

Portland Mochitsuki Ondo

Portland Mochitsuki Ondo was created for the Mochitsuki events. In 2018 Traci and Wynn Kiyama had a really good recording made of Portland Mochitsuki Ondo and Portland Ondo. So we added it to our bon odori in 2018 so everyone could hear the new recording and become familiar with the dance. This year we will do it live with Jenna singing.

The story behind this song/dance from Wynn Kiyama
Portland Mochitsuki Ondo (2015)

Utsukikai began as a volunteer team that pounded mochi for the first Japanese American Mochitsuki event in 1996. Taking inspiration from the Japanese myth of the rabbit on the moon pounding mochi, the group adopted the name “Utsukikai” and dedicated itself to sharing the tradition and festivity of New Year’s mochi making.

At one particular demonstration, when the rice took longer to steam than expected, Utsukikai members entertained the audience with an improvised obon dance with mochi pounding movements. The group later decided to formalize this dance and commissioned Ryan Dorin, keyboardist for the obon band HappyFunSmile, to compose the music. Members of Utsukikai created the lyrics, choreography, and arranged the music to create “Portland Mochitsuki Ondo.” The choreography depicts the steps of mochi making—from pounding and kneading to flipping—and ends with an acknowledgement of the bunny on the moon.

“Portland Mochitsuki Ondo” was premiered at the 2016 Mochitsuki and this recording features Jenna Yokoyama on vocals; Wynn Kiyama on percussion; and Utsukikai members on background vocals.

Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0IM6-C0NCw&list=PLkeYL6A2MrBSVoMr2SShTA4C_sbfgyvs_G&index=16&t=0s

Lyrics:

Mochitsuki Ondo lyrics:

Koi! Koi!
Mochitsuki in the Rose City
Grab your kine and pound with me
Make an oishii treat

Koi! Koi! hood-o san kara umi ni
Even hipsters in the brewery
Come make mochi with me!

Petan! Petan! Petan petan ko
Petan! Petan! Mochitsuki yo

Petan! Petan Hajime yo
Mochitsuki Mochitsuki yo

Haaa! Koko Potorando ni
mochitsuki kisetsu ga yatte kita
minna atsumare mochitsuki da
kotoshimo yoi koto ippai

Petan! Petan! Petan petan ko
Petan! Petan! Mochitsuki yo
Petan! Petan Hajime yo
Mochitsuki Mochitsuki yo