



Episode 307 - Muay Boran and other Martial Arts of Thailand |
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Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey everyone, thanks for coming by. This is whistlekick martial arts radio, episode 307. Today, we're gonna talk a bit about the martial arts from Thailand that aren't Muay Thai My name is Jeremy Lesniak, I'm your host for this show, I'm the founder of whistlekick sparring gear and apparel, and I love traditional martial arts and I'm guessing you do too and that's why you are joining me. Hopefully, this isn't the first time you've joined us, if it is, you might want to head on over to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com, join the newsletter, check out the other 306 episodes we have, everything from interviews with prominent martial arts figures, to someone who could be or maybe even is your martial arts instructor. Martial arts has an impact on so many and the goal here is to bring you the stories of those who have trained and benefitted from the martial arts maybe to give you some inspiration in your life in your martial arts practice. You can also head on over to whistlekick.com, see everything that we make whether its digital services like martialartscalendar.com, where you can submit and browse, martial arts events in the us for free or you can find the links to all of our products including sparring gear and apparel and training accessories, whole bunch of great stuff and we're always adding more.

Now you've likely heard of Muay Thai Translate roughly the art of eight limbs or eight limb boxing, I've read a number of different translations and I don't speak Thai and I can't tell you definitively what it means, I have to go on what I'm reading but, Muay Thai is not the only Thai martial art. It may be the



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most popular today, it may have influenced MMA, actually quite a bit of self defense even in the traditional martial arts here, but it is not only the traditional martial art from Thailand. The most popular martial art from Thailand that is not Muay Thai actually precedes Muay Thai It's called Muay Boran. Muay Boran or ancient boxing is a martial art that is originally from Thailand in the late 18th century and the ancestor of as I've said, the more commonly known martial art called Muay Thai The history of Muay Boran starts with a warrior nai khanom tom in 1767, the kingdom of Ayutthaya, now Thailand, lost after a long series of wars against the Burmese. This war, ended the four century old Siamese kingdom, and many people are held captives and taken to Burma. Among these prisoners was the skilled Thai boxer named nay khanom tom. About 7 years later the Burmese king organized a festival that involved a competition between the Thai boxers and the Burmese boxers. The king wanted to see whose technique was superior because the Burmese had their own different style of boxing. Burmese boxing mainly involve fist for fighting while the Thai boxing as you might expect, use knees elbows feet and fist. The Thai chose khanom tom to fight against the champion of the Burmese. As part of the custom, khanom tom performed his way kru dance accompanied by music before the fight. Khanom tom defeated and even knocked out the Burmese champion and the Burmese cannot easily accept this defeat, they even went so far as to say that the way kru dance was black magic. After all this, the Burmese king sent another 9 skilled boxers to fight khanom tom, one after the other and none of these Burmese fighters succeeded in defeating them even though khanom tom must've been exhausted fighting off ten boxers in a row. The Burmese king finally accepted defeat and even applauded khanom tom because of his extraordinary boxing skills. Then the king said, according to legend anyway, that "every part of the Siamese is blessed with venom, even with his barehand he can fell 9 or 10 opponents, but his lord was incompetent and lost the country to the enemy." if you had been any good there's no way the city of Ayutthaya would ever have fallen." the victory led to the release of khanom Thom along with his comrades. The Burmese king even gave khanom Thom his choice of two rewards. Khanom Thom chose 2 Burmese wives over riches offering the reason that money was easier to find. Even today, his victory is annually celebrated on Thailand on March 17th and they call it the national Muay Thai day.

Khanom tom did not use Muay Boran exactly but rather another form of martial art similar to it. There were several ancient boxing styles from different regions of Thailand at that time but they were just lumped together in a single term, Muay Boran. And we kind of see this today when we talk about karate or we talk about taekwondo. There are variations and you know, can we really get down to what the true and I'm using air quotes as I say this, karate is, the true taekwondo etc. The modern day Muay Boran is different from the original one. Originally, it was used for self defense so it was part of the training of military soldiers. It involved lethal and ground fighting techniques that included grappling, the Thai embraced the martial art and became part of the Thai culture where fighters from the different regions of the country would gather to test their skills. Eventually, fighters began to wrap their hands and forearms with rope not only to serve as protection but also to wound their opponents. And I suspect those of you that are old van Damme fans, might have some visuals as I'm saying this. The



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reputation of Muay Boran fighters heightened because of their efficiency in close combat and the best became royal guards to the king. Around 1920s and 1930s, Muay Boran was disciplined and modernized by king Rama the 7th so that participants would fight in a ring with a set of rules. It adapted the western style of boxing in terms of referees and rounds and the use of gloves rather than rope to reduce the wounds that can be inflicted during the fight. Moreover, many techniques especially the deadly ones were also banned. And this was the reason why Muay Boran's popularity declined. Because of this reformation, the "ancient boxing" eventually called Muay Thai also referred to as the art of eight limbs. Muay Thai then gained popularity internationally and it produced thousands, tens of thousands maybe even hundreds of thousands of practitioners around the world. But Muay Thai, Muay Boran are not the only Thai martial arts. Here are a few others that I'll be honest, before we started doing the research I've never even heard of.

Muay Chaiya. Muay Chaiya is an old martial art founded around 200 years ago by a military leader of the Ritana Kusun Kingdom. It got its name from a town in Thailand. Its techniques are effective against heavier opponents even without using too much strength. However, immediate counter attacks are required because the attacks may not be strong enough to cause heavy damage on the opponent. A Muay Chaiya fighter's defense is difficult to penetrate because much like Muay Thai, elbows and shins are used to block the attacks. Their hops and jumps make them even more difficult to hit as they move around.

Lerdit or Muay Lerdrit is a martial art derived from Muay Boran and has a pretty close resemblance in terms of the techniques used. Lert, pardon my pronunciation if anybody out there actually speaks Thai with a proper accent, means superior while Rit means power. So we could translate it to boxing of superior power. Its techniques were also based from the strategies of the special infantry corps which are Tum, ground, top meaning crush, Chap meaning grab and Hak meaning break the joints. Muay Lerdrit is effective on close combat as fighters are trained to have strong muscles and tendons to perform strikes, grappling and finishing blows more effectively. And if you're like me you might be visualizing someone shin kicking a palm tree right now. There seems to be this broad cultural similarity among these martial arts and I think we see that in every country. You know, when we look at the martial arts of Japan, they all have a similar attitude.

Krabi Krabong can be called the armed version of Muay Boran. Krabi means sword and Krabong means staff. Other types of weapons are also used such as Dob which is a single edged sword and Ga Wich is a bladed staff and Maisuksong which is a pair of clubs. According to history, most of the techniques of Krabi Krabong are influenced by Japanese martial arts such as Okinawan Kabuto.

Silat Pattani. Silat Pattani is a martial art formed, originated in the Pattani Kingdom which is now a state in Thailand. It has a heavy similarity with Gatka Wich is an Indian martial arts style. It has no predefined forms but rather has 2 freestyle forms called Ramayana and animal forms. The Ramayana form includes



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three figures which is for good posture, sitaduwai which is for short movements and fatal attacks, and hanuman which is for strength and agility. Each figure has different behaviors, movements and mannerisms that should be imitated. The animal form consists of 6 animals which are the deer for agility, monkey for speed agility and impulsiveness, snake for hard and soft techniques that can include blades, bird from the meking eagle rooster and crane, tiger for strength and dragon for locking the opponent using limbs. Initially, Silat pattani doesn't involve weapons, the practitioners must learn and eventually master the fundamentals before applying the weapons to the techniques. The weapons used include kayu or the bate which are sticks, pari which is a machete, broad sword sort of thing, chinday samping, tombok lembing which is a spear, keris which is a dagger, karambit which is a tiger claw knife and gadak which is a mace. You know I always find it interesting when we talk about martial arts of a particular country, how we can elements from other martial arts in them. As we're talking about Silat pattani we're hearing things around animals. If you've talked about animals as they relate to martial; arts you're probably thinking of Chinese martial arts at least I am. And you know, this kind of lends itself to something I've said on the show that you know, martial arts are going to have a lot of similarities regardless where they come from because there's only so many ways we can move our body. And cultural influence can be pretty strong especially when we go back when there weren't dozens, hundreds, thousands of variations in martial arts when there wasn't internet, tv and movies, people would share these things. And if you were a newer martial artist, its stands to reason that someone sharing something with you, you're probably not going to spend years or decades with the opportunity to learn from that person so you're going to take what they teach you in a short period of time and combine it with what you know, what you understand from your own country, you're own culture. And thus we see some of this spreading. I think it's cool.

And there you have it, Thai martial arts that are not Muay Thai We will probably talk about Muay Thai in-depth at some point, I'm enjoying this research episodes they've been a lot of fun, I'm learning a lot, hopefully you're learning something and you enjoy that. If you don't, well the beauty of the podcast format is you can just skip to the next episode. You can go on to one of the other many, many episodes but you know what, I would like your feedback. Go ahead hit me up, email jeremy@whistlekick.com you can comment over on the blog, the show notes pages, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com or you can get to us via social media. We are @whistlekick everywhere you would ever imagine to use social media. That's all I've got for today, until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day.