

## Seven Tips for Atarigane Playing

The atarigane (hand-held gong) is a versatile and exciting percussion instrument. It is typically played with a shumoku, a mallet made from bamboo and deer antler. Although many different regional styles can be found all over Japan, the Edo Bayashi (festival music of old Tokyo) method is especially suitable for new and interesting musical applications. Here are seven tips to advance your atarigane playing:

- 1. Practice using kuchishoga (singing the part)** - accurately singing the part helps deepen your understanding and improves your playing.
- 2. Hold the instrument properly** - make sure there is contrast between the open and dampened sounds. The fingers should completely make contact with the flat surface of the kane.
- 3. Use a shumoku with a flat handle** - this will help keep the beater in the correct position without having to look at it.
- 4. Play along with recorded music** - choose any music you like and play a groove or solo along with it. This fun practice routine will help develop technique and expression.
- 5. Use a practice kane** - just like drumming on a practice pad, having a practice kane will allow you to practice anytime without the worry of disturbing others or protecting your ears.
- 6. Transfer taiko patterns to the atarigane** - playing taiko parts on the kane creates new practice material and expands your technique on the instrument. For example, play drumhead sounds in the center (don = chan) and rim sounds on the side (ka = chi).
- 7. Study Edo Bayashi** - there is no substitute for learning the original music of the playing style. The lessons learned in this context are invaluable.

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