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A pellet drum is known in its most basic form as a children's toy popular throughout East Asia. What makes it unique is the fact that the beaters are actually pellets attached to the drum by short strings so that they strike the drumheads when the drum is twirled back and forth rapidly. Pellet drums are also popular with street vendors who use them as noisemakers to attract customers. In China, this drum is called *taogu*, or "rattle drum." This is the type of pellet drum that we are making today. Another form of pellet drum that is shaped like an hourglass is used for religious rituals in places such as Tibet, Mongolia, Nepal, India, and Taiwan. To see examples of this type of instrument, visit the Mongolia display and find the *damar*; go to the Tibet display and look for the *thod rnga*; or walk around to the India (Devotional) display and search for the *damaru*.

MAKE



Materials

- Deli container with lid
- Stick
- String
- Beads
- Paper
- Markers, stickers, and animal cutouts
- Ribbon
- Scissors

Instructions

1. Pierce two holes in the deli container and insert stick through the plastic.
2. Tie the string around the center of the stick.
3. Tie a bead to each of the two sides of the string.
4. Trace two circles from the container on to paper.
5. Decorate your circles with markers and stickers however you prefer.
6. Cut out the circles and tape them to either side of the container—one on the lid and the other on the bottom of the deli container.
7. Press the lid onto the container, making sure that the beaded ends of the string are sticking out.
8. Tie the ribbon around the stick of your drum for extra decoration.
9. Play your drum!

SEE

Visit MIM's Asia Gallery and see the pellet drum, called *damar*, in the Mongolia display.

LISTEN

Check out [this playlist](#) for:

A news segment about 1,651 people trying to break the Guinness World Record for the most people playing the pellet drum at once

A dance performance featuring the *bolang gu* (pellet drum or drum-shaped rattle)

Some demonstrations of how to play a pellet drum

PLAY

Make up your own pellet drum rhythm to accompany this Chinese folk song.

Ai Hai Yo

Chinese Folk Song

Ai hai yo, ai hai yo, ai hai yo hai yo.

5 Long hur tai yang dur tu di. Sheen nian yi jin dao lai

9 Jia jia sheen fu nong tian hao shou chung.

Translation

Ai hai yo, ai hai o, ai hai yo, ha yo.

Warm sun shining on the earth, the New Year has been birthed.

Now we wish you cheer and to have a good year.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about Chinese games and sports [here](#).