A Glossary of Traditional Chinese Toys, Puzzles and Games

Main Reference: An English translation of Play, Play, Play: Fun and Wisdom in Traditional Chinese toys, CHANG Shih-Tsung, National Taiwan Education University, 1993. 张世宗 **(**國立台北教育大學**):** 玩遊戲**,** 太聯文化出版，**1993**年。

Category	English	Chinese	Material / Context	Description/Remarks
Toy	Ba'er	拔兒	wood	This refers to a 12-inch wooden object shaped like the stone of a date. It is firsr held uprright before hitting.
Toy	bamboo copter	竹靖蛟, 竹蜻蜓	bamboo	
Toy	bamboo crossbow	竹弩	bamboo	
Toy	bamboo gun	竹槍	bamboo	
Toy	Campanula	風鈴	wind, sound	
Toy	Camphor boat	樟腦船	water	This simple toy is made using a board as the body of the boat with camphor placed at one end. The boat is able to move without any additional force.
Toy	clay dolls	泥偶	mud, clay	Including clay dogs (泥泥狗), clay tigers(泥泥虎), and A-Fu, a well-known child figurine with a chubby face and a beaming smile.
Toy	Clay whistle	泥人哨	clay, sound	
Toy	cloth dolls	布偶	cloth	Including cloth tigers (布老虎)and other animal shapes
Toy	contra rotating stick	逆轉棒	gravity	
Toy	Crane lantern	仙鶴燈	light	
Toy	Cricket gourd	蟈蟈葫蘆	storage	
Toy	Deity standing on the palm	仙人立掌	gravity	
Toy	diabolo	空竹, 空鐘, 扯鈴, 響簧	bamboo	A diabolo can be a single cone, or resemble two tops joined at their tips with an axle. Players hold two sticks with a string tied between them in their hands and spin the top up and down the string, tossing it and catching it again. Diabolos come in all sizes and are differentiated by the number of ringing sounds they can produce.

	lantern			
Toy	Fan Hua Ban	翻花板	wood	A kaleidoscope on a board
Toy	field toad	地牛	bamboo	
Toy	flapping crane	振翅鶴	paper	
Toy	flying eagle	飛鷹	paper	
Toy	Ice ape	冰猴兒	wood	A top made to spin on thick layers of ice.
Toy	Jumping ingot	跳寶	gravity	
Toy	kite	風箏	wind	
Toy	Kong Ming lantern	孔明燈	light	Named after Zhuge Kong Ming or Zhuge Liang [諸葛亮], recognised as the greatest and most accomplished strategist of his era，lighting the lantern symbolizes wishes to be fulfilled
Toy	Little Hand Drum	小搖梆	wood	
Toy	Lotus lantern	荷葉燈	light	
Toy	Monkey walking on a tightrope	猴子走鋼索	gravity	
Toy	Morphing paper flowers	摺紙花	paper	
Toy	Mu Ren Zou Xian	木人走線	wood	Literally, a wooden man walking on a rope
Toy	Paper flower ladderpaps	翻花梯	paper	
Toy	Punt-polel lantern	篙子燈	light	
Toy	rattle drum	搏浪鼓	wood	
Toy	River lantern	河燈	light	
Toy	Rolling ground tiger	滾地虎	gravity	
Toy	Shadow-picture lantern	走馬燈	light	Literally, “Walking Horse”
Toy	Sound board	響板	sound	
Toy	Sun and Moon Ball	日月球	wood	
Toy	Top	千千, 陀螺	wood	
Toy	WaterlLantern	水燈	light	
Toy	wooden dolls	木偶	wood	
	Zh C Pi	豬槽撇		

Puzzle	boards	排版	wood	
Puzzle	Butterfly Rings	蝴蝶环	metal	
Puzzle	Butterfly Wings puzzle	蝶翅几	wood	
Puzzle	Chinese ring puzzles	巧环	metal	A collected term that refers to all intellectual ring puzzles, the famous being the Nine-Connected Rings.
Puzzle	Clever Puzzle Ring	益智巧环	metal	
Puzzle	Deity Ferry	仙人摆渡	wood	
Puzzle	Deity Lock Pick	仙人开锁	wood	
Puzzle	Deity Shuttle	仙人穿梭	wood	A Deity Shuttle is made of a horizontal rod and two pieces of coins. There is a hole in the middle of the horizontal rod which allows a thread to go through. This looks like a shuttle that runs to and fro on the weaving machine during weaving. There are 2 small holes at both ends of the rod to hold the ends of the thread in place. To solve the puzzle is to bring the coins together. During the game, the coins have to pass through the small hole which is even smaller than its diameter.
Puzzle	Deity Stairs	仙人登梯	wood	
Puzzle	Double Round Jigsaw Puzzle	雙圓七巧板	wood	
Puzzle	Egg Puzzle	蛋形拼板	wood	
Puzzle	Escape Rings	金蝉脫殼	metal	
Puzzle	Five Finger Rings	五指环	metal	
Puzzle	Four Amazing Division	奇分四喜	wood	
Puzzle	Golden Turtle Rings	金龜环	metal	
Puzzle	Heart-shaped Puzzle	心形七巧板	wood	
Puzzle	Hua Rong Road	华容道	wood	
Puzzle	Lady Scale	贵妃秤	wood	
Puzzle	lantern riddles	灯谜	lingual	

Puzzle	Lovers' Rings	鸳鸯扣	metal	
Puzzle	Lu Ban Lock	鲁班锁	wood	
Puzzle	Maze Rings	迷宫环	metal	
Puzzle	Nine Connected Rings	九連環	metal	Also called “Cardan’s Rings” and “Sigillo Salomen” in the West. In Nine-Connected Rings, all rings are interloped on a bar or a frame in a shape ranging from a sword to a butterfly. One either tries to release all the rings from the frame or hook them back on by following certain steps. The name has been extended to cover similar puzzles with number of rings not limited to nine. The procedure of releasing or interconnecting the rings is actually repetitive in shifting the ring up and down around the frame. However, as the number of rings increases, the steps required increases exponentially. A minimum of 241 steps are needed to solve the nine-ring puzzle.
Puzzle	Nine Curve Rings	九曲环	metal	
Puzzle	Nine Halls Diagram	九宫图	wood	
Puzzle	Pagoda Rings	寶塔环	metal	
Puzzle	Pentominoes	五方联	wood	
Puzzle	puzzle boards	拼板	wood	
Puzzle	Pythagorean Puzzle	畢氏七巧板	wood	
Puzzle	Qi Zhong Yi	歧中易	metal	
Puzzle	riddles	猜谜	lingual	
Puzzle	Round 10 Assembly Board	园形十巧板	wood	
Puzzle	Seven-piece Tangram	七巧板	wood	
Puzzle	Six Components of Excellence	六子聯芳	wood	Also known as 六疙瘩
Puzzle	Sliding Tiles Puzzles	滑板	wood	
Puzzle	Spiral Runner	螺旋转轮	metal	
Puzzle	Swallow Jigsaw Puzzle	燕式七巧板	wood	
Puzzle	Three Coincidental Parts	巧合三寸	wood	
	Three-star	三星归		

Puzzle	tongue twisters	繞口令	lingual	Yuan (A.D. 1279-1368) Dynasties in which a character is broken up into its parts to form a puzzle phrase.
Puzzle	Wire Flywheel	铁线飞轮	metal	
Puzzle	word riddles	拆白道字	lingual	
Game	catching the chicks	老鹰捉小鸡	field	
Game	Cat's Cradle	挑绳，翻花绳	String	This rope play trains children fingers skills in picking, turning, crossing, purling and so on and team competition encourages concentration and cooperation. Typical rhymes are often chanted by children at play.
Game	Finger guessing	猜拳	drinking	Also known as "Throwing fists". This is a simple game to decide on win/lose. In a wine game, a dinner guest could challenge another one into throwing fists to decide who should drink. The players would throw open their fists, showing certain number of their fingers, while the challenger would call out a number. If the number matches the total fingers put up by both players, the challenger would win. The challenge is not limited to straightforward calling of numbers. Especially among intellectuals and scholars, sophisticated calling phrases have been devised to challenge the literary knowledge of one another.
Game	Grassfight	草玩	grass, plant	Grassfight is in two different forms. In a phsical fight, different specis are used to cross cut each other. In a literary form, names of the grass are called to match, or 'overpower' the other. In Chapter 62 of the classical novel Dream of the Red Chamber [紅樓夢], in the grassfight between two young girls, “arhat pine” [罗汉松] was used to match with “Buddha willow” [观音柳] , and “beauty canna” [美人蕉] with “noble bamboo” [君子竹].
Game	hand shadow play	手影戲	light	
Game	handball	手球	field	
Game	Kicking dance	蹴鞠舞	field	The earliest form of football game
Game	kicking sand bags	踢沙包	field	
Game	kicking shuttlecocks	踢毽子	field	
Game	Leaflets play	葉子戲	paper	This card game, orginally made of leaves and invented during the Tang and Song dynasties (A.D.960-1279), was spread to Europe as the Mongolian troop marched to the west. After merging with the local cultures, it gradually evolved to become poker.
Game	Ma Diao	马吊	paper	This Leaflets game was for four players.
G	M hj	麻將	til	Evolved from Ma Diao, paper cards were replaced by more

Game	playhouse	酒	field	
Game	Ring toss handheld games	套圈圈	water	
Game	Sand drawing	沙畫	sand, water	
Game	selling drums	卖摇鼓	field	
Game	stepball	踏球	field	
Game	stickball	竿球	field	
Game	Water Margins cards	水浒牌	paper	Evolved from the Leaflets game, this set of cards display the main characters from the classic Water Margins.
Game	Water swing	水秋千	water	This sports game is played in the following way. First, place the two poles of the wooden frame (of the swing) respectively onto two barges that are close to each other. Next, the player must stand on the suspended wood plank and use great strength to treadle on it. By doing so, he could swing high up. Once the plank reaches the same level as the top of the plank, the player will release his hand from the swing, somersault in mid-air and fall gracefully into the water.
Game	Wine games	酒令	drinking	Literally, “Drinking rules”. These are games played with wine drinking in dinners. Losers are made to drink. There are over 700 kinds of game rules in 6 major categories ranging from dice throwing, finger guessing; and verbal linguo.
Game	Puffing paper frog	噴田蛤仔	paper	This simple game places the folded paper frogs in confrontation. Each player tries to puff into his/her own frog to jerk it into smashing the opponent's frog.

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