

## Introductions of Taiko and instruments

### Miya-daiko

This is a beer-barrel shaped drum with tacked heads made of one big piece of wood (Japanese cypress, zelkova, oak).

It was brought to Japan from China through Korea around the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The Miya-daiko is used mainly for Japanese traditional festivals.



### Hira-daiko

These Taiko drums are made in the same way as Miya-daiko.

Their diameter is longer than a man's height.



### Okedo-daiko

These are lace-headed drums of various sizes. Many pieces of wood are put together to make an Okedo-daiko. The biggest Okedo-daiko in Japan is 380cm in diameter.

It is made light so that it can be played while being carried.

Musicians frequently play this type of Taiko drums at the Shishimai (Japanese dance-like play) or Kabuki.



### **Shime-daiko**

A small drum with laced heads, the Shime-daiko was brought to Japan from Kudara(Korea) around the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Its body is made of zelkova or pine tree which is hollowed out inside. Cow skin is put over each end and fastened with hemp. This Taiko drum has a high pitched sound and is often used to play fast rhythm.



### **Chappa**

A small bronze cymbal, the Chappa was used widely in the ancient Near East. Passing along the Silk Road, it was first brought to China, and then to Japan around the Nara Era. It is often used at religious services.



### **Shamisen**

One of the best-known Japanese instruments, the Shamisen is used to provide accompaniment to different styles of vocal music and theatrical performances. The Shamisen came to Japan from China via the Ryukyu Island and was fashioned into its current shape during the 16th century. It has a long thin neck and a box which resonates when its three strings are plugged with a big plectrum called Bachi. The Shamisen became widely popular from about the 17th century. Today it can be heard accompanying Kabuki, Bunraku and Joruri performances as well as traditional dances and folk songs.



## **Koto**

The Koto was introduced to Japan in the Nara Era as one of the instruments used in Japanese court music and dance from China in the Tang Dynasty. The first Japanese Koto was the Chikushi Koto. The unique composer Kenko Yamada used the Koto as his main instrument. Before that the Koto was only used as an accompaniment. Yamada continued improving the instrument in cooperation with Koto master Fusayoshi Shigemoto and together they created a new type of Koto of about 180cm wide. This increased the volume of sound dramatically. The sound also became much clearer. Yamato's Koto is the original Yamada Koto and the production method and playing technique have been passed down until today. The best sound quality for the Yamada Koto is acquired with a hollowed out Paulownia tree forty to fifty years old having a diameter of about 40cm.



## **Shinobue**

The Shinobue is a Japanese flute made from shino-bamboo. There are twelve types of Shinobue flutes, each having seven holes. The Shinobue acts as the melodic counterpart to the rhythm of the Taiko.

