

Nonnoko Bushi

This is a dance with an interesting story and history. This is also a dance with several variations. The dance in the video is one that Sahomi Tachibana created. She was getting ready for Obon bon odori in 2014 and found three different dances to the same music/lyrics which she combined into one. The first time we danced Nonnoko was in 2006. For that year, Sahomi used a dance that closer to the Furusato no Minyo version (we will do later).

The history and story

Following is a short history from the Instagram site of Maud Archambault, a non-Japanese who is a professional minyo/buyo dancer and teacher in Tokyo, Japan. <https://greatfon.com/t/maudarchambault>

“At Nippon-ism's last workshop, we danced to the sound of 'Nonnoko Bushi', a folk song from Nagasaki Prefecture.

Sankin-kōtai, or 'alternate attendance', was a policy of the Tokugawa shogunate during most of the Edo period (1603-1868). The purpose was to strengthen central control over major feudal lords. It required feudal lords to alternate living for a year in their domain and in Edo, the capital. And to come in or out of Edo, all feudal lords, as well as their subordinates, had to go through a checkpoint called 'Hakone Sekisho'. Being able to pass that checkpoint required the following of many rules.

One day, the lord of the Isahaya Clan (in the now Nagasaki Prefecture) and his subordinates almost got turned away for not following some rules. As they finally got through, they decided to take a break. All so happy, they started to drink and fest. Someone even improvised a song which is said to be at the origin of 'Nonnoko Bushi'.

The dance, born much later, is also said to have started when people were drinking... After gathering some of the plates they were eating with, they probably started clicking them...

The dance is now performed by holding and clicking small plates, two in each hand, as if they were percussions. “

In the song various aspects of their journey are referenced. They talk about going through the regions of daimyo (feudal lords) and having to check in at the posts. To check in and report, the group had to lower their banners which were on long poles. Not lowering broke the rules.

They talk about their destination is Goyo no Matsu (pine) at Hosen-in temple in Kyoto which reminds people of Mt. Ōmi-Fuji and Tsurukame – the crane and tortoise.

Further information about both:

Goyo no Matsu. A pine tree at Hosen-in temple in Kyoto that resembles Mt. Ōmi-Fuji (title) – name is Mount Mikami 432 m in Shiga Prefecture. This is not a high mountain but the beauty of its profile as it slopes down to Lake Biwa has made it into a landmark. People are reminded of the beauty and shape of Mt. Fuji.

Tsurukame, translations and meanings are: crane and tortoise (symbol of longevity, artistic motif) - a form used often in ikebana (a low rounded shape, plus a taller shape). (Chris, I read that one of the views of Mt Mikami reminds one of tsurukame as there is a lower hillside “in front” of the mountain.)

And last they talk about having a party to celebrate. When they added the dance, it is thought that the small plates came from Arita, a porcelain town close to Imari (Imari porcelain) and Isahaya.

In the Isahaya dialect Nonno means "adorable & cute". Ko is young, child, fresh. So Nonnoko refers to the small plates used in the dance. It is also called "dish dance" because one dances with two small plates in each hand (at OBT we use kachi kachi 😊).

Videos:

How to dance – Nonnoko Bushi 2014 version:

OBT Teach - Nonnoko Bushi 2014 version <https://youtu.be/IU8SQOjY-zQ>

Dancing:

OBT Bon Odori Nonnoko Bushi 2014 version <https://youtu.be/ShafPDLIRww>

Following are the lyrics and translation. If you have questions send an email to obon@oregonbuddhisttemple
Thank you Chris bon odori sensei

Nonnoko Bushi

Lyrics from Book Furusato no Minyo Vol. 5 page 123 They are the same lyrics as in the music that we dance to which is from Furusato no Minyo CD 2 (media # 10 - vhs media # 14) . Spacing in the Japanese characters is to line up the romaji with the Japanese. Translation by Chris Dart

haa, Shiba ni narita ya Hakone no shiba ni yaare
ハア～ 芝になりた や 箱根の芝に ヤーレ

The turf has become the turf of Hakone

shokoku sho daimyō no shiki shiba ni

諸国 諸 大名の 敷 芝に

On the turf of each country/region daimyo, we spread our covering

Nonnoko saisai shitemata saisai
ノンノコ サイサイ シテマタ サイサイ

chorus: Nonnoko frequently do it again
frequently (check in - report)

haa, Todoke todoke yo ura made todoke yaare
ハア～ 届け 届けよ 末まで 届け ヤーレ

We report, register, deliver - until the end, we report, register, deliver

Sue wa tsurukame Goyō no matsu

末は 鶴亀 五葉 の松

The destination is crane and tortoise. Goyo no Matsu (pine) at Hosen-in temple in Kyoto

Nonnoko saisai shitemata saisai
ノンノコ サイサイ シテマタ サイサイ

chorus: Nonnoko frequently do it again
frequently (check in - report)

haa, nome ya Daikoku utae ya Ebisu
yaare
ハア～ 飲め や 大黒 歌え や 恵比須
ヤーレ

We drink to Daikoku, sing to Ebisu (God of fishing)

Ai no shakutori ya fukunokami

あいの 酌取り や 福の神

Salute to the cupbearer and God of Fortune

Nonnoko saisai shitemata saisai
ノンノコ サイサイ シテマタ サイサイ

chorus: Nonnoko frequently do it again
frequently (check in - report)

haa, iwai medeta no wakamatsu sama
yaare

ハア～ 祝い 目出度の 若松様 よ ヤーレ

For the auspicious festival, feast day, special pine decorations

eda mo haete ha mo shigeru

枝も 栄えて 葉も しげる

The foliage is full and luxurious

Nonnoko saisai shitemata saisai

ノンノコ サイサイ シテマタ サイサイ

chorus: Nonnoko frequently do it again
frequently (check in - report)

haa, Ai wa se nan ka yaare

ハア～ 逢いはせなん か ヤーレ

What are you meeting?

Genkai nada de ni hon masuto no tororu fune

玄海 灘で(出) 二本マストのトロル 船

We will meet a two masted troll ship at Genkai
by the open sea.

Nonnoko saisai shitemata saisai

ノンノコ サイサイ シテマタ サイサイ

chorus: Nonnoko frequently do it again
frequently (check in - report)