

YAMATO

Wadaiko Drummers of Japan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Profile of Wadaiko Yamato*
- Wadaiko Yamato's message to their audiences*
- History of the taiko in Japan*
- Types of taiko drums & other traditional Japanese instruments*
- A typical day for a member of a performing taiko group*
- Glossary*
- The process of making a taiko drum*

- Yamato Cast Members*
- Resources*

Profile

Founded by Masaki Ogawa in 1993, the WADAIKO group is based in Nara, a city where the Japanese culture is believed to have started. The name YAMATO is the old name of Japan and of Nara. We adopted this name because we want to represent the best of Japan and Nara, where we were born and where our research of taiko sounds originated. YAMATO is a special word for the Japanese and our music reminds them of the "good old times".

Our Wish

WADAIKO is an old instrument, believed to have existed in many parts of the world. The sound of this instrument touches the hearts of peoples of all ages. YAMATO has been able to touch people with these very simple drums by putting their heart into them. The sound of the heartbeat goes all the way to the audience. The rhythms, which we use, are sometimes intense, sometimes funny, or warm. Our wish is to express different moods, times and places. We face the world with courage and beat taiko.

With this feeling in our souls, we train our bodies everyday towards Taiko-do, sometimes in a dynamic, sometimes in a soft manner. The moment the heartbeat coincides with the rhythm of the soul it's YAMATO. The moment every member of the audience feels refreshed by something new within them, the power of life is being communicated.

We wish to continue to beat the taiko to create such moments.

History of Taiko

Taiko is a Japanese drumming style, which originated over 1400 years ago. The word taiko, which translates as "fat drum", actually refers to the drums themselves. However, nowadays taiko is often used to mean the music of Japanese drum groups (kumi-daiko). Since the first kumi-daiko drum group was formed fifty years ago, taiko drums have captivated audiences in Japan and around the world, so that today there are over 8,000 taiko groups in Japan. This mesmerizing drumming promises to be the first Japanese traditional music to spread throughout the world.

Some experts believe that taiko drums may even date back 2000 years ago. The drums have some similarities to Chinese and Korean drums, but over the centuries have evolved into unique Japanese instruments. The drums were probably first employed in battle to intimidate and frighten the enemy. Drums have also been used in many other cultures for similar purposes. Later, taiko were used in battle to issue commands and coordinate movements, because their loud sound could be heard across an entire battlefield.

Off the battlefield, taiko drums played a more refined role in ensembles of Gagaku, or imperial court music, which was introduced to Japan in the Nara period (697-794). Gagaku is still performed today, and is the oldest continuously played court music in the world. The taiko used for Gagaku are some of the most elegant and beautifully decorated of all Japanese instruments.

Thanks to their rumbling power, taiko drums were used as a means of communication in Japanese villages from earliest times. Simple taiko beats signaled that the hunters were setting out, a storm was coming, or that the women needed to bring in the meat and fruits they had drying. The drums were so important to village life that a village's boundaries were defined by how far the drums could be heard. If someone lived too far away to hear the village drum, then they were not part of that village.

Because these drums were so vital to their daily lives, Japanese villagers began to believe that they were inhabited by a god. Gradually only the holy men were allowed to beat the taiko, and as the Shinto and Buddhist religions developed in Japan, this custom remained. Thus the only instruments to be found in shrines and temples were taiko. One consequence of this association of taiko with religion was that taiko were played only on special occasions, and only by men who were granted special permission by the priests. Throughout early history, taiko were played singly, or sometimes in pairs.

Today, taiko has continued to find a place in religious ceremonies, both Buddhist and Shinto, and in village festivals throughout Japan. These festivals have developed a rich body of traditional taiko rhythms, which are a never-ending source of inspiration to modern players.

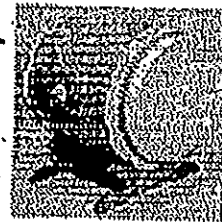
For a more detailed history, please visit <http://www.taiko.com>

Types of Taiko Drums

Chu-daiko - General term for a medium sized drum, roughly around three to four feet in diameter. For picture see *nagado-daiko*.

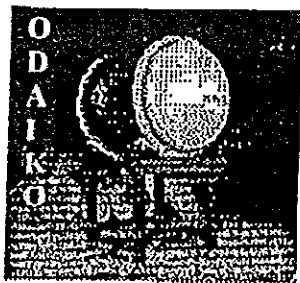


Hira-daiko - General term for a drum wider than it is deep (Lit. "flat drum"), with nailed heads, and carved from a single block of wood. Highly decorated versions called *gaku-daiko* are used in Gagaku.



NAGADO-DAIKO

Nagado-daiko - Lit. "long-bodied taiko". The body has a rounded, barrel shaped appearance, with the maximum diameter being roughly equal to the length of the drum from head to head. The cowhide heads are nailed onto the body of the drum with tacks. The pitch of the drum cannot be changed without retensioning and retacking the head in place. A pair of ring shaped handles, called *kan*, are attached to the sides. This is the prototypical taiko drum most often associated with taiko drumming. Nagado-daiko are available in many sizes, from 30cm to over 2m.



Odaiko - Literally: big, fat, drum. In general, the term is used for any drum larger than 84cm in diameter. It can refer to a large drum of any style, but usually is reserved for drums of the *nagado* style.

Okedo-daiko - Also *Oke-daiko*. General term for drums made from a barrel-stave construction. The heads are usually stitched over steel rings and then laced to the body with a rope, similar to the *shime-daiko*. The tone of the drum can be changed by the rope tension. Often they are horizontally placed on tall stands, and played with a drummer striking each head.



SHIMEDAIKO

Shime-daiko. General term for a rope-tensioned drum (now sometimes bolt or turnbuckle tensioned as well). Also specifically refers to small rope tuned drums often used in Noh, Kabuki, Hayashi, Kumi-daiko, etc. Shime-daiko have two heads which are sewn over steel rings and laced to a *kuri-nuki* body with a rope called the *shirabeo*. It is tensioned with a second rope called the *ushirabe* that is wound around the lacings of the first rope. These *shime-daiko* are sometime just called "taiko" or "wadaiko," and have relatively thin heads, often with a circular patch of deer skin in the middle of the head.

Uchiwa-daiko - A handheld taiko that has the skin stretched and stitched over a hoop and attached to a handle. This taiko has no resonator. Literally means "fan drum." Originally used to accompany chanting in the Nichiren Buddhist sect, but now common in taiko groups. Most *uchiwa* are small, but large versions are sometimes made.



UCHIWA DAIKO

Other Traditional Instruments Often Played with Taiko



Atarigane - A hand gong. Often used to keep time. It is played held in the hand or suspended by a cord. Struck with a deer horn mallet called the shumoku.

Chappa - Also called tebyoshi. Small hand cymbals.



Dora - A fairly small gong with a deep lip and pronounced center boss.

Koto - Japanese zither, usually with 13 strings, although bass and custom versions with more strings are also found.



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Shakuhachi - Bamboo end-blown flute, with four holes in front and one in back. Takes its name from the standard instrument size of one shaku, 8 (hachi) sun, although a wide variety of sizes are available. Known for its delicate tonal shadings and evocative, breathy sounds.

Shamisen - A banjo-like instrument with three strings. Played with a plectrum or a pick. Often claimed to be the best instrument to express Japanese sensitivities and feelings. Common on the Japanese main islands, and developed from the Okinawan sanshin. The shamisen is larger and heavier than the sanshin.



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SHINOBU



Shinobue - Also known as fue, hayashi-bue, takebue or yokobue. Bamboo transverse flute.

A Typical Day for a Member of a Performing Taiko Group

8:00 am	Come to the leader's house Training	Run 10 kilometers in the mountains
9:00 am	Eat breakfast together	
10:00 am	Training	Weight training Suburi* - 1000 - 2000 repetitions
12:00 pm	Lunch together	
1:00 pm	Go to dojo and set up taiko for practice	
3:00 -	Practice	
9:00 pm	Return to the leader's house Dinner Meeting	
12:00 am	Go home	

*Suburi - swinging the large taiko drum sticks over your head as if you were playing an imaginary drum.

Yamato Worksheet

I. Meet the Instruments! Match the letter of the instrument with its description.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| A) Shime-daiko | H) Shakuhachi |
| B) Chu-daiko | I) Chappa |
| C) Hira-daiko | J) Atarigane |
| D) Nagado-daiko | K) Koto |
| E) Odaiko | L) Shamisen |
| F) Okedo-daiko | M) Shinobue |
| G) Uchiwa-daiko | N) Dora |

- ___ 1) Literally means Fan Drum. Handheld taiko common in taiko groups.
- ___ 2) Specifically refers to small rope tuned drums often used in Noh and Kabuki.
- ___ 3) Small hand cymbals also called tebyoshi.
- ___ 4) 13 stringed Japanese zither.
- ___ 5) A fairly small gong with a deep lip and pronounced center boss.
- ___ 6) The prototypical taiko drum most often associated with taiko drumming. Means "long-bodied taiko."
- ___ 7) A bamboo transverse flute also known as fue.
- ___ 8) Refers to a large drum of any style, but usually is reserved for drums of the nagado style. Literally means Big Fat Drum.
- ___ 9) Hand gong often used to keep time. Struck with a deer horn mallet called the shumoku.
- ___ 10) General Term for a medium sized drum, roughly around three to four feet in diameter.
- ___ 11) Played with a plectrum or a pick, this instrument is often claimed to be the best instrument to express Japanese sensitivities and feelings. It is a banjo-like instrument with 3 strings.
- ___ 12) This drum is wider than it is deep. Literally means Flat Drum.
- ___ 13) Often placed on tall stands and played with a drummer striking each head, this is the term for drums made from a barrel-stave construction.
- ___ 14) Known for its delicate tonal shadings and evocative, breathy sounds, this instrument is a Bamboo end-blown flute with four holes in front and one in back.

Glossary

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Bachi - Also buchi. General term for drum sticks. There are many different types of bachi in many sizes, shapes and materials.

Dojo - A place for studying. Literally: the place of the way. A taiko dojo would be a place for learning taiko.

Fundoshi - A loincloth. Sometimes worn in various festivals and by some taiko groups during performances, particularly Odaiko solos.



Futatsu-domoe - A design made up of two comma shaped marks in a circle (similar to a yin-yang symbol). Also commonly called a tomoe. Associated with the music of the left in Gagaku. It is a common design lacquered on the heads of Odaiko.



FUNDOSHI

Gagaku - Japanese imperial court orchestral music. Literally means "refined music". Introduced into Japan in the 6th and 7th centuries, and formalized in 701. The genre exists mostly unchanged to this day, making it the oldest surviving tradition of court music still played.

Hachimaki - Headband often worn during festivals or by some taiko groups.

Happi - Short kimono-like coat often used in festivals and performances.

Hara - Belly. Location of the Ki energy in humans. Also refers to center of the drumhead.

Hayashi - General term for a musical ensemble that includes drums; musical accompaniment; festival music.

Kakegoe - Shouts, vocal calls. Used to accent the music, signal shifts in rhythm, and to encourage other performers.

Keyaki - The zelkovia tree, which is native to Japan. Used extensively for kuri-nuki-daiko in Japan due to its hard wood and beautiful grain pattern. The best trees for taiko making are reputed to come from the foot of Mt. Haku as well as the Japanese alps. Relative of the elm family.

Ki - Your body's energy or spirit.

Kiai - A shout used to channel ki. Often used as kakegoe.

Kuchi showa - Also kuchi shoga, kuchi shoka. The mnemonic syllables (and system) used in learning traditional Japanese music. One syllable will correspond with one sound/note of an instrument. Traditional Japanese music was not noted on paper, rather it was memorized through *kuchi showa*.

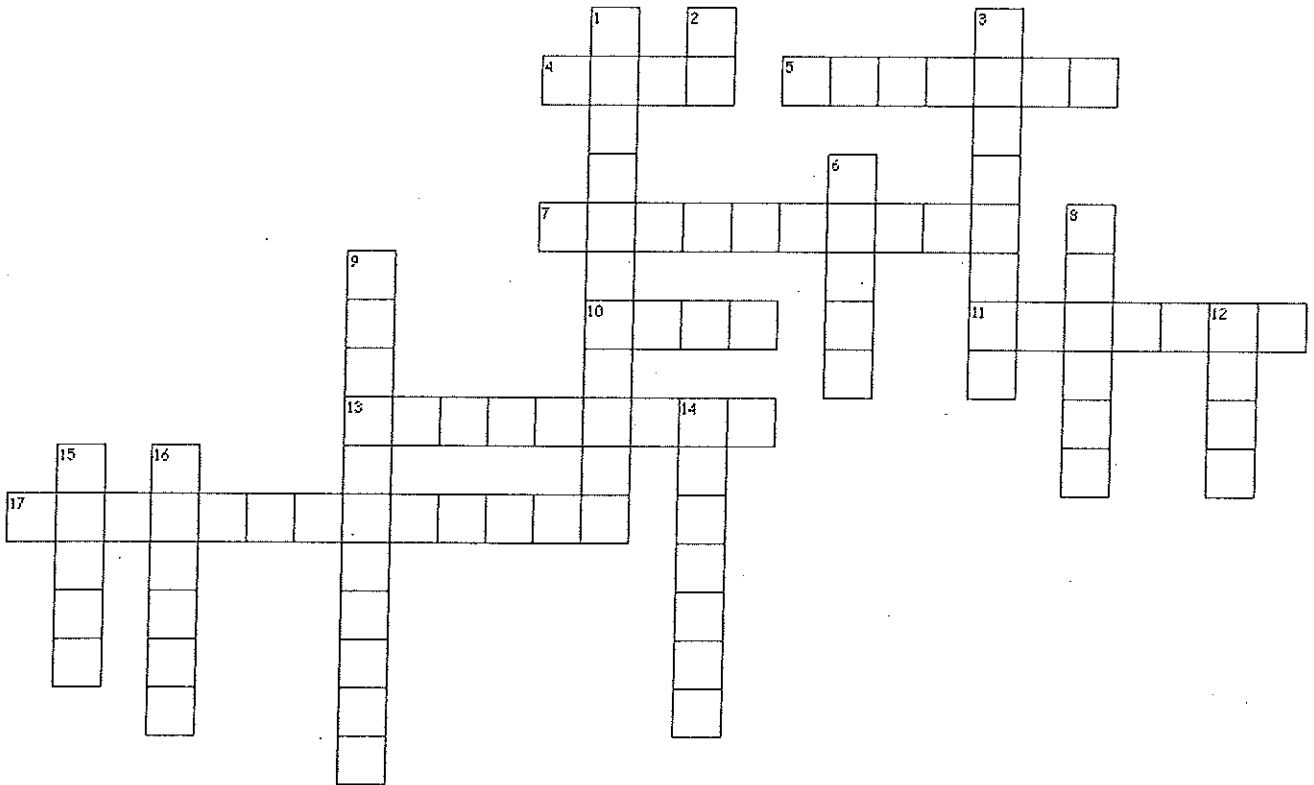
Kumi-daiko - Literally. "grouped drums". A taiko ensemble. The modern style of taiko playing using many drums and performers at the same time.

Matsuri - Festival. The noun form of the verb "matsuru", meaning to worship.



Mitsu-domoe - A design similar to the futatsu-domoe, but using three comma shaped marks contained in a circle rather than two. This design is associated with the music of the right in Gagaku. It is a common design lacquered on the heads of Odaiko. Also see futatsu-domoe; tomoe.

YAMATO



Across

- 4. A shout used to channel Ki.
- 5. Festival. Means "to worship."
- 7. Grouped Drums. A taiko ensemble.
- 10. A place for studying. Literally means "the place of the way."
- 11. General term for a musical ensemble that includes drums; musical accompaniment; festival music.
- 13. Headband often worn during festivals or by some taiko groups.
- 17. A design made up of two comma shaped marks in a circle (similar to a yin-yang) that is imprinted on the heads of Odaiko.

Down

- 1. A design using three comma shaped marks in a circle that is imprinted on the heads of the Odaiko.
- 2. Your body's energy or spirit.
- 3. A loincloth.
- 6. Drum sticks.
- 8. The Zelkovia tree, which is native to Japan.
- 9. The mnemonic syllables (and system) used in learning traditional Japanese music.
- 12. Belly. Location of the Ki energy in humans. Also refers to the center of the drumhead.
- 14. Shouts, vocal calls. Used to accent the music, signal shifts in the rhythm, and to encourage other performers.
- 15. Short kimono-like coat often used in festivals by some taiko groups.
- 16. Japanese imperial court orchestral music. Means "refined music."

17 of 17 words were placed into the puzzle.

Created by [Puzzlemaker at DiscoveryEducation.com](http://Puzzlemaker.DiscoveryEducation.com)



Process of Making a Taiko

Constructing the body of the drum in the mountains.

1. Find a good tree and chop it down.
2. Make measurements for the size drum you want and mark it on the trunk.
3. Cut the trunk to the size of drum you have decided to construct.
4. Hollow out the middle of the trunk.
5. Shape both ends and body the body to the form of a taiko,
6. Carve the inside of the drum so wall is the same thickness all around.
7. Smooth the edges.
8. Smooth the outside of the drum.
9. Smooth the inside of the drum.
10. Bring the drum body down from the mountains to town.

Finishing up the body at a taiko finishing shop (taiko carpenter)

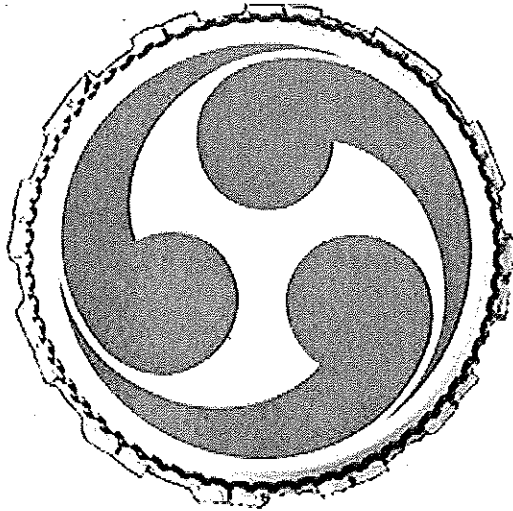
1. Let the body dry.
2. Sand the entire surface of the drum; inside and out, until completely smooth.
3. Coat the body with Japanese lacquer and attach handles and other metal fittings.

Making a skin at tanning shop (for the drum head)

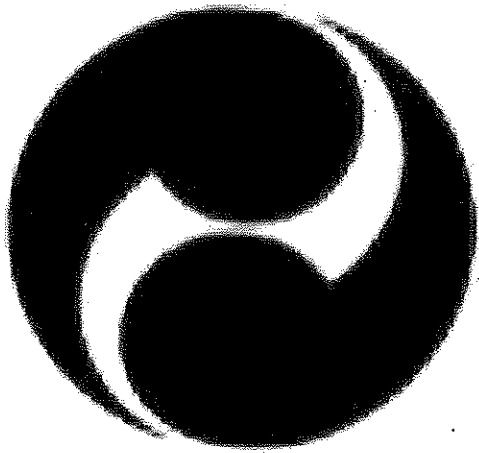
1. Acquire the hide of a cow.
2. Remove the hairs from the hide.
3. Soak the skin in salt water and preserve it for a while.
4. Rinse it.
5. Remove the fat layer from under the skin.
6. Soak the skin in bran.
7. Take out the top layer.
8. Take out the fat layer completely.
9. Dry the skin.

Attaching the skin to the drum body and finishing the drum at an attachment shop

1. Soak the skin in water to make it soften.
2. Attach the skin to the body temporarily.
3. Let it dry.
4. Sprinkle a special powder on it.
5. Attach the skin to the body, stretching the skin to the desired tension.
6. Fix the skin to the body with rivets.



Mitsu-domoe



Futatsu-domoe

Choose one of the Japanese designs, color it, cut it out and place it onto your instrument to make it official!

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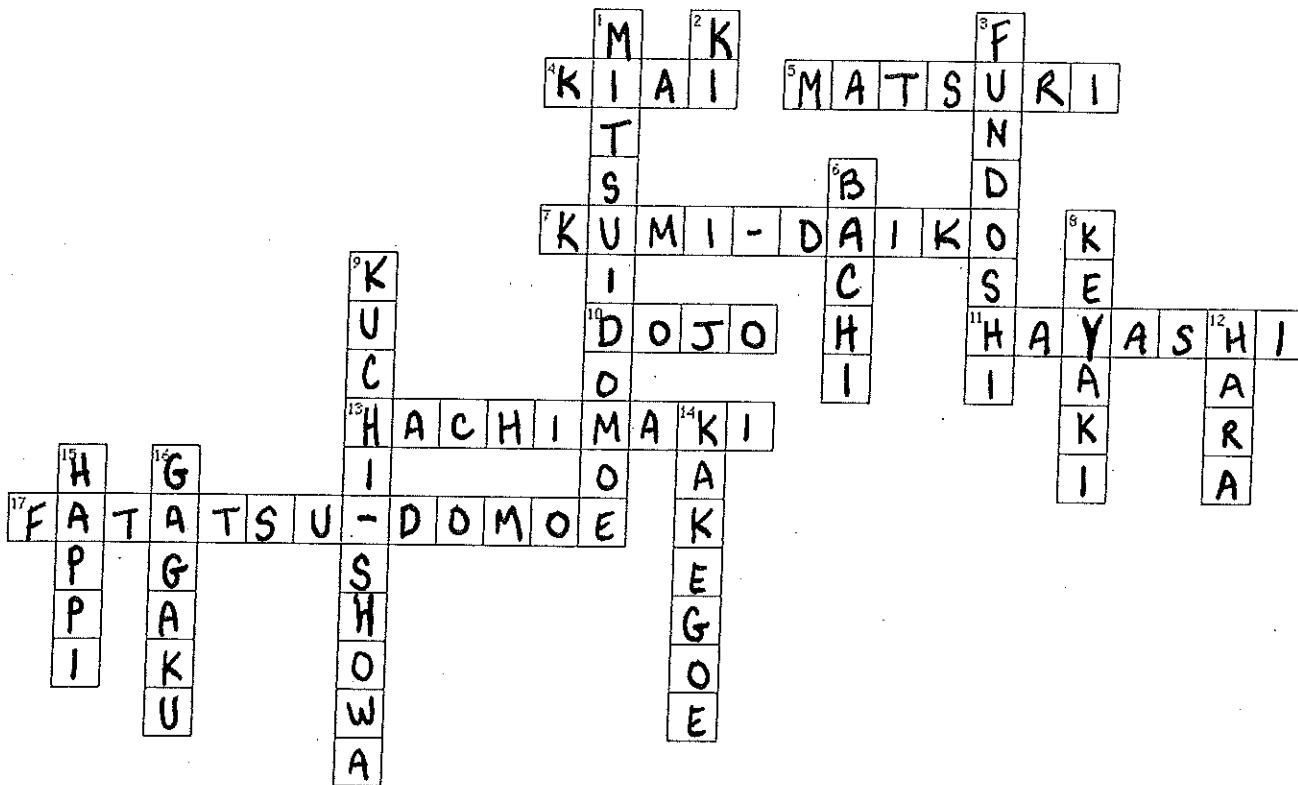
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