

Kyomai Dance (Web Text)

Some of the most recognizable keepers of Kyoto traditions are *geiko* (known as *geisha* in other regions) and *maiko*, their apprentices. *Geiko* are female performing artists who entertain guests with dances, songs, music, and games. One of the arts they practice is the elegant *Kyomai* dance.

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Kyomai dances in this program are generally performed by *maiko* from Gion Kobu, one of the five traditional entertainment districts where *geiko* and *maiko* work in Kyoto. In Gion Kobu, *geiko* and *maiko* study the *Kyomai* dance of the Inoue school, inspired by the deliberate, symbolic movements of *noh* theater and the delicate, sophisticated dances favored by the emperor's court. The *Kyomai* style of the Inoue school was created in the eighteenth century to be performed in *zashiki*, relatively small tatami-mat parlors in teahouses and other venues where guests could eat, drink, and enjoy the songs and dances provided for entertainment.

The show includes two dances performed in the Inoue-school style of *Kyomai*. One dance is changed each season, and the other is the popular classic called *Gion kouta* (A Song for Gion).