

## ABSTRACT

This thesis entitled “Opening the World of Thai Boxing: Relations of between Boxer, their Boxing Camp, and Business in the Boxing Circles” gives an ethnographic account, based mainly on field research, concerning the life, living, and bodily training of a Thai boxer, as well as the business relations within the boxing sphere. A Thai boxing circle encompasses altogether boxers, boxing-stadium organization, boxing-competition managers (promoter-muay), and boxing-camp masters (hou-na khai-muay). Relations within the circle have their root embedded in the Thai traditional patron-client system, especially in the aspects of complex social relationship within pairs of master-servant (nai-phrai), leader-follower (hua na – luk nong), and senior-junior (phu yai – phu noi). The boxing stadium organization reigns supreme in this stratified system of social-relations, while normal boxers are located at the bottommost level; their lives and living are controlled almost entirely by their camp master.

Majority of Thai boxer in the Sor-Kiattiyot Boxing Camp, a focus of this study, comes from poor families in Buriram, Kanchanaburi, and Nakhon-Srithammarat provinces. The boys have been taking Thai boxing with a hope for their better future, education and earnings to support their families. Within the camp, they are mentally trained socialized for adjusting their ideology and attitude towards the norm of Muay-Thai culture; their physical bodies have been managed to keep with the Muay-Thai standard, as if to guarantee the success and longevity of their boxing career.

Thai boxing is a fighting game for two men to fight, with only one to win. This kind of competition has stimulated gambling, which in turn plays a very important role in the boxing circle. Gambling has been one of the prime factors that made various business activities and agencies within the Thai boxing sphere interwoven to form a coherent network.