

Tanko Bushi

Japan

This dance is known all over Japan, and has slight variations in various sections. It is the one dance that Japanese teach to Americans, when they go to Japan.

TRANSLATION: Coal Miner's Dance

PRONUNCIATION: TAHN-koh BUSH-ee

RECORD: Folk Dancer (78) MH 2010. This dance can be done to various Tanko Bushi tunes, but this record is the most commonly known one.

FORMATION: Individuals, standing single file, and facing LOD (CCW) around the room. Each dancer dances solo, following each other around the ring.

HANDS: Fingers are close tog with thumb beside hands or tucked slightly into hand.

STYE: Kimonos are quite restricting. You dance pigeon-toed with knees close together and a little bent. Hands are soft and graceful.

METER: 2/4

PATTERN

Meas.

INTRODUCTION: Begin with vocal

Beg pos: Lift R ft to below L knee - lean slightly fwd, hands are as if holding a shovel (R fwd of L) (&).

FIG. I: DIGGING WITH SHOVEL

- 1 Touch ball of R ft diag R fwd - hands move diag fwd twd ground as if digging (ct 1); R ft lifts just below L knee - with hands still holding shovel, pull slightly bkwd twd body (ct 2).
- 2 Repeat meas 1, except on ct 2, step on full R ft as L lift below R knee.
- 3-4 Repeat meas 1-2 with opp ftwk.
Cue: Dig 2x with R, then 2x with L.

FIG. II: THROW COAL OVER SHLDR; SHADE EYES

- 1 Step fwd on ball of R ft (ct 1); place full wt on R (ct 2).
Hands - with hands still on shovel, throw coal over R shldr.
Cue: Throw coal over R shldr.
- 2 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk and arm movement. (thrown coal over L shldr)
Cue: Throw coal over L shldr.
- 3 Touch R toe bkwd - body and head turn slightly twd R (ct 1); place full wt on R (ct 2).
Hands - L hands extends fwd at eye ht (palm fwd, hand horizontal to floor) as if shading eyes as R hand extends bkwd (cts 1-2).
Cue: Shade eyes.
- 4 Repeat meas 3 with opp ftwk.
Cue: Shade eyes.

FIG. III: PUSH THE CART; ENDING

- 1 Step R fwd (ct 1); hold (ct 2).
Hands - Extend arms fwd, with palms fwd and fingers up (ct 1); keeping same pos, arms move slightly bkwd twd body (elbows pull bkwd).
Cue: Push cart
- 2 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk (L fwd), but with same arm movements.
Cue: Push cart
- 3 Ending: Step R fwd with bent knee - arms move down and out to side (ct 1); step L fwd - straighten knees (ct &); close R beside L and clap hands at chest ht (ct 2).
Note: I have only seen cts &,2 done as follows: step L bkwd with slightly bent knees (ct &); close R beside L, straightening knees (ct 2).
- 4 Holding in place - clap hands - Q,Q,S (1-&-2)
Total clapping sequence: S - Q,Q,S.

Repeat dance from beg to end of music.

Do the dance twice, then do 5 slow claps and begin again. Note that the 5 clap interval (musical bridge) comes every second time through the dance. Also it helps to know that you always begin the dance on a vocal.

Note that the elements found in Tanko Bushi are all basic fundamentals for other Japanese dances.

Original notes by Ruth Greaber 1965
Dance notes revised by dd 4/99