

# Teachers' Notes: Taiko Drums & Flutes of Japan

## Japanese Musical Instruments



### **Shakuhachi**

This Japanese flute with only five finger holes is made of the root end of a heavy variety of bamboo. From around 1600 through to the late 1800's the *shakuhachi* was used exclusively as a tool for Zen meditation. Since the Meiji restoration (1868), the *shakuhachi* has performed in chamber music combinations with *koto* (zither), *shamisen* (lute) and voice. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *shakuhachi* has performed in many types of ensembles in combination with non-Japanese instruments. It's characteristic haunting sounds, evocative of nature, are frequently featured in film music.

**Koto** (in Anne's Japanese Music Show, not Taiko performance)  
Like the *shakuhachi*, the *koto* (a 13 stringed zither)  
ORIGINATED IN China and a uniquely Japanese musical vocabulary and performance aesthetic has gradually developed over its 1200 years in Japan. Used both in ensemble and as a solo virtuosic instrument, this harp-like instrument has a great tuning flexibility and has therefore adapted well to cross cultural music genres.



### **Taiko**

These drums come in many sizes and have been traditionally associated with religious rites at Shinto shrines as well as village festivals. In the last 30 years, Taiko drumming groups have flourished in Japan and have become popular worldwide for their fast pounding rhythms.

**Sasara** A string of small wooden slats, which make a large rattling sound when played with a "whipping" action.

**Kane** A small hand held gong.

**Chappa** A small pair of cymbals



**Kane**



**Sasara**



**Chappa**

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# *Vocab used by Anne & Toshi in their presentation*

<b>Musical Instruments</b>		
しゃくはち	Shakuhachi	An end blown bamboo flute
たいこ	Taiko	Drum
かね	Kane	Bell/Gong
ささら	Sasara	Percussion Instrument
ふえ	Fue	A side blown bamboo flute
ちゃっば	Chappa	Small Cymbals
でんでんだいこ	Den-den daiko	Toy (twisty) drum
<b>Costumes</b>		
はっぴ	Happi	Happi coat (livery)
はちまき	Hachimaki	Headband
おび	Obi	Sash
たび	Tabi	Socks with a split toe
<b>Greetings and Useful Vocab</b>		
みなさん おはようございます	Mina san ohayogozaimasu	Good morning everyone
せんせい おはようございます	Sensei ohayogozaimasu	Good morning teacher
こんにちは	Konnichiwa	Good afternoon
ありがとう	Arigato	Thank you
さようなら	Sayonara	Goodbye
いち に さん し	Ichi, ni, san, shi	1, 2, 3, 4 (counting)
おおき	Oki	Big
ちいさい	Chisai	Small
みぎ	Migi	Right
ひだり	Hidari	Left
わたしは アン です	Watashi wa Anne desu	I am Anne (My name is Anne)
ゆっくり	Yukkuri	Slowly
はやく	Hayaku	Fast
だんだん はやくなる	Dan dan hayakunaru	Gradually getting faster