



Chinese Games

Dumplings: Saturday, December 16, 2006



Throughout China's 5000-year history, its people have found many ways to amuse themselves. As a result, there are a plethora of Chinese games that exist that vary greatly by type and region. Chinese Yo-Yo (扯铃-che ling), one of the most popularly known games, became popular in northern China, and was played by children in the springtime. It consists of a bell-like shape that is twirled on a string, and makes a humming sound while being played. The pitch of the hum is determined by the number of holes in the bell, and expert Yo-Yo players can produce beautiful sounds as well as perform a variety of tricks with their bell and string.

Kites (风筝-feng zheng) also play a large role in the history of Chinese games, and date back to the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD) where it was rumored to have been used in warfare, with whistles attached to it that made strange noises. Traditionally the frames are made from split bamboo—strong and light—and is today often associated with the fall, when enthusiasts make hundreds of beautiful kites resembling anything from dragons to centipedes.

Although there are still countless other Chinese games to enjoy, one that deserves final mention is the shuttlecock. Called "jian-zi" (毽子) in Chinese, it also dates back as far as the Han Dynasty, and is very similar to the American game of hacky sack. Instead of staying stationary while kicking and passing the hacky sack around a circle, however, the jian-zi is often played by one person with a variety of different kinds of footwork, with each kick being part of a jump. One or both feet can be used (two feet is more difficult), and there are additionally other tricks involving other parts of the body that have become part of the art form of playing jian-zi. It is often seen as a cold-weather game, as it warms up the body in exercise.

Additional popular games include Mahjong (麻将-ma jiang), which involves four players exercising strategy with tiles, and Go (围棋-wei qi), a board game which involves trying to surround an opponent's pieces with one's own,

Harvard Chinese Yo-Yo Club

"Yo-Yo Club began as an extension of the Harvard Taiwanese Cultural Society and obtained official status as a Harvard student organization during the 2003-2004 academic year. What began as a series of informal workshops has now evolved into a full-fledged performing troupe, now consisting of over fifteen members. The club often appears on-campus at cultural events such as the Taiwanese Cultural Society's Winterfest. It has also been a popular show at the annual Cultural Rhythms and ArtsFirst. Off-campus events have included performances at cultural shows at local universities.

CYYC's growth in size has been accompanied by a concomitant growth in community involvement, as CYYC continues to dedicate itself to the promotion of Chinese culture in the community. In addition to performance, CYYC leads hands-on workshops for children in the Boston community. These include workshops sponsored by adoption agencies, particularly those specialized in placing Chinese children in American homes."

--taken from

<http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/~yoyo/theclub.html>



Schedule

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|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 10:30-10:40 | Welcome: Arrival, Nametags |
| 10:40-10:50 | Western Games: |
| 10:50-11:05 | Game time! |
| 11:05-11:15 | Harvard Chinese Yo-Yo Club! |
| 11:15-11:50 | Make your own Yo-Yo! |
| 11:50-12:00 | Chinese Jump Rope, Snack Time |