

PAI GOW



By 

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INTRODUCTION

The first time I saw the game of Pai Gow at the ██████████ ██████████, in the summer of 1979, it appeared like the proverbial "Chinese fire drill." A half dozen men of obvious Oriental descent surrounded a green felt table, which at first appeared to be a normal Blackjack table. A dealer, leaning over the center of this table, was stirring an undetermined number of black dominos while the players, in a sing-song language, argue about some previous outcome on which multi-colored barber poles of casino chips were wagered. The dealer then rapidly stacked the dominos which he placed into the center of the table. With his right hand the dealer cast three white dice off the top of the ominous domino wall which rolled to various places on the table. A burst of shouts came from the players who either agreed or disagreed with their chance of winning the next outcome. The dealer, driven by some cosmic information derived from the sugar cube dice, began to separate the dominoes and deliver groups of four to each one of the players. Through both sight and feel the players analyzed their dominos and placed them in two stacks in front of their rainbow colored wagers. With another outbreak of sighs and moans the dealer exposed the dotted surfaces of his dominoes and began turning over each player's dominoes in the same manner which triggered yet another verbal barrage. Money and dominoes, for no apparent reason, exchanged hands between the house and the players in a manner that to an uneducated observer as myself seemed totally out of control. As I left the table, more confused then ever, I asked myself these questions; how is Pai Gow played? What kind of edge does the house have? Is there any way to protect it? Is there any way to learn it?

As a some-what experienced casino-wise person and a member of the ██████████ Gaming Control Board, I was fascinated with this game I didn't understand. I was eager enough to learn this game of domino rankings, foreign traditions, and rules alien to my beloved games of Blackjack, Craps and Roulette but the availability of Pai Gow experts, at least experts that I could understand, were nonexistent.

The task of finding information about Pai Gow turned out to be more difficult than the game itself. As a Gaming Control agent located in [REDACTED] [REDACTED], only one casino was available that offered Pai Gow, [REDACTED].

How excited I was to enter beautiful [REDACTED] and find the only Pai Gow table south of [REDACTED] filled with players. The sight before me was no less spectacular than my previous vision with the clicking dominoes, the barber pole stacks of chips and unusual language. I promised myself that I would not leave this Pai Gow paradise until I fully understood all the aspects of this alien game. But as a Gaming Control agent I was forbidden to play any casino game unless I was involved in an immediate investigation (even if I could have afforded the \$25 minimum bet.) I approached the pit boss in charge of the pit which contained the Pai Gow table, identified myself as an agent with the Gaming Control Board and advised him that I wanted to know all about this game that held my fascination. "Beats me how its played" he replied, "ask one of the Chinese floormen watching the game." At least I was getting closer to my objective. I proceeded to the Chinese floorman who would obviously explain the entire meaning of Pai Gow and the tradition behind it, my mentor for life! "Excuse me sir," I asked "could you please explain this game to me." Without looking up, this floorman, who showed wisdom beyond his years, shoved a two page brochure into my hand and said, "here, you read." To my dismay the information in the little brochure was so vague that I was more confused then ever. Years later I discovered that these handouts were for the non-orientals or "Lo Fons" who asked about the game. It wasn't rudeness on the floorman's part. It's because of the inability of some Chinese to communicate information of a technical nature in English. So away I dejectedly walked, clutching my useless Pai Gow brochure, wondering if I would ever understand a simple fact such as what the red dots on the dominos meant.

Over the next month I experienced two major breakthroughs in my quest. First, right under my nose, was a Gaming agent who not only knew Pai Gow but had played it extensively while in Viet Nam. He quickly became my tutor, instructing me to learn the domino or, as he put it "card" rankings, before he would explain the rules of the game. Fortunately I had not jettisoned the "Lo Fon" brochure since it held both pair and individual card rankings. Over the next week I learned the rankings by heart. After proving to my instructor that I knew the rankings, he produced a deck of 32 dog-eared

playing cards. These cards had printed on their faces the same incoherent series of red and white dots that I had only seen previously on dominos (and I have since to see such a deck.) During the next several weeks terms like; Wong, Gong, High Nine, Bo, Gee Jun, Teen and Day, became household words, at least in my household. I purchased two sets of "American Dominos" and some red model airplane paint from the local hobby shop and constructed my very first set of Pai Gow dominos. I was far from being "a Lo Fon Pai Gow expert" but at least I grasped the concept.

My next trip to Pai Gow paradise was much more satisfying than my first disastrous odyssey. But my observations produced new questions. Why would a player split a pair, since pairs are regarded as a good hand? What possesses players to play the same combinations of dominos differently? Is there such a thing as a basic strategy as in blackjack?

During one such observation I realized that I was not alone in my search to achieve knowledge of this mysterious game. While watching a large "action" game at [REDACTED], where thousands of dollars were being won and lost with each "stir" of the dominos, I felt the presence of a large mass standing behind me. I was aware that [REDACTED] had just ended his performance of the early show in [REDACTED] elegant show room and that the crush of people moving behind me were attempting to occupy a spot at their favorite gambling table, but someone of large proportion had stopped and was now drawing a bead on the action at the Pai Gow table. As I turned I noticed that this "Cowboy" stood at least 6'6" tall. He was wearing a "Hoss" type hat that made him seem even taller, and a brushed leather and fur coat that made his large build even bigger. While clutching a large cigar between his teeth, he stared intently at the much smaller Chinese and the exchange of thousands of dollars in chips. With a gruff and booming voice he expressed his desire to know more about my beloved Pai Gow. "What kind of pussy game is this??" As he blew an ominous cloud of cigar smoke and walked away from the apparently unoffended Chinese, I thought to myself; "Ah, another Pai Gow novice."

If there is an unofficial "Mecca" for both players and gaming employees, it would have to be [REDACTED] located in [REDACTED]. The name is some what mis-leading since it is not a [REDACTED] but a book store that contains almost ever gaming book in print. Most of my gaming

questions, over the years, have been answered by a brief "pilgrimage" to "Mecca."

My second breakthrough came during my next pilgrimage. I inquired upon the chance that possibly some one, hopefully English speaking, had put information in print that would explain this oriental game. I was surprised to discover that not only one book had been written but two different books maintained an exalted position on the book store shelves. But with a closer observation of the material I realized only one of the books went into detail regarding strategies of play. "Gambling Games of the Chinese in America" written in 1891 by [REDACTED], contain only a few paragraphs regarding Pai Gow. This book dealt with the traditional aspects of the game instead of technique. Tradition could wait! I needed strategy! The other book was written by [REDACTED] and titled [REDACTED]. At the time of printing, [REDACTED] had worked as Pai Gow supervisor for several casinos in [REDACTED] and was currently a Pai Gow games manager in [REDACTED]. What separated [REDACTED] from the rest of the "Lo Fons" in the gaming industry was his working knowledge of the Chinese language. His book contained, not only traditional information, but disclosed in detail a house strategy, how the dice are used and why, and different domino deliveries. Armed with this information I could now confidently carry on a discussion regarding Pai Gow.

During the next several years I contacted many individuals, both Chinese and non-Chinese, regarding strategies, procedures and game protection. Now my simple questions were replaced by more complicated interrogatories such as what is the house's advantage over a person acting as a player? As the banker? What is the best house strategy? Does the knowledge of one of the banker's dominos give the player an advantage? Questions of these types cannot be answered by the traditional experts but only by persons well versed in computer analysis. Then came [REDACTED]!

[REDACTED] has written several professional papers concerning the game of Pai Gow. [REDACTED] has produced computer simulations that have opened the door to establishing house advantages, certain domino effects when removed and optimal playing strategies. Through [REDACTED] work, data can be obtained which will outline the strengths and weaknesses of the game, enabling the casino executive to fully understand what procedures must be

used to properly protect Pai Gow. With this information and the information gathered from interviews, I was now able to start offering my service as a Pai Gow consultant.

During the next several years I contracted many hours of work out to casinos and cardrooms throughout [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Some of the work was evaluating certain gaming establishments procedures, while others required classes on game protection. Work of this type was very entertaining and a great education. During those years I started to build up a reputation which led to my most cherished achievement, becoming a Pai Gow manager at a major [REDACTED] hotel.

Being a Pai Gow manager, or as the Chinese say "Lo Bon," has opened my eyes to the other side of Pai Gow that I had put off for quite some time. Finally I experienced the traditional end of the game first hand. I learned about many aspects of Pai Gow which the Chinese hold as sacred. About their views concerning gambling superstitions, their holidays, their pride and, most importantly, their attitude towards the "Lo Fons." It was the latter views that lead me to understand why it had been so hard to obtain information about Pai Gow. As I have been told, the Chinese are bothered by the Occidental lack of respect towards Pai Gow.

During one occasion I observed a "Lo Fon" pay for his education. After watching several hands of Pai Gow, the player produced some chips and made a fairly large wager. When asked politely by the dealer if he knew how to play Pai Gow the player stated very rudely that "this is a simple game, just deal me in." After receiving his hand, the player stared blankly at the dominoes for quite some time until the dealer inquired if he needed some help setting his hand. The dealer advised the player of the "house way" of setting the hand. Of course the player had no alternative but to follow the dealers instructions but commented "I knew that was the right way to play that hand." The dealer then set his hand and advised the player of the outcome, win, lose or draw. "Yea, I know what you got," stated the player, "deal me in again." This continued until the player "I know'd" himself out of ten thousand dollars! After losing the last hand and still not having any idea what was going on, our "Ugly American" player marched off exclaiming, "what a stupid game." This is when I learned my favorite Chinese expression. "Sop San Dim Lo Fon", or roughly translated, "Crazy Non-oriental."

Speaking of "Ugly Americans," I also realized that many of the Chinese dealers were terrified of the "Occidental" players. One of my female dealers had a terrible fear of the "Lo Fons." I was told that she had had a bad experience with a player when she was just learning to speak English. As the story goes, an "Occidental" player made several substantial wagers which he promptly lost to bad luck. The player then claimed that he was cheated since he did not understand Pai Gow and the dealer refused to answer questions about how the game was played. After a lengthy shouting match between the player, the floor supervisor, and the pit boss, the player got back his wagers. The poor confused and embarrassed dealer was then admonished, in English, by the pit boss. From that day on, any "Lo Fon" that came to her table gave her a bad case of the shakes. The uglier and bigger the "Lo Fon," the worst she would get. One day I was standing in the pit next to the Pai Gow table to which this female dealer was assigned. I was either busily going over player rating cards or talking about sports with one of the twenty-one floor supervisors, when I heard my dealer let out a low moan, "Ohhh." As I turned to look at her I noticed that all the blood had drained from her face. Her eyes were wide and full of terror. She stared at me with a gaze of impending doom and stated, "Ohhh [REDACTED], look!" As if personally experiencing "De Ja Vu," I saw the image of a huge man wearing a "Hoss" type cowboy hat and smoking a large cigar. "Hey little lady," the giant wrangler stated, "how 'bout you'll teaching me this h're pussy game." All my dealer could do is shake like a willow in a wind storm and say, "Ohhh!"

I hope that this book will make learning Pai Gow as easy as possible. This book will not only teach you the basics of how to play the game but also the more advanced topics such as strategies, proper procedures and how Pai Gow is protected. I have broken this book into four chapters, "UNDERSTANDING PAI GOW, PLAYING STRATEGIES, GENERAL PROCEDURES and GAME PROTECTION." Each section is structured to take the reader step by step through the material in an understandable manner. You may have noticed that I have left the history of Pai Gow out of the text. It's my belief that the reader is willing to put his time into learning how to play Pai Gow. If the reader, after learning how to play Pai Gow wants to learn the history and tradition (which is all hearsay anyway,) I strongly recommend the two previously mentioned books. All of my experiences, interviews and research from the past ten years are available to the interested student who

spends the time to read this material. So, happy reading, study hard and "Ho Choy" (good luck.)

UNDERSTANDING PAI GOW

The key to learning Pai Gow is contained in this next paragraph. If you remember and use these two facts, Pai Gow will be that much easier to learn. Ready?

Fact #1- You don't need to speak Chinese to learn Pai Gow.

Fact #2- The red dots on the Pai Gow dominos are of no importance.

Got the idea? Ok, let me state these facts again. First, you do not need to speak Chinese in order to learn (or protect) Pai Gow. Second, the red colored dots have no special value. They are just dots. After understanding these two concepts the game of Pai Gow is no different from learning Twenty-one, checkers, Monopoly or Chutes and Ladders.

If we attempt to learn Pai Gow in the same way as we would learn any popular board game, the rules would look like this:

BRIEF IDEA OF HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

The object of the game is to beat the banker or on occasion, the non-banking players. Each player and the banker will receive four (4) dominos which he will use to construct two (2) separate hands of two (2) dominos each. In order for the player to win, both of his hands must be higher in value than the opposing banker or player. If only one hand is higher, the player pushes (will not win or lose.) If neither hand is higher, the player will lose. Dice will be used only to determine which player will receive the first set of four dominos. All bets must be placed before the dice are totaled and the players receive their dominos. All winning bets are charged a 5% commission by the house (5% commission is charged in ██████ casinos.)

LIST OF EQUIPMENT

The following equipment will be used in the game of Pai Gow;

Thirty-two (32) dominos which consist of sixteen pairs.

Three (3) dice

One (1) dice cup (optional)

One (1) Banker marker (also known as a "Chung.")
 One (1) Pai Gow table containing seven betting circles (eight circles in [redacted])

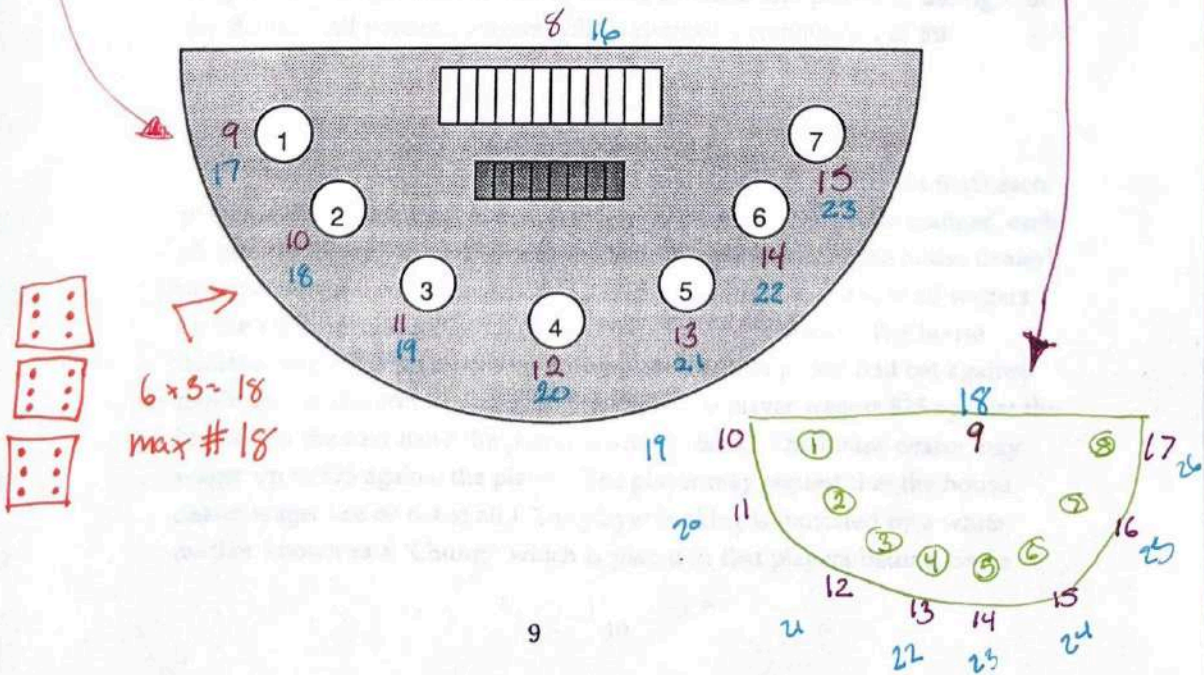
And of course;

One (1) Pai Gow Dealer

RULES OF PLAY

BASIC PLAY

The game of Pai Gow starts when the dealer shuffles or mixes the dominos face down and stacks them into eight (8) stacks of four (4) dominos each. Each player is then required to make a wager. After all wagers have been made, the dealer will shake the three (3) dice which are concealed in the dice cup. The cup will then be uncovered and the dice totaled. The total of the dice will indicate to the dealer where the first stack of four dominos will be delivered. The banker (in this case the dealer) will always receive the first stack of dominos when the dice total 9 or 17. Any other total will be delivered to the indicated spot counter-clockwise from the banker.



As an example; the dice total "13." The first stack of dominos is delivered to the 4th circle. Since the banker (dealer) is position 9, then circle 1 is position 10, circle 2 is position 11, circle 3 is position 12 and circle 4 is position 13.

After the first stack of dominos is delivered, the remaining stacks will be delivered in a counter-clockwise manner until all stacks have been delivered. Any stacks delivered to unoccupied wagering circles will be gathered up and placed to the left of the dealer.

Each player will then examine their dominos and set them into two (2) hands of two (2) dominos each. Once a player has determined how the domino hands should be set, the player places them side-by-side in front of his betting circle. After every player has set their hand, the dealer will then expose his hand and set it in the same manner. The dealer will always set his hand in a predetermined manner known as the house strategy or "House Way". Once the dealer's (banker's) hand is set, the dealer will expose each player's hand, moving counter-clockwise and determine whether the player won, lost or tied. If the player ties the dealer, his wager will remain in the betting circle and the dominos will be collected and placed to the right of the dealer. If the player loses to the dealer, his wager will be lost and the dominos will be collected and placed to the right of the dealer. If the player wins, his wager will be paid an equal amount (example: \$10 will be paid \$10.) After the wager has been paid, the dominos will be collected and placed to the right of the dealer. All winning wagers will be charged a commission of 5%.

PLAYER ACTING AS A BANKER

After the house has banked, (the house dealer always banks first) each player may become the banker. Moving in a counter-clockwise manner, each player has the option to bank against the other players (and the house dealer) or pass the bank. A player wishing to bank must be able to cover all wagers on the table, including the wager made by the house dealer. The house dealer's wager is determined by the amount that that player had bet against the house on the previous wager. (Example: the player wagers \$25 against the house. On the next hand the player wishes to bank. The house dealer may wager up to \$25 against the player. The player may request that the house dealer wager less or not at all.) The player banking is indicated by a white marker known as a "Chung," which is placed in that player's betting circle.

The Player-Banker isn't allowed to look at the other players hands since this might alter the way he would have played his hand.

After the dealer has shuffled the dominos, the player banking has the right to request which stack of dominos is to be delivered first and will shake the dice. The first stack delivered will be determined by counting from the player banking instead of the dealer (always start from the banker.) After all players have set their hands, the player banking will then set his hand. Once the player banking has set his hand, then the house dealer will expose and set his hand the "House Way." The house hand will be compared to the player banking hand before any other actions are taken. Once the house hand has been decided, the dealer will expose all the other player's hands, starting to the right of the player banking's hand, and determine the outcome. (Remember, the player banking's hand is compared with the other players to determine win, lose and tie. The player banking is financially responsible for all winners and losers.) After all winners and losers have been settled, the player banking will pay a commission on the net winnings. If the player banking is not a net winner, no commission is collected by the house. All other players that win will be charged a commission. A player may only bank once before the house dealer banks again.

But not uncover the cup. It's the dealer's responsibility to uncover the cup

BANKERS ADVANTAGE

The banker (whether the player or the dealer) has an additional "built in" advantage. The banker wins all zero-zero push hands and when the Player and the Banker tie on the high domino in their hands.

SETTING THE DOMINOS

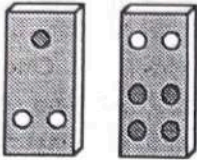
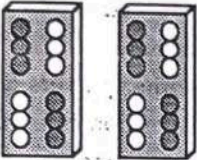
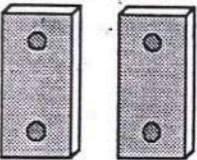
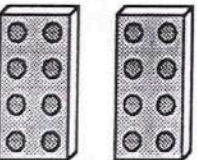
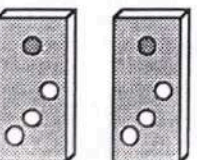
The dominos are set into two hands of two dominos. Each are ranked in the following manner:

- 1.) Pairs (also known as "Bo's")
- 2.) Wong, Gong and High Nine
- 3.) Two Domino Totals Closest to Nine

Highest
↓
Lowest

Since there are thirty-two dominos to a set, there are sixteen mates or pairs (Bo's.) Pairs are always higher in value than Wongs, Gongs, High Nines or two domino totals closest to nine. Wongs, Gongs and High Nines are always higher in value than two domino totals.

The Pairs (Bo's) are ranked as follows:

Dominos	Chinese Names	Ranking	Listing Name
601 > 	<u>The Supreme Pair</u> Gee Jun	1st	The Supreme Creator Gee What came before everything else, the creator. <u>Gee</u>
606 > 	Heaven Teen	2nd	The creator ^{1st} made the stars to fill the void of space. 12
599 > 	Earth Day	3rd	The creator made Earth. 2
595 > 	Man Yun	4th	The creator made man to live on this earth. <u>High 8</u>
597 > 	Goose Gor	5th	The creator made Goose for the man to eat. <u>High 4</u>

Highest

5944

Plum Flower
Mooy 6th

The creator made flowers to give the earth beauty.

High 10

50

Long Chong 7th

The creator made long robes so that the man could clothe himself.

High 6

4

Board Bon 8th

The creator made boards to make benches for the man to sit on.

Low 4

30

Hatchet Foo 9th

The creator made hatchets for the man to chop wood with.

11

2

Partition Ping 10th

As the man's family grew, he made partitions to separate the rooms in the man's house.

Low 10

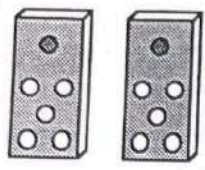
10

Long Leg Tit Seven 11th

Long Leg Seven

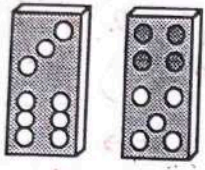
The man's seventh child had long legs.

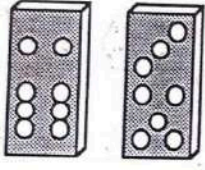
High 7

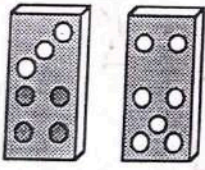
5900  Big Head Six Look 12th Low 6

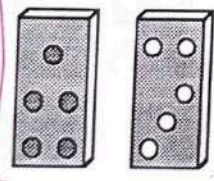
the man's 6th child had a big head

military pairs these are mixed pairs that represent the military. the greater the number of dots, the higher the rank

 Chop Gow 13th 9

 Chop Bot 14th Low 8

 Chop Chit 15th Low 7

5000  Chop Ng 16th 5

The dominos are ranked with the highest pair as the Gee Jun and the lowest as the mixed five pair.

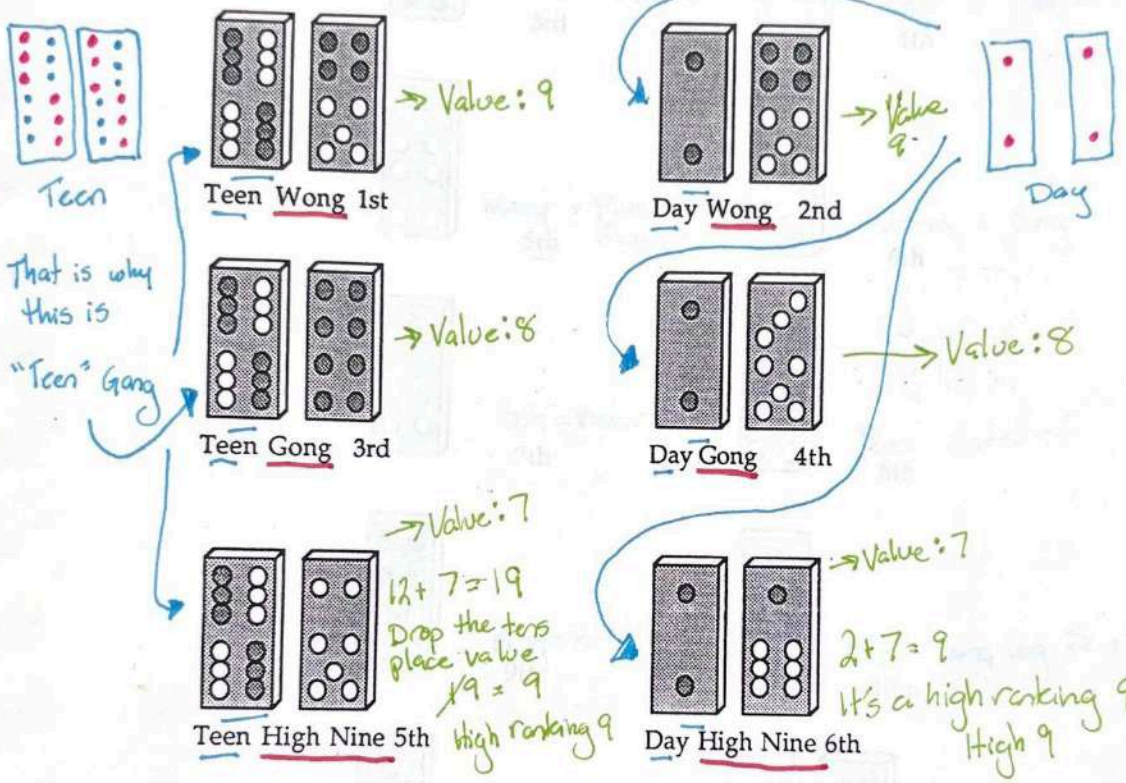
If you can't make ^{any} of the above mentioned pairs, then next shoot for a Wong, Gong or High 9

→ Gee Jun, Teen, Day, Yui...

Wongs, Gongs and high nine can be paired with 9's, 8's or 7's.

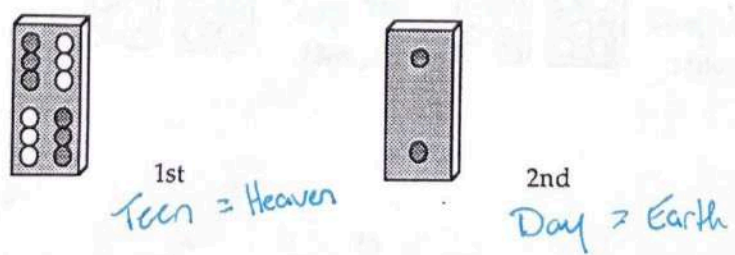
Wong, Gong and High Nine will always be higher in rank than any two domino total even if the two dominos total nine (highest total.)

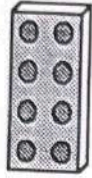
The Wong, Gong and High Nine are ranked as follows:



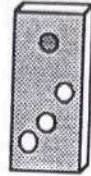
Individual Domino Rankings

When determining hands of equal totals, it is important to know which domino is highest in ranking. The individual domino rankings are as follows:

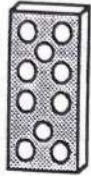




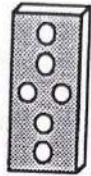
Yun = Man
3rd



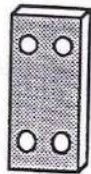
Gor = Geese
4th



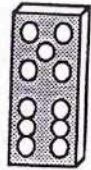
mooy = Plum Flower
5th



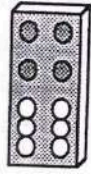
Chong = Long
6th



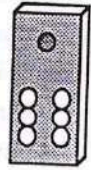
Paen = Board
7th



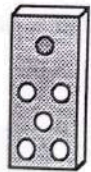
Foo = Hatchet
8th



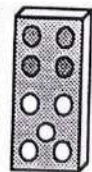
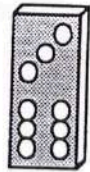
Ping = Partition
9th



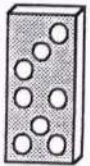
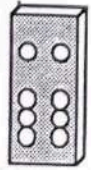
Tit = Long leg Seven
10th



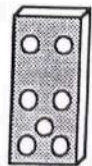
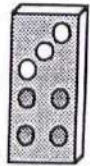
look = Big head 6
11th



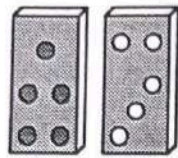
Chop Gow
12th



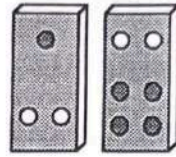
Chop Bot
13th



Chop Chit
14th



Chop Ng
15th



Gee Jun = The Supreme Pair
16th

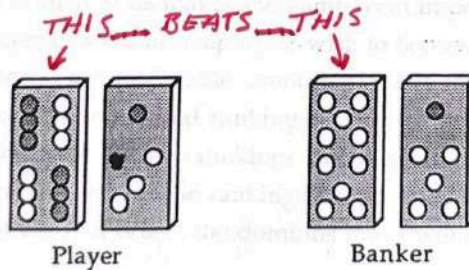
The individual rankings are similar to the pair rankings with the only exception being the Gee Jun dominos. **As a pair, the Gee pair is the highest or supreme pair. As individual dominos played separately, they become the lowest or weakest dominos.**

When adding two dominos, the total can never exceed nine. If the total goes over nine, the last digit of that number is the only digit used.

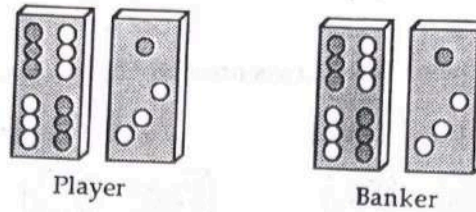
Like baccarat

(Example: dominos of 8 and 10 will equal 18. The first digit is dropped and the total becomes 8.)

Since the player will set two hands, one hand will normally be higher than the other hand. When comparing hands with the banker, the lower hand is compared to the bankers lower hand and the higher hand is compared to the bankers higher hand. When comparing two domino hands, the hand which is higher in ranking or value will win (again, for the player to win he must out rank or have a higher value than the banker on both two domino hands. If one hand is out ranked or under valued, the player ties. If both hands are lower, the player loses.) In case of a value tie, the highest domino in each hand is compared and the highest ranked domino breaks the tie.



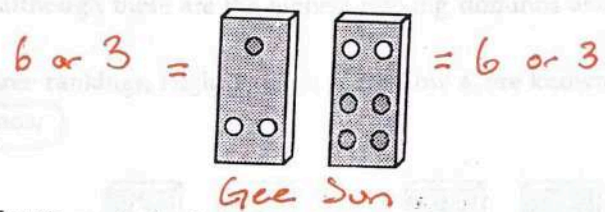
(Example: both the player and the banker have a hand which totals "6." The player has the highest domino and wins.)



If both the player's and the banker's highest ranked dominos are identical, the banker wins the tie.

WILD DOMINOS

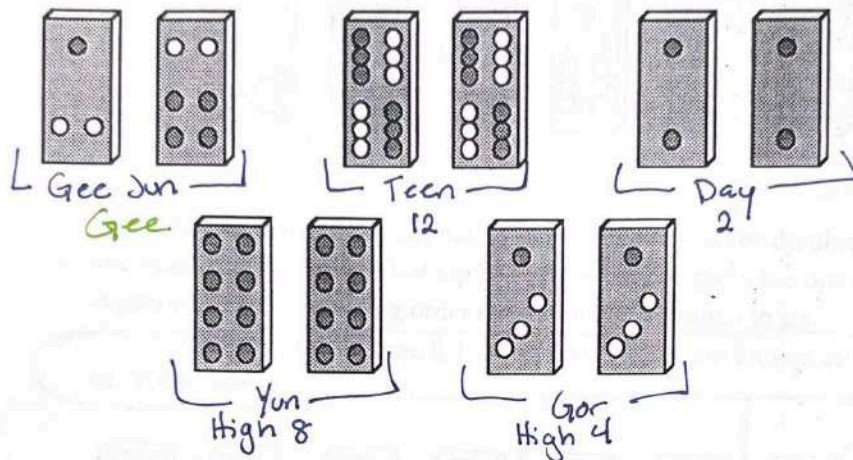
The Gee dominos act as "wild" dominos because they have interchanging values. The Gee pair is made up from a "two over four" six and a "one over two" three. Either domino may be used as the value six or three at the discretion of the player.



Now there's a set of rules even Milton Bradley would be proud to print. Pai Gow is not a very tough game to play. The fact that most of the equipment is alien to us makes the game seem impossible to learn. If you, as either a player or a casino employee, wish to become familiar with Pai Gow, you must spend a considerable amount of study time just to learn the domino pair and individual rankings.

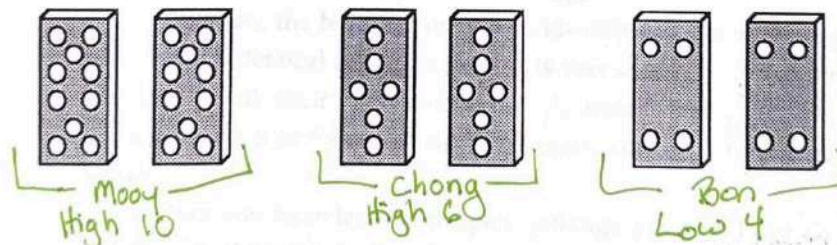
Learning the domino rankings can be made easier if the student puts them in a proper order. The rankings are basically in numeric order and once you learn to use that order, the dominos ranks will take no time to remember.

The first five rankings you should learn are the Gee, Teen (12), Day (2), High 8 and High 4;



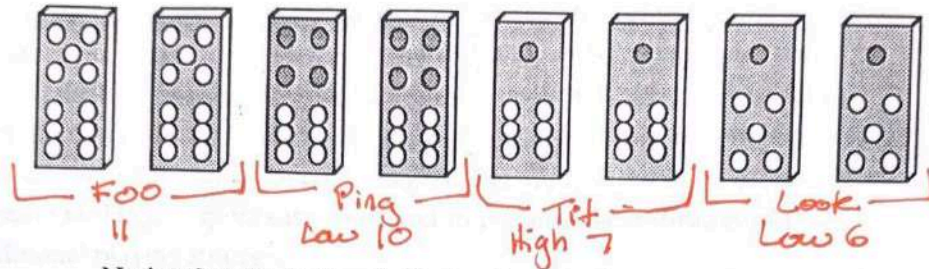
These five dominos need to be memorized since there is no descending numerical order, although these are the highest ranking dominos and are important.

The next three rankings, High 10, High 6 and Low 4, are known as the "all white" dominos;



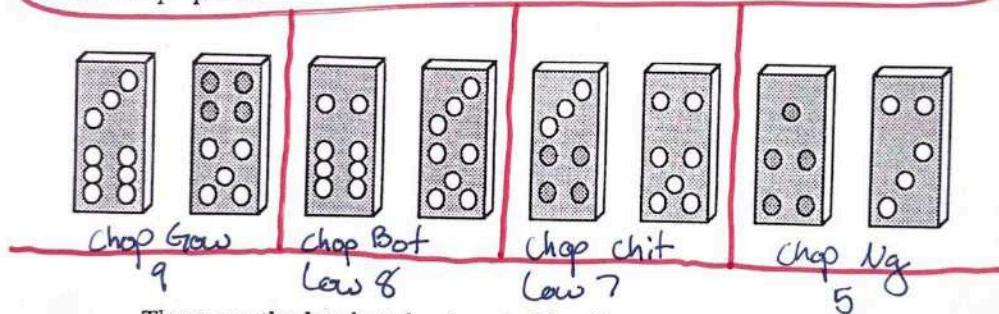
These dominos are not only all white, but if you divide each domino in half, you will notice that the top portion of the domino is identical to the bottom. (Example: the High 10 is made up from two groups of five all white spots.) The dominos are also in descending order, ten down to four, and are all even numbers.

The next four rankings, 11, Low 10, High 7 and Low 6, also have similar characteristics.



Notice that the bottom half of each of the first three dominos contains six white spots, while the last top half of the last two pairs has one red spot. Again we see a descending order eleven to ten and seven to six.

The last four dominos, 9, Low 8, Low 7 and 5, are known as the mixed or "chop" pairs.





These are the hardest dominos to identify as pairs while in play because they are not identical in appearance. It is very common to confuse the Low 8 and Low 7 with their higher numerical likenesses. This problem will not occur with the 9 or 5 since there are no other pairs of the same numerical value.

Once you have learned the pair rankings, you will have also learned the individual rankings. Remember, the only difference between the pairs and individual rankings is the Gee. In pair rankings, the Gee is the highest. In individual rankings, the 12 (Teen) is the highest and the Gee dominos become the lowest.

meaning:

 Pair
Gee in pair
it's the highest ranking

Individually
 - teen - highest ranking domino
 - lowest ranking domino

The recommend way to practice the rankings is to shuffle a set of Pai Gow dominos face up and then separate them into their proper order. If you repeat this practice drill several times, the orders will start to become second nature. It is recommended that you use a ranking chart at first, but after several drills, try setting the ranking orders without the aid of a chart. It is very important that you memorize the rankings before you continue to the next chapter concerning playing strategies. Learning the basic procedure and domino rankings is quite easy compared to learning the intricacies of the traditional playing strategy.

PLAYING STRATEGIES

TRADITIONAL STRATEGIES

Pai Gow is similar to Casino Blackjack since the players must make a playing decision after they have received their cards (or dominos.) In order for players to make a decision they must have some type of strategy in which to go by. [REDACTED] states in his professional paper [REDACTED] that 32 dominos will combine to make 35,960 combinations. Of those combinations only 3620 are different and they fall into three categories: combinations containing two pair (120 combinations), combinations containing one pair (1680 combinations) and combinations containing no pairs (1820 combinations.) Taking [REDACTED] information into consideration, there are three main "traditional" ideas regarding how to set your dominos:

A.) Make two powerful hands.

Easier said than done. An example of "two powerful hands" would be when setting two pairs or a pair and a Wong, Gong or High Nine. This type of hand would not take much decision making energy since there is only one obvious way to set the hand, but this combination will only appear a small portion of the time.

B.) Make one powerful hand at the expense of the lower hand.

For example a player can play a pair, or a Wong, Gong or High Nine, or arrange the dominos to make a seven, eight or nine in the high hand but by doing so will only be able to put together a two, one or nothing in the low hand.

C.) Bring the low hand and high hand as close together as possible.

This will occur approximately as many times as the other two situations, unfortunately. An example of this situation would be if a player

could set his hand either 4-8 (low hand is 4 and the high hand is 8) or 5-7, then the best way to set the hand would be 5-7.

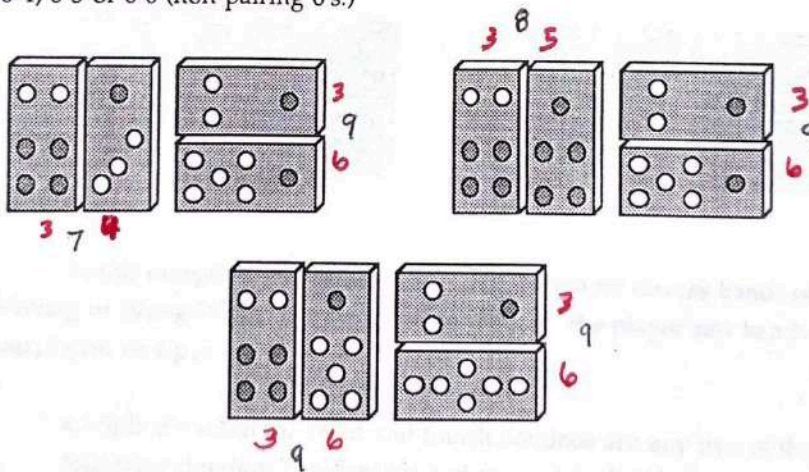
Remember, I used the term "traditional" when describing how to set the dominos. Over the past several thousand years the Chinese have developed a strategy, through trial and error, which is considered the accepted or "traditional" Pai Gow strategy.

The traditional strategy follows the above guidelines but is conditioned with variations that are known as "exceptions." Below is the following traditional strategy along with the exceptions.

I. ALWAYS PLAY A PAIR (BO) IN THE HIGH HAND.

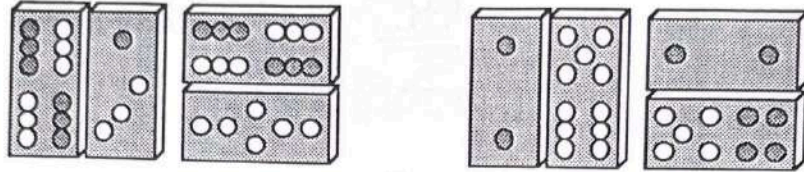
Always Play PAIRS Together, Except:

- 1.) Split the GEE JUN pair when the third and fourth dominos are either 6-4, 6-5 or 6-6 (non-pairing 6's.)



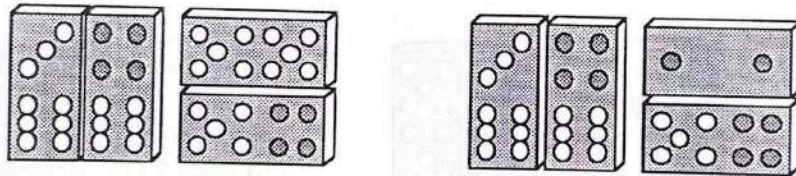
Instead of playing the Gee Jun pair in the high hand which, being the highest pair, guarantees that the player cannot lose and will almost certainly push, the Gee dominos are split to make hands of 7-9, 8-9 and 9-9. This is done to produce more over all winning hands. When the Gee is played as a pair, the hands will be 0-Gee pair, 1-Gee pair and 2-Gee pair, producing many pushes.

★ 2.) Split 2's or 12's to make hands of 6-8 or better. Also split when third and fourth dominos are 9 and 11. ★



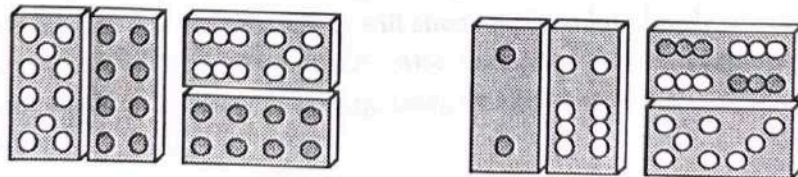
By splitting the 2 or 12 pairs, which are the second and third highest pairs, the player gives up an almost certain push hand to make a hand which will produce more winners.

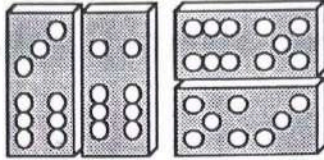
3.) Split 9's when the third and fourth dominos are any two of the following dominos (non-identical and non-pairing): 10's, 2, 12.



In this exception, by splitting the 9 pair the player creates hands of 9-9, 9-Wong or Wong-Wong. By not splitting the pair, the player sets hands of 0-pair, 2-pair or 4-pair.

4.) Split 8's when the third and fourth dominos are any two of the following dominos (unidentical and non-pairing): 10's, 11, 2, 12. Also split when third and fourth dominos are 9 and 11.

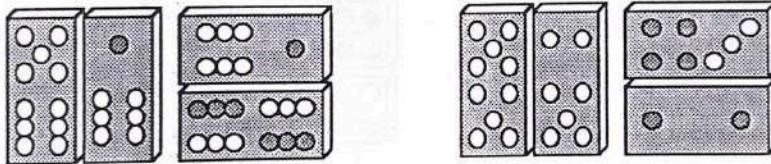




This exception is similar to splitting 9's. The added exception appears when the third and fourth dominos are 9 and 11. By splitting 8's with the 9 and 11 the player makes a hand of 7-9; when playing the 8's together the player is stuck with 0-pair.

5.) Split 7's when the third and fourth dominos are any two of the following dominos (unidentical and non-pairing); 10's, 11, 2, 12.

(Important: The player must have either a 2 or 12 in his hand in order to split the 7's.)



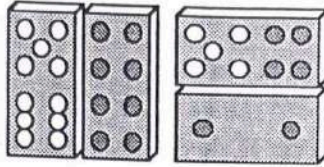
Again, we split the 7's to create more winning hands but the high hand must be at least a High Nine. If the hand does not contain a 2 or 12 it is more advantageous to go with the strongest high hand and a possible push.

II PLAY A WONG, GONG, or HIGH NINE IN THE HIGH HAND

It is understood that High Nine is played instead of a Wong and Gong, and that Gong is played instead of a Wong when given a choice. Traditionally this rule is accepted since it will strengthen the low hand without reducing the high hand that much. Also, when the player is given a choice between the 2 and 12 with the Wong, Gong or High Nine, play the 12 on the high hand.

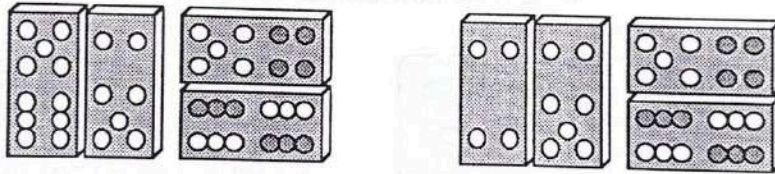
Wong, Gong or High Nine Exceptions:

- 1.) Play Wong over Gong when the fourth domino is 11.



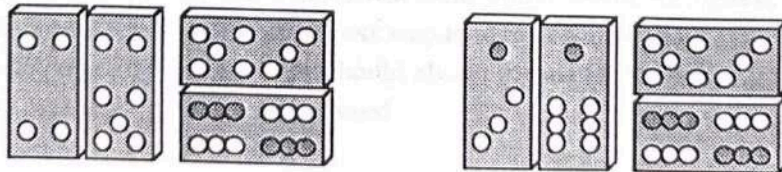
This situation allows common sense to dictate. With a 9, any 8, a 2 (or 12) and an 11, playing 9-Wong makes more sense than playing 0-Gong.

- 2.) Play Wong over High Nine when the fourth domino is 11 or a "Low 4."



With a 9, any 7, 2 (or 12) and a low 4, a hand played 3-High Nine will contain a very low "3" for a low hand. Traditionally it is recommended that the player set the high hand as strong as possible.

- 3.) Play Gong over High Nine when the fourth domino is "any 4."

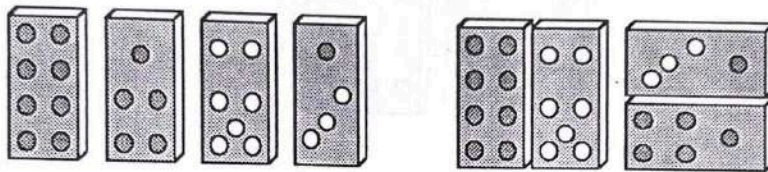


Traditionally it is felt that a low hand of "2" is too weak. Again, the high hand is made as strong as possible.

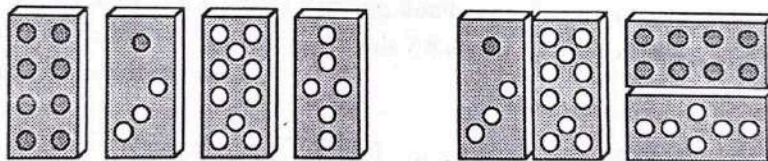
III. PLAY THE LOW AND HIGH HANDS AS CLOSE TOGETHER AS POSSIBLE

The easiest and quickest way for a player to arrange his dominos as close together as possible will be to follow two ideas.

A.) Combine two small value dominos together that total 8 or 9.



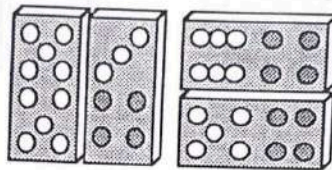
B.) Combine the lowest value domino with the highest.



These ideas don't always work as well as one would like. First, if the player holds the High 4, 5, 11 and 2 (or 12) and plays two low value dominos together to make an 8 or 9, the hand plays 3-9. Not very close together when we can play the same combination as 6-6. Second, if the player holds the High 10, Low 10, Low 4 and 11 and plays the lowest value domino with the highest, the hand plays 0-5. Traditionally, the correct way to play this hand is 1-4. It might cost the player more time but he should always search for the best combination regardless of which idea is used.

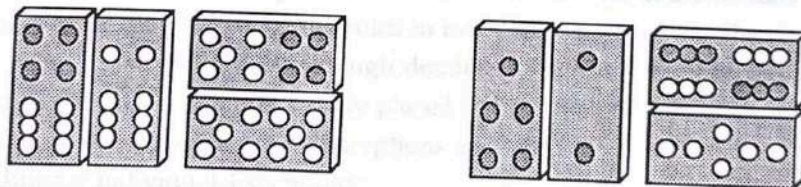
Another question should arise regarding the last hand example using the dominos High 10, Low 10, Low 4 and 11. When playing the hand 1-4, which 10 is put with the higher hand and which 10 is put with the lower hand? Traditionally, there are two ways of playing this type of hand;

A.) Play the highest ranking domino on the Low hand if the hands total 7-9 or less.



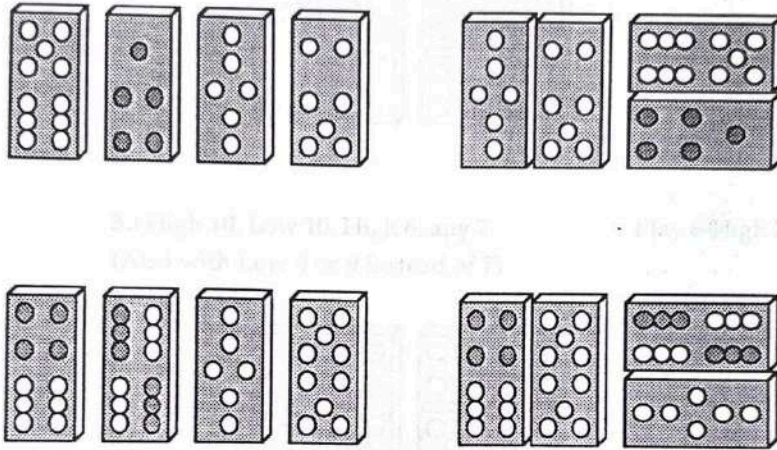
As you can see, the High 10 would be played in the low hand, while the low 10 is played in the high hand.

B.) Play the Highest Ranking domino on the high hand if the hands total 8-9 or higher. If the hand totals 7-8 and contains both the 2 and 12, play the 12 on High hand.



The next question asked by the traditional player is: at which point is my low hand so weak that it would be to my advantage to make my high hand as strong as possible? Again, traditionally, there is a point where the two hands are played as far apart as possible. The traditional rule is:

A.) If by bringing both hands close together, the Low hand is not at least the value of "3" and by splitting the hands as far apart as possible, the High hand can be played as "7" or better, then split them apart and make the High hand as strong as possible.

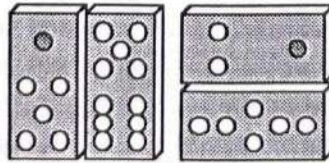


The above traditional rule will cover almost every hand, but what is Pai Gow without additional exceptions to those rules? Several combinations of dominos may be set contrary to the rules to make stronger hands. When the above rules dictate that either two high dominos are put together in the same hand or a higher domino is weakly placed in the low hand, traditional exceptions are used. Those common exceptions are as follows:

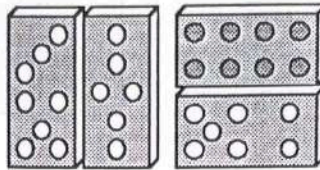
Additional Individual Exceptions:

1.) High 6, Low 6, 11, Gee

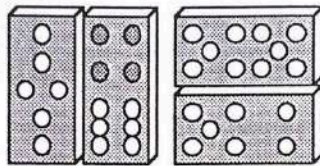
Play 7-High 9



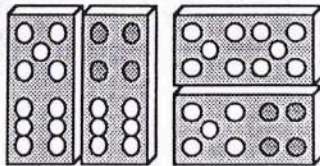
2.) High 8, Low 8, any 7, High 6 or 4 Play 4-High 5 (2-High 5)



3.) High 10, Low 10, High 6, any 7
(Also with Low 8 or 9 instead of 7) Play 6-High 7



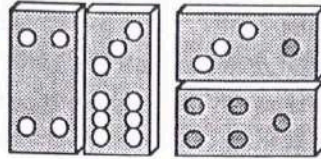
4.) Low 10, High 10, 11, 9 Play 1-High 9



The above hands are exceptions to the rule that states, "play the highest ranking domino on the low hand if the hands total 7-9 or less; play the highest ranking domino on the high hand if the hands total 8-9 or higher." In these cases it is felt that playing the high domino on the high hand is more advantageous. Notice that in all examples, the exceptions have been made because either two high dominos were separated and played in different hands, or the low hand was too weak and the high domino is not being wasted.

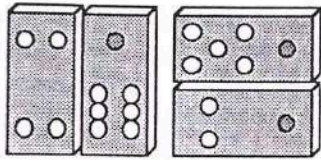
5.) High 4, Low 4, 5, 9 or Gee

Play 3-High 9 (7-High 9)



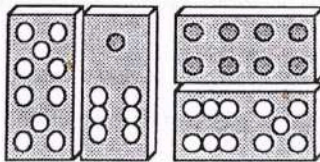
6.) Low 6, any 7, Gee, any 4 or 5

Play 1-9 (2-9)



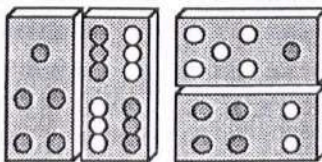
7.) High 10, any 7, 11, High 8

Play 7-High 9



8.) Any 6, 12 or 2, 5, Gee

Play High 7-9



These exceptions violate the rule that states, "Play the low and high hands as close together as possible." This change will occur when the low hand is too weak or two high dominos are played in the same hand.

There are more exceptions than the ones listed. Many players will use their own interpretation of what is "traditional strategy," but they will not differ that much.

CASINO HOUSE STRATEGIES

The traditional strategy, when used by a casino as a guideline to determine how to play the house hand, is called "the House Way." Each casino will establish their own strategy that they feel is the strongest and more traditional. These "house ways" usually reflect the beliefs of the person who was responsible for introducing Pai Gow to that casino. Their interpretation may be as a result of their area of origin, their teacher or the beliefs of the Chinese community to which they intend to market. These differences are shown in the variations between the different casinos' house ways and the traditional strategy mentioned previously.

HOUSE WAY 1989

PAIRS -

- 1.) The Gee Jun pair is never split

PLAY WONG, GONG, or HIGH NINE EXCEPTIONS:

Play Wong over High Nine when -

- 2.) The fourth domino is a 5 and the high domino is 2 (Day).

Play Gong over High Nine when -

- 3.) The third and fourth dominos are "Low 8" and 5 or Gee.

PLAY HANDS AS CLOSE TOGETHER AS POSSIBLE

If by bringing both hands close together, the Low hand is not at least the value of "Long 3" and by splitting the hands as far apart as possible, the High hand can be played as "7" or better, then split apart and make the High hand as strong as possible.

Note: "Long 3" is any two dominos that equal "3," of which one of the dominos is a High 6 (Chong) or higher.

ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUAL EXCEPTIONS:

- 4.) Low 10, High 8, 11, High 7 Play 7-High 9
- 5.) High 10, High 8, 11, Gee Play 6-High 9

██████████ house way indicates that they do not split the Gee Jun pair. Some Pai Gow experts believe that one should never split a hand that can not lose. It should be noted that not splitting Gee is slightly in the players favor. ██████████ also uses the "Long Three" as a dividing point for splitting the hands apart, instead of any three. There is not much difference between the two theories. When playing the dominos Low 6, any 7, any 4 and 11, using any three as the breaking point, this hand played 3-5 is the rule. When using "Long Three" as the breaking point, 3-5 is an exception. One of the more unusual exceptions used by any casino is ██████████ exception of playing Wong over High Nine when the fourth domino is a 5 and the high domino is 2 (Day). ██████████ plays the High Nine when the high domino is 12 (Teen.)

██████████ HOUSE WAY 1989

PLAY WONG, GONG, or HIGH NINE

- 1.) Play Gong over High Nine when The third and fourth dominos are "Low 8" and 5.

The ██████████ believes that a low hand of "three" constructed from the Low 8 and 5 is too weak and they will pump up the higher hand, in this case to a Gong.

██████████ HOUSE WAY 1989

ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUAL EXCEPTIONS:

- 1.) High 4, Low 4, 5, any 8 Play 2-High 9
- 2.) Any 4, 5, Gee, any non-pairing domino Play (?) - High 9

The ██████████ house way is similar to the ██████████

HOUSE WAY 1989 (similar to)

PAIRS-

- 1.) Gee Jun is never split
- 2.) Do not split 2 or 12 when the third and fourth dominos are 9 and 11.

PLAY WONG, GONG OR HIGH NINE EXCEPTIONS:

- Play Wong over High Nine
- 3.) The fourth domino is a 5 and the high domino is 2 (Day).
- Play Gong over High Nine when -
- 4.) The third and fourth dominos are "Low 8" and 5 or Gee.

PLAY HANDS AS CLOSE TOGETHER AS POSSIBLE

- 5.) Use "Long Three" as the breaking point.

ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUAL EXCEPTIONS:

- 6.) Low 10, High 8, 11, High 7 Play 7-High 9

As you can see, the uses house way. The only exception that is different from is their failure to split the 2 or 12 pairs when the third and fourth dominos are 9 and 11. This theory is similar to the belief that the Gee pair should never be split.

HOUSE WAY 1987

PLAY WONG, GONG, or HIGH NINE Exceptions

- Play Gong over High Nine when -
- 1.) The third and fourth domino are "Low 8" and 5.
- ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUAL EXCEPTIONS:
- 2.) Low 10, Low 6, 5, Gee Play 5-9
- 3.) High 8, Low 8, Low 7, 9 Play 5-7

discontinued Pai Gow in 1987. still maintains several games using the same strategy.

HOUSE WAY 1987

PAIRS

1.) Gee Jun is never split

PLAY WONG, GONG OR HIGH NINE EXCEPTIONS:

Play Wong over High Nine

2.) 2 (12), 9, any 7 and Low 4 is played 3-High 9.

Play Gong over High Nine when -

3.) The third and fourth dominos are "Low 8" and 5 or Gee.

PLAY HANDS AS CLOSE TOGETHER AS POSSIBLE

4.) Uses "Long Three" as the breaking point.

5.) With both 2 and 12, play 12 in high hand.

ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUAL EXCEPTIONS:

6.) High 8, Low 8, High 4, any 6 (any 7) Play 2-High 4 (2-High 5)

7.) Any 4, 5, Gee, any non-pairing domino Play (?) - High 9

The [REDACTED] discontinued their Pai Gow in 1987.

HOUSE WAY 1989

PAIRS

1.) Gee Jun is never split

PLAY WONG, GONG OR HIGH NINE EXCEPTIONS:

Play Wong over High Nine

2.) The fourth domino is a 5 and the high domino is 2 (Day).

Play Gong over High Nine when -

3.) The third and fourth dominos are "Low 8" and 5 or Gee.

PLAY HANDS AS CLOSE TOGETHER AS POSSIBLE

4.) Uses "Long Three" as the breaking point.

ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUAL EXCEPTIONS:

5.) Low 10, High 8, 11, High 7 Play 7-High 9

The [REDACTED] is one of three casinos that uses [REDACTED] house way.

██████████ HOUSE WAY 1982 (ALSO SAME AS ██████████
██████████ 1983)

PLAY WONG, GONG, or HIGH NINE EXCEPTIONS:

Play Gong over High Nine when -

- 1.) The Third and fourth dominos are "Low 6 and Low 8"

ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUAL EXCEPTIONS:

- 2.) High 4, Low 4, 5, Low 8 Play 2-High 9
- 3.) High 8, Low 8, High 6, any 7 Play 3-High 6
- 4.) Any 4, 5, Gee, any
non-pairing domino Play (?) - High 9

Both the ██████████ and the ██████████ reflect ██████████ influence.
My information indicates that ██████████ set up Pai Gow at both casinos,
unfortunately, neither casino currently offers Pai Gow.

██████████ HOUSE WAY 1989

ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUAL EXCEPTIONS:

- 1.) High 4, Low 4, 5, any 8 Play 2-High 9
- 2.) Any 4, 5, Gee, any
non-pairing domino Play (?) - High 9

██████████, ██████████ and ██████████ Casino (presently
██████████) did not have a printed house way. All three casino Pai
Gow departments were set up by the same person, ██████████. From what I
have been told, ██████████ strategy was similar to ██████████. The ██████████ has
operated Pai Gow on two occasions. Their house strategy was similar to the
██████████ through the influence of ██████████. ██████████ also set up ██████████
██████████ house way (██████████ set up but never opened their Pai Gow,) and he has
had influence in the ██████████ house way. (Most "House Ways" are normally
incomplete. There are many exceptions that are implied but not stated. Some
of these house ways may have minor variations not printed above.)

OPTIMAL STRATEGIES

When discussing traditional strategies previously I stated that it was derived "over the past several thousand years...through trial and error." This leads the more modern Pai Gow enthusiast into attacking the traditional strategy with the computer. Questions that our enthusiast would ask a computer are: can I develop a stronger strategy? If so, can I develop a strategy that will give the player an advantage over the traditional house way?

_____ answered all these questions (and more) in his paper _____. _____ states that the traditional strategy does have room for improvement. Below is a chart that _____ included in his report which indicates the strength of each two domino combination:

Hand Ranks Based on Constituent Dominos

	Gee	12	2	H8	H4	H10	H6	L4	11	L10	H7	L6	9	L8	L7	5
Gee	<u>102</u>	72	71	34	61	51	77	58	57	48	19	73	37	26	16	65
12	72	101	35	84	54	15	72	54	25	15	82	72	86	84	82	64
2	71	35	100	83	53	14	71	53	24	14	81	71	85	83	81	63
H8	34	84	83	99	13	70	34	13	80	70	45	34	62	52	45	23
H4	61	54	53	13	98	33	1	69	44	33	7	1	22	12	7	79
H10	51	15	14	70	33	97	51	32	6	1	60	51	78	68	60	43
H6	77	72	71	34	1	51	96	<u>1</u>	59	50	21	11	42	31	21	5
L4	58	54	53	13	69	32	1	95	41	30	4	1	20	10	4	76
11	57	25	24	80	44	6	59	41	94	3	67	57	1	<u>75</u>	67	49
L10	48	15	14	70	33	1	50	30	3	93	56	48	74	66	56	40
H7	19	82	81	45	7	60	21	4	67	56	92	19	47	39	29	9
L6	73	72	71	34	<u>1</u>	51	11	1	57	48	19	91	38	28	18	2
9	37	86	85	62	22	78	42	20	1	74	47	38	90	55	46	27
L8	26	84	83	52	12	68	31	10	<u>75</u>	66	39	28	55	89	36	17
L7	16	82	81	45	7	60	21	4	67	56	29	18	46	36	88	8
5	65	64	63	23	79	43	5	76	49	40	9	2	27	17	8	87

To use the above graph, compare the strength of two dominos by cross referencing them from the top and side column. For example, Low 8 and 11 rank 75. The highest two domino combination is the Gee Jun pair which ranks 102. The lowest two domino combination is any two dominos which equal zero (High 4 and Low 6 for example,) rank 1. Although the above graph is very helpful there is only one true method to obtain an optimal strategy.

To obtain an "optimal strategy," [REDACTED] needed to set various guidelines:

A.) Is the person who intends to use an optimal strategy acting as a player or a banker?

B.) What type of strategy is the person's opponent (bank or player) using (traditional or also optimal?)

C.) Does the person wish to use a single optimal strategy, or two separate strategies for both the player and the banker?

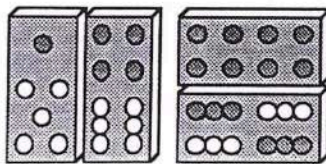
Once the guidelines are determined, each hand must be played against all possible remaining combinations of dominos (remember, the four dominos used to create a hand must be removed from the 32 domino set and only the remaining 28 dominos will be included in the computations) in order to arrive at the number of winning, losing and tie results.

As an example, first, take any four dominos at random and set them in a traditional manner. Second, play this hand as a player against all possible remaining combinations using a traditional strategy as the banker. Once a total of wins, losses and ties have been calculated, run the same computation, only this time, change the strategy of the player to another combination of the same four dominos. After arriving at a new set of win-lose-tie figures, compare them against the figures obtained when playing the hand traditionally. If the new figures provide more wins and less losses than the traditional figure, you have arrived at a more optimal way to play that four domino hand. Also note that certain changes in the traditional strategy of different casinos (house way) will have an effect on your outcome. [REDACTED] indicates in his extensive work that against the traditional strategy there are over 440 optimal changes as the player, over 410 optimal changes as the banker and over 420 optimal changes using the best single strategy (both as player and banker.) "Whether the player can memorize any such optimum

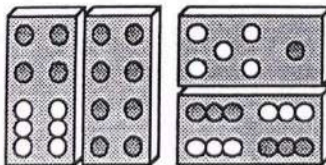
strategy is highly questionable," states ██████ "these optimum strategies appear to have many exceptions which are not easily categorized by general rules."

Since an optimal strategy is too difficult to memorize, then one would need a small, concealed computer which they could operate to play every hand to its maximum potential. But before you invest several thousands of dollars into a concealed computer, (which, by the way, is illegal in the state of ██████) please read the next sentence. ██████, also indicates in his report that, although an optimal strategy will decrease the house advantage (when playing casino Pai Gow) overall, the customer will never obtain an advantage (these percentages are included in the chapter on "Game Protection.")

Another idea that comes to the minds of the casino executives is, "what about improving the casinos house way to increase profits?" The major problem that surfaces when considering using a more optimal house way is with the traditional players themselves. The traditional players will not except any radical changes from the traditional strategy (if there are other casinos at which to play.)



The hand of Low 10, High 8, low 6 and 12 played traditionally 6-Gong.



The hand of Low 10, High 8, low 6 and 12 played optimally 8-8.

A more optimal way of playing this hand is 8-8, but every traditional player will evacuate the casino in an instant. ██████ verifies this theory in his other paper titled ██████

"Traditional play is an important part of the game," concludes [REDACTED], "and a house which uses an unfamiliar strategy will probably lose business." In business, casino executives are interested in the bottom line. The bottom line states, "when creating a house way for your casino, stick with traditional rules and exceptions!"

GENERAL PROCEDURES

As a player, we enter a casino to play Pai Gow and are required to make only a handful of decisions. Where should I sit? How much should I buy in for? What strategy should I use? How much should I lose or win? How much should I drink? But when you're not the player, if you're the person running the games, you must have some kind of established game plan or procedure.

Clear and precise house procedures are very important when operating any gambling game. Well written procedures will all but eliminate problems and arguments with the customer and minimize the possibility of theft and cheating. The following procedures are examples of rules and guidelines currently used by many casinos in the state of [REDACTED]

General Rules

1. There is no house limit on wagers between the player banker and any player (since the house is at no-risk and the more amount bet, the more commission charged.) The only exception would be between credit players, since the house collects all credit debt. Between credit players, house limit applies. (In some casinos, but not all.)

2. A customer may request assistance from the dealer to set his/her hand. The dealer must always recommend the house way but takes no responsibility on any winning or losing hands.

Assisting customers with their dominos should only be done after the remaining customers have set their hands.

If a customer requests assistance from another customer, this is acceptable. However, the customer that is assisting must first set his/her own hand before assisting any other customer. If the customer who is assisting has an apparent betting interest in the assisted customer's hand, the high money hand must be set first.

Discourage any customer from exposing their dominos until the other customers have set their hands. Discourage any customer from looking at another customer's dominos when it is felt that the customer is attempting to gain an advantage by doing so.

3. The dealer will always set the house hand according to House Ways. If the dealer has any question on how to set the hand, the dealer should consult the supervisor. Some casinos state that, once the dealer has set his and acted on the first player's hand, the dealer's hand stands whether set correctly or not.

4. All currency will be dropped in the drop box after verification by the dealer. Currency lost will not be returned to customers for chips, nor will it be exchanged for chips by any other customer.

5. Only the seated player(s) betting on a playing spot is allowed to handle the dominos and set the hand. The domino must always stay within the table area. If more than one player wagers in one betting circle, the seated player has the final say about how a hand will be played.

6. Each customer is allowed to play up to two hands. If a customer wagers on a spot more than one position away from his seated position, the customer must not reach over any of the other player's dominos to set the hand. If the player is wagering on only one hand more than one position away, the dealer will transfer both the bet and dominos from the spot wagered to the spot where the customer is seated.

7. The customer can look at the discarded or unused dominos only after all payoffs are completed. These dominos cannot be picked up by the customer. At no time will the dealer be allowed to look at unused dominos until after the hand is completed.

8. When a player surrenders his hand, the wager is lost and the dominos need not be exposed in front of the player. Some players, when realizing that they have a very bad hand which loses, do not want their hand exposed.

9. At the start of the game, the house will always bank first. The bank is rotated counter-clockwise (right to left) among the players and dealer after each game. A player can only be the player bank for one game during a single rotation. Each player has the opportunity to be the banker but the player has the option to pass the bank.

10. Pre-paid commissions are acceptable. Pre-paid commission is placed on top of the player's bet. If the player wins, the original bet is paid but the pre-paid commission is not. If the player loses, both the original bet and the pre-paid commission is taken.

11. In some casinos any number of players are allowed to play in one betting circle; however, table limits do apply per betting circle. The seated player has the option to let anyone else play on his/her hand. The seated player has the final say about how a hand is to be played. Some casinos restrict the number of wagers to four (4.)

General Game Procedure

1. Dominos will be cleaned by the dealer at the start of each shift or when the dominos are changed, unless play does not permit time. Dominos are cleaned with soda water and checked for any scratches or marks.

2. When new dominos are put into play, the dealer checks the fronts, backs and sides of the dominos for any flaws or marks. Should any abnormalities appear, the pit supervisor will be notified immediately.

3. The dominos will be shuffled thoroughly in front of the chip rack. The dealer will ensure that all the dominos are intermixed to avoid the tracking of individual dominos.

4. The dealer should stack the dominos during the shuffle in either groups of eight (8) or groups of four (4). The stacking procedure should never vary.

5. The dealer will always start delivering the dominos from the furthest stack on the right (House Way), delivering from right to the left. The dealer will distribute the dominos to the players moving in a counter-clockwise rotation. There are always eight hands dealt no matter the number of players. The remaining dominos which were delivered to vacant betting circles will be collected and placed on the left side of the chip rack.

6. The dealer will always arrange and set the house hand after all players' hands have been set. The four dominos will be placed in front of the chip rack in full view before exposing players' hands. The dominos will be set with the low hand to the dealer's left in a vertical position to the dealer and the high hand to the right in horizontal position to the dealer. The house hand is always exposed and set last to prevent any collusion.

7. The dealer will announce all win, lose, and push hands verbally. Push hands are also indicated by giving the push signal (right hand tapping the table twice). The losing and push hands will be collected immediately and placed next to the upper right side of the chip rack. The losing bets will be placed in the center of the layout. The winning hands will be left face up in front of the playing circle. They will be paid after all hands are determined. Any losing bets that have been placed in the center of the table will be placed into the chip rack and money out of the chip rack will be used to pay the winning wagers.

8. Winning bets will be paid by the dealer starting and moving counter-clockwise (right to left). Each bet will be proven by the dealer and paid individually.

9. All winning bets will be charged 5% commission and collected immediately by the dealer.

Player Bank

1. The dealer places the "Bank Marker" inside the betting circle of the customer who will bank the next game. The player bank's bankroll does not have to be inside the circle; however the Bank Marker (Chung) must.
2. The customer may either bank 100% of the game or request the house to bankroll as a partner for 50% (co-bank) of the declared customers' bets. A player must have previously wagered against the house before he is allowed to receive the bank.
3. The dealer will act as a player during a player bank situation. The dealer will then bet an amount similar to the player bank's last bet against the house. The dealer may bet up to 10% more than player's last bet at the discretion of the pit supervisor. The player bank can request the dealer to bet less than the player banker's last bet in rotation, or nothing at all.
4. The player bank can only bank on one (1) hand in each rotation. If a player is betting on two spots, the dealer will only be allowed to bet the higher amount of the two spots.
5. The player bank is allowed to "move" and "cut" the dominos before the dice are shaken. The act of "moving" the stacked dominos occurs when one or more dominos are removed from the stack, laid on the table touching either end of the stack. The remaining dominos are pushed or "moved" on top of the dominos that were laid on the table. A "cut" occurs when certain domino stacks are removed from the main stack and "cut" to either ends.
6. The player bank must designate the manner in which the dealer will distribute the dominos before the dice are exposed. The delivery will be indicated by moving certain stacks of dominos slightly, whether forward, backwards or diagonal, to indicate the type of delivery.
7. The player banker's hand is then set after the other customers' hands are set. The dealer will always set the house hand last.

8. Before the house hand is set, the player banker's hand will be moved to the center of the layout and placed in full view. The house hand will then be exposed, set, and compared to the player banker's hand for determination of a win, lose or a push. The rest of the players' hands are then exposed in a counter-clockwise rotation starting from the hand that is immediate right of the banker.

9. The excess of losing bets over winning bets will then be given to the banker. The shortfall of winning bets over losing bets is also made up by the banker. All net winnings are charged a 5% commission.

10. Upon request, the customer may bank with the house (co-bank.) Both the house and the player co-banking equally share the financial responsibility of the hand. When co-banking the banking player will receive only two (2) dominos and the dealer will receive two of the dominos. After all other player hands are set, the house will give the player the two remaining dominos. The co-banked hand will always be set the house way. The house will not receive a hand when co-banking.

Handling Dice

1. When using a dice cup, the dealer should always be the one to uncover the dice cup; if the player banker inadvertently uncovers the cup, the dealer will ask for another shake and may explain to the players that the dealer must uncover the cup.

2. The dice will remain uncovered and unmoved until the hands are all dealt out; the dealer will then cover the dice, shake the cup, and place the cup to the right side of the layout. When not using a dice cup, the dice must always stay in view and must be called before they can be touched.

3. The total of the dice will determine which circle gets the first hand. The dealer will count counter-clockwise and start from the bank as #1. The bank will always get the first hand if the dice total 9 or 17.

4. Do not move the dice before calling the dice total. If a die lies on top of another die or if a die is cocked, there will be "No Dice." The dealer will then cover and shake the cup, and present the cup to the player banker to be shaken again.
5. After the dice are exposed, players are not allowed to change their bets.

Exposed Dominos

1. If a domino is exposed during the shuffle and stacking, the dealer does not have to re-shuffle the entire 32 dominos unless the domino is a Teen (12) or a DAY (2).
2. The dealer will always have the option to re-shuffle in the event of any suspected domino tracking. If tracking is suspected, the floor supervisor must be notified immediately.
3. If dominos are exposed in the dealer's hand, the hand must be played.
4. If the dealer exposes two or more dominos of the customer's hand, the customer has the option to call the hand dead before looking at the remaining dominos.
5. If the player bank exposes his own dominos, the hand will play.

In [REDACTED], Pai Gow is legally played (as of this writing) in many of the over 300 cardrooms. Cardroom Pai Gow procedures are much different from procedures used in the [REDACTED] casinos. Because of [REDACTED] law ([REDACTED] Penal Code, [REDACTED]), the house can never bank or take an active role in a gambling game. Therefore the house may only supply the gaming equipment (e.g. tables, chairs, chips, etc), supply a non-playing dealer and collect a fee from each player. This leaves the role of banker up to the players only. In a gambling game where the house cannot bank, the main rule is simple, someone must act as the bank each round. The procedures used in a typical cardroom in [REDACTED] are as follows;

House Rules

1. With each round, a player must be designated as the banker. That player may bank for no more than two (2) consecutive rounds. The banking opportunity will pass around the table in a counter-clockwise rotation starting with the first wagering circle right of the house dealer. Each player has the option to be the bank or to pass.
2. If a player elects to act as the bank, he must indicate the amount of wagers he wishes to cover by placing that amount, in chips, in the betting circle where he is seated. The banker may only take "action" on players wagers, counter-clockwise, up to the amount he has indicated. Winning and losing wagers are considered wagers that have "action." Tie wagers are not considered "action." After all of the banker's money covers all "action" wagers (a combination of all winning and losing bets,) remaining players wagers are not taken or paid, and are returned to those players.
3. Additional players may wager with the bank. These players must have participated in the previous hand. Each additional player that wagers as the bank is treated as "additional" banks. Example: Three players are wagering on one banking circle. The first player is considered the first bank. His wager will cover all possible "action." If any remaining player wagers are on the table after the first bank is depleted, the second bank (banking player) covers all "action" that he can. Any remaining "action" not covered by the second bank may be covered by the third bank. This process is repeated until all players wagers have been settled or the banks are all depleted.
4. There is no limit to the size or amount of any wager. No player may win or lose more money than that player has visible on the table. No currency may be wagered. Only house chips can be used.
5. The house dealer will shuffle and stack the dominos but the banking player may cut and move the dominos and dictate the type of delivery. When more than one person is wagering on the bank, it is traditional to let the player investing the biggest bank suggest the cut, move, delivery, shake the dice and set the hand.

6. When asked for assistance, the house dealer will suggest the traditional and accepted strategy only. (Since none of the cardrooms post an accepted strategy, whatever the house dealer decides is the house strategy.)
7. All players must pay a predetermined fee before playing in each hand (usually \$5.) It is a violation of state law to collect or charge a commission.

Since the cardrooms do not take the bank and do not have a financial interest in the game outcomes, strict procedures are not that necessary. Most cardrooms do maintain a very high level of game security and put a high priority on protecting their patrons' best interests.

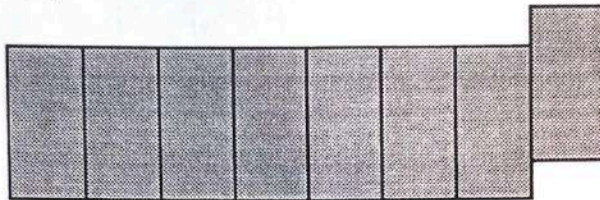
Pai Gow Domino Deliveries

There are many different types of domino deliveries. Although the house uses only one type of delivery, the player when banking, may request any one of a dozen common delivery formations and an unlimited number of their variations. The reason for these various deliveries (other than driving the dealer nuts) allows the player to change his "luck." Although not a very scientific method, the traditional player uses different deliveries to direct the "Hot Hands" into a position which, hopefully, will correspond with his betting circle after the dice have been totalled. The traditional term for changing the dominos to receive the "Hot Hand" is known as "Tau Pai" (pronounced "tow pie.")

In the past, most casinos have restricted the number of acceptable deliveries based on whether the dealer knew the requested formation. Several casinos have established their own acceptable deliveries to prevent ambiguous situations which could jeopardize game protection (which will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on game protection.) Some deliveries have been prohibited because the length of the "ritual" is too time consuming.

Some of the most common deliveries, their traditional names and in most cases, their English translations, are:

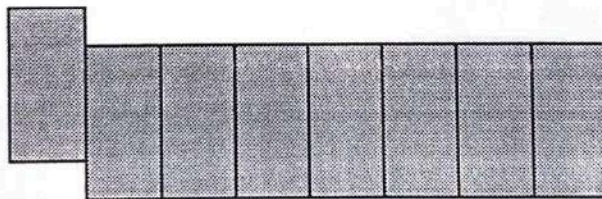
A.) House Way



Top View

The first stack on the right will be pushed forward and it will be the first stack delivered. The remaining stacks will be delivered from right to left.

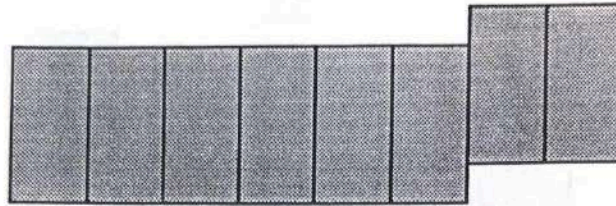
B.) Yin Ja (From the Left)



Top View

The first stack on the left will be pushed forward and it will be the first stack delivered. The remaining stacks will be delivered from left to right.

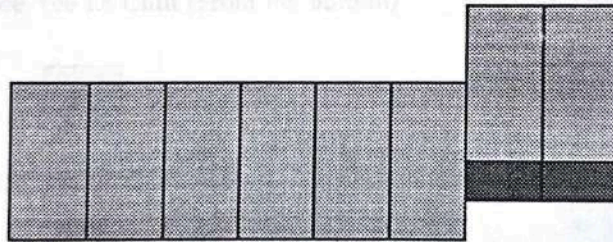
C.) Cup Say



Top View

The first two stacks on the right will be pushed forward. The first four dominos delivered will come from the top of the two out-jogged stacks. The four remaining dominos will be delivered next. The remaining stacks will be delivered from right to left in the same manner. (This type of delivery may be conducted from the left side in a similar manner.)

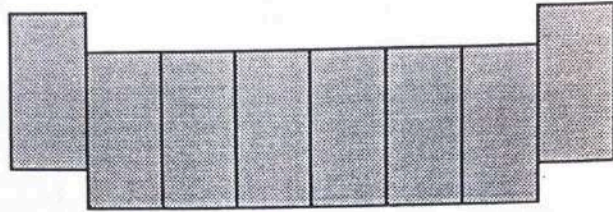
D.) Cup Say Di Chut (From the Bottom)



Top View

The first two stacks on the right will be pushed forward. The first four dominos delivered will come from the bottom of the two out-jogged stacks. This will be indicated by pushing the top four dominos slightly forward. The remaining stacks will be delivered from right to left in the same manner. (This type of delivery can be conducted from the left as well.)

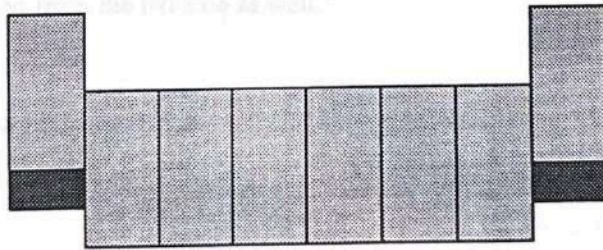
E.) Chee Yee (Chop the Ears)



Top View

The first stack on the right and the first stack on the left will be pushed forward towards the players. The first four dominos delivered will come from the top of the two out-jogged stacks. The two stacks will be pulled back to a point several inches from the remaining stack, and delivered from that spot. The four remaining dominos will be delivered next. The remaining stacks will be delivered inward in the same manner.

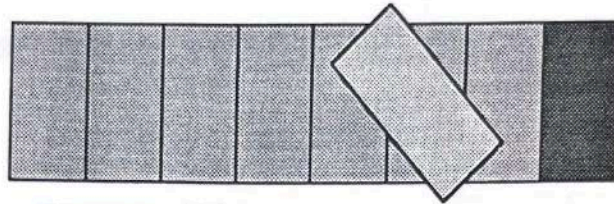
F.) Chee Yee Di Chut (From the Bottom)



Top View

The first stack on the right and the first stack on the left will be pushed forward. The first four dominos delivered will come from the bottom of the two out-jogged stacks. This will be indicated by the top two dominos on each stack pushed slightly more forward. The two stacks will be pulled back to a point several inches from the remaining stack, and delivered from that spot. The four remaining dominos will be delivered next. The remaining stacks will be delivered inward in the same manner.

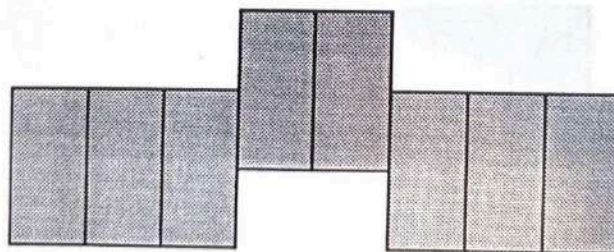
G.) Won So



Top View

The top domino of the right stack will be placed diagonally across the top of the second, third and fourth stacks from the right. The top dominos from the first four stacks on the right will be the first dominos delivered. The top dominos from the next four stacks (fifth through the eighth stacks) will be delivered next. The third set of dominos to be delivered will be the next four dominos from the top of the first four stacks from the right. The remaining dominos will be delivered in the same manner alternating from the top dominos of the first four stacks and the top dominos of the last four stacks. (Can be delivered from the left side as well.)

H.) Jung Quat (Take the Heart)

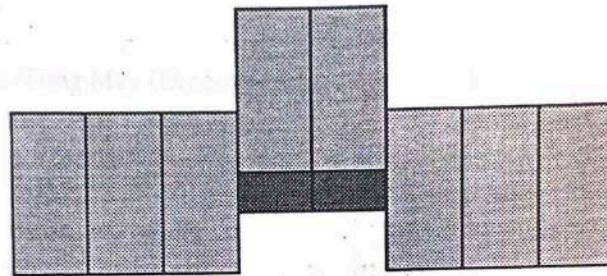


Top View

The middle two stacks will be pushed forward. The first four dominos delivered will come from the top of the two out-jogged stacks. The four

remaining dominos will be delivered next. The remaining stacks will be pushed together and delivered in the same manner.

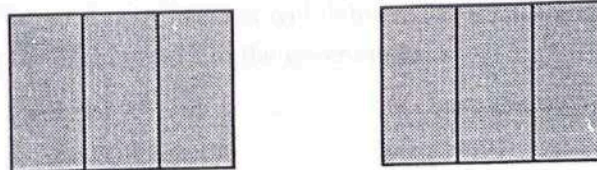
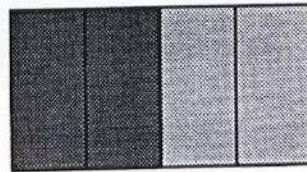
I.) Jung Quat Di Chut (From the Bottom)



Top View

The middle two stacks will be pushed forward. The first four dominos delivered will come from the bottom of the two out-jogged stacks. This will be indicated by pushing the top four dominos of the middle stacks slightly forward. The four remaining dominos will be delivered next. The remaining stacks will be pushed together and delivered in the same manner.

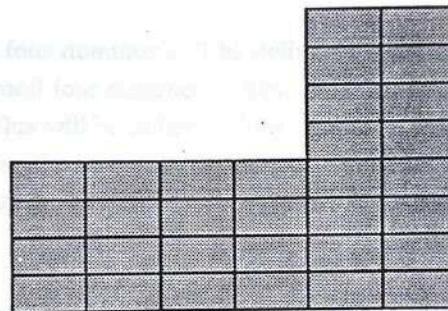
J.) Jung Quat Hob Bean



Top View

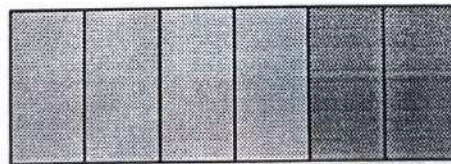
The middle two stacks will be pushed forward. From the out-jogged stacks, the four top dominos will be stacked to the right. The first four dominos delivered will come from the top of the now four out-jogged stacks. The four remaining dominos will be delivered next. The remaining stacks will be pushed together and delivered in the same manner.

K.) Long Tau/Fong May (Dragons Head/Phoenix Tail)



Front View

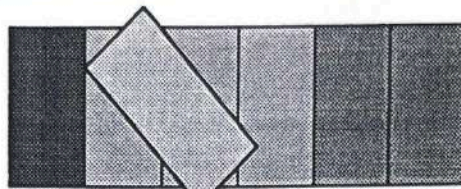
Long Tau (Dragons Head)



Top View

The first four dominos will be delivered from the top of the higher two stacks. The second four dominos will be delivered from the top of the four lower stacks. The remaining dominos will be delivered in the same manner, alternating from the higher stacks to the lower stacks.

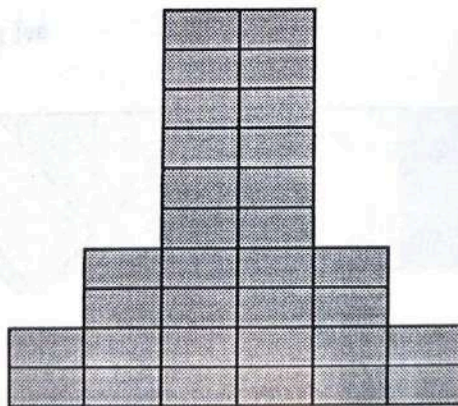
Fong May (Phoenix Tail)



Top View

The first four dominos will be delivered from the top of the lower four stacks. The second four dominos will be delivered from the top of the two higher stacks. This will be indicated by placing one of the top dominos diagonally across the lower stack. The remaining dominos will be delivered in the same manner, alternating from the lower stacks to the higher stacks.

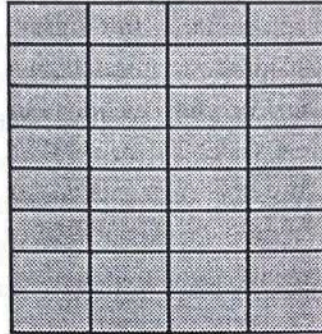
L.) Hong Kong Bank (Also known as Shanghai Bank)



Front View

The first four dominos to be delivered will be taken from the two higher stacks. The dominos will be delivered until all dominos from the two higher stacks has been distributed. The remaining stacks will be pushed together and the remaining dominos delivered in the same manner.

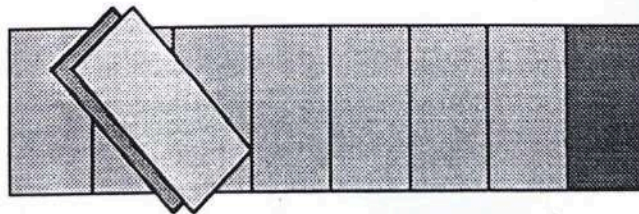
M.) Four Across (There is no traditional name for this delivery)



Front View

The top four dominos will be delivered first. The next four dominos will be delivered second. The remaining dominos will be delivered in the same manner.

N.) Yet Chong Leoung Jee



Top View

The top two dominos of the right stack will be placed diagonally across the top of the sixth, seventh and eighth stacks from the right. The top two dominos from the first stack and the top dominos from the seventh and eighth stacks on the left will be the first dominos delivered. The next top two dominos from the first stack and the next top dominos from the seventh and eighth stacks will be delivered next. When these three stacks are depleted, top

dominos from the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth stacks will be delivered in the same manner.

When using persons that have not actually dealt the game of Pai Gow, written procedures are very important. In the past, casinos and cardrooms that used only experienced Chinese personnel, have been able to operate an efficient program using verbal procedures only (this included the house way.) Today, a variety of employees watch the game of Pai Gow. Pit supervisors, floor supervisors, surveillance operators, casino hosts and casino executives must have access to proper written procedures in order to make player involved decisions and evaluate game potential.

GAME PROTECTION

I feel the most interesting topic on Pai Gow is the area of game protection. Very few people that I have talked to over the years know much about how Pai Gow is attacked and how to protect against being attacked. In [REDACTED], Pai Gow is in its infancy as a casino game. Blackjack, Craps and Roulette have been played throughout the state since gaming was legalized in the [REDACTED]. Every casino executive is comfortable with Blackjack, Craps and Roulette because of the vast number of experts and printed material available concerning protection of the bankroll. Not so with Pai Gow. Pai Gow has only been offered in [REDACTED] as a casino game since the late [REDACTED]. Most persons that are experienced in Pai Gow have come from overseas or have worked in underground clubs and are not accustomed to sharing their information.

The lack of gaming experience and an understanding of the game of Pai Gow has cost several casinos thousands of dollars in lost revenues. Two casinos, one in northern [REDACTED] and one in [REDACTED], have closed their games after being victimized by major scams. Instead of analyzing the problem and correcting it, they closed up their tables and cut off a very good revenue producing avenue. Another casino in [REDACTED] closed their Pai Gow game after offering it for several years. The incoming Casino manager, who was unfamiliar with Pai Gow and afraid of the game, had it removed. The game averaged a substantial win each year! Still another [REDACTED] Casino, after spending money on equipment and hiring dealers and a Pai Gow manager, got cold feet regarding their ability to protect the game and never opened Pai Gow.

Before anyone can protect a gambling game, they must first know how it can be attacked. Pai Gow is no exception. But before we learn how to take advantage of Pai Gow, we must also learn why it wins money for the house.

Why Pai Gow Wins For the House

The houses advantage in Pai Gow is based on several variables. Whether the customer is acting as the player or the banker, the amount of commission, the house strategy (house way) and the players strategy must all be considered.

When a player is wagering in a game where no Commission is charged:

As player	-0.9%	As Banker	+0.9%
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This would be your typical parlor game between friends that do not charge a commission or fee. Since a commission is not charged, the banking player takes full advantage of the "built in" edge obtained by taking all high domino pushes and zero-zero pushes. A banking edge of about 1% would never be noticed during a night of friendly playing. Both the player(s) and the banker must be using a similar strategy, either traditional or optimal.

When a Player is wagering in a game that takes 5% Commission:

As Player	-2.4	As Banker	-0.6
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These figures are based on the fact that a Traditional Strategy is used and only one person is acting as the player. The 5% commission is only charged on winning bets. Since approximately 40% of all hands are pushes, only 60% of the results can be charged commission. This translates to 5% of 60% of monies wagered or 3%. It must be taken into consideration that the player and banker will each win about 50% of the time. The player will pay commission on every wager at a rate of 1.5%. The estimated commission plus the player disadvantage of .9%, gives the player an overall disadvantage of -2.4% on every dollar wagered. When figuring the banking players disadvantage, take the bankers advantage (+.9%) from the commission charged (-1.5%) to achieve a overall disadvantage of -0.6% on every dollar wagered.

When a Player is wagering in a game that takes 5% Commission and he is using an Optimal Strategy:

As Player -1.6 As Banker +0.15

It is understood that to employ an optimal strategy a player would need a concealable computer. But the use of such an expensive and illegal device would never be able to overcome the 5% commission. Although a customer acting as the banker will have a slight advantage over the house, that slim advantage will be swept away when the customer acts as a player. In cardroom games, when the house takes a fee of only \$5 per hand, the banker will have the advantage when wagering approximately \$500 or more, using either an optimal or traditional strategy.

The House's Advantage over the other Players when there is a Player-bank situation and the house charges 5% commission:

All other Players -3.0

We have covered the house advantages over the banker during a player-bank situation, but what about the other players at the table. It doesn't matter what strategy the players use since approximately 60% of all wagers will result in a win or loss and are charged a commission.

Getting the Edge in Pai Gow

There are several ways to get the "edge" in Pai Gow. Several techniques, similar to other card games, come to mind. Marking and switching dominos would appear to be the most common since marking and switching cards are well known techniques in cheating at Blackjack. But Pai Gow is much different from Blackjack or any of the other casino card games, and must be examined more carefully than first thought.

Marking Dominos

The reason a player would mark dominos in the game of Pai Gow is to identify them when their value and ranking normally wouldn't be known to persons at the table. Lets examine marking dominos so that the player knows what the banker possesses in his four domino hand. We must establish what type of advantage the player will receive by knowing the banker possesses certain dominos.

Based on the information given by [REDACTED] in the table below, the knowledge that the house dealer does or does not possess certain dominos gives the player a relatively small (if any) advantage.

[REDACTED] Tables on the Effect of Seeing One Domino
(Rounded to the nearest 1/10 percent)

Domino Seen	Advantage Known	Effect of Possesion
Gee	2.0	-14.7
12	1.7	-23.6
2	1.5	-20.5
H8	0.3	- 3.9
H4	0.4	+ 6.0
H10	0.8	+ 2.9
H6	0.4	+11.1
L4	0.6	+ 8.4
11	1.4	- 2.1
L10	0.7	+ 6.0
H7	0.8	+ 8.8
L6	0.6	+13.4
9	0.4	- 4.6
L8	0.5	+ 1.1
L7	0.8	+ 9.5
5	0.6	+ 1.8

The effect of knowing if the dealer holds the following dominos:

Teen (12), Day (2), 9, any 8, and any 7	Player Advantage
Wong-Gong-High 9 Strategy	+0.6
All Four Dealer Dominos	+7.0

As shown above, the effect of marking only the Teen (12) and Day (2) dominos and using that knowledge to vary the playing strategy when the banker does possess those dominos, will not gain the player any advantage. For example, the "knowledge" that the banker holds the 12 gives the player a 1.7% advantage if he varies his strategy. That advantage is then crushed by the overwhelming fact, that by "possessing" the 12 gives the banker an advantage of over 23%! The player can not expect to gain any advantage unless he marks all 12, 2, 9, 8 and 7 dominos. By marking those 14 dominos and varying the playing strategy accordingly, the player will only have an advantage of just over 1/2%. If the player were to mark all 32 dominos and play his hand optimally against the known banker hand, the player can expect to win 7% of every dollar wagered. A small reward for committing a felony.

The second reason for marking dominos is to gain knowledge of the value of a domino that the player will receive before they are dealt and then bet accordingly. For example, let's suggest that the player has marked one Teen (12) domino and, after identifying it while stacked with the other dominos, can direct it into his hand. The knowledge that he will receive just that one domino is a gain of approximately 23%. To be able to direct any domino or dominos into our hand as players, we must arrange three (3) events to occur. First, we must mark certain dominos that we wish to identify while stacked face down. Second, we must evade the randomness of the dice. For now let's suggest that we can get around the dice. Third, we must act as the banker. As previously mention in this book, the player banking may cut and/or move the dominos, dictate the type of delivery and shake the dice cup. Several years ago a scam went down at a major [REDACTED] casino.

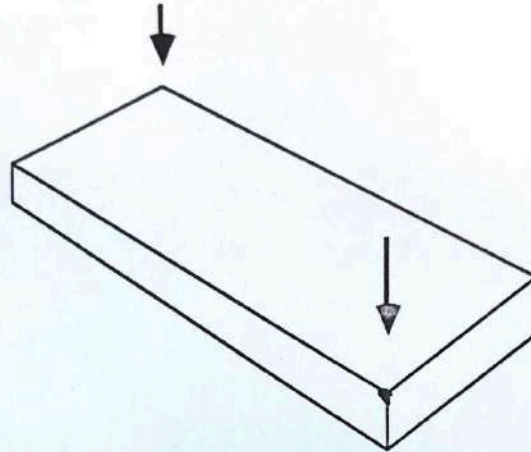
Supposedly players went into this casino, marked the four highest ranking dominos (eight dominos total) and bypassed the dice. To understand if this scam could possibly hurt the casino certain questions should be asked. Will marking those eight dominos give the player banker a large enough advantage? How many cuts and moves will be needed to directed the marked dominos into the player banker's hand? How many dominos can feasibly be direct into the desired hand? [REDACTED], a Pai Gow expert, and I marked the same dominos and played about thirty situations against the house and non-banking players. Our results were shocking to say the least. After playing against a total of 210 separate hands (six non-banking players plus the house dealer acting as a player times thirty rounds,) the player banker won over 140 hands while losing only 12 hands! It took an average of only one move or cut to position no less than three key dominos into the desired stack. On many occasions, the reception of three key dominos was accomplished by using certain types of deliveries without cutting and moving.

After understanding how marked dominos can be used to achieve an edge at Pai Gow (an illegal edge at that), the next step would be to prevent it from happening. The easiest way to protect against the above scams is by understanding how the dominos are marked and be able to detect such irregularities. Since the dominos will be stacked when they are read, they must be marked on an area of the domino that can easily be seen by the player banking when cutting, moving and directing the delivery type.

Marking Dominos

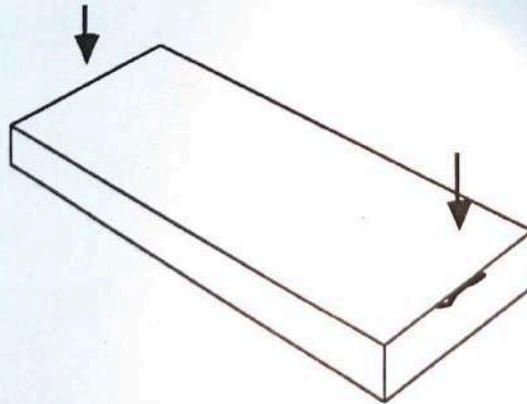
Dominos can be marked many different ways. Like marked cards, certain characteristics are consistent. The following examples are the most common:

A.) Nicked Domino



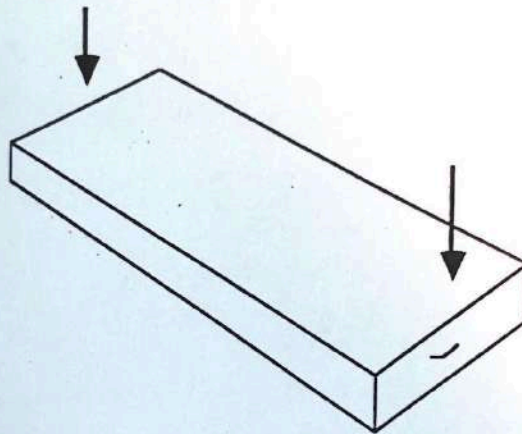
Dominoes that are marked in this fashion are usually "nicked" with a ring or sharp object concealed in the player's hand. The opposite ends or edges of the domino are marked so that the domino can be read from anywhere on the table.

B.) Sanded Domino



This mark is made by using sand paper or an abrasive material which is concealed in the hand of the Player. The slight application of such marks can only be read when the light angles off the top edge.

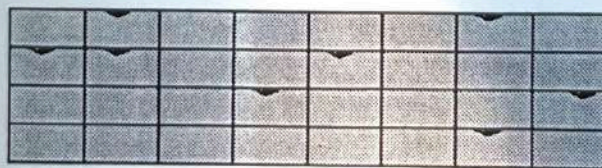
C.) Scratched Dominos



A ring or a sharp object is used to make this marking. Because of its location on the face of the domino, the mark is put on very slightly and is difficult to read with the untrained eye.

Marked Dominos in the Stack

Reading the Stack



In the above example the Gee, Teen, Day and High 8 dominos are marked. The player banker will try to direct at least three of the marked dominos into his hand. If the player banker knew that he would receive the first set of dominos delivered, he would not have to move or cut the dominos. By having the dealer deliver the dominos "Cup Say," the player banker will receive the three marked dominos stacked in the upper left corner.

Getting by the Dice

One of the most important game protection procedures of Pai Gow is the use of the dice. The dice add a random element to the game which, unless controlled or bypassed, considerably reduce the chances of fraud. Dominos can be marked, located and directed to a certain stack but unless the dice roll the exact number of the desired delivery, it will remain a random draw. There are several ways to get by the dice:

A.) Not Calling the Dice Correctly

Although this seems too simple and obvious it is surprising how often it can be done. For the dice to be called incorrectly the dealer must be in on the scam. When using a dice cup, a dishonest dealer will expose the dice, call out a predetermined total and immediately replace the cover. Most house procedures demand that the dealer leave the cup uncovered until all stacks have been delivered. If a dice cup is not used, the dealer will toss the dice off the stacked dominos with enough force to send at least one die to the rim of the table. Since it is normal for a player to lean over the rim of the table, the die can be hidden from the surveillance cameras by one of the player's arms. The hidden die removes any chance of detecting an incorrect dice call.

B.) Controlling the Dice Cup

Most dice cups are constructed of smooth metal interiors with felt bases. If the player banking were to receive the dice cup and have knowledge of the dice total at that moment, he might be able to control the dice so that

- #1 they don't roll off that number. By using a leveled stirring or "whipping" motion, the dice total can be maintained. Most procedures instruct the dealers to shake the concealed dice before they are presented to the player banker. In some situations player bankers have shaken the dice cup and while distracting the dealer, either peeked at or revealed the total on the dice to an accomplice. After obtaining this information, the player banking will then cut/move or request a delivery according to the peeked and still unrevealed (unrevealed to the dealer) total.
- #2

C.) Altering the Dice

When determining how dice can be altered to overcome the game of Pai Gow, one must first look at the result that is necessary. The dice must roll that exact required number every time it is desired. This narrows every possible method of altering or "Gaffing" dice to just one. Magnetic or "Juiced" dice. To facilitate the proper action with juiced dice a magnet must be placed underneath the table at a certain spot. The player banking will shake the dice cup and put it down on the effected area. Since the gaff dice can be manufactured to appear the same as the dice used by the casino, it is recommended that a small magnet should be used by the casino to detect foul play. If a small pen like magnet is passed over juiced dice, the dice will adhere themselves to the magnet.

D.) Ambiguous Type of Delivery

Certain deliveries can be ambiguous. A player banker can see the dice result and make a minor change to the delivery which will get by some dealers and supervisors. In the examples given below, the player banker is trying to direct either a Teen or Day domino into his hand and at the same time keep them out of the dealer's hand.

7th	5th	3rd	1st	SET	3rd	5th	7th
8th	6th	4th	2nd	SET	4th	6th	8th

Jung Quat Delivery
Front View

The Jung Quat delivery indicates that every other hand will be in the top half or bottom half of the stack. If a player banker is sitting on an odd number spot and receives a set of dominos from the bottom half of the stack (the 2nd, 4th, 6th or 8th set), the house dealer can only expect to receive dominos from the top half of the stack. Since Jung Quat can be delivered either from the top set or the bottom set first, the player banker could change the delivery if the house procedures are loose. If the dice roll is an even number, and the player banker has moved and cut all the Teen and Day dominos to the top half of the stack, he would ask for the dominos to be delivered "first stack from the bottom." The same can be done with the Cup Say and Chee Yee deliveries.

Switching Dominos

Anyone who has seen a magician on television will understand that anything can be hidden and exchanged by trained hands. It would be ridiculous to believe that the dominos in Pai Gow are any different. It would also be ridiculous for me to try to explain each type of known move in detail. What is important is understanding how the different mucks and switches are accomplished. The most common mucks or switches are:

A.) Single Domino Muck

Because there are only 32 dominos which are stacked into eight stacks of four before every hand, it would be impossible to remove or add a domino without detection. If a player wishes to muck dominos in and out of a game he must use an additional domino so that the total number of dominos on

the table at any time remains thirty-two. One fellow, who wishes to remain anonymous, explained that he brought in an additional Low four domino. He felt it would go virtually unnoticed (having three Low fours in play) unless three showed in one player's hand. His reasoning for using the Low four was that it was all white, medium ranked and didn't draw any attention. He also explained that other Pai Gow muckers he knew used the High seven or Low six. It was this fellow's feeling that the red dot on top of the High 7-Low 6 draw too much attention. He stated that he would muck in the Low four on his first hand, betting a minimum amount, and muck out the highest domino that he received. Depending on the ranking of the domino (Teens and Days were premium) he would bet accordingly. Our friend is actually using the four best of five dominos. This will give him an overall advantage of approximately 25% no matter what the rank of the fifth domino might be. He then concluded that he would muck dominos in and out until he received a hand containing a Low four domino. At that point he would remove the Low four from the game and play normally. He might do this five or six times a night depending on the type of game and its players.

B.) Single Domino Switches Between Two Players

Without going into detail, if two players were to sit side by side and switch one domino between them it would facilitate a higher advantage than our last example. In this example, with one player betting large amounts and one betting a minimum wager, the big player has the opportunity to play the best three of his four dominos and the best one of his partner's four dominos. But if you think that players must sit very close together to be able to exchange the dominos, you are wrong. There were two very smooth gentlemen that would exchange dominos from either end of the table, as far apart as possible. How did they do it? Both "guys" must have gone to the same tailor. Each fellow was wearing a sport coat that would hold up to thirty dominos in specially designed individual pockets inside the jackets under the lapels. The big player would signal to the smaller player what his four dominos were in his hand. The smaller player would then signal the larger player which domino to remove and which, out of his coat he should add.

These decisions were based on what the smaller player held. The smaller player would then remove and add just the opposite of what he had instructed the larger player. After several hands the players would reverse roles.

Freezing Out the Table

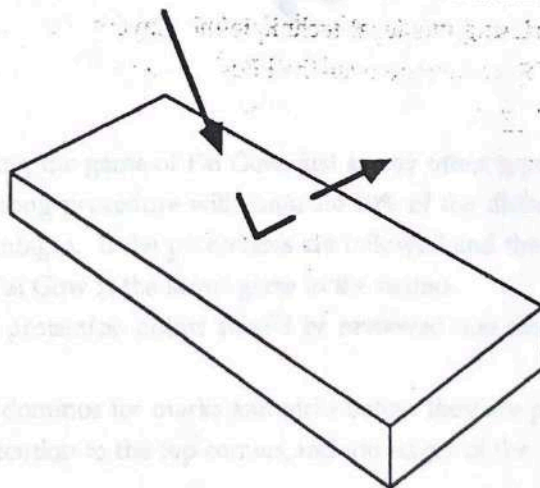
Another way to determine what four dominos the house dealer possesses, other than marking all the dominos, is known as "Freezing Out the Table." When all seven spots of the table are used, all thirty-two dominos are in play. If all the players at the table could communicate to each other the identity of their dominos, through the process of elimination, they would be able to determine the identity of the four remaining dominos held by the house dealer. Using this legal technique the players could achieve an approximate 7% advantage over the house dealer (who would be banking.) During this situation several characteristics will occur together. First, none of the players will accept the bank. When the house banks, the players can wager limit bets at a 7% advantage in all seven betting circles. If one of the players banks, only the banker plays against the house. Second, the players will act differently when playing their hands. Most traditional players will take time to analyze their dominos, picking them up one at a time. When freezing out the table the players will look at all their dominos immediately which provides them more time to signal, analyze and set their hands. Since this technique is legal (unless concealed computers are used) the best course of action a casino would use is to eliminate one betting circle. This forces the conspirators to play against eight possible dominos.

Infrared Transparent Dominos

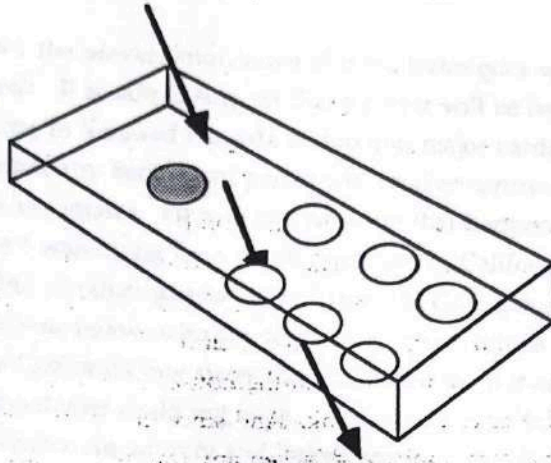
Although, it is my feeling that these dominos were not intended to be used to cheat the casinos or cardrooms, I believe there should be some mention in this text about the incident. During the spring of 1988, several shipments of dominos were received by casinos in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which contained dominos that appeared transparent when viewed

through the surveillance cameras. The camera will pick up many different light wave lengths that the naked eye can not. If the dominos are made from a red substance instead of black or gray material, infrared light will pass through the dominos and the dominos will appear invisible on the surveillance monitor. Not all sets of the dominos received were transparent. Only the set that appeared red, like a glass of Burgundy, when held up to the light, were irregular. Most dominos will appear cloudy when held in front of a light, but if they look gray or black, Infrared light waves will not penetrate them. Most casinos have instituted the procedure of reviewing all new dominos through the camera before they are put in a game.

Effect of Infrared light on regular Dominos



Effect of Infrared light on Red Dominos



When protecting the game of Pai Gow, just as any other type of gambling game, a strong procedure will eliminate 90% of the different possible player advantages. If the procedures are followed and the supervisor properly educated, Pai Gow is the safest game in the casino.

Several game protection points should be reviewed one more time:

- 1.) Check all dominos for marks and nicks before they are put into play. Pay special attention to the top corners and top edges of the dominos.
- 2.) Be sure that the dice are called correctly. Watch to make sure that the dealer leaves the dice cup exposed when delivering the dominos. Do not let the players touch the dice. Occasionally check the dice with a magnet. Always maintain unused dice in a safe and secure place.
- 3.) Be sure that the requested deliveries are carried out by the dealer. Also, watch an occasional shuffle and make sure the dominos are mixed reasonably well.

4.) Understand the house way and traditional strategy. Be aware of players that set their hands in unusual manners.

As for the player, knowledge of these techniques will help you protect your bankroll. It is safe to suggest that a player will be free from cheating when playing in licensed [REDACTED] casino and major cardrooms in [REDACTED], but there are many back room parlor and smaller cardrooms where the players run the games. Here is one situation that happen during a surveillance I was doing for a small cardroom in [REDACTED]. The cardroom had a number of poker games but only one Pai Gow game. The game was run by a Vietnamese fellow who supplied the chips, dominos and dealt the game. Because the [REDACTED] law states that the house can not actively participate in the game, the dealer could not bank. And since the cardroom was located next to a farming community and lacked any traditional players, there were very few persons that wanted to bank. But there were many locals that learned Pai Gow and loved to play it. So our "friend" had his girlfriend sit at the table and act as the player bank. Everything appeared fine. The players would come and play, the girl would bank and on a rare occasion, one of the "farmers" would bank. One thing I noticed was that the players would set their "obvious" hands but would ask the dealer to set their hands (house way of course) if it could be played several different ways. After all player hands were set, the girl banking would expose her hand. If it was an obvious decision she would immediately rank the hand. If it wasn't obvious, she would ask the dealer, her boyfriend, the person that had just set many of the other hands at the table, what he thought. If he knew that she would get the best of it by setting her hand opposite house way, he would recommend she play house way. Of course this was the signal to deviate from traditional. If he wanted her to play house way, he would instruct her to play the hand any way she wanted. Such a nice couple!

Pai Gow is easy to protect as long as you educate yourself (and employees) and follow all the basic procedures. Just think, if a certain casino manager had read this chapter, he would have won a substantial amount of money last year too!

PAI GOW- [REDACTED]

Since you have read this far in the book, it is obvious to me that you are one of three types of person. One, you know nothing about Pai Gow but are intrigued enough with the game to learn how it's played. Your motivation could come from a desire to learn a new game, you're fascinated with the Chinese culture or you are currently in gaming and feel that learning Pai Gow will help you advance your career. Two, you already have a good idea how to play Pai Gow but would like to know more. You either learned Pai Gow from a friend or out of a book and, as I found out, are having a hard time getting any information above the basic level. Three, you are currently involved with gaming on the supervisory level or in surveillance, or even some branch of law enforcement. You know the game, most of the procedures and a basic knowledge of the house way, but feel very uncomfortable about protecting the houses bankroll. It is my hope that this book has helped to peak your interest in Pai Gow and made you feel more comfortable about the game. But no matter how simple or easy one tries to make a subject, there are still many questions.

After discussing this book with several persons that have learned Pai Gow, they all made the same comments. First, find a way to make learning the basics of Pai Gow a step by step process similar to learning any other gambling game. Second, let the readers know what can be expected in the future concerning Pai Gow. Third, let the readers know where they can purchase Pai Gow equipment.

Fortunately, in the past few months I have taught several people how to deal Pai Gow for [REDACTED], a dealing school in [REDACTED]. The lessons and drills I use are similar to Blackjack, Craps or other gambling games. The lessons are as follow:

Lesson 1- Learn the domino rankings for both pairs and individual.

I have the students learn the different level of rankings just like I have explained previously in this book. The drills I use force the student to learn the position of each domino (or pair) in relationship to the others. It is not necessary to remember that the Low six is the 12th highest pair. It is more important to know that it is lower than the High seven and higher than the nine. Ranking the dominos in order from the Gee pair down to the five pair, over and over again, will establish their positions in the mind of the student. If the student feels comfortable ranking the pairs in this manner, I have them rank the pairs starting from the five pair up (reverse order.) Another drill that I use is to have the student turn over four dominos at random and then pick out the highest ranking dominos in order. If I find that the student is still having problems identifying certain mixed pair combinations, I will have him draw the dominos from memory.

Lesson 2- Learn how to set the hands.

I start out explaining the three rules when first looking at your hand. After they have a basic understanding of the rules, I start explaining what pairs may be split and their exceptions using the actual hands as examples. Then I cover the Wong, Gong and High Nine combinations and exceptions. Last I explain the two basic rules of ranking a hand that do not contain a pair or Wong, Gong or High 9. At this point in the student's training the rule concerning in which hand to play the high domino should be explained. It is not advisable to go into the individual exceptions until the student is clear about setting the dominos regarding the basic rules. As a drill have the student turn over four dominos and rank the hand. Have the student, out loud, recite each rule regarding setting the hand. When the student finds the rule that applies to that hand, have him/her recite any additional rules for that category. Example: The student discovers that his/her hand contains a pair. Have the student recite which pairs can be split. If it is a pair that can be split, have the student recite the rule which states when that pair can be split. Keep turning over four dominos at a time and have the student rank the hand as stated above. Repetition is the best way to learn any material.

Lesson 3- General dealing procedure.

Start the student off by having him/her practice the shuffle and stacking procedure. Have the student stack four dominos high to start with. Stacking eight high should only be attempted after the student can deal the complete game. After the student appears fast and neat at stacking, start with the general procedure used when the house banks. After the dominos have been delivered, the other students will set their hands and place them face down on the layout in stacks of two. The student dealing will then turn over his dominos and set the hand. It is very important that the student learns to memorize his hand before turning over the first players hand. This can be enforced by covering the bank hand with a slip of paper immediately before the student starts turning over hands. Be sure that the student follows the proper procedure when determining winners, losers and push hands. Chips need not be used.

Lesson 4- Learn Player Banking Procedures

Have the student practice the procedures when a player is banking. Be sure that the student understands commission. Use chips when practicing. Go over the different deliveries and have the students playing request to cut and move and vary the deliveries.

Lesson 5- Advanced Techniques

When the student reaches this point in his/her training, try to get the student some live training. The student needs to know the house way and procedure for the casino or cardroom where the student will be training. Co-banking procedures must be covered. Any student that is learning Pai Gow so that they can watch the game (floor personnel or surveillance) should review the material concerning game protection.

When learning Pai Gow, always review the house way. Most of the information will be forgotten if not used on a daily basis. Even if you supervise Pai Gow every day, some of the house way exception hands will not appear for weeks.

Regarding the future of Pai Gow, let's first look at what's happening in [REDACTED]. The future of Pai Gow in [REDACTED] is very unpredictable. The Attorney General of [REDACTED] is adamantly against Pai Gow as a cardroom game. As stated under [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED] Penal Code, "banking and

percentage" games are clearly prohibited. It is the state's option that, since the players must bank (not like poker where the players play against a pot) and the cardrooms take a fee from each winning player which is a percentage of that win (now they take a flat fee per hand not win), Pai Gow is an illegal game. In the fall of [REDACTED], many cardrooms in [REDACTED] appeared before local magistrates (counties) seeking preliminary injunctions in an attempt to keep their games open. Most courts found that Pai Gow is not a "banking" or "percentage" game and is not specifically named as a prohibited game by Penal Code [REDACTED]. Although the injunctions stand, the Attorney General's office has been trying continually to reverse those decisions.

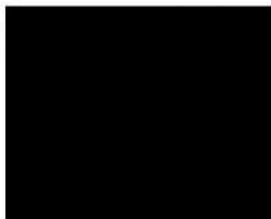
Why the state wants to close Pai Gow is not very understandable. The game of Pai Gow has been a financial boost for the cardrooms of [REDACTED]. It has increased revenues immensely by marketing to the Chinese-Americans, and has opened the door to other games such as "Pai Gow Poker" and "Super Pan Nine" which are a big success, if not bigger than Pai Gow. Another big plus that Pai Gow has accomplished in [REDACTED] is its exposure to the Occidentals. This is also a big plus for the [REDACTED] casinos.

In [REDACTED], only three casinos in [REDACTED] offered Pai Gow. During the first quarter of [REDACTED] there are [REDACTED] casinos in [REDACTED] that have at least one game on their floor. In [REDACTED] there are [REDACTED]; [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] offers [REDACTED] clubs: [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. Several of these casinos will run as many as four Pai Gow games during busy periods and most of these casino's annual winnings are estimated to be in the millions. Despite its income there are no official records of Pai Gow profits since the state of [REDACTED] lumps that information together with the games of "Big Six" and "Red Dog" under the title "Miscellaneous Games." Without the proper revenue information, it is all but impossible to predict what Pai Gow will do in the future. But if we take into consideration there are seven more casinos offering Pai Gow now than 10 years ago (five of those seven have opened since [REDACTED] cardrooms introduced it in [REDACTED]). Pai Gow appears to have a flourishing future.

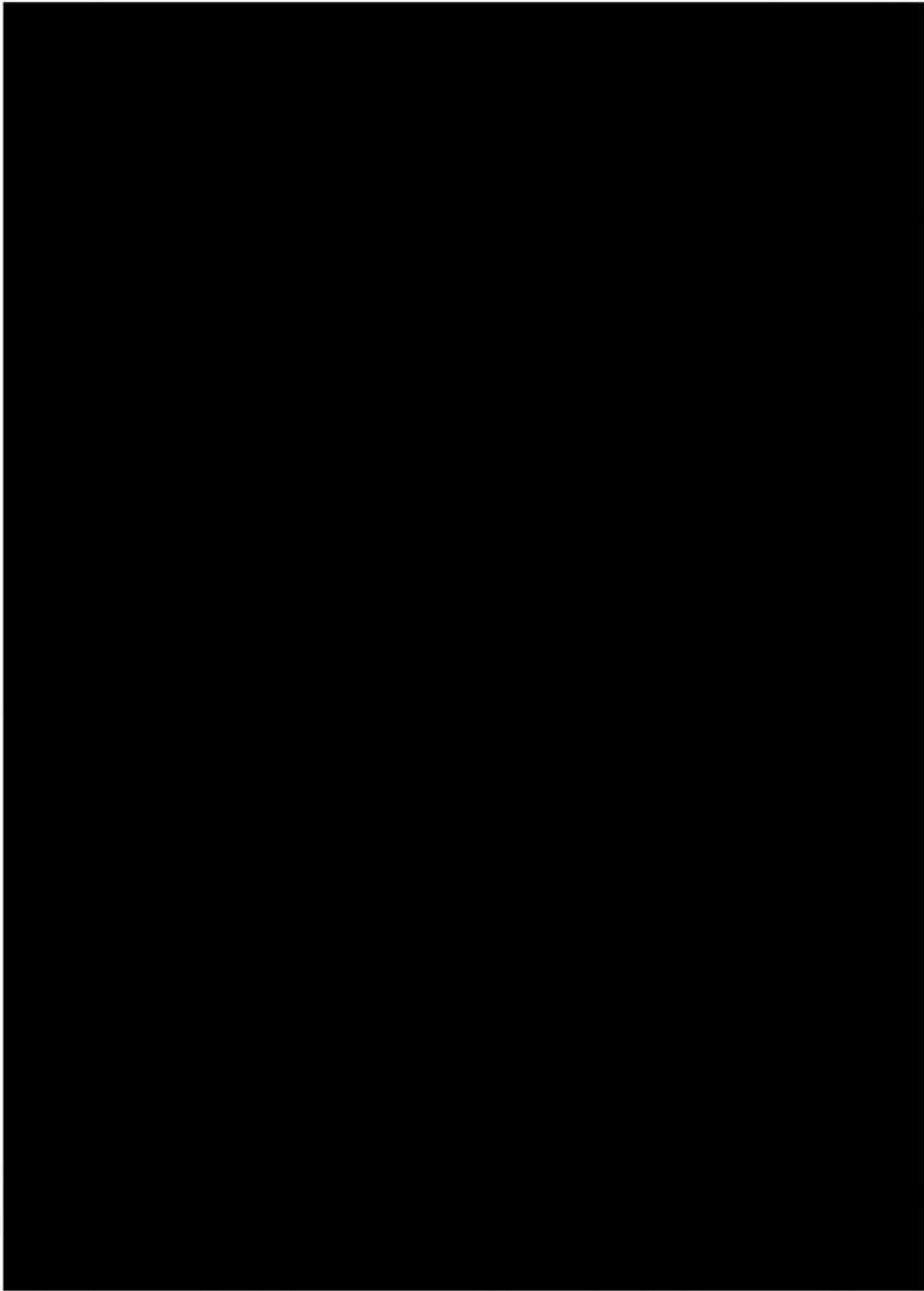
Purchasing Pai Gow equipment is much easier today than it was several years ago. Now major gaming distributors such as [REDACTED] Company, [REDACTED] Dice and Cards, and [REDACTED] Casino Supplies, along with the [REDACTED], have on inventory items such as dominos,

dice, various dice cups and layouts. In the past, if you were interested in a set of dominos, one would have to make a trip to either [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. If you were lucky, you might be able to get a cancelled set from one of the casinos. But more than likely you would be forced to go down to your local hobby shop and create a set of your own. Even though equipment is more available now, the prices aren't very "bargin basement." A set of new dominos will cost you between \$35 to \$70. A lathed stainless steel dice cup can cost as much as \$80 while a layout, usually a second (one made for a casino but defective), is a bargain at approximately \$60. And if you are thinking of purchasing a table for your home, an average Blackjack table with padded rim, chip tray, drop slot (with box and paddle) and layout cost about \$1000. Of course for that amount of money the distributor will throw in the Pai Gow layout for no extra cost. In [REDACTED] there are several distributors. Unfortunately the only one I can think of is [REDACTED]. For more information concerning the location of the nearest distributor, look in the yellow pages under "Gambling Equipment."

My main goal in writing this book is to pass on some of the information that I have collected over the past ten years. If I can eliminate some of the barriers that I had to cross, then I have succeeded. If you have any questions regarding Pai Gow, do not hesitate to contact me:



You will find Pai Gow a very enjoyable and interesting game. So wipe away those tears and remember, the red spots mean absolutely nothing.



[REDACTED] is the complete book about the Chinese domino game of Pai Gow.

[REDACTED] contains information concerning: how to play the basic game, traditional strategies, optimal strategies, casino and cardroom game procedures, different domino deliveries, why Pai Gow wins, game protection techniques, and much more!

[REDACTED] answer questions for all levels of players and Pai Gow enthusiasts.

Basic Questions:

Do I have to speak Chinese to learn Pai Gow?
May a player act as the bank in Pai Gow?
Is there an easy way to memorize the domino rankings?

Intermediate Questions:

Why are dice used and how important are they for keeping the game random?
Do different casinos use different house rules to set their hands?
If I learn Pai Gow, will I be able to find dominos, dice and other equipment?

Advanced Questions:

Can Pai Gow be beaten legally like Blackjack?
Can Dominos be marked similar to playing cards?
Are certain dominos "invisible" when viewed through a camera?

[REDACTED] will be interesting to both the novice player and the experienced casino executive.

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- (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

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