



NISEI WEEK™
Foundation

PRESS RELEASE

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**79TH NISEI WEEK JAPANESE FESTIVAL OFFERS FREE PUBLIC DANCE PRACTICES
STARTING JULY 16**

(Los Angeles – July 6, 2019) – Ever want to dance in the Nisei Week Ondo and Closing Ceremony or Grand Parade? Join us this year as the Nisei Week Japanese Festival celebrates its 79th anniversary August 10-18. To help the public prepare for the Grand Parade (August 11) and Ondo and Closing Ceremony (August 18), free public dance practices are being held from 6:30 – 9 pm on Tuesday, July 16, Tuesday, July 23, Tuesday, July 30, and Tuesday, August 6, on the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center Plaza (JACCC). Please bring an uchiwa to each practice. Questions should be directed to Miles Hamada at 323.620.0662 or mileshamada@yahoo.com.

The 2019 Nisei Week choreographer is Kangiku Sanjo. Kangiku Sanjo was born June Ito on February 8, 1940 in Boyle Heights, California to Jimmie and Alice Ito. In 1942, the family was interned in the camp at Manzanar. When the war ended, the family moved to Bunker Hill in Los Angeles.

At the age of 4 years old, she began taking Japanese classical dance lessons. At the age of 9, she came under the tutelage of Kanya Sanjo V (then known as Miharu Bando) to study both nagauta music and nihon buyo. Kangiku Sanjo reached professional status (natori) at the age of 16 and made her debut performing “Kyoganoko Musume Dojoji” and “Yasuna.”

Within a few years she became an apprentice (uchi deshi) with Kanya Sanjo V (grandmaster) and assisted in instructing and producing the “Kabuki Dance” and “Kayo Buyo Series” programs until the passing of Kanya Sanjo in June 1989. She had also enhanced her study of nagauta music with the late Grandmaster Yajuro Kineya IX.

Kangiku Sanjo was offered and accepted opportunities to advance studies by kabuki dance choreographers and instructors in Japan. She performed with the late Onoe Shoroku II with Kanya Sanjo V at the National Theater of Japan in March 1969 accompanied by bunraku musicians of Osaka in a dance production “Shishi no Yume” (Ioin’s dream). Another career highlight includes her appearance in David Bowie’s 1976 film “The Man Who Fell to Earth.” She and Kanya Sanjo V were featured in the Kabuki performance segment. She also performed with then known Senjaku Nakamura as the butterfly in “Kagami Jishi” in 1981. Kangiku Sanjo appeared in poster ads, television programs and represented Japan Kabuki Theater in television promotions for the World’s Fair held in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1982.

She traveled often to Japan to study the latest techniques and trends in Japanese classical dance, juitai mai with the late Hide Kanzaki II, percussion instruments (ohayashi) and tea ceremony. From January 2003 through November 2005, Kangiku Sanjo lived and worked in Japan, allowing her to undergo an intense, in depth study of the history, evolution, backstage work, choreography, costumes and props, past and present, all-encompassing the creativity and the production of the kabuki dance with renowned choreographers and instructors.

After the passing of Kanya Sanjo V, Kangiku Sanjo became the artistic director and official representative of the Kanya Sanjo V Kabuki Dance Company dedicated to preserve the cultural heritage of a 300-year-old historical traditional art form.

Being named the official choreographer of the 2019 Nisei Week Ondo is a great honor and privilege. All of the natori and students are looking forward to creating an exciting and memorable event memorializing Kangiku Sanjo's great passion and desire to impart the Japanese culture on to future generations.

The 2019 Nisei Week Japanese Festival is a nine-day event first held in 1934, and is recognized today as one of the longest running ethnic festivals in the United States. Celebrating its 79th anniversary, the festival will take place in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo district from August 10-18. For a calendar of events, log on to NiseiWeek.org, call the Nisei Week Foundation office at 213.687.7193 or email info@niseiweek.org. The Nisei Week office is located at 244 South San Pedro Street, Suite 303, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

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