## TRADITIONAL FOLK DANCES OF JAPAN



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KASA ODORI SUMIYOSHI ODORI **MUGIYA-BUSHI ODORI** MEMBURYU SADO OKESA **IWASAKI ONI KEMBAI** AWA ODORI OKUBO ODORI **GUJO ODORI** MORIOKA STAG DANCE DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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# **TRADITIONAL DANCES OF JAPAN**



RECORDED BY MARY L. EVANS

#### INTRODUCTORY NOTES BY MARY L. EVANS

#### SIDE I, Band 1: KASA ODORI (Kokubu, Tottori Prefecture)

About the end of the Tokugawa Era there was a long draught in these districts. The soil was parched and cracked, and the farm-products were doomed to complete destruction, when an old farmer named Gorosaku thought of praying for rain. He prayed to Gods for three days day and night, dancing with a kasa - an umbrella made of paper and bamboo - in his hand. His supplication was granted, and on the third day rain came down in torrents to the great excitement of the villagers. A dreaded famine was evaded. But Gorosaku was made ill by his excessive toil and died. Since that time the villagers, men and women, young and old, have performed this dance during the Bon Festival period every year to honor the memory of the laudable old farmer. The dance was designated as an Intangible Cultural Asset by the Government in 1952.

This is one of the unique local dances in the country, in which young men wearing white head bands with their sleeves tucked up with tasuki, or a long piece of white cloth, dance, each twirling a 'kasa' with many small bells hanging from its rim. Various songs such as Inaba-ōtsue, Inaba-osobushi, Naniwa-bushi, Gidayu, Yasuki-bushi, Oryokkō-bushi, are sung on the occasion. The dance is very spirited and colorful.

#### SIDE I, Band 2: SUMIYOSHI ODORI (Sumiyoshi-cho, Osaka City)

This dance, widely known as 'Kappore', was first played as 'Ujimai' (a dance of a clan) by Sumiyoshi natives, in the presence of Empress Jingū (170-269) who had just come back from an expedition against ancient Korea. The dance was a supplication for peace and good crops. From the end of the Tokugawa Era to the Meiji Era, the players traveled all over Japan, receiving money or food for the performance. And they returned to their home on June 14, when a rice planting ceremony was held at Sumiyoshi Shrine. About 30 years ago when the Empress Dowager Shōken (Emperor Hirohito's grand-mother) visited these districts and worshiped at the Shrine, she had the chance to see the dance performed. Since then it has been danced regularly on the occasion of the rice-planting ceremony, and of other divine services.

Merry are the dances given in honor of the God of Sumiyoshi. Iyahoe! We pray for the peace of the world, the welfare of our country, and rich harvest, So long as the heaven and earth endure. The pine trees around the Sumiyoshi Shrine are flourishing,

Just as the country is thriving, with people enjoying their life.

People dance in a circle, wearing white coats, black pleated skirts, white mittens and gaiters; they have on their heads sugekasa (sedge grass sunshades) with several red cloths hanging from their rims, and carry fans in their hands. At the center of the circle a man, with a large longshafted umbrella in his hand, plays the accompanyment tapping its shaft and beats time singing. The umbrella means a canopy. The shout 'Iyahoe' is the corrupted form of 'In-yo-ho-ei' ('in' in it means 'passive, negative, darkness, wet, 'etc., while 'yo' means 'active, positive, light, dry, 'etc. 'Ho' means 'rice ears' and 'ei' means 'flourish.' The whole represents their wish that 'in' and 'yo' would be in harmony with each other, thus bringing a rich harvest of rice). The accompanyment 'kappore, kappore' is said to be the emphatic form of 'hore', which literally means 'Dig!' Now the members of the Sumiyoshikai (17 children) perform this dance at the garden of the Shrine on occasion. They hop forward once, and back once, beating their fans with each hop.

#### SIDE I, Band 3: MUGIYA-BUSHI ODORI (Jo-no-hana, Toyama Prefecture)

In the old era of Juei, the Heike clan, then in all its glory, was defeated in the battles of Kurikara, Yashima and Dan-no-ura. Forlorn and in bitter disappointment they took refuge in Gokayama, a lonely place among the mountains in the Province of Etchu. They learned to use hoes and spades instead of bows and arrows, sowed barley and rape-seeds, grew hemp and worked at looms. The fugitives were reluctantly settled there, but in their despairing life they yearned for their past splendor. Sorrow and yearning filling their hearts, a song was born. They sang it with bitter hearts to the sound of the clear water of the Sho river. The song came to be known as 'Mugiya-bushi.'

Every year on the 15th and 16th day of September the 'Mugiya Festival' is celebrated merrily, and the dance is performed all through the night. The melody and the movement are both touching and beautiful, reminding us of the old days of Juei. The dance is designated by the Government as an Intangible Cultural Asset.

The dance is performed by five or seven boys and girls. The boys in kimono with their family crest, tucked up with 'tasuki' and white tabi, or foot-cover, carry a sword half a yard long, and wear 'suge-gasa' (a large hat made of sedgegrass). The song 'Mugiya-bushi' is accompanied with samisen (a three-stringed instrument), kokyu (another three stringed instrument), shakuhachi (a kind of flute made of bamboo), yotsudake (a simple musical instrument composed of four pieces of bamboo, used in the same way as castanets) and drums. The note is tragic and plaintive especially to those who are familiar with the pathetic legends about the fall of the Heike clan.

Barley and rape can be harvested in the next year. But how can hemp?

Abandoning the stormy Yashima, our last foothold, We cast away 'eboshi' and 'kariginu' (a head-gear and garment worn by noblemen in olden

times).

We are not only woodcutters among high mountains in Etchu province.

We feel lonely listening to the sound of the stream and the voice of deer.

Let us bring our looms to the riverside, bid the waves weave, and dress up the rocks with the cloth.

#### SIDE I, Band 4: MEMBURYU

(Mikazuki-mura, Kojo-gun, Saga Prefecture)

About four hundred years ago, at Imayama in these districts Ryuzoji Takanobu of Higo Province who was defeated by the great army of Otomo Sorin of Bungo Province asked Nabeshima Han-emon to help him. Nabeshima had only a small handful of soldiers, but, a man of resources, he ordered his men to disguise themselves in grotesque masks of Oni (Devils) with long hair on them, and then made an onset on the enemy. The enemy was taken by surprise and routed in every direction. The



SADO OKESA

KASA ODORI



victorious soldiers danced in their disguise to celebrate their well-deserved victory. This is said to be the origin of 'Memburyu.' The dance is usually performed to pray for rain or to offer thanks to God for a bumper crop. It is an Intangible Cultural Asset.

The dance is played by forty or fifty male dancers in devils' masks, white underwear, black happycoats with the designs of a carpfish swimming up torrents, etc., black gaiters, white tabi, waraji (a kind of straw sandals). The movements of the dance are brisk and active. The drums are beaten by masked men, while the bell is rung by gaily dressed girls with headgears decorated with paper flowers.

The masks have red demon faces and long plumes of hair. Each man beats a drum and dances fiercely, brandishing his limbs.

#### SIDE I, Band 5: <u>SADO OKESA</u> (Ebisu-machi, Ryotsu City, Niigata Prefecture)

A legend says that a spinster named Okesa living in Ojiya, Niigata, first sang this song while working at a spinning wheel. Another legend has it that 'Hanya' (prostitute, literally 'half-night') first sang it, and a geisha girl by the name of Okesa introduced it to Yedo (now Tokyo) and named the song 'Okesa-bushi.' A third story runs as follows: Long ago a rich family in Niigata met with a declining fortune, and a cat which had been kept in that family changed herself into a girl named Okesa. Then singing a song, she earned a lot of money, and with it saved her master from the distress. Since then her song has been known as 'Okesa-bushi.' We have many other stories concerning the origin of the song. The dance is perhaps the most popular in Japan. The dance and the song have many varieties.

All yearn for Sado; even grasses and trees bend to Sado.

Query! Is the Island nice and cosy to live in?

I dream of the black hair of a maid on the Island. Would I were there to see her.

The wind is blowing through the pine-woods around the old Emperor's tomb in Mano on the Island.

My sleeves wet with my tears get wetter in a drizzling rain.

Niigata is getting duskier in a snow-storm. And no lights are invisible on Sado Island. Is the Island sleeping, I wonder?

#### SIDE II, Band 1: IWASAKI ONI KEMBAI (Waga-machi, Waga-gun, Iwate Prefecture)

About one thousand years ago this dance was originally performed by some Buddhist ascetics near Mt. Haguro, Dewa Province. About that time, the dance became popular in the Hiraizumi districts in the south, and the Iwate districts in the north. On the whole the dance is said to keep its ancient form.

Six or eight dancers take part in the dance. They wear four-color masks of Oni (Ogre) with long hairs, and carry swords and folding fans. Music is played with three flutes, one drum and one bell. The performance is grotesque but full of interest.

Namu-amidabutsu, Namu-amidabutsu. (Buddha be praised, Buddha be praised)
Senyāha. Mt. Fuji, the best in the three countries.
(The three countries' means India, China and Japan).
Namu-amidabutsu, Namu-amidabutsu.
Sen-yāha, Kimyō
Chōraiha, Mt. Fuji.

This dance is very exciting and martial. The men are dressed in black and white and their clothes seem to imitate the pattern of armor. They carry real swords and at one point circle rapidly, holding each other's naked sword blades, then they imitate the dueling of warriors.

SIDE II, Band 2: AWA ODORI (Showa-chō, Tokushima City, Tokushima Prefecture)

This is one of the best-known folk-dances in the country, and has once been introduced abroad. Hachisuka Iemasa, the first lord of the Awa clan, defeated the ambition of the Chōsogabes to lord it over the whole Shikoku districts, and in the fifteenth year of the era of Tensho he was awarded the province of Awa for his meritorious act by Toyotomi Hideyoshi. He built a new castle at Tokushima. To celebrate the completion of the castle the townspeople marched into the castle, singing and dancing. Since then the dance has been performed every year for three successive days during the Bon Festival period according to the lunar calendar.

Lord Hachisuka left 'Awa Odori' behind him. Those who join the dance are supposed to be fools. So are the on-lookers. If I am bound to be called a fool either way, Better dance and be a fool.

If you pass the Great Valley, you'll see nothing but rocks. If you pass the Bamboo-grass Hills, You'll see nothing but bamboo-grass, And boars devouring beans. Scare them away, 'Hōi, hoi, hoi!'

If you dance at all, dance well. I will take for my wife the girl who dances best.

A dried gourd is not the only thing buoyant. Buoyant is my heart also.

Look at me dressed up for the Bon Festival. Whom shall I dance with under the Evening Star?

The bridge over the Yoshino River is long. But the lines of the dancers are by far the longer.

The cries 'Hōi, hoi, hoi!' and the movement of the dancers are supposed to be the copy of those of boar-scarers around Sasa-yama--the Bamboograss Hills.

Since the era of Tempō, various musical instruments, such as samisen, flutes big and small drums, tsuzumi (a kind of drum), and chimes, have been used.

The dance is known by another name of 'Aho Odori' --Fools' Dance, because of the excessive excitement of the participants.

This was danced by people of all ages, from little children to oldsters. The movements are very simple but very gay. It's still performed annually in the summer; when the whole town dances and is carried away by the excitement of the music. When this was recorded during the festival in Ojaka, the villagers began dancing back stage long before their turn and were quite excited by the time they went on stage.

#### SIDE II, Band 3: OKUBO ODORI (Mihara-machi, Hyogo Prefecture)

In the era of Temmei a great famine visited these districts, when a peasant named Saizo living in a village in this region complained to the 'Daikan' --Magistrate--of the distress of the whole village. But he was on that score arrested and executed. The villagers pitied him, and secretly designed a dance in his memory and played it on the anniversary of his death. Kyoun Shonin, a famous Buddhist priest, improved the dance steps and postures. It is performed every year during Bon Festival period. In 1952 it was designated by the Government as an Intangible Cultural Asset.



IWASAKI ONI KEMBAI

#### SUMIYOSHI ODORI



The dance is very simple, performed to the accompaniment of one big drum. It is divided as follows:

 Te-odori, literally 'Hand Dance', is also called 'Kakka Odori.' This is a dance of an old style performed clumsily with no special theatirical properties by male dancers in 'yukata' and 'suge-gasa.' A part of the song:

The mill on the Yodo River is going round and round, Waiting for--whom? A girl is expecting the day when she will be back home, And she yearns for the clear water of the stream Running through her home village.

- 2. Tsukue Odori, literally 'Desk Dance' is performed by a male and a female dancer. It represents a scene from the well-known Kabuki drama 'Terakoya'.
- 3. Kasa Odori is performed by male dancers in kimono with their family crests. Each has three 'kasa', one on his head and the other two in hands. A part of the song:
  - Now, O-tusuji, wife of Yamagata Magojuro, though she had a child born to them, Fell in love with a man called Tojuro. How could she have been stopped?
- 4. Kusari Odori, literally 'Chain Dance'. The scene is taken from Kabuki 'Hikoza Gongen.'
- Karakasa Odori, literally 'Sunshade or Umbrella Dance'. The scene is taken from Kabuki 'Sendai Hagi.'
- Yari Odori, literally 'Spear Dance.' The dance is taken from Kabuki 'Chushingura.'

SIDE II, Band 4: GUJO ODORI (Hachiman-machi,Gujo-gun, Gifu Prefecture)

About three hundred and fifty years ago Aoyama Yamato-no-kami, who had been the lord of the Miyazu Castle, came to live in the Hachiman Castle here. The new lord was very generous and warm-hearted, and started this dance with a view to promoting friendship and familiarity among his subjects including the samurai rank. At present around Hachiman-machi every year



OKUBO ODORI

from July till September almost night after night this dance is performed, reaching its climax around the Bon Festival period. Many of the visiting spectators participate in it. In 1956 the dance was designated as an Intangible Cultural Asset.

Many dancers, men and women, sometimes numbering from three thousand to five thousand dance in one circle. The dance has many varieties, but on the whole the movements are rather simple, and so you can learn how to dance it within a few minutes.

When you leave Hachiman-machi, You'll leave it with your sleeves all wet Even when it is not raining.

Moon's wife has eloped, And he calls her name from above the clouds.

The songs have no end; the dance has no end; Nor has this moonlight night.



AWA ODORI

What we boast of is the grand castle, Which reflects itself in the eyes of the ayu-fish.

#### SIDE II, Band 5: MORIOKA STAG DANCE (Morioka, Iwate Prefecture)

This dance is performed by men wearing masks with great plumes representing stag horns and carrying drums. Their dancing represents the combat and the mating customs of stags. Musicians play bamboo flutes, samisen, drums, and small gongs. In the summer many festivals and dances are held in Japan in connection with the O-bon season, when the spirits of the dead are honored and are believed to visit their former homes. The stag dance takes place during this season. The dancers wear a drum, masks, and horns to represent a deer. They dance to the quick tempo of music played on a large drum, a small drum, and a flute. Originally there were eight people, one to represent the leader, so to speak, of the stags (Tayajika), one to represent the female deer (Meijika) and seven to represent the other male deer.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHELDON A. BRODY HAROLD COURLANDER, GENERAL EDITOR MOSES ASCH, PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

#### NEW NUMERICAL LISTINGS

Old Numbers are in Brackets ( )

### FOLKWAYS RECORDS

			★ ★ ★ The World's Le	ading Produce	AUTHENTIC FOLK MUSIC 6	n Records ★ ★	*		
AM	ERICANA 10"	125	JAZZ SERIES 12"	A State		FW6515 (815)	Sones of Mexico	CHILDREN	N'S INTERNATIONAL SERIES 10"
FA2001 (1) Squar	e Dances, Piute Pete	FJ2001 (53)	Anth-Inen Ma I The Couth	FE4445 (445) FE4446 (446)	Flathead Indians of Montana	FW6816 (816) FW6817 (17)	Spanish Guitar Solos, Montoya Scottish Bagpipe Tunes, McLellan	FC7200	Pueblo Indian Story & Songs (4.96)
FA2002 Christ	mas Carols, Summers ng Corey, Seeger This Hammer, Leadbelly No. 1	FJ2802 (55) FJ2803 (57) FJ2804 (59)	Anthology No. 3, New Orleans	FE4447 FE4448 (448)	Music from the Mato Grosso Music from South Asia Folk Music of the Amami Islands	FW6818 (818) FW6819 (818/2)	Irish Popular Dances Irish Jigs & Reels	FC7201 (7701) FC7208 (708)	Afrikaans Songs, Vol. I French Songs for Children, Mills Game Songs of French Canada
FA2004 (4) Take FA2005 Amer	This Hammer, Leadbelly No. 1 ican Folk Songs, Seegers	FJ2805 (63)	Anthology No. 5, Chicago I	FE4449 (449)	Japanese Buddhist Rituals	FW6820 (820) FW6821 (821)	Russian Folksongs, Piatnitsky Chorus Canadian Northwoods, Hemsworth	FC7214 (714) FC7218 FC7224 (724)	Spanish Songs of Latin America
FA2006 (6) Wash FA2007 Cumb	board Band, Terry perland Mountain, Clayton	FJ2806 (45) FJ2807 (67)	Anthology No. 6, Chicago 2 Anthology N. 7, New York	FE4450 (450) FE4451 (451)	Songs from Cape Breton Island Bulu Songs from the Cameroons	FW6822 (822) FW6823 (823)	Haitian Guitar, Casseus English Folk Songs, House	FC7229 (829)	Spanish Songs of Latin America Jewish Childrens Songs, Rubin Christmas Songs of French Canada
FA2009 (9) All D FA2010 (10) Lones	ins rolling codeers board Band, Terry serland Mountain, Clayton bay Singin', Yan Wey bome Valley, Folksongs Bowl Balalds, Guthrie	FJ2808 (69) FJ2809 (71)	Anthology No. 4, Jarx Singers Anthology No. 5, Chicago 1 Anthology No. 6, Chicago 2 Anthology No. 8, Big Bands Anthology No. 8, Big Bands Anthology No. 10, Boogie, K.C. Anthology No. 10, Boogie, K.C.	FE4453 (543) FE4454 (454) FE4458 (458)	Folk Music of Jamaica	FW6824 (824) FW6825 (25)	Gospel Songs, Bahamas Cantorials. D. Kusevitsky Jewish Folk Songs, Olf	FC7250	Jamaican Songs, Benett
FA2011 (11) Dust FA2013 (13) Railro	Bowl Balaids, Guthrie	FJ2810 (73) FJ2811 (75)	Anthology No. 10. Boogie, K. C. Anthology No. 11, Addenda	FE4460 (460)	Indian Music of the Upper Amazon Temiar Dream Songs from Malaya	FW6826 (826) FW6827 (827)	Jewish Folk Songs Vol. 7 Olf	FC7307 (7)	N'S SPECIAL & HISTORICAL 10"
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FA2038 (38) Negr FA2039 (39) Song	o American, Nye o Spirituals, Hall, Reed s of Joe Hill, Glazer y Mountains, Lunsford Gay, Summers I Travelin <sup>1</sup> Houston	FG 3502	Recording Canadian Indians, Barbeau Ballads of Newfoundland, Peacock	FE4482 FE4483	Arabic & Druse Music Folk Songs of French Canada Music of the Ituri Forest People		Songs of the Bible, Hillel, Aviva German Folk Songs, Schlamme		AGE INSTRUCTION SERIES 10"
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FH2152 (48/2) Revo FH2163 (48/3) War	Iution 1775-81, House 1812 No. 1, House 1812 No. 2, House	FM4000 (1000) FM4001 (1001)	Hungarian Folk Songs Wolf River Songs	EHS001	RICAN HISTORICAL 2-10"	FW6925 (925) FW6927 (927) FW6928 (928)	Arabic Songs of Lebauon & Egypt Great Scottish Ballads, McEwan Bros. Hebrew Folk Songs	FR8901	RELIGIOUS SERIES 12" Urban Holiness Services Yemenite Passover Services
ELITIAA (ARIA) War	1812 No. 2, House	FM4002 (1002) FM4003 (1003)	Sonas from Aran	FH15002	Ballads of the Revolution (2151 & 2152) Ballads of the War of 1812	FW6929 (929)	French-Canadian Folk Sonas, Mills	FR8921 FR8922	Call of the Shofar
FH2176 (48/6) Fron FH2187 (48/7) Civil	tier Ballads, Seeger	FM4006 (1006) FM4007 (1007)	Great Lakes Indians Nova Scotia Folkmusic Lappish Joik Songs	FHS003	(2163 & 2164) Frontier Ballads, (2175 & 2176)	FW6930 (930) FW6935 (935)	Scottish Ballads, McEwan Bras. Israeli Dances, Tzabar Cantorials for the High Holidays, Brun.	FR8951 FR8975	Easter Services in Jerusalem Mushroom Ceremony of the Mazatec
FH2188 (48/8) Civil	I War No. I, Nye I War No. 2, Nye	FM4008 (1008)	Folkmusic of Norway	FH5004	Ballads of the Civil War	FW6940 (940) FW6947 (947)	German Christmas Songs, Wolff		ITERATURE SERIES 12"
FH2191 (48/11) Heri FH2192 (48/12) Heri	tage Speeches, Kurlan tage Speeches, Kurlan	FM4011 (1011)	Lithuanian Songs in U.S.A. Drum Dance from Carriacou Songs and Pipes from Brittany	FH5004	Heritage Speeches, Val. 2 (2191 & 2192)	FW6951 (951) FW6953 (953)	German Christmas Songs, Wolff Songs & Dances of Quebec Songs & Dances of Brazil	FL9594 (93/4) FL9595 (95/6)	Jomes Joyce Society, 2-12"
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FA2201 (401) Cou FA2202 (402) Cred FA2204 (404) Spar	ntry Dances, Seeger, Terry	554401 (401)	Sigur & Navajo Music		STORICAL and DOCUMENTARY American Industrial Ballads, Seeger		EN'S AMERICANA SERIES 10"	FL9740 (98/4)	Bret Harte, read by Kurlan
FA2204 (604) Spar FA2215 (615) Duto	Any Concer, Yan Way Jel Songs, Yan Way hish Songs, New Mexico hish Songs from Pennsylvania ns, Baby Dodds y Lou Williams, Rehearsal Tatum, Trio	FE4402 (402) FE4403 (403)	Equatorial Africa Drums of Haiti	FH5251 2H5255	Days of the '49 Gold Rush, English	FW7001 (701) FC7003 (703)	American Folk Sengs, Seeger Street Songs of New York City Alabama Ring Games Songs to Grow On, Yol. 1 Nursery More Sangs to Grow On, Wills Birds Bugs & Bitgger Fishes, Seeger Birds, Bugs & Bitgger Fishes, Seeger	FL9750 (98/5) FL9774 (74) FL9780 (FP97/8)	Steamboat 'Round the Bend, Burman As If, Clardi
FJ2290 (30) Drur FJ2292 (32) Mar FJ2293 (33) Art	ns, Baby Dodds	EEAADA (ADA)	Music of Turkey Folk Music of Ethiopia	FH5285 (85/1) FH5501	Days of the '49 Gold Rush, English Union Songs, Seeger The Untypical Politician	FC7004 (704) FC7005 (5) FC7009 (709)	Songs to Grow On, Vol. I Nursery	FL9790 (90) FL9791 (91)	Netro Poems by Brown and Hughes. Anthology of Negro Poets, self-read Anthology of Negro Poetry
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