



# Bachi Beat



WINTER 2011

REBECCA TAVISH EDITOR

## Drumming for Peace Reflection of the year 2011

By Ikuyo Conant

A few days after the tsunami, I received a link to a photograph of a devastating scene of Sendai. The city was completely flattened. The massive debris resembled the aftermath of post World War II Japan. A man in a Japanese Self Defense Force uniform was looking for survivors under the collapsed buildings. The image was powerful - a reminder that we humans are so powerless against forces of nature. There was a Taiko drum in the center of the photo. The drum was visible in the background, behind the worker; however, its presence was strong. I could feel the drum calling out to heal and empower.

To Japanese, the sound of the Taiko is the heart beat. It is the sound of life, and it resonates inside of the body. Taiko sounds reflect natural powerful energies that are awesome, forcing us to be humble. Natural sounds give us courage to go through hardships in our lives, and when they are quiet, gently comfort us.

In silence they send us a message.....**to live..**

Nature has two kinds of energies – male and female. To live through one’s life in the physical world, we need both energies - strong male energy with determination and gentle female energy, with healing. These energies of nature are reflected in Taiko, and drummers learn to feel and control them. Power drumming in Taiko training stresses male energy, and subdued drumming in Taiko training focuses on healing. As we learn to control and feel the sound, we learn to work together with others, such that we can create a harmonious vital force to reach the soul of Taiko. We learn how to play Taiko with power and controlled fluidity and learn to create quiet, deep sounds

## TAIKO—

by Ikuyo Conant

As our skills mature, we learn to control the power, To be come a good Taiko drummer, we go through many hours of training and performance. We present our skills in front of people with many different kinds of performances: “show and tell”, “demonstration”, “entertainment” and “artistic presentation.” Different performances stress different skills. With presentations of our skills in the community we learn to master not only drumming skills, but also what it means to be an artist.

The Artist is a peacemaker for communities. By their training of skills, they learn to reach deeply into their disciplines. Their struggle in mastering their art will lead them to open doors for new thinking and new interpretations of the world. These struggles are personal; however, the result of each struggle is the core part of their artistic expression, and these are the elements to create that which is unique for the individual artist. As a result, the artist will learn to see hidden meanings in the history of their time, and with training of their skills, those hidden meanings will be disclosed in their art for all to see.

We learn language, and words allow us to store abstractions of events. In American culture much language has evolved from a science based technologically focused society, and the language is full of formulae and abstractions. However, it is said that language represents only 10% of human communication. The remainder is entirely non-verbal. There are many expressions of Art. In each are found powerful communicational tools. Art reaches us on an emotional level. We **feel** ourselves as human beings. We are “human beings.” We live in a physical as well as spiritual, transcendental world grounded in both collective and individual psyche. We live in two worlds in one body and this is our struggle.

This year, many art groups in the county were busy participating in benefit concerts to raise funds to help people in and out of the country, and many people came to see these benefit concerts. In the midst of a difficult economy, I still feel hope



Watsonville Taiko would like to acknowledge and express our deep appreciation for the continued support we have received from the Cultural Council of Santa Cruz Country throughout the past 19 years. The grants, shared knowledge and guidance that we have received has allowed us to continue to offer special classes, scholarships, and trainings throughout Santa Cruz Country. Sharing our love of Taiko with as many people as possible is our goal and greatest joy.



# Great Collaborations

## Local and International



**KYO NO KAI** Clash of the Thunder  
By Bonnie Chihra

On September 18th of this year Bando Mitsuhiro Monterey Peninsula Kai presented its fifth anniversary performance Kyo no Kai: Clash of the Thunder at CSUMB World Theater. This performance featured Japanese Classical Dance and Kabuki Dance presented by local dancers taught by Bando Hirohichiro and master artists from Japan.

Several members of Watsonville Taiko and Shinsho Mugen Daiko were in attendance to see an art form that is not often seen in the United States and also to support our taiko sensei Ikuyo Conant.

The program opened with Katsusaburo Renjishi. It was performed by Fujima Toyohiro and Bando Hirohichiro. This piece was my favorite. It was composed in 1861. "This dance is set on a holy mountain in China called Seiryozan. Among the towering peaks of Seiryozan, there is a miraculous stone bridge spanning over a deep ravine. The bridge is a link between this world and the divine, for on the other side is the Buddhist paradise where the Buddhist deity Monju dwells. The actors each carry a wooden mask of a shishi head, one with white hair representing the parent shishi and the other with red hair to represent its child. A shishi is a mythological lion-like animal said to be the king of beasts and always associated with the Buddhist deity Monju. In order to foster courage and strength the parent shishi kicks its young cub over the edge of the ravine and waits anxiously to see if the cub can climb back up again. In the end, the young cub is able to climb up the ravine and there is a joyful reunion between father and cub."



Ikuyo Sensei performed Onna Date. In this piece she represented one of the beauties of Edo and when a young street ruff tries to flirt with her, she becomes impatient and chases him using her shakuhachi flute as a powerful weapon.

Photo: Tom Conant

## CARD MAKING CLASS

by Bonnie Chihra

On November 6th and November 13th I taught card making at my home in Aptos. Five people attended the first class- Mary Lou Jaquith, Rebecca Tavish, Sandy Allen, Kristen Yamamoto and Pam Kangas. We made cards using the iris folding technique where strips of origami paper are folded and layered to mimic the iris or lens of a camera. Everyone was able to complete two cards and then take supplies home to make at least two more. It was a relaxing day filled with laughter and creativity.

At the second workshop we worked on Hanko Design paper quilting cards. We use a thin sheet of foam and poster board covered by origami paper to create a three dimensional card. There



were nine people at this workshop-Nicole Tsao and her two friends Meg and Bernie, Rebecca Tavish, Sandy Allen, Naoko Yamamoto, Carol Kaneko and two of Kristen Yamamoto's friends from Monterey. This group was so enthusiastic-I had planned it so that everyone would make two cards but after those were completed they just kept on making more enjoying every minute of it. I mostly sat back and ate the snacks because everyone helped each other! Great things happen when we help each other and all work together! Even those that thought they were not so creative or crafty made some great cards. I enjoyed having these workshops so much that I hope to present more next year. Thank you to everyone who attended these workshops.

Photo: Ikuyo Conant

## Clash of the Thunder cont.

Towards the end, though I don't like to admit this, I was beginning to feel tired and a bit sleepy. Some of the set changes seemed to take a long time. I think some others were feeling that way too when we were all startled by two actors who began to throw mochi (sweet rice balls) out to the audience. They were depicting a husband and wife who traveled from place to place pounding mochi and selling it. Everyone enjoyed the performance and the mochi if you were lucky enough to catch one!

We are fortunate to be able to see a production like this in our area. I look forward to their next performance.



# Notes From Our Members



## The Prodigal Taiko Player

by Sandy Allen

I had been playing with Watsonville Taiko for 13 years when I made the decision to temporarily move to Portland, Oregon to help out my son and daughter-in-law and to better get to know my 6 year old grandson.

Portland, of course, is all that its reputation says-- beautiful, very friendly, family oriented, easy to navigate, bike centered, etc. And then, of course, there is the well know Portland weather. I thought I could hack that for maybe 5 years. But no. It took less than 1 year before I realized that it was too gray and cold for me, being a lover of warmth and light. But while I was there I found some fun involvements --my grandson and his parents, scrabble, tai chi, exercise classes, and classes given by Portland Taiko. That helped me to keep on playing even though most of the classes were at beginner level and I got to play Renshu Daiko many times again. The PT players and teachers are extremely nice and talented, and I appreciate being able to take their classes. Still I greatly missed Watsonville Taiko and our sensei, Ikuyo Conant. I missed the challenges she gives us, be they physical, artistic, mental, spiritual or anything else. It is great to be back with WT and I think that Ikuyo-san has increased the challenges since my return. For the first 2 months, in addition to taking classes back here, I spent time every day sitting in a chair in the front of my house looking at the huge blue sky against the backdrop of Nisene Marks Park.

It almost filled me up and I no longer take that blue sky for granted.

Odiko on stage  
2010

Photo:  
Rebecca Tavish



## The 20th Anniversary 2011

By Ikuyo Conant

Many thanks to those who joined us for the celebration of our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This year we invited a Cabrillo Chorus directed by Cheryl Anderson. Their clear voices resided in the celestial field and our Taiko took the terrestrial field. Between these two fields the drummers were busy balancing their energies, and they did well.

This year, the audience came from all different directions: San Diego, North San Francisco, Oregon State, North Carolina and many more cities. They were also different ages. Former drummers brought their friends and parents in their 80's and 90's. They also brought young family members. The reunion at the lobby, and meeting supporters of Taiko were memorable moments.



Photo Barry Stanley



I am very happy to see our young drummers on the stage at the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We are trying to pass down our philosophy and skills to the next generation. These young drummers are very dedicated. I hope you will have more chance to see them soon.

Another year with Taiko is passing. We worked very hard for the show.

Congratulations to my students, and thank you to our kind supporters.

Photos: Steve Hill



Photo: Steve Hill



# More Notes From our Members



## Making a Taiko Drum by Rebecca Tavish

I took a workshop at the NCTC—Northern Ca. Taiko Conf. on how to make a Taiko drum. Here in USA the drums are made out of wine barrels. The barrels are totally taken apart, each stave is glued-attached to its neighbor with a wooded “biscuit”, reassembled, sanded inside and out,



stained, and varnished.

All this BEFORE the drum head is put on. The drum head or hide is formed to the drum— but not permanently attached. It is then allowed to dry completely. The final step is to stretch the head onto the barrel. Just the top few inches of the hide is re-hydrated and then stretched onto the barrel. Once the stretching is complete the hide is attached to the side of the barrel with special tacks. Then hide is then allowed to dry completely.



## .Holiday Party Taiko Style by Ikuyo Conant

It has been our tradition to participate in KSBW’s Holiday Telethon to raise money for the Salvation Army, and then quickly go back to our Dojo to set up for our Taiko Holiday Party. Many thanks to Karen Groppi, Naoko Yamamoto, Rebecca Tavish, Sandy Allen and Herlie Kataoka for the planning of the party on December 9th. We had games, a visit of the bear from



Grey Bears,



musical performances, story telling, and bamboo dancing and Filipino martial arts, Combat/Kali. The children loved the games. The martial art presentation took our breath away. Dave Thayer’s sing along is always joyous.



**Thank you all for the wonderful time!!**



Photos: Kellie Kataoka and Ikuyo Conant

**\*\*If you would like Watsonville Taiko to perform at your event, please contact Taeko D’Andrea at 831-435-4594 or email [info@watsonvilletaiko.org](mailto:info@watsonvilletaiko.org).**

**For more information and updates to our performance schedule, classes, workshops and other special events go to:**

**[www.watsonvilletaiko.org/events\\_calendar.html](http://www.watsonvilletaiko.org/events_calendar.html)**



# Looking Forward to 2012



## 20th Anniversary performance cont.

A special word for Steve Hill whose photos are below and in other pages of this newsletter. Steve, a student of photojournalism, has taken over 1500 photos of Watsonville Taiko. His work is outstanding. We appreciate his professional help to promote our group.



© Steve Hill

## Taiko Classes

Classes are held every Friday at Kizuka Hall, 105 Blackburn St, Watsonville Class segments are 8 weeks beginning in January

Adult beginning classes are at 7 pm

Intermediate classes are at 8 PM and advanced classes at 9 pm

Children's classes ( 8 years and older) are also held at the JACL on Fridays.

Seniors classes are held Weds held At Greybears in Santa Cruz

New students welcome the 1st Wednesday of the month:  
6:00 - 6:50 pm Introduction to Taiko drumming  
7:00 - 8:00 pm Beginning Taiko drumming

831-435-4594 and visit our website

[www.watsonvilletaiko.org](http://www.watsonvilletaiko.org)

*Taiko is a very healthy activity. It improves breathing, endurance, rhythm, mobility, coordination and concentration.*

**Come & Join us at Grey Bears**  
2710 Chanticleer Ave, Santa Cruz

### Taiko for Seniors

Wednesdays  
Registration: First Wednesday of the month  
Time: 7:00 - 8:00 pm  
Fee: Grey Bears members \$45/month  
Non Members \$ 55/month



Contact: 831-423-3926 or [kiritaitaiko@aol.com](mailto:kiritaitaiko@aol.com)



Please return the form below with your donation

## Watsonville Taiko needs your support.

Please consider donating to Watsonville Taiko and help keep our programs going.

Watsonville Taiko is a non-profit organization. Your donations allow us to continue creating new music, teaching Taiko and producing public performances and cultural events. All donations are tax-deductible and you will receive a thank you letter for your records.

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Donate \$20 online today at [www.watsonvilletaiko.org/store.html](http://www.watsonvilletaiko.org/store.html) and click on the "Add to Cart" button under the donation section to make your secure donation through Pay Pal.

## Help Turn the Bachi Beat Green

Help Watsonville Taiko reduce waste by receiving your Bachi Beat via email. Just send your email address to ([info@watsonvilletaiko.org](mailto:info@watsonvilletaiko.org)) to start receiving your Bachi Beat electronically. You can also be added to our email list for notifications about our upcoming events. Please indicate “**mailing preference**” in the subject header. If you want to receive your Newsletter via e-mail, write “Electronic Bachi Beat”, if you want to continue receiving your Newsletter by mail, write “Mail me the Bachi Beat”, and if you would like to discontinue receiving our Newsletters write “Remove me from the Bachi Beat”. Perhaps our mailing list is outdated, so we understand if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter. Your efforts will help reduce our mailing costs and save resources of our planet.

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