

FOLK DANCE FEDERATION OF CALIFORNIA RESEARCH COMMITTEE:

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TOKYO DONTAKU

Japan

Madelynn Greene introduced this Bon Dance at the 1961 University of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp. It was learned in Honolulu. There the Japanese community celebrates the Feast of the Dead with week-end dance festivals on the swept ground in front of their temples. The musicians play on a raised stand in the center of the circling dancers. The stand is decorated with banners, bunting and prayer scrolls. A huge drum stands beside the bandstand and is performed upon occasionally by gyrating experts. The dancers wear cotton kimonos (yukata), tabi and go-aheads; the men dance more vigorously than the women, and bind their foreheads with the little cotton towels given by each temple to those who dance there.

MUSIC: Star 8414 - Dance begins with vocal.
Folk Dancer MH 2050 - 8 measure introduction.

FORMATION: Single circle of individual dancers facing CCW.

STEPS AND STYLING: Walk.* Because the kimono is tight and restricting, the steps are small, and done slightly pigeon-toed. Knees are close together and slightly bent at all times. Hands are graceful and flowing. Fingers are kept together with straight thumb tucked under index finger.

* Described in Volumes of Folk Dances from Near and Far, published by Folk Dance Federation of California, Inc., 150 Powell St., San Francisco, Calif.

MUSIC 4/4

PATTERN

Measures

- 1-8 INTRODUCTION: No action.
- 1 Step fwd in LOD on R (cts 1, 2); continue in LOD with L (cts. 3-4). Clap hands in front of chest on each step.
- 2 Step fwd R, with R knee bent, back straight, leave L ft. in place behind (ct 1); hands are separated with a sweeping motion downward and out to sides, palms down. Step back on L, resuming erect posture, clap hands in front of chest (ct 2). Step R next to L, clap hands in front of chest (ct 3); hold (ct 4).
- 3 Step fwd L, move arms down and from front to back on L side as though paddling a boat, palms bwd (cts 1, 2); step fwd R, moving both hands from front to back on R side (cts 3, 4).
- 4 Step fwd L, bring L hand in front of L ear, palm facing back, R arm extended stiffly fwd from shoulder, hand upright, palm facing fwd (ct 1); step fwd R, reversing handwork (ct 2); step fwd L, reversing handwork (ct 3), hold (ct 4).
- 5 Step fwd on R, toes pointed to outside of circle and face to outside of circle, bend knees deeply, arms rounded, fingers touching below knees, palms up (cts 1, 2); as body resumes erect posture draw L ft up next to R ankle as arms swoop outward and up above head where fingers again meet, palms up (cts 3, 4). Arms are making a "tree."

- 6 Repeat action of meas 5 to L side.
- NOTE: In order to maintain balance it may be necessary to keep trailing ft on floor on cts 3-4 of above meas 5 and 6, but with practice the dancer should stand on the supporting ft only.
- 7 Turn $1/2$ to $3/4$ R with a flat-footed 3-step turn -- R,L,R (cts 1,2,3), hold (ct 4). Turn may be as far around as comfortable. R arm is bent at elbow, palm of hand facing back at head level, L hand below R elbow as though keeping kimono sleeve from swinging.
- 8 Turn to L, reversing ft work and arm position, to finish facing LOD.
- Repeat dance from beginning.