

# TOKYO DONTAKU

*Source:* Madelynne Greene learned this dance in Hawaii and taught it to folk dancers in the US in the 1960s.

*Origin:* Tokyo Dontaku is a “Bon Odori” dance, a special dance of the O-Bon Festival in Japan. During the O-Bon, or Feast of the Dead, Buddhists throughout Japan honour the souls of their ancestors. In Tokyo, the festival is held during the 3rd week of July. Sometimes called “The Feast of Lanterns”, the O-Bon is held at other times of the year in other parts of Japan. For instance, the festival is held at Nikko during the first week of August, at Nagasaki during the second week of August, and at Okinawa during the third week of August. It is also one of the largest festivals held on Sado Island. Thousands of lighted paper lanterns are launched on rivers and lakes to carry the ancestors’ spirits (who had returned to earth during this time) back to heaven.

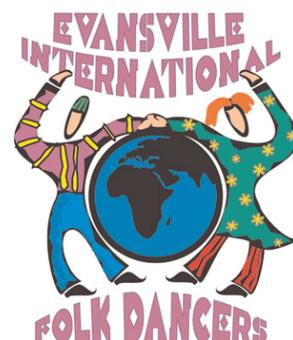
*Rhythm:* 3/4

*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.

*Formation:* Circle of individual dancers facing CCW, hands at sides.

Measures	Counts	Introduction
	1-8	No action
<u>CEREMONIAL BOW</u>		
1	1-2	Facing and moving in LOD, step R FWD, lightly clapping hands in front of chest
	3	Step L FWD, lightly clapping hands in front of chest
2	1	Step R, bending knee, while leaving L in place as hands are crossed in front of chest, palms down
	2	Step back onto L, as hands are swept down and out to sides
	3	Step R next to L, clapping hands in front of chest
<u>PADDLE BOAT</u>		
3	1-2	As if paddling a boat, step L moving both hands BKWD along L side
	3	Step R, moving both hands BKWD along R side
<u>LOOK IN MIRROR</u>		
4	1	Step L, bringing L hand in front of L ear w/palm BKWD as if pulling back the hair while R hand is extended FWD w/palm FWD and fingers up, as if looking into a mirror
	2	REPEAT action of count 1, w/opposite footwork and handwork
	3	REPEAT action of count 1

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- MAKE TREE
- 5      1      Step R w/toe pointed outside, bending knees deeply, and w/rounded arms, touch fingertips at knee level w/palms up
- 2-3      Straightening knees, bring arms outward and up, and w/rounded arms, touch fingertips overhead w/palms up as L heel is brought up behind to raise "kimono" off of floor, shin parallel to floor
- 6              REPEAT action of measure 5 to center w/opposite footwork
- HOLD SLEEVE
- 7      1-3      Stepping R, L, R, turn slowly to face out of circle while R hand is held at head level, palm BKWD and L hand is held under R elbow, as if keeping "kimono sleeve" from swinging
- 8              REPEAT action of measure 7 w/opposite footwork and handwork
- REPEAT ENTIRE DANCE FROM BEGINNING

(INFORMATION courtesy of DICK OAKES)

VARIATION

Source: Unknown. Below notes were transcribed from handwritten notes.

Counts

- 1-4      Begin clap-clap - balance w/cross hands  
R and L and R, L, R and
- 5-6      Ocean wave to L first  
L and R and
- 7-8      Wave w/hands to L first  
L, R, L, hold
- 9-12      Plant a tree on L side  
Step on R foot
- 13-16      Plant a tree of R side  
Step on L foot
- 17-20      Kimono sleeves - turn circle to R in 3 steps  
R, L, R, hold
- 21-24      Kimono sleeves - turn circle to L in 3 steps  
L, R, L, hold

BEGIN AGAIN