



Contact: Sascha Koki
Phone: (808) 922-8974
Email: sascha@mediaetc.net

For Immediate Release
May 5, 2017

“KARIYUSHI, KARIYUSHI”:

Senju Kai Hawaii Celebrates 20 Years of Okinawan Dance and Culture in Hawaii

(Honolulu, HI)—Saturday, May 21, marks a special occasion for Frances Nakachi Kuba and the *Tamagusuku Ryu Senju Kai* Okinawan Dance Dojo. They will be celebrating their 20th Anniversary in Hawaii along with the grand opening of their new dojo in Manoa.

Kuba will be joined by Grand Masters of Okinawan Dance. “Grand Masters are considered as *Jiyou Mukei Bunkasai*,” says Kuba. “Preservers of important, intangible cultural properties in Japan.” In other words, their presence is not an insignificant detail to be overlooked. Her students along with Kuba herself will perform in a recital titled *Kariyushi, Kariyushi* or “happiness and celebration” in Okinawan. The headlining performance by Kuba will include a famous piece choreographed by the founder of her dojo over 100 years ago.

The recital will be followed by an Aloha Party with Okinawan Awamori liquor along with a meet and greet of the Grand Masters and Frances Kuba Sensei. Tickets are available on Event Brite and through the Hawaii United Okinawan Association at the Hawaii Okinawan Center.

Frances Kuba has also recently moved into a new dojo at the Manoa Japanese Language School. Classes are offered to students ages three and up, to all dance levels. Interested students can sign up for a class; the first lesson will be free. Class schedule and information is available online at www.senjukaihawaii.com.

About Frances Nakachi Kuba

Okinawa-born Frances Nakachi Kuba was always destined to become a *Ryukyū buyo* dancer. Her mother had been one, and her dream was to see her two daughters become renowned Grand Master Okinawan dancers.

Kuba’s dance career began when she was three years old at *Tamagusuku Ryu Senju Kai* dance school (called a “dojo,” a place to polish oneself) in Okinawa. She was under the care of Yoshiko Tanita and Mieko Kinjo—renown dancers who happen to be sisters as well as the inspiration behind Kuba’s mother’s dream. At 14 years old, Kuba began the rigorous process of taking certification tests on the road to becoming a full fledge *Ryukyū buyo* dancer. It would take a total of three tests spanning seven years—her final test took place while she attended college in Hawaii.

While living in Hawaii, requests for performance at parties and private events led to requests for classes. Feeling a sense of responsibility for her craft along with a passion for perpetuating and protecting Okinawan dance along with its cultural heritage in Hawaii, Kuba was compelled to open a dance school. With the support and blessings of the *Iemoto*, the founding directors of *Tamagusuku Ryu Senju Kai*, Kuba opened a



Hawaii branch with her first student (her cousin) in 1997. Her first recital in Hawaii took place at Hawaii Theatre in 1999, after she obtained her teaching certificate.

Now, 20 years later, Kuba is considered a *Shihan*, or Master Instructor in dance. Her career has led her to perform nationally and abroad with the most notable including Carnegie Hall in New York, Central Park in New York, Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington D.C., and the most recent *Uchinanchu Taikai* (a large festival of Okinawans from around the world, gathering in Okinawa once every five years).

“I feel that it is my mission to enrich lives and bring joy through preserving and perpetuating the precious culture,” states Kuba. “Like how the culture was used to promote peace and bring people together in the past.”

About Ryukyu buyo

Ryukyu buyo translates to *Ryuku*, the former name of the once independent Okinawan kingdom, and *buyo*, “dance” in Okinawan. The historically rich dance style is heavily rooted in Chinese Classical Dance where Okinawan high officials (men only) would entertain imperial envoys from China over 500 years ago. In the past, Chinese imperial envoys visited the Okinawan island to witness a new King’s coronation. The dances were initially learned as a form of entertainment, peaceful ties and goodwill with the many surrounding nations in Asia.

Eventually, the dance style expanded to include women with modern folk dances called *Zo Odori* which depicted the daily lives of the Okinawan commoners in the latter part of the 18th century. The thoughts and emotions of the masses of that time are evoked in the dance and music.

“Kariyushi, Kariyushi” 20th Anniversary Celebration

Date: Saturday, May 21, 2017
Time: Recital, 3:00 – 5:00 PM;
Aloha Party, 6:00 – 8:30 PM
Address: Hawaii Okinawan Center
94-587 Ukee St. Waipahu, HI 96797

Tickets: \$25 Aloha Party
\$35 General Seating
\$150 Super Supporter
(Includes Reserved Seating, 1 parking and ticket to Aloha Party)
<https://www.eventbrite.com/> (Under Kariyushi, Kariyushi)

Tamagusuku Ryu Senju Kai Frances Nacahi Ryubu Dojo

Address: Manoa Japanese Language School
2408 East Manoa Rd. #8 (2nd Floor), Honolulu, HI 96797

Phone: (808) 754 - 2243
Website: www.senjukaihawaii.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/senjukai.hawaii

###

If you would like more information about Senju Kai Hawaii and/or any of the events mentioned, please call Sascha at (808) 922-8974, or email her at sascha@mediaetc.net.