

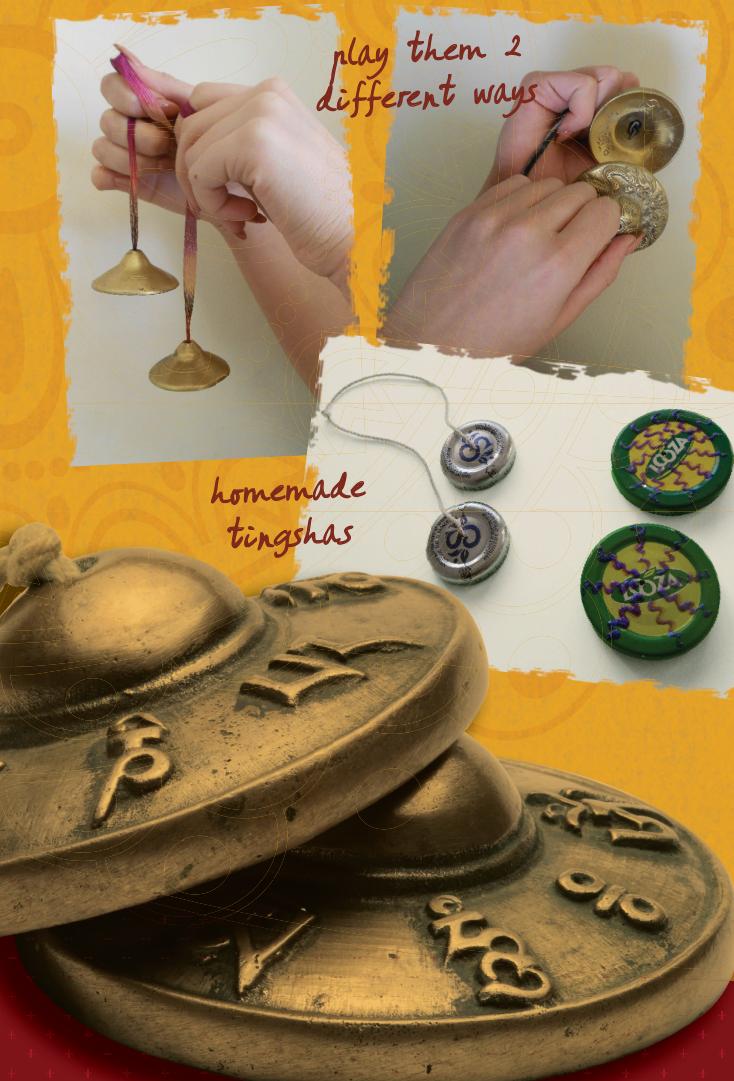
MAKE YOUR OWN

Tingsha Handbells

Most historians believe that about 4,000 years ago, craftspeople in the region around China began experimenting with metal and bronze. Among the items they created were amazing sounding bells, gongs, singing bowls and small sets of handbells known as tinghsa. Tingsha (also, ting-sha) are two small, rather heavy cymbals that are attached to a rope or piece of rawhide. They are usually about 2.5 to 4 inches in diameter and can be plain or have decorative images on them. Some have symbols such as dragons that are considered lucky or they may have mantras or other words or phrases that are a part of prayer or devotional practices.

Tingsha can be played in two different ways. Either the string is held and the two bells are allowed to strike each other or both cymbals are held and tapped together to make them ring out. Because the sound of tingsha bells is so beautiful and relaxing, they are often heard in the United States as part of yoga or meditation practices.

Want to make your own version? Here is an easy project to create your own tingsha bells out of recycled materials.



Supplies

- Two matching bottle caps – “Snapple” caps work perfectly
- String or yarn
- Paint, textured paint or glitter & glue for decorating the handbells

To make the hole in the bottlecaps:

- A piece of wood (as a work area)
- Hammer and nail or hammer and awl

Directions

Start by creating a hole in the center of each of the bottlecaps. You can do this by putting the bottlecap; outer side up, on a work surface (such as a spare piece of wood) and tapping it gently with a hammer and nail or use a hammer and awl.

Once you've created the hole, it's a good idea to turn the cap over and tap it with a hammer to flatten the sharp edges around the hole. This makes it safer to handle when adding the string.

To decorate your two "cymbals", you can paint or add textured fabric paint. You can also apply glue and glitter. When you're done and they are dry, you are ready to string them together.

Thread the strong or yarn through each side and make a knot to hold it into place. Check that you like the length of your tinghsa and adjust the knots accordingly.

WHAT DO SINGING BOWLS, TIBETAN HANDBELLS AND GONGS LOOK LIKE?

Here are some pictures that will show you a variety of these instruments.



close-up of one handbell

2 different varieties of handbells



4 different sizes and designs of singing bowls



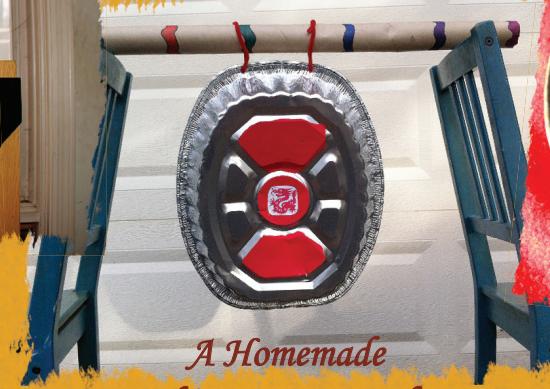
Tibetan handbells



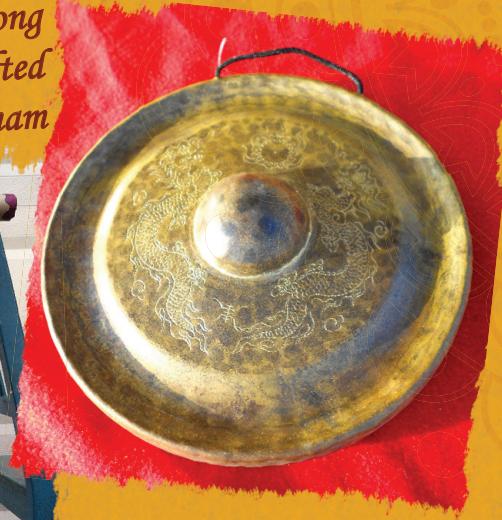
Etched Gong hand-crafted in Vietnam



A large gong used in recording studios



A Homemade Chinese Gong craft



Want to explore more instruments or music from around the world?

Check out DARIA's world music for kids website – www.dariamusic.com