

## **Awa Odori in the Postwar Era**

When the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, the city of Tokushima canceled its Bon Odori (summer folk dancing) events. Entertainment was restricted during the war and people were no longer permitted to dance. This carried over into World War II, when the city was heavily damaged in air raids. However, as Japan entered a new era of peace in 1946, Bon Odori made a comeback as part of efforts to revive Tokushima. This was the year that the city formally renamed the dance Awa Odori, after the old provincial name of Tokushima. Even before the war, the city's leaders had considered replacing the term "Bon Odori" with "Awa Odori," because the dance was performed in seasons other than summer, for various celebrations and tourism events.

Troupes of dancers soon formed and began developing and refining the steps and other elements of their performance, including the musical accompaniment. Awa Odori started attracting visitors from around the country and even abroad. It is now a major symbol of Tokushima.