

1961 SANTA BARBARA FOLK DANCE CONFERENCE

Presented by Madelynne Greene
Notes by Mary Scott

TOKYO DONTAKYU

Japanese Bon Dance

SOURCE: This dance was learned in Honolulu where the Japanese community celebrates the Buddhist 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 middle of the circling dancers with banners and bunting and fluttering prayer scrolls. A high drum stands beside the band stand and is performed upon by gyrating experts occasionally. The dancers wear cotton kimonos (Yukata), tabi and go-aheads; the men dance more vigorously so they bind their foreheads with the little cotton towels given by each temple to those who dance there.

Kimonos are very modest and quite restricting. You dance pigeon-toed and with knees close together and a little bent. Hands are soft and graceful but the fingers are kept paralled with only the thumbs separating themselves from the flowing movement.

Mary Scott of Honolulu taught the dance to Miss Greene in Honolulu.

MUSIC: The dance sequence begins with the vocal on Victor V-40871 (side P-2900). The music has a strong first beat in a 4-beat measure. Most steps "movements" are made on the emphasized beat.

Pattern

- A
- 1, 2 Starting R walk fwd 2 steps clapping hands in front of chest (R & L)
 - 3 As though continuing sequence of 3 instead step forward with a little crouching dip and instead of clapping the hands, let them pass each other across and down in that "end of sequence" signal so common in Japanese dances. The L foot is left in place behind.
 - & Step back L
 - 4 Step back R and repeat clap of first two forward steps.
- B
- 1 Step back L moving both arms down and back to L as though paddling a boat
 - 2 Step back R moving both hands as above to R
 - 3 Step forward L raising L hand palm back upright in front of L ear, R hand is upright forward at end of straight-ahead arm.
 - & Step forward R raising R hand palm back upright in front of R ear etc.
 - 4 Repeat 3.

Continued...

Tokyo Dontakyu(cont'd)

C

1

Step forward R facing outside LOD dipping knee and starting "tree" made with bowed arms, hands meeting first below knees then swooping around and up

2

Draw L ft. to R ankle (you may need to touch the L for balance but the experts do not put the L ft down on this) completing arm movement with hands meeting and arms bowed overhead.

3

Step forward L facing inside LOD, making another tree as you

4

Draw R ft. up to L and complete rounded tree overhead

D

1, 2

Holding R arm high, left bowed across at waist to hold your kimono sleeve so it won't swing out, make a flat-footed stepping turn R almost completely around yourself.

3, 4

Holding L arm high, R bowed across, make the same stepping turn L. End in position to begin dance sequence again. Repeat to end of record.