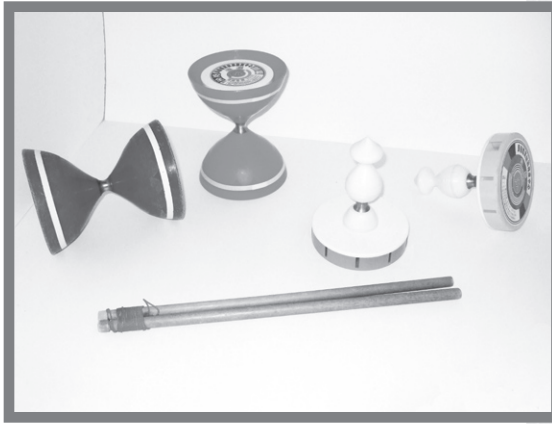


扯鈴



Chinese Yo-Yo/Diabolo

■ By Robert Chung

Chinese Yo-Yo (Traditional Chinese: 扯鈴; Hanyu pinyin: chě líng), also known as the diabolo in the West, is an old ancient toy originating from China. In Taiwan, elementary and middle school students learn the Chinese yo-yo as part of their physical education curriculum. In fact, schools have clubs that specialize in Chinese yo-yo and they frequently compete with other schools. The main source of appeal for the Chinese yo-yo is the many challenging and exciting tricks that can be performed with the Chinese yo-yo, especially if the performance includes many performers all in sync.

The most common Chinese yo-yo is called the double-bell yo-yo (Traditional Chinese: 雙頭鈴; Hanyu pinyin: shuāng tóu líng). The double-bell yo-yo consists of two equally sized discs, each attached to the side of a long axle. Traditionally, the Chinese yo-yo is made from bamboo or wood; today, they are made out of plastic and/or rubber for greater durability. Some yo-yos have slits on the side of the discs that make the yo-yos hum when rotating with sufficient velocity.

The Chinese yo-yo is rotated with a string wrapped around its axis. The string is tied to two sticks which serve as handles; one stick is attached to each end of the string.

The string's length is adjusted to be slightly shorter than your height. Other than a string attached with sticks as handles, other objects can be used to create different and exciting tricks. Such objects include extra long strings, umbrellas, badminton rackets, and broomsticks; any thin rod can serve this purpose.

In addition to the common double-bell yo-yo, the Chinese yo-yo can come in another form. Some Chinese yo-yos have only one disc / bell. This type of yo-yo is called a single-bell yo-yo (Traditional Chinese: 單頭鈴; Hanyu pinyin: dan tóu líng). In performances, the single-bell yo-yo is used as a top to spin on the ground.

Other than the two previous types of yo-yos, other objects can be used as yo-yos. One such object is a pot cover / pot lid which is used in cooking. However, not all pot lids can be used as Chinese yo-yos. Only lids with a sufficiently long handle with a decent sized arch can be used. The method of using a lid is the same as using a single-bell yo-yo. Using single-bell yo-yos and pot lids are unfortunately not usually seen in most performances because most Chinese yo-yo curriculums focus on using the more popular double-bell yo-yo.

Most Chinese yo-yo performers use only one yo-yo at a time. However, advanced users may use two or more yo-yos for greater difficulty and appeal to the audience.

Anyone can learn how to play the Chinese yo-yo. However, younger students might have more trouble learning than older students. Chinese yo-yo offers many benefits. It allows its user to develop patience, motor skills, eye-hand coordination and aids in physical fitness. Most importantly, Chinese yo-yo is fun.

Chinese yo-yo is performed from time to time at various Chinese and Taiwanese events such as Lunar New Year. You can check out these events and circus / juggling performances such as Cirque du Soleil to see Chinese yo-yo in action.



Robert Chung has been practicing Chinese yo-yo as a hobby ever since he was a child. As community service, he has performed and taught Chinese yo-yo at various non-profit events to help raise awareness of Chinese culture. If you are interested in him performing or teaching or just have questions about Chinese yo-yo, you can contact him at Robert.Chungtw@yahoo.com

Robert Chung performed at the Chinese School of CAACF Closing Ceremony