

Etchu Ohara

(Toyama prefecture, Japan)

Yatsuo is in the present-day Toyama prefecture (once known as Etchu prefecture) and is the hometown of this particular dance. It is a quiet place surrounded by mountains and water, and is famous for its silk-worm farming. The township goes back as far as 1636. The song was sung by young female workers during the thread-extracting process and was introduced at a Bon festival in July of 1702.

This town had a rather a showy culture because, during the season, many of the woman worked at silk factories away from home and earned well. The women also brought back customs not found locally.

From 1874 to 1885, the Owara festival was banned because it was considered an affront to good taste and the nights of sleep. In 1922, the Owara-Study Group was formed by people who loved and supported the festival. The group grew into the Toyama Minyoh (folk music) Preservation Society and, with their help, the Owara festival grew to become as big as it is today. During the festival, dancers wear concealing, low-brimmed straw hats while dancing day and night.



Lyrics to the songs then and now are written by famous poets, writers or by average citizens by open invitation. The preservation society tries to keep the original song's simple but elegant singing style intact and has banned members from participating in any type of singing contests, and singing at other public events as well as by limiting and keeping the musical instruments to the original three.

Pronunciation: eht-choo oh-hah-rah

Music: 3/4 meter *Japanese Music CD, Track 6*

Formation: Individuals in a circle facing LOD (CCW).

Steps & Styling: Cho: A short, soft clap of the hands; Chon: A hard, long clap of the hands.

Fujiyama: Arms form a mountain (Mt. Fuji), palm down, fingers touching in front of face.

Soenobashi: R arm straight in front, palm down; L arm bent with hand on R elbow. Can be done with opp hand position.

Note: All movements flow smoothly from one to the next.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ao4jnVU4IJM&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wQSEPUdUI4&feature=related>

Meas 3/4 meter Pattern

9 meas INTRODUCTION. No action. Start on measure 3 of vocal, after "Kitasano-sa, Dokkoisano-sa-sa."

FootworkHandsBASIC PATTERN (begin with woman's vocal)

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|---|--|--|
| 1 | Step R across L (ct 1); step L in place (ct 2); step R slightly behind original position (ct 3); change wt to L (ct &) | 2 <u>Cho</u> fwd at head level (ct 1, &); <u>Cho</u> a bit lower (ct 2); <u>Cho</u> by R hip (ct 3). |
| 2 | Walk two steps, R, L (cts 1, 2); step R next to L, no wt (ct 3) | Raise both arms, hands together at shldr height, R palm down, L palm up (ct 1); lower arms to sides, turn hands, R palm fwd, L palm back (ct 2); raise arms back to ct 1 position (ct3). |

I. FIGURE I

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|-----|---|--|
| 1 | Step R, bend knees slightly (ct 1); change wt to L (ct 2); step R back next to L (ct 3). | Raise arms as in Basic meas 2; then <u>Soenobashi</u> with L straight (ct 1) ; lower R arm <u>Cho</u> on R thigh 2 times, first palm up, then palm down (cts 2-3). |
| 2 | Step L, bend knees slightly (ct 1); change wt to R (ct 2); step L next to R (ct 3). | <u>Soenobashi</u> with R straight (ct 1); lower L arm <u>Cho</u> on L thigh 2 times, first palm up, then palm down (cts 2-3). Both arms out with palms down (ct &). |
| 3-4 | Step R (ct 1); touch L toe next to R (ct 2); repeat 2 times, changing ftwk. | Bend elbows, bringing back of hands almost to shldr (ct 1); both arms on R side of both, R arm out above shldr height palm down, L arm below waist level palm up (like holding a ball) (ct 2); repeat ct 1 (ct 3); on L side repeat ct 2 (ct 1); arms down to sides, palms back (ct 2); hands at waist, palms cupped facing up (ct 3). |
| 5 | Step L (ct 1); raise R knee, swing R ft across L leg (ct 2); step R back, beyond L (ct 3). | Swing arms down and around (ct 1) to <u>Fujiyama</u> near mouth with palms out (ct 2); move hands away from each other in a full circle (ct 3). |
| 6 | Wt on R, L leg straight, bend at waist (ct 1); change wt to L (ct 2); step L in place (ct 3). | Extend arms to both sides, L arms low, R arm high, palms down (cts 1, 2); start to bring arms up (ct 3). |



II. FIGURE II

- 1-2 Step R (ct 1); touch L toe next to R (ct 2); repeat three times changing ftwk; end with step R. R hand “grabbing” motion downward (ct 1); open hand with palm up (ct 2); L hand “grabbing” motion (ct 3); open hand with palm up (ct 1); bend elbows bringing back of hands almost to shldr (ct 2); both arms on R side of both, R arm out above shldr height palm down, L arm below waist level palm up (like holding a ball) (ct 3); bend elbows, bringing back of hands almost to shldr (ct 1); both arms on L side of both, L arm out above shldr height, palm down, R arm below waist level, palm up (like holding a ball) (ct 2); arms down to sides palms back (ct 3).

3-6 Repeat Fig I, meas 3-6.

III. FIGURE III **NOT TAUGHT – but the steps are on the video.**IV. FIGURE IV **NOT TAUGHT – but the steps are on the video.**

Etchu Ohara — continued

Sequence: Suggested sequence as taught is Basic, Fig II, repeat these to end of music.

Presented by Iwao Tamaoki

Lyrics

(Kitasa-no-sa, Dokkoi-sa-no-sa-sa)
 Ecchu-de Tateyama, Kaga-dewa Hakusan
 Suruga-no Fujisan, Sangoku ichidayo
 (Utaware-yo, washa hayasu) “Please sing, I’d accompany”

Yatsuo yoitoko, Owara-no honba
 (Kitasa-no-sa, Dokkoi-sa-no-sa-sa)
 Nihyaku-toh-ka-wo Owara dete odoru
 (Kitashotto hai-hai-to, korashotto-hai-hai-to)
 (Utaware-yo, washa hayasu)

Yama-no hatake-ni futari-de maita
 Soba-mo hana-saku Owara Kaze-no Bon
 (Uitaka hyoutan karusonya nagareru, yukusakya shiranedo anomini naritaya)