

SAKARA

(Yoruba Tribe -- West Nigeria)

Sakara, a style of rhythm, is a dance for happy occasions, slow and pleasurable. Song sings praises.

Formation: Sakara is danced freely any place on the dancing area. If one person is chosen to be the leader (chief dancer) by the drummer, the rest of the dancers follow. There is no set line or circle formation. The drummer may at any time go to another dancer and appoint him leader. This may also change the direction of the dance. It is the custom when the drummer picks the leader for the admirers of the dancer to give him money, and in turn he gives the money to the drummer.

Style and Posture: Bend fwd slightly from hip. Remain in this pos throughout dance pattern. Arms bend at elbow with forearm parallel to floor. Hold handkerchief in both hands with 1st finger and thumb. L elbow pushes fwd and back with the rhythm, unless otherwise specified. R arm remains close to the body. Hip moves freely with wt change. The knee action is constant and soft.

I. Basic. Glide R ft diag fwd to R (ct 1). Close L toe to R heel, wt on L and both knees bent (ct 2). Glide R diag fwd to R (ct 3). Close L toe to R heel; wt remains on R (ct 4). Beginning L repeat action of basic (ct 1-4), reversing ft pattern. Note: This step may also move to the side.

II. Flat Gallop. Step R slightly fwd keeping ft flat on floor, R knee bent (ct 1). Step on ball of L ft close to R heel, rolling wt back into whole ft as L knee is straightened (ct &). R knee remains bent. Note: This step may move in any direction, i.e.: fwd, sdwd, bkwd, circle R or L. In order to change from R to L ft, the initial step (ct 1) is made, but there is no second step (ct &).

III. Long Walk. Both knees bend in preparation for Long Walk step. Step fwd onto R heel (ct 1, &); as heel is placed on floor knee straightens (lock). There is a thrust of the ft fwd as the knee locks. With a rolling motion, wt is transferred fwd onto a flat ft. Hip lifts slightly as knee straightens. Beginning L repeat action of Long Walk (ct 2, &).

IV. Short Walk. Knees remain flexed throughout step: Step fwd onto R with gliding movement fwd as R ft reaches floor (ct 1). L ft brushes bkwd with knee bend, toe pointed downward about 3" from floor (ct &). There is a slight rock from R to L as wt is transferred. Beginning L repeat action of Short Walk (ct 2, &).

SAKARA (continued)

V. Front Crossover. Step R on flat of ft about 6" across L, toes fwd (ct 1). Step L toe close to outside of R (ct &). Knees bend in rocking motion. To change direction leave wt on R (ct 1). Swing L ft around (ct &), and step across R (ct 1).

Head: No noticeable motion.

Arms: L arm is bent, elbow held in at waist line with forearm extended. R arm remains close to waist, handkerchief in hands. As R ft crosses over, L hand movement is accented downward (down-up) R hand a slight counter movement; as L ft crosses over R, hand movement is accented upward (up-down), L hand a slight counter movement.

Arm Position: Two variations

1. When R ft moves fwd, hands move to L (elbows bent).
When L ft moves fwd, hands move to R.
2. Handkerchief held in front at waist pos, elbows bent, do a circular movement (CCW) fwd, under and back.

Head: Moves with rhythm. Accent is on lift of chin.

VI. Cross Behind. Step R toe behind and to outside of L ft. L knee remains bent while R knee strongly flexes and straightens slightly on each step (ct 1). Step L on flat of ft bringing L to R toe (ct 2). To change direction do a Basic sdwd (ct 1-4) R (ct 1-4); keep toes fwd.

Repeat Cross-behind step to L reversing all action.

Hips are thrust bkwd on each step. Elbows move outward slightly with the rhythm of the music.

Presented by Joseph Oyewusi