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## 79<sup>TH</sup> NISEI WEEK JAPANESE FESTIVAL ONDO AND CLOSING CEREMONY ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 18

**(Los Angeles – July 14, 2019)** – The Nisei Week Japanese Festival celebrates its 79<sup>th</sup> year and will be held from August 10-18. As tradition goes, the nine day festival will conclude with the Ondo and Closing Ceremony on Sunday, August 18. The public is welcome to come enjoy the live entertainment and participate in the Ondo “traditional Japanese street dancing”, followed by the Closing Ceremony. This event will begin at 4 p.m. and is held on 1st Street, between San Pedro Street and Central Avenue. The public dance practice schedule can be found on [NiseiWeek.org](http://NiseiWeek.org). Questions should be directed to Miles Hamada at 323.620.0662 or [mileshamada@yahoo.com](mailto:mileshamada@yahoo.com).

The 2019 Nisei Week choreographer is the late Madame Kangiku Sanjo of the Sanjo School of Kabuki Dance. 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 nine, 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, jiutai 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 demise 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 culture 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 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. This event will take place in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo district from August 10-18. For a calendar of events, log on to [www.NiseiWeek.org](http://www.NiseiWeek.org), call the Nisei Week Foundation office at 213.687.7193 or email [info@niseiweek.org](mailto: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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