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Tai Yai group, Mae Hong Sorn Province, Thailand

Description
This version of *Pao Nang Yang Tong* is a rubber band blowing game widely enjoyed by Tai Yai children from the Mae Hong Sorn province in Northern Thailand. As it only requires couple of rubber bands, two players and the simple skill of blowing, it has become a popular way to pass the time both at school and at home. Tai-Yai children have two versions of this game that they play in pairs or small groups.

Who Plays?
This game requires two players. It is played by both boys and girls and is most suited to children aged between 5 and 12 years old.

Accessories/Equipment
This game is all about winning rubber bands and therefore this key item cannot be substituted with anything else. Rubber bands are often used in households to tie together multiple items or seal bags containing food. Light and cheap, they are found in abundance around the home or can easily be bought from local stores, making them a useful item for children to play with.
Time and Place

On average, a round of *Pao Nang Tong* will last around 1 to 3 minutes. Children are most likely to play the game during their lunch break at school or whenever they have free time with friends. The game can be played indoors throughout the year, no matter what the weather is. The game is best played on a large, smooth surface such as a flat floor or table, where there are no bumps or obstructions that could stop the rubber bands from being blown accurately.

Skill, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player

Children need to be able to blow their rubber bands accurately, so it lands on their opponent’s target. In order to do that, the best players are those that can take big, deep breaths and then using their mouths and cheeks, control the speed and direction of the air when they blow out. Most often, children learn this game from peers or older siblings and become good players through frequent practice.

Popularity

Tai Yai children play this game for fun and enjoy competing against each other to win the rubber bands. As the game can be played anywhere, it is played frequently. It is not a popular game among older children. The game is played in many other areas including the Tai Yuan Group in the Chiang Mai province and Akha Group in the Chiang Rai province.

History of the game

This game was also played by members of the older generations when they were young, much in the same way as it is today. It is presumed that the game has been played ever since rubber bands were first introduced into communities. Over two decades ago however, rubber bands were not as easy to find nor as cheap as they are today. Back then, children tried much harder to collect any unused rubber bands from their homes so they could increase their collections. They were also often determined to find way to improve the quality of their bands, using remedies such as soaking them in lard to make them bigger or selecting only bands that didn’t lie completely flat in an attempt to win more games.
Preparation

1. Both players play O-Chub to determine who will start the game.

How is the Game Played?

Step 1. Each player places their rubber band approximately 1 metre away from their opponent’s rubber band.
Step 2. Next, the first player using their breath, will blow their rubber band as hard as they can in the direction of their opponent’s rubber band. Once they have completed their turn, their opponent repeats the process, this time blowing their rubber band back towards the other player’s band.
Step 3. The players both continue to take turns until one of their rubber bands is blown onto their opponents. The bands must overlap for it to be considered a win. Whoever manages to do this first wins the game and can keep the loser’s rubber band as a prize.

Rules

1. Each player can only blow their rubber band once during a turn. If they blow more than once, they lose the game and their opponent can keep their rubber band.

2. The player whose rubber band is blown onto their opponent’s wins the game and can keep the loser’s rubber band as a prize.