

## TOKYO DONTAKU

Japanese

PRONUNCIATION: TOH-kyoh dohn-TAH-koo

TRANSLATION: Bon Odori dance of Tokyo

SOURCE: Dick Oakes learned this dance from Madelynne Greene who learned it from Mary Scott in Honolulu, Hawaii, and taught it at the 1961 Santa Barbara Folk Dance Conference.

BACKGROUND: The Japanese community in Honolulu celebrates the Buddhist feast of the dead with week-end dance festivals on the ground in front of their temples. In Hawaii, *O-Bon* is celebrated with the festival being held at different temples each weekend. Temple courtyards are swept and surrounded with banners and prayer scrolls. Guiding lanterns are lit, food is prepared for the living and the departed. Dancers wear cotton *yukata* (kimonos), *tabi* (a covering for the foot, similar to a sock, having a separate pouch for the large toe), and *chappal* (Hawaiian for flip-flops or go-aheads). Cheerful *Bon Odori* (Bon dances) are performed by young and old alike. Musicians, usually including a gyrating *O-Daiko* (barrel-drum) drummer, and occupy a raised wooden platform around which long lines of dancers circle. New dances are constantly being added by Japanese-trained dance masters, and old classics are performed, modified, or forgotten by participants through the folk process. Most temples conclude their ceremonies by blessing and launching tiny wooden spirit boats down rivers or on the outgoing night tide carrying food and lanterns to accompany the departing spirits.

MUSIC: Express (45 rpm) E-212  
Folk Dancer (45 rpm) MH-2050  
Folkdance Underground (LP) 33 F.U. 3 A  
Star (45 rpm) S-8414

Geisler, Richard. Sheet music, "Lark in the Morning Free Music Library,"  
<http://larkinam.com/LITMLibrary.html#Geisler>.

FORMATION: Cir of individual dancers facing CCW, hands at sides.

METER/RHYTHM: 4/4

STEPS/STYLE: Due to the restrictions of the kimono worn by the dancers, the steps are small. From long tradition, the steps are slightly pigeon-toed, and the knees are slightly bent and close together. The thumb is kept under the index finger, the fingers are kept together, and the hands and arms are moved gracefully. The men dance more vigorously and they bind their foreheads with cotton cloths given by each temple to those who dance there.

## INTRODUCTION

1-8 No action.

## THE DANCE

- 1 CEREMONIAL BOW: Facing and moving in LOD, step R fwd, lightly clapping hands in front of chest (ct 1); step L fwd, lightly clapping hands in front of chest (ct 3);
- 2 Step R, bending knee, while leaving L in place as hands are crossed in front of chest, palms down (ct 1); step back onto L as hands are swept down and out to sides (ct 2); step R next to L, clapping hands in front of chest (ct 3).
- 3 PADDLE BOAT: As if paddling a boat, step L moving both hands bwd along L side (ct 1); step R, moving both hands bwd along R side (ct 3).
- 4 LOOK IN MIRROR: Step L, bringing L hand in front of L ear with palm bwd as if pulling back the hair while R hand is extended fwd with palm fwd and fingers up as if looking into a mirror (ct 1); repeat action of ct 1 with opp ftwk and handwk (ct 2); repeat action of ct 1 (ct 3).
- 5 MAKE TREE: Step R with toe pointed outside, bending knees deeply, and with rounded arms, touch finger tips at knee level with palms up (ct 1); straightening knees, bring arms outward and up and, with rounded arms, touch fingertips overhead with palms up as L heel is brought up behind to raise "kimono" off of floor, shin parallel to floor (ct 3);
- 6 Repeat action of meas 5 to ctr with opp ftwk.
- 7 HOLD SLEEVE: Stepping R,L,R, turn slowly to face out of cir while R hand is held at head level, palm bwd, and L hand is held under R elbow as if keeping "kimono sleeve" from swinging (cts 1,2,3);
- 8 Repeat action of meas 7 to ctr with opp ftwk and handwk.

Repeat entire dance from beg.