Yon Yang Rod / Throwing Motorbike Tires

Site of Documentation

Akha group, Tambon Mae Yao, Mueang District, Chiang Rai Province

Description

Yon Yang Rod is a game played by Akha children living in the Chiang Rai province of Northern Thailand. In the game children compete with each other to see how far they can throw a disused motorcycle tire.

Who Plays?

This game requires a minimum of two players. Both boys and girls can play aged 7 to 12 years old.
**Accessories/Equipment**

Each player is required to have one old motorcycle tire. This can be found in the home, at local garages or from rubbish tips.

**Time and Place**

On average this game takes between 1-3 minutes to play. This game can be played all year round, as long as the weather is cool and dry. It is usually played in the evenings, on weekends or during holidays in quiet streets or around the village square. It requires a large, open space with a flat ground, free from obstructions.

**Skill, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player**

This game is a test of the player’s strength. The best players are those with a solid build and strong arms so that they can accurately throw the tire long distances. Children often learn this game by watching their friends play and perfect their skill through frequent practice.

**Popularity**

This game is most popular with young boys and often played alongside other games that use tires, such as Rod Yang.

**History of the game**

*Yon Yang Rod* was not played by members of the older generations, probably because when they were young the use of motorcycles was not widespread in small villages. The game has no formal name (*Yon Yang Rod* was a name created by the team of *Children’s Games* researchers) and is a good example of how children have created children new games, using modern materials. As a simple throwing game, it can be adapted to suit any objects that are readily available such as sticks, rocks, shoes, etc.

**Preparation**

1. First, each player must bring a used motorcycle tire to the game area.

2. Often the game area is a central point in the village, such as a quiet street or square, where there is a high curb that can be used as the finish line. If this is not available, children can just choose a large empty space such as a school playground and draw a finish line on the ground with chalk or by dragging a stick in the sand.
How is the Game Played?

**Step 1.** All the players have to agree on where the start line should be located. It is usually 5 to 6 metres away from the cement curb or finish line.

**Step 2.** When ready, all the players throw their tires towards the finish line. The player whose tire is thrown the furthest and lands closest to the finish line wins the game. Winners can punish the losing players by challenging with a task, getting them to perform a song or dance or even gently hitting them.