

{FIRST NAME}{LAST NAME}
{BUSINESS NAME}
{ADDRESS}
{CITY}, {ST} {ZIP}

May 27, 2007

Dear {FORM OF ADDRESS},

We're coming to you today to ask for your help to preserve a cultural tradition that has existed in far northern California for over 20 years.

That tradition is Shasta Taiko.

We're Jeanne Mercer and Russel Baba, the founders of Shasta Taiko—a small but dedicated Japanese drumming troupe in the mountains of rural Siskiyou County, California.

Taiko has been our passion for over 35 years. It is a calling to express ourselves artistically, a calling to enrich other people's lives through this ancient art form, and an opportunity to counteract the "one size fits all" music scene so prevalent today.

And for over 20 years, we've brought Taiko to the people in far northern California through education and performance.

We have now reached a critical point in Shasta Taiko's development. The drop in grant support all arts and performance groups have faced in recent years has also affected Shasta Taiko's program. We now depend on the development of ShastaYama—our annual taiko show—to provide Shasta Taiko a focus for its program.

Here's a glimpse at what our community stands to lose if we are not able to enhance our funding through donations from caring people like you:

Since 1985, Shasta Taiko has been teaching the art of taiko to students of all ages, from young children to older adults. We and our students have performed and led workshops for local schools, community events and benefits, care centers, and recitals.

Our taiko program was one of the first in America to include children. Advanced students toured with us from Los Angeles to Alaska, gaining valuable life experiences. And some of the students who learned taiko with us as children now perform professionally and are leading young American *taiko* artists and teachers.

A little over 10 years ago, Shasta Taiko—together with the assistance and sponsorship of Shasta Mountain Playhouse—decided to put on a high quality performance featuring traditional Japanese taiko while at the same time exploring the interplay between taiko and music from other cultures and other musical genres like Jazz.

In 2005, we expanded our annual show to an outdoor venue at the base of Mount Shasta and called this annual summer evening event, ShastaYama. That year we attracted over 700 people to the first concert.

The audience response was overwhelmingly encouraging and positive ... so much so that ShastaYama 2006 drew almost 1,000 people to Mount Shasta.

But moving outdoors has increased our costs significantly. Our bare bones expenses for ShastaYama 2007 on August 4 will come to over \$35,000 ... costs that cannot be covered by ticket sales.

These expenses include guest artist fees, stage, lighting, sound, tents, porta-potties, and the like (all of which we have to rent).

Expenses also include paying lighting and sound crews and event staff; lodging for lighting and sound crews; video, photographic, and audio documentation; advertising and marketing; and a wide variety of production costs.

Currently, Shasta Taiko, our sponsoring organization Shasta Mountain Playhouse, and many of our support staff donate much of their time—easily an in-kind donation worth \$12,000 or more.

But all of us feel so strongly about Shasta Taiko's mission of enriching people's lives through exciting, innovative, and culturally diverse music that it's a donation we willingly make.

The reality, though, is we badly need your help {FORM OF ADDRESS}, to continue presenting ShastaYama and fulfilling Shasta Taiko's passion and mission.

Please look into your hearts and finances. Make a tax-deductible donation by filling in the accompanying Donation Form—payable to Shasta Mountain Playhouse or SMP—and returning it to us in the self-addressed envelope we've enclosed.

Your generosity will keep Shasta Taiko echoing against the magnificent grandeur of Mount Shasta ... and throughout the West ... while supporting musical and cultural diversity.

Thank you for your generosity.

Gratefully yours,



Russel Baba



Jeanne Mercer

PS It's been a long time since there was true peace in the world. It's up to us individuals to build peace by promoting and supporting greater understanding among different cultures. Supporting Shasta Taiko with your donation certainly won't lead to instantaneous world peace. But it's one small step. Join us in this quest by making a donation.