

## Onidaiko

*Onidaiko*, or *ondeko* as it is known in the local dialect, is a traditional performance art in which an *oni* (an ogre-like being regarded as having divine qualities) dances and pounds on a drum to exorcise evil spirits in a neighborhood or village. *Onidaiko* is unique to Sado Island, where more than 120 villages have their own traditions.

There are five main styles of the dance: *issoku*, *mamemaki*, *maehama*, *hanagasa*, and *katagami*. In the *issoku* style, the *oni* dances on one foot. The *mamemaki* style involves a second figure wearing robes appropriate for a samurai. The *maehama* style features flute music and two *oni* instead of one, and the *hanagasa* style combines the dance of the *oni* with the *hanagasa odori*, a dance in which performers wear conical hats adorned with flowers. *Katagami*, the most common style, incorporates techniques from Noh and *shishimai* (Japanese lion dancing).

Before each performance, the *oni* and a group of dancers gather at the local shrine to participate in a purification ceremony. They then head to the village, stopping by each house to drive away evil by drumming, dancing, and chanting. To finish off the performance, each group of *oni* and dancers returns to the shrine where they exhaust their last bursts of energy in an animated finale. *Onidaiko* can be experienced during local shrine festivals in spring and autumn, and at the annual Sadokoku Ondeko Dot-Com Festival in May, which also showcases a traditional type of song and dance called Sado Okesa.