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MUAY THAI (THAI BOXING)

THESIS

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By

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Muay Thai (Thai Boxing) is a kind of self-defense with its own forms of fighting which are different from the self-defense styles of other countries, whether it is in a form of wrestling, Karate, Taekon-do, etc.. Muay Thai is not only fighting for self-defense but also an art and science demonstrated by using various parts of body and movement resulting into forms of offense and defense. This documentary film was made for educational purpose and to spread the art of Thai Boxing to foreigners. VHS video tape was used as a medium to present this documentary. There are two segments in this Muay Thai Documentary. The first segment presents the history, circumstances, and general techniques of Muay Thai. The second segment shows the everyday life of ordinary boxers by using a Thai child named Noppadol as an representative for other fighters.

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THE FILM TREATMENT

FILM TREATMENT

TITLE: MUAY THAI (Thai Boxing)

AUDIENCE: Strangers to Thailand

THEME: Muay Thai is a kind of self-defence with its own forms of fighting which are different from the self-defense styles of other countries, whether it is in a form of wrestling, Karate, Tae-kon-do, etc. Muay Thai is not only fighting for self-defense but also an art and science demonstrated by using various parts of the body and movement that result into forms of offense and defense.

PURPOSE: This documentary film was made for educational purpose and to spread the art of Thai Boxing to foreigners for better knowledge and understanding of Muay Thai.

LENGTH: 20 minutes.

FILM STOCK: VHS video tape, NTSC standard.

PLOT DESCRIPTION: The Thai people originated from the central part of China, then emigrated to the south to escape from the warlords and to find a better

location for settlement.

During the journey, they had to fight and protect themselves from warlords, disease, and the local populace, causing their people be always ready whether in time of war or peace. They trained to protect themselves in time of peace to be ready for the next fight. Therefore, one can really say that Muay Thai has been developed for a long period of time.

Muay Thai is an art of fighting that uses various parts of the body, such as fists, knees, elbows, feet, etc. for both offense and defense. The Thai Boxing Tournament has progressively developed by changing the rules and regulations according to the Western Hemisphere type but they strongly retained the sensational parts of Muay Thai. Every Thai kids is involved with Muay Thai from birth, and everyone knows the sport exceptionally well. Some of them make a living by become professional fighters.

NOPPADOL PANYOI is another Thai kid who

dreams of becoming a Champion in professional Muay Thai, NOPPADOL entered into boxing ring at the age of 11 years old. Presently, he's 14 years old, and has been boxing professionally with support from his father for more than 60 bouts, with a record of only 4 loses. NOPPADOL's life is very interesting, because everyday he has to go to school like every other kid the same age, but the difference is this. Instead of going home to do his homework or studies, he has to go to the training camp to build up the body and his energy, and to learn new techniques in offensive and defensive strategies to be ready for his next fight.

The reason that NOPPADOL has worked harder than the other kids is because his family is very poor. His father has raised the family with the money from his hair-cutting business and it is not enough. Therefore, NOPPADOL, as the eldest of the kids in the family, must find a way to help support the

family by becoming a boxer.

He used to get paid with very small amount of money in the past, but now, since he started making a name with a good record of fighting, the purse increased for each fight and he is able to help the family to live more comfortably than before. We all believe that the road to the championship for NOPPADOL is not too far off, and when that day comes, everyone in his family will be very happy and live a better life than what they do now.

There are 2 segments in this MUAY THAI documentary:

FIRST SEGMENT This segment recalls the history, circumstances, and general techniques of MUAY THAI by using information from books, recommended by various masters of MUAY THAI. Besides all of these, there is stock footage from those who love this sport and have recorded the contests of MUAY THAI on 16 mm. film.

The first segment has been made in black and white and then dyed with Sepia to give a feeling of the past.

SECOND SEGMENT This segment shows the life of one Thai kid named NOPPADOL who is involved with MUAY THAI in order to help cover the family's expenses by going to school and boxing whenever the opportunities occur.

This segment also shows the everyday life of ordinary boxers with the hard training to build up their energy and toughness, and the learning of new techniques both offensive and defensive from trainers who were ex-fighters themselves in the past. There is also the present bout in this segment, using NOPPADOL as a representative for other fighters. This segment is made with natural color and environment showing the difference in time from the first segment.

THE SCRIPT

MUAY THAI (THAI BOXING)

VIDEO

AUDIO

1. TITLE 'MUAY THAI'

-- Music (fade on and out)

2. (An old Thai book is
opened.)

-- The Thai people as a race has deserved sympathy for a very long time, that is, from the beginning of the Buddhist era until the present. They were constantly harassed and their peaceful existence disturbed until about 25 B.C. when they left the rich and fertile land called THAI MUANG, on both sides of YANGTZE and HWANG HO rivers in central China to the South.

-- For reasons of security and to ensure their future freedom, a system of self-defense was devised which after generations of changes and improvements resulted in a set of rules and regulations.

-- During times of peace, the

Thais trained under the guidance of experienced warriors, learning the different fighting techniques based on the manual, but often substituting the "arm" for the real weapon, in other words, practicing unarmed combat, or what is commonly known to Thais as DEE MUAY or Boxing.

3. Stock footage of the old Thai Boxers. (Film 16 mm)
- Muay Thai is the art of self-defense using various parts of the body. Because it is based on the principle of "doing no more than necessary to teach a lesson", it is equally well suited to be used as a competitive sport as well as a "fight to the finish".
 - Muay Thai is a philosophy, a science, and art, unlikely to have come about easily or by chance. It is the result of diligence, perseverance, trial and error, and endless

practice sessions to master those techniques that transform a beginner into an expert.

4. C.U. the pictures of the Thai boxers in the past. -- In the old days the horse hide thongs were later replaced by hemp ropes or starched strips of cotton soaked in glue before being tied to a boxer's hands. It is also said that for some matches and with the agreement of both contestants, ground glass was mixed with the glue. The fighters wore groin guards of tree bark or sea shells held in place with a piece of cloth tied between the legs and around the waist. In those days there were no such arrangements as weight divisions, or three-minute rounds. A bout lasted as long as a fighter could continue. Many a boxer is said to have left the arena on a bamboo

stretcher--dead.

5. Stock footage of the old Muay Thai techniques.
(sub-titles)
- Montho Nangtann
 - Jorrakhae Fardharng
 - Hork Mokhasak
 - Morn Tangkrit
 - Khonkaow Prasumain
 - Huchkguang Aiyara
- Muay Thai is said to have basic techniques. This might have been the case in the old days but certainly doesn't hold true today. In the old days each move was known by a complicated name, quite incomprehensible to a layman, and often in no way related to its function.
- A number of techniques exist in theory only. They are neither seen during training, nor are they ever used in the ring.
6. Stock footage of the use of fists.
- Basically, Muay Thai employs of punches, elbow attacks, knee kicks, and foot techniques. Today, Muay Thai uses the fist in a fashion similar to that of western-style boxing, like straight punch, reverse punch, swing, jab, hook, and uppercut.

7. Stock footage of the use of elbows. -- The use of elbows is a very typical Muay Thai short-range weapon, which is also employed at longer distances when used with jump. Every fighter is proficient in its use and fully aware of the damage it is capable of inflicting.
- The elbow has the distinction of causing the highest number of injuries.
8. Stock footage of the use of knees. -- The most powerful and devastating piece of equipment in the Muay Thai arsenal is the knee, like the elbow, used mainly for in-fighting. It becomes a long-range weapon when used in combination with a jumping attack. Knee kicks are directed at parts of the body, though the main targets are the solar plexus, kidneys, ribs and head.
9. Stock footage of the use of kicks. -- The Round Kick is the well known Muay Thai trade

mark, delivered with the instep or lower shin, two rather sensitive parts of the leg that have been toughened to an unbelievable degree. The Round Kick is directed at any part of the body and has been responsible for a great number of first-round knockouts.

10. Pictures of the present Muay Thai boxers.

-- Most Muay Thai fighters are from provinces, after showing promise by beating the boxers in their own area, have moved to the city in search of fame and fortune.

11. Noppadol in the class room.
C.U. Noppadol then zoom out to L.S.

-- Noppadol Punyoi is another kid who dreaming of becoming the champion of Muay Thai. He's only 14 years old, and have been boxing professionally for 4 years. From the record of 60 bouts around the country and in the city, he lost only 4 times.

12. (From 11.) -- Noppadol has to go the school everyday and try to do the best he can like any other kids in school.
13. Noppadol walking out of his class. -- He's a happy kid beloved by his teachers and friends.
14. Interviewing (teacher) (sub-title) -- Noppadol Punyoi is the student in Math and Science, student with good grade. Learning in school and boxing to make money in the same time.
- In general, he has good behavior, neat, and should have good support in what he's trying to accomplish.
- Music (fade in)
- Music (fade out)
15. Noppadol walking to the camp. -- Everyday after school, Noppadol has to go to the training camp and starts work-out to learn new techniques, including offensive and defensive from trainer to keep in shape and be ready for the

next fight.

16. The way of practicing and environment of the training camp. -- (Background sound)
17. Interviewing (Trainer) (Noppadol is the background) (sub-title) -- For Noppadol, he's very interested in his training, his future, and trying to make money for his family, in the same time wishes to be the champion in the future.
18. Practicing (owner and trainer) of a couple of boxers and Noppadol. -- The camp owner and trainer will worked very hard with Noppadol and other boxers to improve their skill and tactics to be more experience in delivering their punch and kick.
19. Interviewing (The camp owner and Noppadol) (sub-title) -- For Noppadol. is the hope of training camp that have put so much time and energy for him to become a champion, provide that he did not get out of his way and ruin his career.

20. (from 19) Practicing (Noppadol) -- After a long day of going to school and training, Noppadol has to do his home-work and also studies.
-- Music (fade in)
21. Establishing shot (Rajdumnern stadium) -- Music
-- Today is another match for
22. In the dressing room, Noppadol is preparing for his fight. Noppadol, who's fighting under the professional name of LAVO LOOKPRABAHT, and also the name of his training camp.
23. (from 22) warm-up -- He has to fight the bigger, and taller opponent who weight 7 lbs. more than him, and he's sure that he'll have everything under control and win the fight.
24. Lavo climbing through the rope to the arena -- Which is his another step toward the championship in the future.
-- (Background music)
25. Wai Kruh (part of pre-fight) -- An important part of Muay-Thai is the pre-fight ritual, a

slow motion, ballet like set of steps and motions often ridiculed by foreigners ignorant of its significance. It starts with the "Wai Kruh" or obedience to the teacher. The boxer kneels in the ring facing the direction of his camp, home or birthplace. He covers his eyes with his gloves and says a short pray while bowing low three times until his gloves touch the canvas.

26. (from 25) Rum Muay
(part of the pre-fight)

-- Now follows by the "Rum Muay" or boxing dance. It is performed in many different ways, each teacher having his own varieth which he gave to a boxer according to his proficiency and experience.

-- "Rum Muay" also serves as a pre-fight warm-up exercise and can last as long as five minutes. Its performance is

accompanied by silent prayers and the recitation of magic formulae.

27. (from 26)

-- During the pre-fight ritual the fighters also wear the MONGKOL or crown, around their heads. It does not belong to the fighter but is the property of the teacher, and considered sacred. After the completion of the "Rum Muay" and before the first round commences,

28. (from 27) The owner lifts -- the MONGKOL

-- the trainer or a handler bows with folded hands, says a short prayers and lift the "Mongkol" off the boxer's head, blowing on his hair for good luck.

29. The Musicians

-- A very important part of Muay-Thai bouts is the music which not only accompanies the fight itself but also the pre-fight ceremonies.

-- It consists of a ready

- sounding Jawa flute, a pair of small brass cymbals known as Ching, and two drums.
30. (from 29) -- The musicians know every move in the game and watch the fighters constantly, varying tempo and volume from slow and soothing to speedy and loud, depending on the action in the ring.
31. (from 30) -- (The bell rings) (off scene)
32. The fight -- (background sound)
33. Reaction shot -- (background sound)
34. Trainer at the corner (teaching Lavo) -- During the break, trainers try to contact their fighters to improve the tactic and correct some errors to win the game.
35. C.U. The bell rings -- The bell rings.
36. Lavo is fighting (last round) -- Music (background sound)
37. (from 36) -- Tonight Noppadol did not win, which it was true in any kind

of competition to have the
winner and the loser.

-- Music (fade in)

38. Lavo in the dressing
room (taking bandages
off) with owner and
trainer.

-- For Noppadol, he'll be resting
for a couple days and starts
doing what he had to do
everyday by going to school
and training in the camp every
evening to be ready for his
next fight, in which all of us
believed that he can become
the champion very soon.

39. (from 38) Lavo and his
owner.

-- We'll have to do it next time.

40. Caption: The end.

-- Music (fade out)

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

A. PRE-PRODUCTION PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

1. It was very hard to find someone who really knew or had the knowledge of Muay Thai at present. Various techniques have disappeared in modern fighting by forgetting or never passing them on to the fighters by the masters. This left only general forms or techniques of fighting, so most of the information for this documentary has been gathered with inquiries from old folks in the provinces including much information from old books in the library. Because this film was based on a real life story, real people and places were used. It is not likely to find a training camp that is up to the standard of fighters that have the abilities and interesting life to fulfill this project.

2. SCRIPT PREPARATION Only a rough script was used because of the lack of information available. Shooting could not be completed according to the script, because shooting must depend on the event and circumstance. Also, the fighters or boxers would not fight exactly the way they were told.

Whether the shot was complete or not had to depend on how the fighters obeyed the orders of the trainer and followed or reacted with discipline and luck.

3. SHOOTING Acknowledgement was made during the inquiry for locations to assure the local people that this project was for educational purpose and not for the benefit of a business. Permission had to be obtained from ring-

master, training camp owner and promoter of the fight event. Shooting had to be within prescribed circumstances, and in the specific space that has been prepared. Also, only the specified match that had been assigned when make inquiry for permission. Therefore, it was impossible to shoot another match at the event for stock footage.

B. PRODUCTION PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS.

There were a few problems in the production of this documentary.

1. CAMERA MOVEMENT. Most of the shooting was done indoors, so there are lots of problems in camera movement due to the limited space of the location. Dolly shots and tracking shots can not be done, and only Zooms In, Zooms Out, Pans, Tilts with the hand held camera were possible.

2. LIGHTING. It was not possible to arrange special lighting and existing light had to be used in the training camp or stadium. If the light had been planned, it would be a nuisance and divert the attention of the fighters. Therefore, lighting was prohibited inside the stadium resulting in not having enough light for some parts of this documentary.

3. EQUIPMENT (camera). Production of this documentary was done with Video tape, therefore, it was very important in getting WHITE-BALANCE to check the color. The camera distorted the image when a white subject (actor wearing white shirt) moved in and out of camera range causing the camera to adjust color automatically. In addition, the use of two cameras of different types and brand names created distortion and color shifts which made it very hard when editing to keep continuity.

4. There was no way to set the subject or move the subject

in the direction required for shooting. Therefore, during training or at the real fight, the subject was constantly out of focus. Therefore, to correct this problem, the Long Shot and was used in this part. The use of a Close Up or Medium Shot would probably make the subject be out of frame. Only in the class room could shots be retaken. The rest must be in one take in training or the real fight.

C. POSTPRODUCTION PROBLEMS AND SOLUTION.

Doing postproduction for this documentary consumed a lot of time due to various during the making of the film.

1. ELECTRICITY. There was some damage to the film in the editing and color controlling machine (time base) caused by the instability of electric current in Thailand which always below from what it supposed to be. The machine had to be sent to the factory to be repaired inturn it caused a delay in editing.

2. SCRIPT PREPARATION FOR EDITING. The script was prepared from all of the footage. The main problems of this part happened when all the footage was not enough to provide all the details of the story, and it was recorded on the tape before editing. Therefore, some extra shots had to be taken to create the picture length to match exactly with the explanation.

3. Because this documentary has lots of details and the explanation had to be in English, the explanation was recorded on the tape first.

4. Editing the video tape was difficult and more complicated than editing film. The tape can not be cut off into a section as desired. It has to be edited from start to finish, and insertions have to be made again, it meant another editing from the begining to the end had to be done after the insertions were completed.

5. Due to the limited equipment for special effects, it was not possible to control the alphabet. Therefore, sub-titles were made by moving up each line one at a time and cover the unused line with blank piece of paper.