



## Wooden Board, Moppan and Drum, Taiko

A *moppan* (sometimes called a *han*) can be found in several corners of temple complex including the *hattō* (dharma hall), *sōdō* (monks' hall), and *kuri* (kitchen). A monastic strikes the *moppan* with a mallet when he or she arrives at the mountain gate for the first time to join the practice. Also, *moppans* are used to confirm whether priests from all quarters of the temple complex are ready for a ceremony. The *taiko* (drum) is used to mark the passage of time or the beginning of activity. During *kitōhōyō* (a prayer ceremony) a person playing the drum beats it instead of a *mokugyo* to keep the rhythm of sutra chanting.

*Narashimono* are considered important in the Soto Zen Buddhism. Thus, to sound *narashimono* with utmost care is one of the most important practices for all Soto Zen priests. When you attend a ceremony, please pay attention to the sounds of the instruments and remember that each sound has a special meaning.



Denshō

Moppan

Taiko

## Temple Instrument

# 鳴らしもの



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## Temple Instruments, *Narashimono*

A temple has various percussion instruments which together are called *narashimono*. These instruments are most often played to lead the monastics and other attendees in service. They are also used to mark the passage of time or to signal changes and progress in temple activities.



## Main Hall Bell, *Denshō*

The bell installed in the main hall is called the *denshō*. It is rung to announce the beginning of a ceremony or to assemble the participants. Using a wooden mallet, a monk rings the bell gently and slowly first, then gradually picks up speed as it rolls down. Usually, there are three rounds of tolling. The end of the first round indicates that the main hall is ready for the service. Then, the end of the second round indicates that all the attending priests have gathered in the hall. Finally, the end of the third round indicates that the officiant is ready to enter the main hall.



## Wooden Fish Drum, *Mokugyo*

A *mokugyo* is a wooden percussion instrument in the shape of two fish facing each other. The *mokugyo* is used to keep the rhythm of sutra chanting and it is sounded with a cloth-covered stick called a *bai*. The original type of *mokugyo* is known as *gyoku* or *hō* and it is uniquely used in the Zen school. The *gyoku* is hung from the ceiling of the *sōdō* (monks' hall) or dining hall, and a serving monk or nun strikes it to announce the beginning of each meal. The shape of the *mokugyo* is attributed to a belief people once had about fish – that, since their eyes are always open, they never sleep. Thus, monastics should practice assiduously without indulging themselves in sleep. The most common type of



## Bowl-bell, *Keisu*

A *keisu* is a bell made of bronze in the shape of a bowl. Its bottom rests on a cushion called a *shitone* and the person sounding the bell rings it with a cloth-covered stick called a *bai*. *Keisu* can be classified into two types: *daikei* (large bowl bell) and *shōkei* (small bowl bell). Each has a role in controlling the tone of the sound during sutra chanting. The *keisu* is used like a tuning fork, and it also signals the beginning and the end of sutra chanting.



## Hand-held Bowl-bell, *Shukei*

A *shukei* (sometimes called an *inkin*) is a small portable bowl bell made from brass or other metal which is attached to a handle. The person sounding the bell rings it with a metal or wooden striker. The *shukei* is used to lead the procession and the recession of the officiant or to signal the prostrations.