

中國  
兒童遊戲

CHINESE  
CHILDREN'S  
GAMES



CHINESE CHILDREN'S GAMES  
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## Introduction

I was raised in Hong Kong and I spent the years of my childhood there. When I first came to America I found that I really missed playing games in the streets and the fun that I had when all sorts of people joined in the game that my friends and I were playing. It was all so different in the United States. In Hong Kong we did not have many games that needed special equipment to start; ours needed only people. Maybe that was because I lived in a poor neighborhood and we did not have the money to buy them. In America instead of seeing games which were played by many people, I saw games being advertised on the television for which you had to buy equipment to be able to play.

The games that I have written down are according to my memory. The rules in these games might differ from neighborhood to neighborhood; sometime the games were played differently in different places. If there are any disagreements on the rules of the games it might be for that reason. All these games were played by both boys and girls.

*Shiu Ying Fung*  
馮小英

## SHOOTING

The Chinese have a way of choosing who is going to be first, or who wins at something, that is called in English "shooting for it". You may know this as the game of rock, scissors, and paper.

Rock, scissors and paper are represented by three positions of the hand. Rock is fist. Scissors is with the first two fingers sticking out and apart like scissors. Paper is a flat hand, palm up.

Two people can shoot for something by facing each other, each making a fist at shoulder height, saying rock, scissors, and paper, and, as they say paper, shooting the fist out in front of them in one of the three positions. One of the people wins as follows:

Rock beats scissors (by blunting them)

Scissors beats paper (by cutting)

Paper beats rock (by wrapping the rock up)

If both people make the same thing, they have to do it again.

Sometimes when you are shooting for something important you will do two out of three or three out of five times. In this case to have good style you should shoot so fast that you hardly see it.



PAPER



ROCK



SCISSORS

## CHOOSING TEAMS

The Chinese way of choosing teams is like this. Everyone stands in a circle with their hands flat on their chests. Then on the count of three, each person puts his hand into the circle either palm up palm down. Palm up is called white; the back of the hand is called black. If exactly half of the people show their palm and the other half, back of their hand, then the first group is one team, the white, and the other group is the black. If it doesn't come out half and half the first time, do it again until it does. If you have an odd number of people playing, one can step out and face away from the people who are choosing. After the teams are chosen, he will come back and say if he wants to be black or white, without knowing who is on which team. That is the nice thing about this way of choosing teams—it is all chance instead of picking the best players first. If there is a latecomer, then the team with less players gets him. If there is still another latecomer, he does the same as the odd person.



WHITE



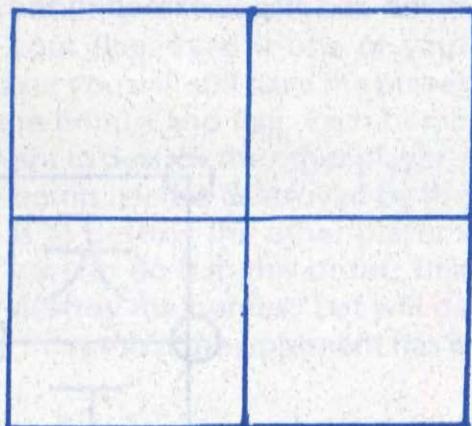
BLACK

# PEACE ON EARTH

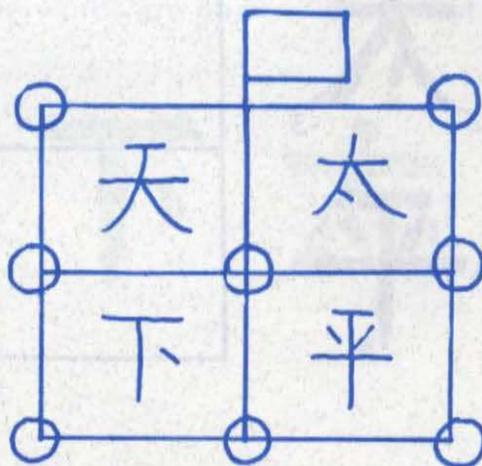
In Hong Kong there is a game called 天下太平, which means "peace on Earth". This is a black-board game; it also can be done on paper or on the ground. To play this game you have to have two players. They will have to know how to "shoot" the Chinese way. (see page 1) They will also have to know how to write the Chinese character which make up the name "Peace on Earth". The strokes of the words are numbered so that you can practice writing them.

天 下 太 平

Now the game is ready to start. First each player must draw a square as big as there is room for, and then divide the square into four parts. The square will have a cross in the middle. The distance between the two squares should be one or two feet apart. Both players now "shoot". The one who wins gets the first stroke of the word 天. He will write the first stroke of the word in the top left box of his square. The loser will not do anything. The goal for the first part of the game is to complete the four words stroke by



stroke, by winning in "shooting". The one who wins will always write a stroke. When you complete the first word you will start the second word in the bottom left square. For the third word you will start it in the top right square. The last word will be in the last square. When the first stroke is written then you will "shoot" again for the next. So the "shooting" goes on and on. When the player finishes the four words he will build bombs one at a time. The bombs are represented by a circle drawn on the corners of the four little squares that you have, except for the center top corner. Instead of having a bomb on that corner you will draw a flag. Each bomb and flag is earned in the same way, by "shooting".



Now let's say that player A finished first in writing the words; he also finished his bombs and flag; then when he wins again in shooting he will have the power to destroy one of the other player's words. To do so he will try to draw a straight line starting from one of his bombs to any part of one of his opponent's words but he may not lift up his pencil or chalk while he is doing this; this motion is very quick and sharp. If it is done slowly it is considered cheating. The other player can not do anything to stop him, but if the line breaks or misses the word, it does not destroy the word. The player must try again next time he wins at "shooting". The power to destroy can only be won when you have all your words written down, your bombs, and your flag. Even if one of your words is destroyed by the other player you will still have the power to destroy when you completed the bombs and flag. Each bomb can be used as many times as you want to destroy the other player's words, bombs, and flag, until the bomb itself is destroyed by the opponent. The goal of this game is to destroy the other player's words, bombs, and flag; but you have to do it in this order; first destroy the words, then you may destroy the bombs; last will be flag. The first one to destroy all the things that the opponent has is the winner.

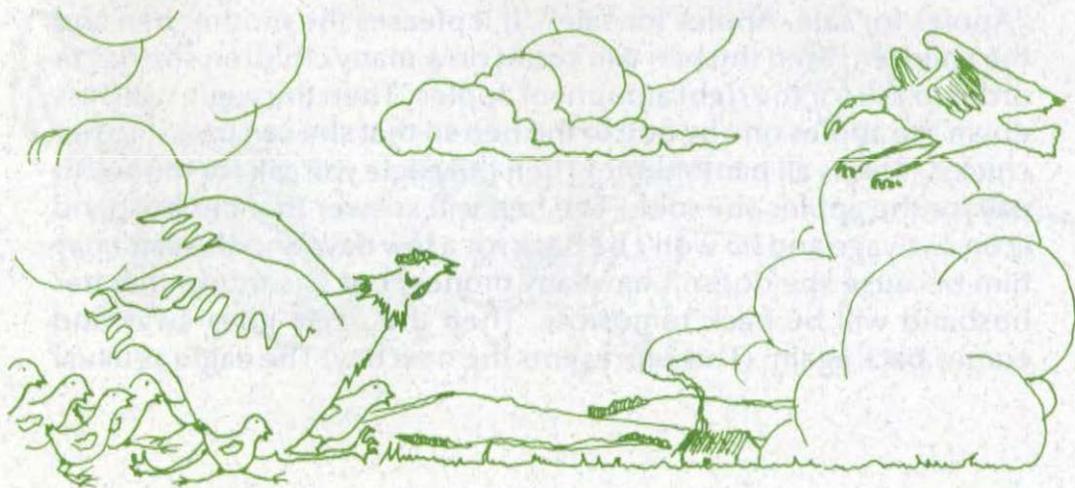


There is a game in China called “The Eagle and the Chicks”. This game needs at least four people to start, but the more people participating the merrier it would be. Out of the people you have, choose a person to be IT. He will be the eagle. Then choose a person to be the mother hen who will protect the chicks (the rest of the players). The goal of the eagle is to try to catch one of the chicks so that he doesn't have to be the eagle. The goal for the mother hen is to try and protect her chicks from the eagle. The eagle can catch the chick by tagging the chick and the mother hen can protect her children by spreading her arms shoulder high. Then she will line up her children one by one behind her. Then the rest of the chicks will hold onto each other's waists. The first one to be behind the mother hen will hold on to her waist. Now the chasing begins, the eagle is free to move anywhere he wants to but the mother hen will always try to be in front of the eagle so that he may not tag one of her chicks.

老鷹捉小雞

The eagle may not tag the person who is behind the hen by reaching under her arms and get the person who is behind her that way. He must try to catch the chicks by going around the mother hen. Since there is a long train of players behind the mother hen it is kind of hard for her to run about so the chicks will have to help her. They can help her by moving out of the way of the eagle.

The chicks don't have to stay with the mother hen all the time; they can run out of the line and play tag with the eagle. If the eagle catches a chick then that chick will be the eagle for the next game. If the chick sees that the eagle is catching up to him, he can crouch down and use both hands to pull his own ears. This is a sign of apology and the eagle may not tag him but if the chick gets up again then the eagle can try and tag him, but the chick can crouch down



and sort of wobble back to the line. If the eagle is chasing one of the chicks who is out of the line the hen must keep an eye on his in case the eagle changes his mind and goes for the line. To make this game more exciting it is better that the chicks don't stay with the hen all the time.

If ever the line is broken the eagle has a very good advantage on them because then the chicks will not have the protection of the mother.

There is a little skit before the tagging part. It is about the eagle and the chicken. In Hong Kong we used to act it out and it was fun to do. You can act it out if you want. In Hong Kong we used to begin the game in this way: first the chicks line up one by one behind the mother and the eagle will act as a salesman. He will shout out something for sale, usually food. Let's say that the eagle yells out "Apples for sale. Apples for sale". If it pleases the mother hen and the children, then the hen will count how many children she has in order to ask for the right amount of apples. Then the eagle will pass down the apples one by one to the hen so that she can pass it to her chicks. (This is all pantomime) Then the eagle will ask for money to pay for the apples she took. The hen will answer that her husband is on a voyage and he won't be back for a few days and she can't pay him because she doesn't have any money, but she thinks that her husband will be back tomorrow. Then the eagle goes away and comes back again. (This represents the next day) The eagle as usual

has something to sell and the hen takes some of the food for all her children to eat. Then again the eagle asks for the money to pay for the food including the food from the day before. The hen will say the same thing as she said the day before. Then the next day comes and the eagle again has something to sell. The hen again asks for food. Then the eagle asks for the money for the food that he has given her including the last two days and he doesn't want any excuse. Then hen will say that she doesn't have any money because her husband died in a plane crash. Then the eagle will say that he will have one of her chicks to pay the bill. The hen will reply that no matter what he does she will never give her children up. From then on the game starts with the chasing of the chicks as I described to you in the beginning of the game.



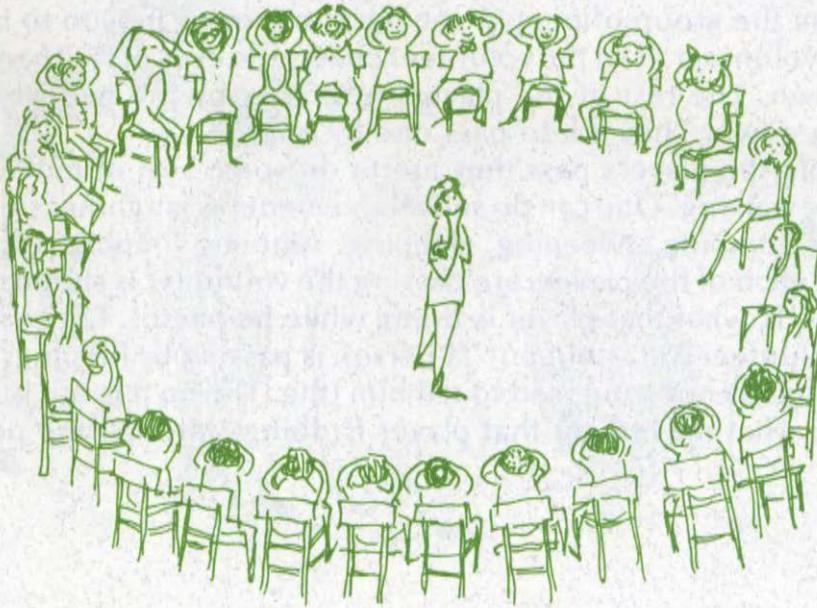
# FIND THE LEADER

There is a game I know that is fun to do. This game has the same basic principle as the game follow the leader, except that the leader is not known to the person who is IT: IT must guess who is the leader.

Any amount of people can participate in this game. First choose a person to be IT. Tell him to go away for a while. When he is gone have one person out of the group be a leader. After the leader is chosen, sit around in a circle. Then the leader will do a movement. The movement can be a clap, a jump, run in place, clap two times, a tap on the head, hit the person next to you, stamp on the floor etc . . . After the movement is started by the leader the rest of the players will follow what he does. When this is all set, call IT. IT has only three guesses to guess who the leader is. The leader can change his movements any time he wants and the rest of the players will have to follow as quickly as possible.

找 領 袖

The point of this game is to try not to let the guesser find out who the leader is. To avoid the leader being caught easily, try not to look at him too much. Try to look at someone else so as to mislead IT. The leader may make it harder for the person to guess by sticking to one movement very long time, so that IT might not catch on that he is the leader. He can also change his movements while IT is not looking at him. IT can take his time at guessing who the leader is. IT is always trying to spot who the rest of the group follows. If IT guesses wrong, he will have to be IT until he does, or unless he chooses to take a punishment instead.



# 英文 PEOPLE PASSING BY 行過

In Hong Kong there is a game called "people passing by". This game can be played by people of all ages but I think it is more fun for small children. It can be played with as many people as you want but you need at least five people to start.

From the group of people you have, choose a person to be IT, and a volunteer. First the volunteer covers the eyes of IT. Then they sit down. The rest of the players now pass by the two who are sitting down. They are to pass one by one.

While the players pass they are to do some sort of movement beside walking. One can do such movements as laughing, smiling, crying, jumping, sweeping, sleeping, running, limping, etc. . . . While each of the players are passing the volunteer is supposed to tell the IT what that player is doing while he passes. For example the volunteer will shout out "a person is passing by limping." The volunteer is not supposed to tell him (the IT) who it is but just tell the IT what movement that player is doing. After all the people

have finished passing by then the volunteer will uncover the eyes of IT. The volunteer will pick a particular movement that he saw; then tell the IT to guess who did that particular movement.

The rest of the players can pretend that they were the person who limped by. They can mislead the IT by acting embarrassed; or every one can act very calm. The IT only has one guess. If he misses he will be the IT again, or he may choose to sing a song to the people as a punishment. If he guesses right then the person who limped by will be the IT.



# BEAN CURD

There is a very complicated game played in Hong Kong in which many people can participate; you must have at least five people to start this game. Out of the people you have, choose a person to be IT. Then the rest of the players form a square. The players must stand on the perimeter of the square. The person who is IT will have to be in the center of the square, the square should be about thirty by thirty feet, or even a little bigger. The positions that the players take on the perimeter must be fixed, like bases. They can be anywhere you want them to be, but once you have chosen them, they must stay that way until the end of the game. If possible try to mark the fixed places the best you can by chalk or anything that you can find available, so that the players won't get mixed up about the positions. Those are the only spots where the players are supposed to be, and the number of fixed positions is always one less the number of the players. If the number of the players changes you add or subtract positions. It's just like musical chairs. In fact the whole game has the same basic principle as musical chairs but much more complicated and imaginative.

\*The game is called this because it is played in the shape of a square of beancurd.

# SQUARE GAME

The object of this game is to try not to let IT get your position so that you won't be IT. IT is like a clown, a sneaky man who tries to take your place. There are specific instructions for the IT and the other players to do and that is what makes this game so complicated.

IT will try any of the following instructions that I will give. The instructions are very detailed and almost like an acting game.

玻璃刺無鞋着

IT can tell the players that there is glass under their feet and they do not have any shoes. (translated from a little verse) This means that the players at the perimeter will have to skip around the outside of the square. They will skip around until they hear the IT call out stop. When he yells "stop" the players will stop and run to the nearest position. When the IT yells stop the IT himself will also run to a position. If the players have already occupied all of the fixed positions then the IT will have to stay in the center again. The IT may not move out of the center of the square even one step until he yells stop. If he does move before he yells stop, then it is considered cheating. The IT may not push or pull any players out of their positions for himself. The players can't push other players either.

## 講故事

The IT can tell the players to come over to hear a story. Then the players will leave their positions and go to the center of the square to listen to the story made by the IT. The IT must tell or begin to tell a story. No matter how silly it is, the beginning of the story must be heard. The players must keep an eye on the IT because if he stops telling the story and heads for one of the position then the other players better run too because if one of them is late then the IT might have taken his position and he will have to be IT. It doesn't matter if you land on a place that someone else had last time, just as long as you have a place you are safe.

## 馬騮爬樹

The IT can tell the players that he is doing the monkey climbing the trees, which means that out of all the players he will choose a victim and he will make his fingers walk up that person's neck. The players are at the perimeter of the square so that the IT will leave the center and go up to the player he chooses. If that person giggles or laughs he will have to be IT. The IT can make his fingers walk as slowly as he wants, but they must not go backwards or stay in one place all the time. When his fingers reach the person's chin and if the player did not laugh or giggle, he does not have to be IT. The IT can try this on as many players as he chooses.



## 長鏡

The IT can tell the players that he is doing the "long mirror." This means that he will tell funny stories to the players, or make funny faces. As long as it is funny it does not matter what he says. He will choose one player to amuse at a time. If the player he chooses laughs or giggles or even shows his teeth he will be IT. When he has chosen the player he will then leave the center and go up to the player he will then leave the center and go up to the player. The IT may do this as long as he wants and to as many players as he wants.

The reason why they called this particular part "The Long Mirror" is that the player has to extend his arm and look at his palm as if it were a mirror, and avoid looking at the IT. Then it is easier not to laugh. The IT may not come too close to the player he chooses; he must stay as far as the end of the player's arm when extended.

## 短鏡

The IT can also call the "short mirror," which is the same thing as the long mirror but the extension of the arm is shorter in this case. The players are supposed to bend their arm at the elbow look at their palms. The palm is fairly close to the players' faces so that the concentration on the palm is better and it might be harder for the IT to make the players laugh.

## 十字路口無路走

The IT can also tell the players to exchange places. They keep on doing so until the IT tells them to stop. Then they will have to hurry to one of the open positions. And if he gets there first, the left out player will have to be IT. Every one must run and exchange places when the IT says so and they may only stay in a position for a second before they head for another. That means that the IT will have an advantage because when he sees that not all the players are at a position he will yell stop and head for a position he had in mind. He may not leave the center until he yells stop.

## 晒衫

The IT can also tell the players that they are supposed to do "Hanging out the Clothing" that means that the players are supposed to put their arm out sideways shoulder-high and when the IT comes around he will try to hit your arms before you lower them down by your side. When this is being done the players on the square are supposed to say that you are bringing the clothes in. If the IT touches your arms before you bring them in then you will be the IT. The IT will have to be sneaky and try to sneak upon someone so that he is quicker than the player and fools him.

## 抱大石

The IT can tell the players that he is going to do "Holding of the Big Rock." The players will have to crouch down, and place their arms around their knees. The IT will leave the center and go up to one of the players and he will try to pick up and move the player to the center and if he does move one player to the center without putting him down once, then the player who is being moved is the IT.

## 抱大椿

The IT can also tell the player that he is doing "Holding of the Big Log", which is the same thing as the holding of the big rock except that the players are standing up and with their arms out to the side at shoulder height.

This game ends when the players do not want to play any more or when there are not enough players for this game.





In Hong Kong there is a game which has the same basic principle as the game "tag". This game can be played with as many people as you want, except that there has to be an even number of people.

Out of the group of people you have, choose a person to be IT. The basic rule of this game is that when the players are in pairs and they are touching. They are safe from the IT. Since you start with an even number of people, and have one person to be IT, the number of players (not including IT) will be odd.

That means that there is always at least one person the IT can go after. Obviously, if the players are chicken they will always stay together in pairs. To make this game more fun it is better to split up and only pair together in emergencies, when the IT comes for them. Any even number of people sticking together is safe; an odd number of players sticking together is not, which means if the IT comes around one person will have to run. If one person is really tired of running or cannot find anyone to pair with, he can force a person out of a pair by running up to them and sticking to them. If the IT is coming up to them one person will have to leave no matter what.

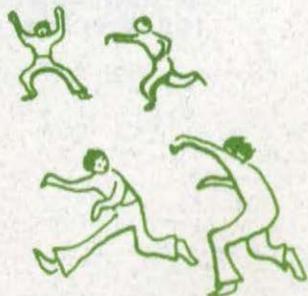
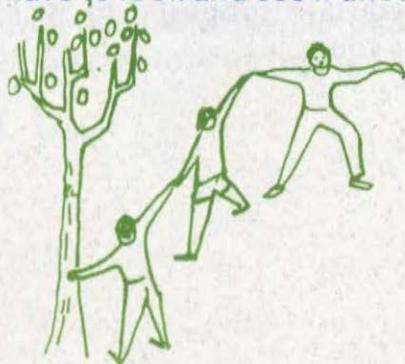
In Hong Kong when I played this game with other people there were no written rules. I just followed what other people did during the first time I played this game. The players I played with were very considerate of others: in time of emergency a pair would split up and try to help the person by distracting the IT from that person or by running up to the person who was being chased and pairing up with him. If a person came up to a pair there was never a fight about who should leave. We just split; there were never any questions or regrets.

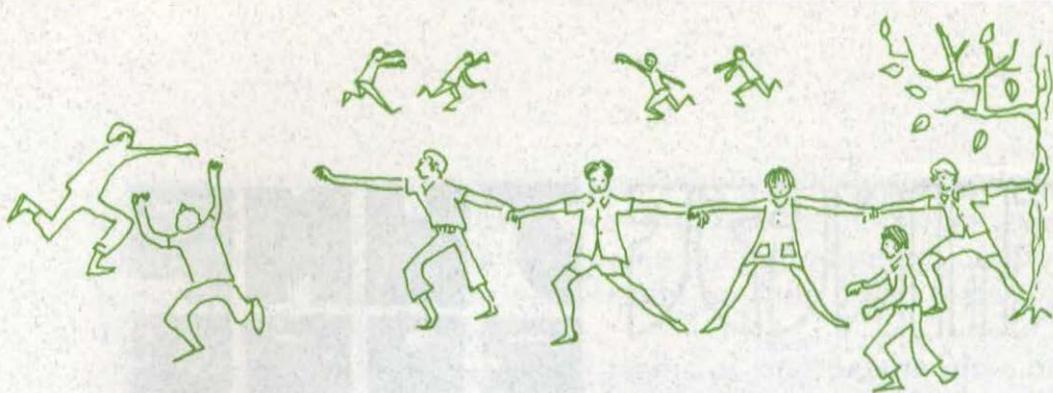
\*The game is called this because you are supposed to stick together like red beans cooked in hot soup.

# THE FIRST RUNS THE SECOND CHASES 先出後捉

There is a game in Taiwan which is very simple to play, although it sounds a little complicated. To start this game you will need at least four players, but the more the better. Out of the people you now have divided into two teams. (see page 2) Then one team will pick a home base. The other team will also pick a home base facing the other teams. The space between the two bases should be at least fifty feet. The teams start out grouped on their own base.

Now the game is ready to start but keep in mind that there are only two rules in this game. The most important one is that "the first runs, the second chases." Let's say that person A1 (from team A) is the first person to run out of his home base, and advance toward B team. Now team B will send out person B1, to chase after A1. It can be like a chain if another person A2 comes out and chases person B1. This can go on and on so each person who chases will have to look and see if another person is chasing him. It does not





have to be only one person at a time coming out, but the whole team can come out and run or tag the other team, just so long as you can keep track of the people who came before you so that you can catch them and keep track of the players who are after you, so you can avoid them. There is no one to decide who will go out or who is to chase what person. Just as long as people come out, that is fine. Anyone from the other team who came out after a person can chase him.

The second rule is that if a person runs back to his home he is safe but if he is caught he will have to be in jail. The jail is the home base of the other team. He must touch the other team's home base but he can stretch out his arm so that it will be easier for his team mates to touch him and free him. If there are many people caught by the other team then they can form a long chain holding hands, and only one of them needs to touch the enemy's base. If a player from their team comes along and touches the furthest person in the chain, then all of the prisoners are free to go home. They cannot be chased again until after they have touched their home base. The team that captures everyone on the other team wins.

# CHINESE JUMP ROPE

The game of Chinese jump rope is a very popular game in Hong Kong and also in the U.S.A. To play this game, you will have to have a special kind of rope. You can make it with rubber bands hooked together one by one until it is about 10 or 15 feet long. This game is not really jumping over the rope; you try to hook one foot over the rope, stretch it down, and turn as you get the other foot over. This has to be done in a very fast motion. If not, people will say you are cheating. There are many variations on this game. If I had the time, I could write a book on it, but for now this is only a little part of the game of Chinese jump rope.



The object of the game is to get your whole team (or just yourself if you are playing individually) over the rope in the proper style. This means that your team must make the same number of good jumps as it has people for each height position.\* The team that finishes the last height wins.

This game can be played with teams or one person after the other. You need at least three people to start: two to hold the rope and one to jump. For teams you have to have at least four people to start. You can have as big a team as you want to.

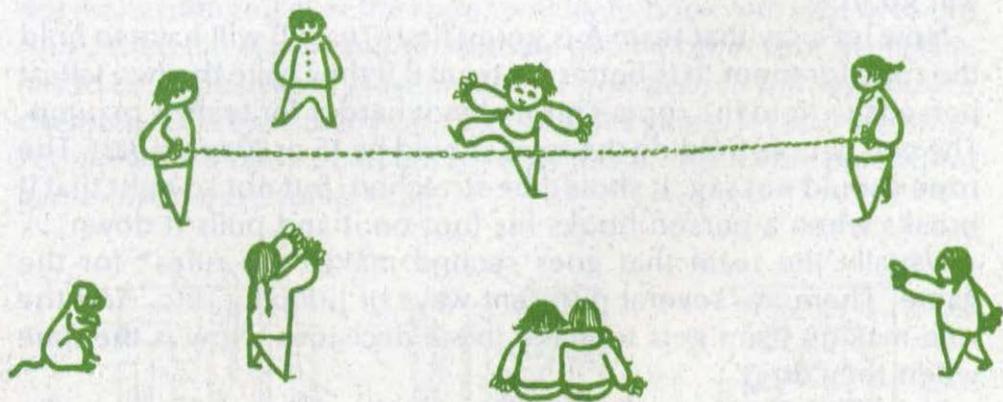
When the teams are settled, choose a captain for each team. The captain should be the best jumper; you will see why as we go along. Then the captains "shoot" (see page 1) to see which team will go first.

Now let's say that team A is going first. Team B will have to hold the rope for them. It is better for team B if they have the two tallest persons to hold the rope. This makes it harder for team A to jump. The two people holding the rope should be 15 or 20 feet apart. The rope should not sag. It should be stretched, but not so tight that it breaks when a person hooks his foot on it and pulls it down.

Usually the team that goes second makes the rules\* for the game. There are several different ways of jumping, etc. And the rule-making team gets to make those decisions. Now is the time when they do it.

Now, if team A goes first, 2 players are holding the rope in the first position.(knee-high). Everyone on team A must get over the rope; the captain goes last. At the lower heights they must jump over it in the regular way without touching it. ("No touching").

Later on, the real “Chinese jump rope” jump is used. If everyone on team A gets over the rope, team A keeps its turn, and the rope is moved to the second height. Team A keeps its turn until someone on the team misses a jump and no one else is able to save\* him. Then Team A holds the rope and team B gets to jump. When team B loses its turn, team A goes, but does not have to start at the beginning, but only from where they stopped, at the height position they could not do before. Even if a team is good enough to complete all the heights on its first turn, the other team still gets its turn and a chance to tie. You can start the game over if you want when there is a tie.



## DEFINITIONS\*

### Rulemaking

Both teams can make the rules if they want to, but usually when I played we agreed that the team that goes second makes the rules. If you decide this, then the team that goes first cannot change their mind and start making rules too. Also, the rule making team will have to stick to the rules they make too. The rule making team has to decide at what height regular jumping may be used. They have to decide what the final height will be. They have to decide if the "pinkie" technique will be allowed, and at what height.

### Heights

The first height for the rope to go is at knee height. The second is at the end of your fingers when your arm is down at your side. The third is at your waist. It is rare that "no touching" applies here, because it is very hard, but that is for the rulemaking team to decide. The fourth height is at the underarm. The fifth is at the shoulder. The sixth is at the ears. The seventh is at the top of the head. Sometime this is the last height of the game, but the rulemaking team can decide to go on for extra heights. The third-to-last is with your head, and the rope on top of the fist. The next-to-last height is with two fists on your head and the rope on top. The last is to hold the rope in your fingers with your arm straight up over your head.

## Saving

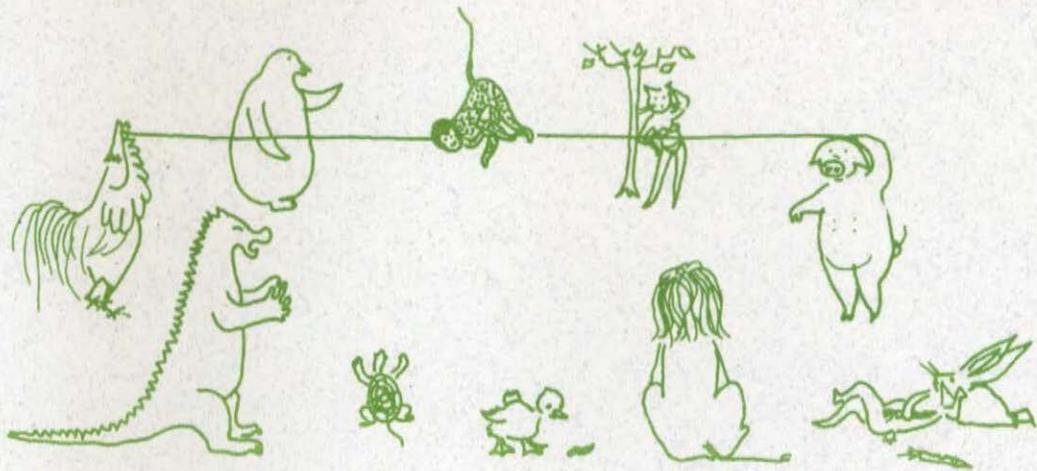
“Saving” if you are playing in teams, is a very important rule because it allows other members of the team to make up for the weaker players. The rule is that if a person misses a jump, the person after him may jump twice to make up for it. Of course, both those jumps must be good ones. Even if everyone else on the team misses, the team may still keep its turn if the captain can make enough good jumps: one for everyone on the team, including himself. This is why the best jumper should be the captain. The “saving” rule applies throughout the whole game, in all positions.

## Other Rules

There are several special rules you may use near the end when the rope gets so high that is very hard to hook your foot over it. The rulemaking team decides if and when you can use them.

## The Pinkie Technique

In the pinkie technique, you can use your little finger to pull the rope down so you can hook your foot on it. (You have to do this very fast or it is cheating.) You should use your right pinkie if you jump with your right foot first. We usually used the pinkie technique for the sixth position, and afterwards.



### Try

If you are not sure if you can jump at a certain height, you can say out loud "try" to the team holding the rope. That means if you miss that jump, it doesn't count, and you can jump again. If you make the jump, then it counts. Each person gets only one "try" on each height. You might want to "try" a jump without using the pinkie technique, and then, if you miss, jump again using your pinkie.

### Variations

Some of the many variations on this game are:

Special steps where you have to twist the elastic rope around your leg once or more, then touch the floor on the other side while hopping to the rhythm of a verse; doing this but using two ropes with different twists for each; "building a house," which is a long, long game in which you have to keep hopping to a verse with higher and higher numbers.

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