Site of Documentation

Akha group, Chiang Rai province, Northern Region of Thailand

Description

*Chan Angkarn* is a simple yet lively game that has been enjoyed by generations of Akha children. The game requires players to complete a sequence of jumps over a long rope made of rubber bands, which is held by their opponents. Each jump in the sequence is more challenging than the next and only the most agile win. The name of the game means “Monday and Tuesday”, as in each round the children have to jump the rope 6 to 7 times and chant the days of the week as they do so.

Who Plays?

This game requires a group of 5 to 10 players. Both boys and girls can play aged 7 to 12 years old.

Accessories/Equipments

This game requires a large number of rubber bands that are tied together to make a long rubber band rope. Children typically buy rubber bands at school stationary stores or from local shops and construct the rope themselves, prior to playing the game. The rubber band rope can be either a single thread (using
only one rubber band in each link, or a double thread where two rubber bands form a link. Ropes usually
are around 2 to 3 metres long to ensure there is plenty of space for the players to jump.

Time and Place

On average, a game of Chan Angkarn takes around 15 minutes to play, which makes it ideal for playing
during school lunch times. When children are out of school and have more free time, each game can last
up to an hour, depending on the speed, skill and fitness of players. The environment the game is played
in can affect the game’s duration, as children can become exhausted quickly. As a result, children usually
play this game where they can find a large space with smooth ground (such as a concrete floor or grass
lawn) and shade. Ideally, children need to find a space that is 4 x 8 meters, giving them plenty of room to
run and jump.

Skills, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player

The most important skill that this game requires is the ability to jump very high in the air. Often taller
children with longer legs have an advantage. All players have to be able to keep quiet and still, so to not
interrupt those who are jumping.

Popularity

Akha children play this game for fun and enjoy testing their skill at jumping the rope, against that of their
friends. It is particularly popular with girls aged 7 to 12 years old. Aspects of the game are similar to
Lanna children’s King Kong Keaw or O-Siw. Akha children have made the game more unique by adding a
final level that allows the children to experiment with the rubber rope, twisting it into squares and triangles
that they can then jump.

How the Game is Played?

Step 1: First players have to divide themselves into two equal sized teams. The teams then play Pao-
Ying-Chub (Hammer, Scissors and Paper) to determine which team jumps first. The winners jump, while
the losers hold the rope.
Step 2: The Holders tie the ends of the rope together to form a large circle. Two Holders stand about 1-3 metres apart from each other and place the rope around their calves, so that there are two ropes for their opponents to jump.
Step 3: The first Jumper has to jump so that one leg is inside the rope and one leg is outside the rope. They then hop to one side (so that both are outside the ropes) and as they do they have to say, “Chan” (Monday). They then have to jump back and straddle the other rope and say, “Angkarn” (Tuesday). The player has to keep jumping from side to side while they go through the days of the week, Puth” (Wednesday), “Paruhad” (Thursday), “Suk” (Friday), “Sao” (Saturday). On the last day, “Athit” (Sunday) the player must jump to one side of the rope with both feet to complete the round.

As the players progress through the game, the height of the rope gets higher and higher to make the game more difficult.
Level 1: Knee Height

In the first level the Holders have to tie the rubber rope around their knees. It is up to the Holders to tell the jumpers whether they can or not touch the rope as they jump. They can say either, “Din Dai” (“Can touch”) or “Ham din” (“Can’t touch”). The first Jumper has to hop one leg over one of the ropes and begins to jump from side to side while saying the day’s of the week, from ‘Monday’ to ‘Sunday,’ to finish the level.
Level 2: Waist Height

At this level the Holders tie the rubber rope around their waists. The Jumpers must jump for each day of the week, although at this height they are allowed to touch the rope as they do so.
Level 3: Navel Height

At this level Holders tie the rubber rope so it’s at the same height as their navel. The Jumpers must jump for each day of the week and are also allowed to touch the rope as they do so.

Level 4: Armpit Height

At this level Holders tie the rubber rope so it’s underneath their arm pits. The Jumpers must jump for each day of the week and are also allowed to touch the rope as they do so.
Level 5: Neck Height

At this level Holders tie the rubber rope so around their neck. The Jumpers must jump for each day of the week and are also allowed to touch the rope as they do so.
Step 4: When the team of Jumpers has completed all five levels they can enjoy a ‘free level’. Here the team can select how the rope is held, such as creating a triangle, square or a pentagon shape by making the Holders stand in certain positions. Once they complete this round the teams swap sides and play again.
Rules

1. If a player cannot clear a level, they can ask one of their team mates to jump it on their behalf. If the team mate also fails to clear the jump, the team loses and has to swap sides.

2. When trying to jump high levels, players are allowed to use their hands to hold the rope down while hopping over it.

3. A team mate can also step over the rope and hold it down to the ground. After that they do this, the remaining team mates have to jump for each day of the week as usual.

4. If there are only one or two players, the role can be tied to a pair or poles or trees instead.

5. There are no prizes for the winners or punishments for the losers; the game is just played for fun.