

# TAMPA TAIKO

## History

Taiko drums are deeply entrenched in the fabric of Japanese History. Taiko drums were used to drive away evil spirits and pests harmful to crops. By imitating the sound of thunder, it was believed that the spirit of rain would be invoked into action. At harvest time, Taiko drums were played to offer thanks for a bountiful crop. Taiko drums were often used in wartime to motivate troops, to help set a marching pace, and to call out orders or announcements.

Recently, a cultural renaissance has been taking place in Japan - a rediscovery of native arts. Today, every school child in Japan knows of Taiko and many corporate events feature Taiko drummers. With groups like Kodo and Ondekoza it has again been popularized and is played in festivals throughout the world.

## Selected Glossary

1. bachi - drumstick; various sizes, a common one being 15" to 16" long and 7/8" to 1" diameter; lighter bachi made of bass wood, heavier ones of keyaki (Zelkova wood -- related to elms)
2. dojo - practice hall
3. fuchi - the head and rim or face of the drum
4. hachimaki - headband; strip of cloth tied around the head
5. happi - a short work coat; our uniform "tops"
6. kata - form; basic body alignment and movement when striking the drum
7. mimi - "ears"; the flaps over the side of the drum used when pulling on the skin to tighten the head prior to nailing
8. odaiko - big drum; the largest drum in any ensemble is called the odaiko, but people often think of the very large drums (4-5 feet in diameter) played by San Francisco Taiko Dojo, Kodo or Ondekoza; usually played on a tower stand
9. shime - "tightened" drum; from verb "shimeru" = to close tightly or tie tightly; smaller, flat drums whose heads are pulled together by rope or metal bolts; highest toned drum, often used to maintain the base rhythm on songs; also used on solos
10. taiko or daiko - drum; general term for any drum, as well as the music played on them

## Music

	<u>Matsuri Daiko</u>						
Don – 1 Beat Hard		Don	Don	Don	KaRa	Ka	Ka
DoRo – ½ Beat Hard		R	L	R	RL	R	L
TsuKu – ½ Beat Soft		Don Don	Ro	Don	KaRa	Ka	Ka
Kat – 1 Beat Rimshot		RR	L	R	RL	R	L
KaRa – ½ Beat Rimshots		Su Don	Ro	Don	KaRa	Ka	Ka
Su – Silence		R	L	R	RL	R	L
				Cont.			

## Taiko Drum Construction

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## TAIKO DRUMMING

**“If you can say it, you can play it.”**

Taiko is known as the modern art of traditional Japanese drumming in a group ensemble that uses martial art like movements and "ki-ais" (shouting to encourage high energy.) The performance may also dramatize Japanese folktales and use props. Drums were used in ancient times to signify the boundaries of a village. Peasant events such as the rice harvests or dance festivals were celebrated with drums. Drums were used to pray for rain and other religious ceremonies. Drums lead warriors into battles in order to scare off the enemy. They were included in Japanese folklore. In one example, by drumming, the Sun God would come out of its cave. Japanese culture has celebrated the athleticism of traditional drumming techniques for thousands of years. Taiko became popular around the world in the 1950's and came to the U.S. in 1968 by Grand Master Seiichi Tanaka, who wanted it to be a common household word, like chopsticks and sushi.

Taiko means "big drum," but there are many shapes and sizes. The dojo or band can include other rhythmic instruments. The sound made by striking the drum is defined by a syllable, and to play the rhythmic phrase the student copies a pattern of Taiko syllables. Uchite (Taiko drummer), can wear loose fitting happi (short coat), with an obi (belt), hachimaki (headband), and tabi (shoes with big toe separated). The crest symbolizes Taiko and can be reproduced upon their clothing and drum. It stands for thunder.

### Matsuri Daiko

Don – 1 Beat Hard	Don	Don	Don	KaRa	Ka	Ka
	R	L	R	RL	R	L
DoRo – ½ Beat Hard						
TsuKu – ½ Beat Soft	Don Don	Ro	Don	KaRa	Ka	Ka
	RR	L	R	RL	R	L
Kat – 1 Beat Rimshot						
KaRa – ½ Beat Rimshots	Su Don	Ro	Don	KaRa	Ka	Ka
	R	L	R	RL	R	L
Su – Silence			Cont.			

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## Student Activities

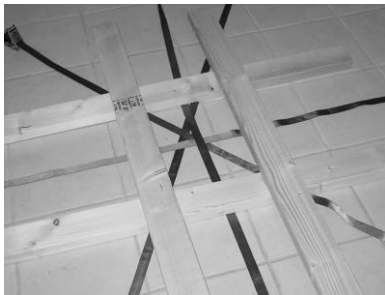
1. Students can make up their own phrases, solo or with a partner, and share with class.
2. The composer(s) phrase can be written on 2'x 4" lined tag board.
3. The phrase can be named. Suggestion: "The Gallop" or "The Kangaroo."
4. Dojo (drum players) can learn and play each other's phrases.
5. Combine phrases together.
6. The bachi can also be hit together and that syllable can be called \_\_\_\_?
7. Say the phrase aloud as they are played.
8. Use the command "Owari Mashoo" to stop, finish, quit.
9. Use the command "Tataki Mashoo" to start playing.
10. Students rotate to different size drums after 3-5 minutes.
11. Have Odaiko group play alone or "Hitori de"
12. Have Jozuke and Shime drum Uchites (players) play "Ishoo Ni." (In other words, together.)
13. Students and teacher can embellish phrases with movement of arms, body turns, switching places, kicks, and lunges. Think of karate, martial arts, or dance.
14. Add props such as fans, scarves, or Japanese costume.
15. Teach a Japanese dance such as Tanko Bushi (The Coal Miner) or Bon Odori (The Fan Dance) using small steps and small hand gestures.

## Warm-up to Taiko

1. Start class in a circle. Each student has a pair of sticks or bachi. All hit rhythm sticks together seven times counting in Japanese. On "8" or hachi, students are silent, with their bachi apart, while one student says: "SU" (which means rest). Go around circle until all have had a turn. (ichi, ni, san, shi, go roku, shichi, hachi, "SU.") On "SU", use the diaphragm in the body's upper abdominal, in order to get a strong, sharp sound. (Can be done by simply clapping.)
2. Without sticks, teacher and students participate in stretch and strength exercises. All participate while counting to "10" in Japanese for each exercise. (ichi, ni, san, shi, go, roku, shichi, hachi, kyu, jyu) Students may even offer their own ideas for an exercise to share with the class. Since Taiko uses a strong stance, try lunges (one leg bent, one straight) while making large circles with arms. Try some kicks, turns, punches, balances, and jumps.
3. Students work in partnerships to make a 10-count exercise. The two should try to integrate their movements together. They may mirror each other, work side by side, or compliment each other's movement. (Emphasize that Taiko uses movements while beating the drum.) Students may elect to show their exercise to the rest of the class and teach it. Eventually, the activity can be coupled with the actual Taiko drum rhythms.
4. The bulk of the class time is spent practicing drumming. Start with the easiest and add more rhythm sentences along the way. Try putting two together and add some movements. Rotate students to the three different sized drums. With all the noise it can be beneficial to create a signal to gain everybody's attention.
5. Clean up the drums and sticks and have students form two lines from each corner of the gym. Have students run to center, then to opposite corner, alternating one person at a time. Try adding a jump or turn in the center.
6. Finishing class with a circle and a bow.

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