

Contributions by Mr. Seiichi Tanaka

In 1968, Grand Master Seiichi Tanaka was the sole taiko performer at the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival. In that same year, Mr. Tanaka established the San Francisco Taiko Dojo, the first of its kind in the United States, which is now celebrating its 45th year. Through his performance and guidance, Grand Master Tanaka has helped to expand the appeal of taiko drumming throughout the United States. He has played an important role as a cultural ambassador, bridging American and Japanese culture, helping to develop taiko in the U.S. to its current status, and promoting the spread of Japanese culture and international understanding.

Grand Master Tanaka was a pioneer who founded the first full-fledged taiko group, not only in the San Francisco Bay Area, but the first in the United States. As a taiko player, artist, and figurehead in the Japanese American community he is commonly referred to in the United States as the “Father of Taiko”. Currently, of the nearly 400 taiko groups in North America, approximately half were started by pupils of Mr. Tanaka. In these past 45 years, Grand Master Tanaka has instructed more than 15,000 people of all ages in the art of taiko.

Though based in the San Francisco Bay Area, Grand Master Tanaka and San Francisco Taiko Dojo have been instrumental in the introduction and establishment of taiko across the United States and around the world. In addition to introducing taiko to the general American public, Mr. Tanaka’s work has also contributed significantly in reconnecting younger generations of Japanese Americans with the heritage and culture of their ancestors. Grand Master Tanaka and San Francisco Taiko Dojo have become indispensable as a major resource for Japanese culture in Northern California.

Grand Master Seiichi Tanaka, as the founder and president of San Francisco Taiko Dojo and president of the American Taiko Federation, is an important spiritual pillar for the taiko players and instructors of America and has achieved great advances in the sphere of cultural exchange between the United States of America and Japan.