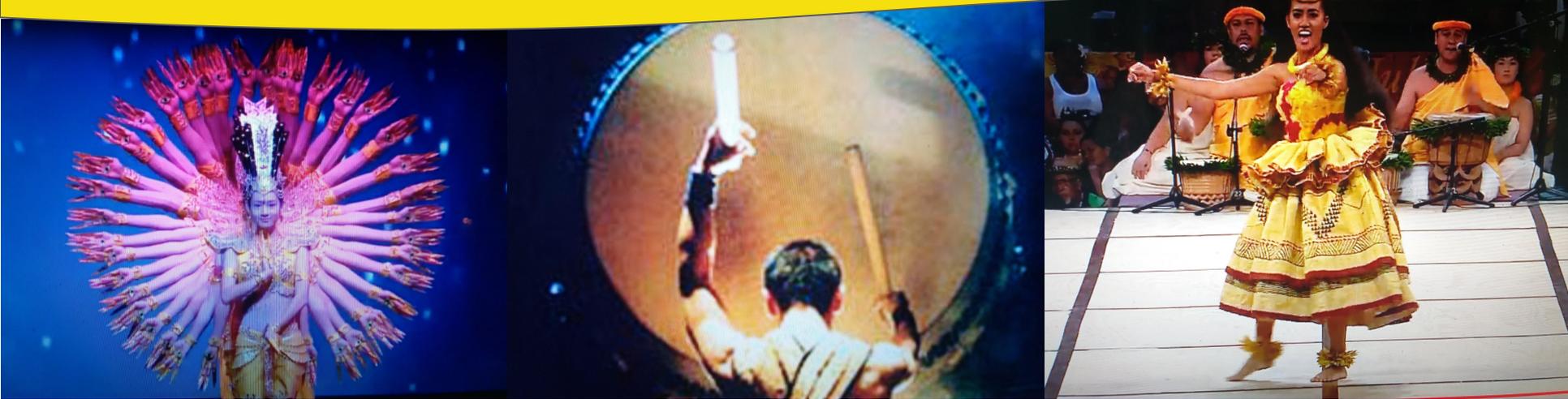


Celebrate!



Asian American / Pacific Island Month

Taiko Drumming



Taiko is an ancient Japanese form of percussion using large drums. The drums range in size from roughly a snare drum ("shime"), to drums as large as a car (the "o-daiko"). The most common drum size in taiko is the "chu-daiko" which is the size of a wine barrel.

During the 1900's, Taiko drumming became a musical art form that involved a music ensemble and tightly choreographed movements. This is taiko as we know it today.

One of taiko's most defining aspects is its dynamic playing style. Taiko playing is loud, hard, and fast, and involves a lot of choreographed movement which many identify with Japanese martial arts.

There are more than 8,000 taiko groups in Japan, but it is only over the last 30 years that taiko drumming has taken root in the western world. Even if you have not seen taiko drumming live, you have probably still encountered it in movies with a Japanese theme, such as *Rising Sun*, or *The Hunted*.



Taiko Drumming



In **Japanese**, taiko literally means "**drum**," though the term has also come to refer to the art of Japanese drumming, also known as kumi-daiko. Centuries ago, taiko was used predominantly in the military arena, and gradually began to be used as a sacred instrument. Historically, it has existed in a multitude of other environments, including agrarian, theater, and the imperial court.

Taiko was created by Daihachi Oguchi, a jazz drummer. He broke with tradition by forming a taiko drum ensemble. More recently, taiko has enjoyed a resurgence of interest in Japan, and also transplantation and evolution in North America.



Learning Taiko

First and foremost, it's important to understand that although taiko drumming is a form of music, it's probably unlike any other kind of music in the world. In many taiko styles (including Tamashii's), *movement is just as important as rhythm*, so in our view, taiko can be thought of as 50% dance and 50% music.

Taiko movements also tend to be hard and fast, and generally very tiring. This means that to perform taiko *well*, you will want to be in good shape and develop speed and endurance -- much like martial art training. Any kind of training requires a massive amount of hard work. The highest-level professional groups in Japan have **very intense physical exercise regimens** to complement their music and dance training.



Learning Taiko

Asian and Pacific Islander American Heritage Month Lessons/Activities

Videos to Watch

- 1) Japanese Taiko Drums –Pro Series
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqEcEDznfdc>
- 2) Eitetsu Hayashi Drumming, “Fertility of the Sea”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZagsLrNzg3I>
- 3) Kodo - Spirit of Japan [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5L6h-s5VSmU\(Kodo-](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5L6h-s5VSmU(Kodo-)
- 4) Yamoto Drummers of Japan Live Street Perform
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqTJoo-0dbw>
- 5) Yamoto Drummers of Japan Performance
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2FWoE.IW_kOo



Learning Taiko

Objectives:

- Learn about the origins of Taiko Drumming.
- Watch the videos posted on the previous page.
- Listen to the sounds, and rhythms of the musicians.
- Observe how the movements are an important part of the drumming.
- Learn and practice a pattern of rhythms using materials available at home such as: a cardboard box, a hard surface to play on, or hand clapping/foot stomping. Move your body as you see the drummers doing in the videos. Also adding your voice.
- use this activity to express yourself and as a release to happiness and joy.



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Learning Taiko

Learning Points:

- What is the origin/culture of Taiko Drumming?
- How do the sounds of Taiko drumming make you feel?
- How would you describe Taiko drumming?
- Why is movement such an important element?
- How did this activity help you to express yourself?
- Make a video recording of you answering the above questions and of you playing a rhythm with movement that you learned or created on your own.

Please send to Ms. Daniels @ Karen.daniels@k12.dc.gov