

# The Community Sports and Superstitions

**Daycho Khaenamkhaew**

Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University, Thailand

E-mail : Daycho\_kha@nstru.ac.th

\*\*\*\*\*

## Abstracts

To ideas about ghost worship and rituals for athletes in a community, the notion that intended to enhance the body and mind to produce positive energy. It represents the ideal marriage of sports science and superstition. This academic article, “The Community Sports and Superstitions,” aims to present the superstitions associated with sports within a community concerning the power of spirits and Buddhism. Our findings indicated that a perfect blend of the two science forms, Sports Science and Superstition, was ideal for the strength and good health of athletes, and beliefs about “The power of spirits and Buddhism” being linked to sports in the community helps build morale during sporting events since at times science cannot rely entirely on rationality. Hence, there also exists a belief in superstitions that serves to fill the gaps and build morale during sporting events that correspond to the way of life of the people of the community. Thus, even today, although science and technology have advanced, the community continues to regard the interaction of superstition and science as being perfectly in harmony and not problematic.

**Keywords:** : Community Sports; Superstitions

## Introduction

Social Ideology is difficult to perceive because it is often a person’s behavior that is transmitted through values until used in everyday life (Kaewthep et al., 2012 : 54). For instance, “superstition” is based on supernatural power. It represents a belief in the unseen that impacts the behavior of individuals and society, making it an arena for superstitious rituals performed by sorcerers, taking the form of “The power of spirits”. While regarding the sacred space dimension based on Buddhist beliefs and ideological aspects, it presents a miracle, in the Buddhist sense, that emphasizes the practice of merit-making, purifying the mind by resorting to introspection and meditation to escape the dangers of being malicious or disregarding “the power of Buddhism” (Khunarak, 2021 : online).

In many rural communities, community sporting activities are conducted among villages or sub-districts, with the attractiveness of sports in the community being the perfect blend of two forms of science. (Duangkaew, 2018 : online) It includes the science of selecting competition judges. Health promotion and disease prevention management help people heal and rehabilitate from injuries (Chansem, 2015 : online). and enhances the physical fitness of

athletes in sports medicine, psychology, nutrition, and technology (Pachcharin Pawalee, Arphat Tiaotrakul, and Tussana Jaruchart, 2021 : online). Superstition involves using the mystical powers of sacred objects, talismans, and magic spells (Khamdee, 1991 : 22), to unwind and change in accordance with prevailing social conditions and beliefs. These are all hidden within the dharma principles and methods for those who have faith to understand and apply them in their daily lives (Treesub, Phra Khrusophonkityathorn, Phra Khruphichitsuphakan, 2015 : 2) and are also linked to “sports” within the community.

Apart from sports, the community is an area where you can observe the perfect blend of science and superstition. Before the fun and charm of the competition, people gather to present offerings to the spirits and guardian angels in the community, which also forms a part of the morale-building aspect of athletes. Even though science plays a significant role and aids the performance of athletes, superstition and belief fill in the gap left by science and support the morale of players (Duangkaew, 2018 : online).

While superstition can manifest itself in a variety of ways, as Boonchuea (1989 : 17) found: 1) Representative Magic 2) Part for all magic 3) Being Medium 4) Fetichism and 5) Shamanism. "Superstition" and its function in Thai society during an era of fast scientific and technological growth. This period might be regarded the moment when the East and West's horizons were open to one other. The ensuing flood of Western ideas and culture to the East has pushed Thai society into a state of rivalry, perpetuating the function of superstition as a mental refuge alongside religion. ( Khamkhaew, 2007 : online) , This academic article, “Community sports and superstitions,” aims to present the superstitions associated with sports within a community concerning the power of spirits and Buddhism. Scope of study: 1) Science and sports, 2) The power of spirits in conjunction with the community sports, and 3) The power of Buddhism in conjunction with the community sports. While science and superstition have always been polar opposites, it has inevitably been observed that superstitious beliefs in the community were, in a way, linked to science. Therefore, the need arises for a discussion on the topic “The Community sports and superstitions”, which will delve into the intermingling of superstition and science in sporting contests and the way of life of the people in the community today.

## **Science and sports**

In terms of Thai social history, every sport is based on scientific concepts that focus on creating healthy citizens. This would, in turn, ensure the stability and prosperity of the country, highlighting the importance of civic health in many spheres such as environmental, physical, and consumption hygiene, and most importantly, with exercise and sports, in developing strength and discipline in the body (Duangkaew, 2018 : online). This discipline included being considerate and possessing the awareness to help others, maintaining self-discipline and discipline within one’s organization, and performing one’s duties excellently, completely, accurately, and safely. Individuals possessing such discipline could become effective leaders in exercise and sports (Boonsom, Pithapornchaikul, Bungmark, Yanprechaset, Kasman, and

Chantasorn, 2017: online), such as yoga trainers (Yoga for Health Care) (Sihawong, 2021: online), sports referees, sports trainers, and fitness trainers (work readiness, ethics, achievement motivation, teamwork, and job stability) (Nimnuan, 2019: 6).

In addition, science has also been attempting to eradicate and alter thinking regarding superstitious practices, such as tattooing and considering auspicious times, by stating that these were neither Buddhist beliefs nor were they scientific and that these beliefs predated Buddhism. However, now Buddhism has developed, and science has flourished (Duangkaew, 2018: online). In this study, science, sports, and the concept of superstition have all been thoroughly analyzed so that no one falls victim to superstition, nor is it branded as being “stupid or nonsense”.

### **The power of spirits in conjunction with the community sports**

Animism and rituals can be analyzed with social science theory. The history and modernity of sports in a community are indicative of social phenomena related to processes, origins, symbols, rituals, beliefs, and faith management based on cultures related to superstitions, whether it was beliefs, rituals, vows, and sacred or spiritual spaces (Pratum, 2019: 54). Under the existing supernatural worldview, including superstitions about ghosts and sacred things such as witchcraft, amulets, talismans, and auspicious times, witchcraft is used to conjure the ordinary into the sacred to help a sports person keep danger at bay when competing in sports in the community. A few such beliefs include belief in an auspicious time, paying respects to the football field before entering it, paying respects to erstwhile rulers to ensure a smooth and successful game, or a soccer goalkeeper paying homage to the soccer goalposts on both sides in the belief that no opponent would score. As for the worldview of sacred things, which includes spirit beings and ghosts, it is believed that they can help inspire the desired results in things that need to be accomplished (Hongbinbok and Kongsirira, 2561: 33). For example, it is believed that Ai Khai is a holy spirit that brings good fortune and happiness to worshippers. Villagers believe that the egg's soul resides in a wooden sculpture of a boy located inside the chedi temple in the Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, where one can wish for good luck, trade, and other things, which get fulfilled almost all the time (Thairath Online, 2020). Moreover, being successful as wishing involved a few secret tactics during prayer time. These included maintaining a smiling face and talking sweetly, indicating that a good athlete needed to be in a good mood, was not easily offended, spoke well to everyone, and was loved by the people of the community. Besides, many athletes from the community came to pay homage and receive blessings and had gone on to win the sporting event, being favored by the deity and receiving the blessing they had wished for and successfully paying their respects. Further, these blessings were settled with firecrackers or chicken dolls according to local beliefs and popularity. Then, when word began to spread about the sanctity of the place, a greater number of believers came to pay their respects until the place gained recognition across the country (Matichon Online, 2020: Online.). Thus, it is evident that “The power of spirits” and the community sports involved a belief in superstitions and talismans of the local

Thais that had been around since ancient times (Prateepavanich, 2015 : Online). All of these offered spiritual benefits in terms of mercy, self-defense, and prestige for athletes in the community.



**Figure 1:** “The power of spirits” in conjunction with the community sports (Matchon Company Limited, 2021: Online.; Nation Online, 2016:online; Posttoday, 2016 : online)

### **The power of Buddhism in conjunction with the community sports**

In ancient times, temples witnessed the gathering of minds and were regarded as places of knowledge for people. Since in the olden days there were no schools, temples were used to educate children, with monks acting as teachers. Temples also became meeting places for people that also helped them cleanse their minds. They greatly influenced the Thai people and, in the present era, have become the location for the compilation of the many different teachings of the Buddha. Moreover, temples have also become centers for the propagation of various Buddhist superstitions. Buddhist principles focus on the development of people into physically and mentally capable individuals (Phra Atikansurasak Sukhumalo khongmuang, 2020 : online). This concept possesses dimensions consistent with the principles of sports science, which also aims to promote health, prevent disease, treat, heal and rehabilitate the body (Chansem, 2015 : online).

Thus, it indicates that the worldview of religion and belief in a community was intended to create an identity and positive energy, offering people protection and good fortune or creating a feeling of passion. For example, “Yan” is a summary of Buddhism and other aspects that are meant to be easy to remember and apply (Kerdkaew, 2012 : online) and is

combined with the principles of Buddhist teachings from beliefs drawn from Brahmanism Superstition and Thai literature that is used to memorize important matters in Buddhism. It is used as a tactic to train the mind to concentrate and is used as a ploy to remind one’s mind to avoid evil, do good, and develop a clear mind. Most of them are used following superstitions that are aimed at generating good energies that offer safety from harm during sporting events and are sometimes also used as a defensive tactic, generally in a sporting clash between two sides. However, possessing compassion and a belief that sports created unity made people desist from hating and hurting each other in the community sports (Kerdkaew, 2018 : online). The power of Buddhism indicates characteristics of merit. Signs and belief-based interpretations were used to understand the shared values of “The Community Sports” (Khunsri, Tangpathomwong, and Chumpradit, 2018 : online).), depending on the context, time, space, and communication, to suit the current era that did not accept superstitious beliefs, while developing both physically and mentally using morals and wisdom.

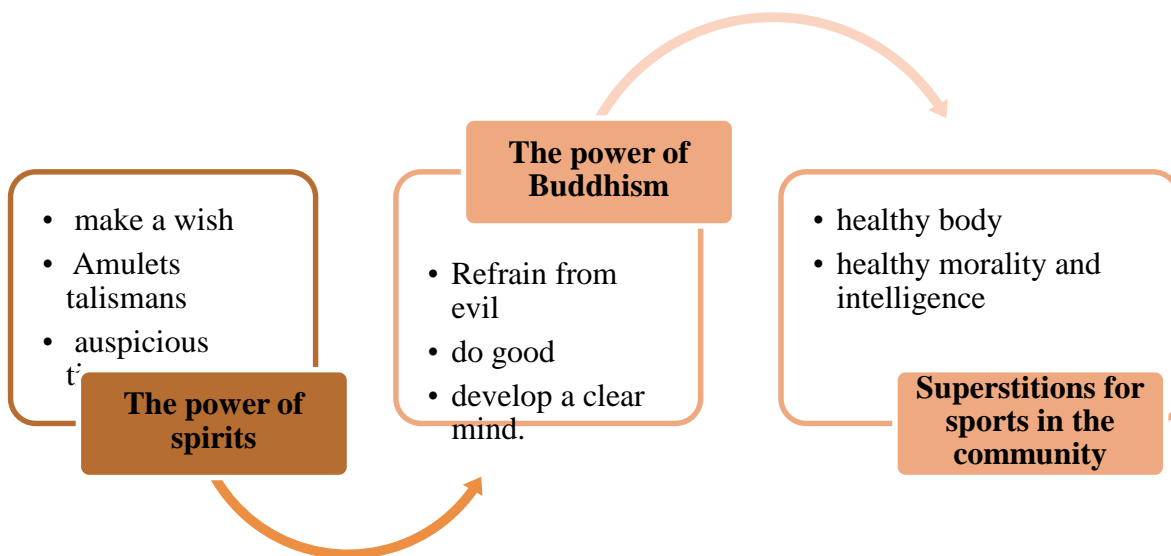


**Figure 2:** “The power of Buddhism” in conjunction with community sports (Duangkaew, 2018:online; Nation Online, 2018:online; Ballthai, 2020 : online ; Naewna, 2020 : onlin)

## Summarize

This is an academic article on “The power of spirits and Buddhism: The community sports and superstitions”. It presents community beliefs on “The power of spirits”, which relates to beliefs about ghost worship and rituals such as making a wish, amulets talismans, and auspicious times. For athletes in a community, “the power of Buddhism” was the belief in Buddhist principles that aimed to develop the body and mind to create positive energy, which

involved refraining from evil, doing good, and developing a clear mind. “Community sport” always aims to develop the body and mind, using morals and wisdom to live life by the “principles of sports science”, which work to promote health, prevent disease, treat, heal, and rehabilitate the body. It indicates the perfect blend of two science forms, sports science, and superstition, aimed at developing strength, good physical health, and athletic morale. Thus, even today, with all the advancements in science and technology, the community continues to believe that superstition and science remain in perfect harmony and are not contradictory to each other.



**Figure 3:** Knowledge of superstition associated with sports in the community based on the power of spirits and Buddhism

## References

- Ballthai. (2020). *Sports Superstition*. Retrieved from <https://www.ballthai.com/scoop/>.
- Boonchuea. K. (1989). *Introduction to theology*. Bangkok : Thai Wattana Panich.
- Boonsom, N., Pithapornchaikul, K., Bungmark, W., Yanprechaset, T., Kasman, I., and Chantasorn, N. (2017). The Curriculum Evaluation on Bachelor of Science Program in Sports Science Faculty of Education, Silpakorn University. *Veridian E-Journal, Silpakorn University (Humanities, Social Sciences and arts)*, 10(1), 786–806. Retrieved from <https://he02.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/Veridian-E-Journal/article/view/87521/69091>
- Chansem, W. (2015). Sports Science in Sports Development. *Academic Journal of Thailand National Sports University*, 7(1), 235–239. Retrieved from <https://he02.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/TNSUJournal/article/view/256448/174492>



- Duangkaew, N. (2018). *Sports superstition Charm and fun in local sporting events*. Retrieved from <https://thestandard.co/superstition-sports/>
- Hongbinbok, W. and Kongsirira, S. (2561). Supernatural Worldviews in Yok Burapa's Novel: Monkalong. *Liberal arts journal Maejo University*, 6(2), 111–127. Retrieved from <https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/liberalartsjournal/article/view/161744/116675>
- Kaewthep, K. et al. (2012). *Old media – new media: symbols, identity, ideology*. Bangkok: prints.
- Kerdkaew, T. (2012). An analytical study of Buddhist symbols that appear in the Thai Yantra. *Journal of Buddhist Studies Chulalongkorn University*, 19(2), 56–72. Retrieved from <https://so02.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jbscu/article/view/169388>
- Kerdkaew, T. (2018). A Study of Acronym in 108 Core Scripture as a Supplementary Buddhism Material. *Liberal arts journal*, 13(26), 51–66. Retrieved from <https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/larhcu/article/view/156501>
- Khamdee, T. (1991). *Superstition and Thai people*. Suthiparithat Journal. 5(14), 110–116. Retrieved from <https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/DPUSuthiparithatJournal/article/view/244742>
- Khamkhaew, W. (2007). Is superstition really reliant on people in Thai society?. *Manusat Paritat: Journal of Humanities*, 29(1), 21-32. Retrieved from <https://ejournals.swu.ac.th/index.php/hm/article/view/603>
- Khunarak, K. (2021). “Amnat Phee Baramee Phut: Space of Religious Ideological Beliefs’ in Tri Aphirum’s romantic novel ‘Miti Thi Sarm’”. *The Journal of Graduate Saket Review*, 6(2), 118–130. Retrieved from <https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/saketreview/article/view/255001>
- Khunsri, J., Tangpathomwong, N., and Chumpradit, K. (2018). Buddhism Communication through Dhammacakka: Timing, Meaning and Value. *Journal of Communication*, 1(2), 68–88. Retrieved from <https://so01.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/CRRUJC/article/view/165584>
- Matichon Company Limited. (2021). *The legend of Ai Khai at Wat Chedi*. Retrieved from [https://www.silpa-mag.com/news/article\\_63032](https://www.silpa-mag.com/news/article_63032)
- Matichon Online. (2020). *The phenomenon of “Ai Khai”, the belief of the community*. Retrieved from [https://www.matichon.co.th/region/news\\_2347034](https://www.matichon.co.th/region/news_2347034)
- Naewna. (2020). *A student has a teacher! M.1 student signs a talisman to join the Muay Thai dance, saying 'Powerful, magical'*. Retrieved from <https://www.naewna.com/likesara/522226>
- Nation Online. (2016). *"Rwanda shins" consecrate items at the goalpost before heading in*. Retrieved from <https://www.nationtv.tv/sport/378529056>
- Nation Online. (2018). *Sports Superstition: From Lester Yantra to Ganesha*. Retrieved from <https://www.nationtv.tv/news/378666053>
- Nimnuan, C. (2019). Way of Developing the Competencies for Football Referees in Thai Premierleague to International. *Sripatum Chonburi Journal*, 15(3), 86-93. Retrieved from <https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/SPUCJ/article/view/189928>

- Pawalee, P., Tiaotrakul, A., and Jaruchart, T. (2021). Conditions and Guidelines for Athlete Development through Sports Science Principles for the Excellence of the Sports Office in the National Sports University (Northern Campus). *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Ratchaphruek University*, 7(2), 79–95. Retrieved from <https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/rpu/article/view/254776>
- Phra Atikansurasak Sukhumalo (khongmuang). (2020). Temple with the center of learning and development of the community. *Journal of Chaiyaphum Review*, 3(1), 37–49. Retrieved from <https://so02.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jcr/article/view/246227>
- Posttoday. (2016). *Taekwondo calls for blessings - receiving talismans*. Retrieved from <https://www.posttoday.com/sports/445639>
- Prateepavanich, S. (2015). The development of fashion from the beliefs and amulets of Thailand. *Veridian E-Journal, Silpakorn University (Humanities, Social Sciences and arts)*, 8(5), 59–73. Retrieved from <https://he02.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/Veridian-E-Journal/article/view/45418>
- Pratum, B. (2019). Buddhism: Superstition Ai Khai Wat Chedi with Commodification. *Journal of Human Society Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University*. 9(2), 1–18. Retrieved from <https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/humannstru62/article/view/227264>
- Sihawong, S. (2021). Cultural Diplomacy: Yoga for Health Care in Thailand. *Asia Paridarsana*, 42(2), 63–81. Retrieved from <https://so01.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/asianreview/article/view/249009>
- Thairath Online. (2020). *Spells and methods of worshipping the egg pagoda temple boy How to pray for blessings*. Retrieved from <https://www.thairath.co.th/lifestyle/culture/2000361>
- Treesub, D., Phra Khrusophonkityathorn, Phra Khruphichitsuphakan. (2015). The Buddhist Teachings which are Appeared in The Faith and Magical Ceremony of Khao-Aor School, Phatthalung Province. *Journal of MCU Nakhondhat*, 2(1), 42–48. Retrieved from <https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/JMND/article/view/152976>.