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Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

Taiko master

**00.15–00.28** Two thousand years ago, Japanese warriors used drums to make their enemies fear them. People used to mark village boundaries by how far the sounds of drums travelled.

**00.30–00.35** They even used to do their daily activities to the beat of drums.

**00.37–00.42** Slowly over the years, the sound of the drums went away – until now.

**00.48–0.59** Now, far from Japan in the United States, a new audience is listening to this ancient drum. The art is called ‘taiko’ and it has come from the villages of Japan to the city of San Francisco.

**01.00–01.06** **Sarita** The essence of taiko is that it’s not just people drumming. It’s the unity of the drummers amongst themselves.

**01.10–01.26** In San Francisco, the movement of the body has now been added to traditional taiko drumming. It’s now an art form that brings together sound, body and mind. During a performance, the energy of all of these parts goes into the beating of the drums.

**01.27–01.36 Seiichi Tanaka** Your self and the drum, totally get together. Into the drum … your self … and drum come to you … both mutual.

**01.38–01.54** In the early 1900s, traditional taiko drumming was popular in Japanese-American communities. But, by the mid 1900s, people were losing interest. Then, in 1968, Seiichi Tanaka arrived and brought a new interest and a new style of drumming.

**01.56–02.03** **Seiichi Tanaka** I was just fresh off the boat. So a whole bunch of ‘fresh off the boat’ people get together and play drums.

**02.05–02.16** **Leigh** Tanaka Seiichi is a real pioneer. He’s made a dozen or so groups back in the sixties and seventies into something like 800 groups now spread all over this country and Canada.

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**02.20–02.30 Seiichi Tanaka** All energy from the Mother Nature through your body, come to my body – here … go through, to the drumstick … BHAM!

**02.33–02.45** Taiko drummers sometimes have to play through pain and tiredness while practising and performing. At that point, some drummers feel that they can really express their feelings and energy.

**02.47–02.57 Leigh** It’s almost as if you are standing outside of your body kind of looking in. And you hit this point where you’re just completely free.

**03.03–03.14 Sarita** The essence of Taiko is giving your 110 per cent. You have to always give, because if you don’t give and everyone else is giving, then you’re draining from them.

**03.15–03.29** Here in San Francisco, taiko came from the old world of Japan and was born again. Grand Master Seiichi Tanaka is giving North America the chance to enjoy the energy and excitement of traditional taiko drumming.