an emphasis that Muay Thai became very popular among people including the king was Som Det Phra Chao Suae, when he was young, he had practiced Muay Thai skill from various places. He had a very good skill in Muay Thai. Muay Thai Day is started on March 17, 1770 which was the day that Nai Khanomtom had fought against the Burmese in which later held annually on March 17 of each year. Furthermore, Thai people named Nai Khanomtom as the father of Muay Thai.

During the Thonburi era, Furthermore, Somdet Phra Chao Taksin Maha Rat (King of Thonburi) at that time is really interested in Muay Thai. Also, he has good skills in Muay Thai, and Krabi Krabong. When he was 6, Somdet Phra Chao Taksin Maha Rat attended to study at Wat Kosawat (Wat Klang) and practiced his Muay Thai skill from the military in the grand palace and various places. That is why at that time there were

so many good Muay players such as Kru Mek from Ban Tah Sao, Kru Tiang from Ban Keng, Nai Thongdee, and Phraya Phi Chai Dab Hak, etc.

In the period of Rattanakosin time, during the reign of King Rama 1st, there were two French steersmen who have well-skilled in Muay that came into Thailand to battle Muay skill with Thais. At that time, there was Muen Phalan who is a military in the grand palace that has well-skilled in Muay Thai, was selected to fight with the two French steersmen. In the reign of King Rama 5th, he also loved to see Muay Thai. He always held the Muay Thai competition in front of his grand palace. Also, there were several Muay Thai players who were appointed to have higher social status because of their good skill in Muay Thai such as Muen Muay (Plong Chamnongthong), a Muay Chai Ya player from Ban Phoom Riang, Muen Muay Man Mud from Ban Ta le Choob Sorn, Lopburi, and Muen Cha Ngud Cheng Chock (Dang Thaiprasert) from Nakhonratchasima.

Moreover, in the reign of King Rama 6th, he also loved to hold Muay Thai competitions; as a result, this cause so many good Muay Thai player from around the country such as Nai Tub Chamkoh, Nai Young Harn Ta Le, Nai Ching, Nai Air Prachamkarn, Nai Prom Inthara-aksorn, Nai Tem Khanha, Nai Sa Leb, Nai Wang, Nai Young Wanthongchai, etc.

According to the study of each period, it is concluded that most of Thai men like to learn Muay in order to be the real men as an acceptance of the society. In addition, Muay Thai is arranged as one of the royal knowledge for the king. The following is the example of the kings of Thailand who have well-skilled in Muay Thai; Phor Khun Ram Kham Hang Maharat, Som Det Phra Naresuan Maharat, Som Det Phra Chao Suae, Som Det Phra Chao Taksin Maharat, etc. On the whole, the way that Thai people were interested in Muay Thai is related to sport science in case of having complete physical competency, desire to practice, harmony, and good healthy without any health problems.

Not only creating the good effective for physical

health, but Muay Thai also creates a good effect on mental health in terms of to be patient in practicing and during the battle; besides, the Muay Thai players who always compete in the competition will have more self confident and stable temper. Additionally, Muay Thai helps develop social skill for the player; for instance, to practice Muay Thai, there should be the components and coaches; therefore, this will lead the social skill for the Muay player directly. Muay Thai is a good sport which leads the teenagers not to waste their time with bad habits like having drugs, or drinking alcohol, etc. Besides, Muay Thai helps develop a good mind because it is the skill in art and culture, and as the process of Muay Thai should have; Khuen Kru, Krob Kru, Wai Kru (the way to show respect to the fathers, mothers, teachers and the trainers); additionally, these can lead people the humble and modest mind. Summarized from the results of many researches pointed out that Muay Thai leads the players to develop not only their physical health, but also mental health, mind, and social skill.

Methodologies and traditions of Muay Thai showed out that there are the processes of Khuen Kru, Krob Kru, Wai Kru which concerned to Muay Thai. Khuen Kru or Yok Kru is the process of Muay Thai in which the teachers or the trainers will accept the Muay player as their students formally. Another process of Muay Thai is Wai Kru (the way to show respect to the teachers and the trainers). This is the way for the players to show their humble mind to pay respect to their fathers, mothers, teachers, sanctity as well as Lord Buddha in order to realize about their favors, and also to get ready before doing something. In any Muay Thai competition, all competitors will make a Wai Kru before starting the fight in order to pay respect to these people, and to wish for the good luck during the fight. To say that, this is a trick that the old people had arranged to teach their descendants the way to be humble mines people. Besides, it leads Muay players to believe in harmony and unity which automatically lead the people to love the monarch. That is why during the

Wai Kru, the Muay Thai player has to turn their face direct to the place of the king in order to realize about the favors of parents and teachers [6]. The way that Muay players make a Wai Kru is relevant to sport psychology in which the players will be confident and patient. Also, Wai Kru is the habit of Muay players which related to the aspect of sport biomechanics in case of gentle, beautiful, and strong while doing Wai Kru.

Although, there was no modern equipment to practice Muay Thai in the past, people there still practice their skill of this martial art through the form of natural and traditional way such as long distance running, making meditation while running, running on the sand, climbing up the trees like coconut tree, holding water container, cleaning up the lawn, pounding rice, practicing Muay with trainers, practicing Wai Kru, praying, and making meditation, etc [7]. According to the treatise of practicing Muay of Phra Hem Samaharn, people normally started to practice their Muay skill when they were 11. The ways to keep practicing Muay from this treatise are, every time when got up—stretch the legs directly, when the sun rose—turn the face to the sun and gaze the eyes to the sun until it is late in the morning time, practice punching the air, jump, and kick, etc. These activities showed that to practice traditional Muay Thai, people at that time used practice principle of sport science. For instance, running across the rice fields helps crating tolerance of physical competency in the fields of Circulatory Endurance, Muscle strength, and Muscle Endurance. In short, sport science is related to the practice of traditional Muay Thai in any cases.

Mae Mai Muaythaiboran (major techniques in traditional Thai boxing) comprises of 65 techniques which are 15 punch techniques, 15 foot techniques, 11 knee techniques, and 24 elbow techniques. Additionally, there are 82 Muay tactics (defense against attacks) consist of 29 boxing punch against tactics, 3-knee against tactics, 4-elbow against tactics, and 23 attack tactics. Also, there are 15 major

techniques and 15 minor techniques of Muay Thai. This kind of combat sport uses every part of the body like punch, foot, knee, and elbow which relevant to applied health science in terms of creating the basis of physical health competency.

Muay Thai Chai Ya is one identity of Muaythaiboran which consists of 5 sets of techniques and 7 tactics.

Another identity of Traditional Muay Thai is Muay Lopburi which is prominent in using clothes to wrap around hands to the half of arms and also around the ankles. In this kind of Muay Thai, the player is fluency in attack and against their body weapons; also, they have more tricks to deceive the components while fighting. In addition, Muay Lopburi is nimble, intelligent and athletic [8]. Besides, there is another identity of Muaythaiboran: Muaythaiboran Korat. The players of Muaythaiboran Korat normally wear only shorts and no tops, also wear the garland around their heads, and wrap clothes around their punches to elbows.

Muay Tha Sao and Muay Phraya Phichai Dap Hak (Phraya Phichai of the broken sword) are another kind of Muaythaiboran, in which the players have to do a black magic during practice and before battle. In this kind of Muaythaiboran, the players will pray to the Siva first before doing another process of Wai Kru; besides, to pay respect to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sanga, they will turn their faces to the southwest. Furthermore, while making a Wai Kru process, Muay Tha Sao and Muay Phraya Phichai Dap players will turn their faces to the east because this is the direction of the sunrises. The last identity of Muaythaiboran is Muaythaiboran Sakon Nakhon which imitates the characteristics of humankind, animals, plants and things in both nature and literature as battle techniques. On the whole, all these identities of traditional Muay Thai are relevant to sport medicine in terms of to protect their body from any injury while fighting like using clothes to wrap around hands to the half of arms and also around the ankles of Muay Lopburi.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

According to the results, this research indicated that Thai men in the past learned Muay Thai in order to be the real men as an acceptance in society; also, in order that they will have more chance to select as a soldier or have higher social status than others who have no skill in Muay Thai. On the other hand, the kings, princes, or high class people liked to learn Muay Thai in the royal palace with well-skilled teachers in order to bring the Muay skill as a weapon to rule the kingdom which is consistent to the previous research conducted by Yomdit and others (Fig.1) [9]. Meanwhile, the places for practicing Muay Thai are various such as temples, teachers' home, and Muaythaiboran office, etc.

The benefits and values of traditional Muay Thai indicated that it is important and effective for the development of physical, emotional, social, and mental skill as well as intelligence, which is so important for adapting ourselves to live in social with happiness [10]. According to traditional methodology, it is showed that the belief of Thai people in any learning cases such as dancing, drama, music, sword, or Muay is concerned with teachers. Hence, before doing anything, Thai people would pay respect to the teachers, or in Thai; Wai Kru, in order to realize about their favors, and also to get ready for doing something. In any Muay Thai competition, all competitors will make a Wai Kru before starting the fight in order to pay respect to the favors of their fathers, mothers, teachers, sanctity as well as Lord Buddha, and to wish for the good luck during the fight [11]. Although, there was no modern equipment to practice Muay Thai in the past, people there still practice their skill of this martial art through the form of natural and traditional way such as long distance running, making meditation while running, running on the sand, climbing up the trees like coconut tree, holding water container, cleaning up the lawn, and pounding rice, etc. These activities showed that to practice traditional Muay Thai, people at that time used practice principle of sport science. For instance, running across the rice fields helps crating tolerance of

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Muay Thai Chai Ya is one identity of Muaythaiboran which consists of 5 sets of techniques and 7 tactics.

Limitations of the research

1. This is a document research which is arranged

limit of contents comprised of history and development, benefits and values, methodologies and traditions, Muay Thai practicing, traditional Mae Mai Muay Thai, as well as identity of the traditional Muay Thai base on sport science.

2. This research collected data from January 2011 to December 2013.

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