**KODOMO NO TAME NI**

*(For the Sake of the Children)*

Education was a critical concern as the Issei (1st generation) began to raise families in the early 1900s. Some felt that private schools, teaching the Japanese language, traditional arts and moral values, were the most desirable. Others insisted that the Nisei (2nd generation) should be sent to public schools for a western education to help them assimilate into American society.

Racial discrimination, however, limited the Nisei’s educational opportunities as San Francisco’s 1906 school segregation policy had broad political and social ramifications for the Japanese American community. In order to serve their children’s needs, the Issei began to create independent Japanese schools that would instill Japanese language and cultural insulations as a supplement to the western education taught in the public schools.

Planning for a Japanese language school in San Francisco commenced in 1910 through the Japanese Association of America, the key political organization for Japanese immigrants established by the Japanese Consulate in 1906. As a result, Kimono Gakan (Golden Gate Institute) opened in 1911. During the following year Kimono was a key participant in the first statewide Japanese American educators’ conference held in San Francisco.

In 1911, Principal Kato Morita with Kimono Gakan’s high school class graduates before Japanese Americans were interned during World War I. Although the legislation and continuing discrimination resulted in the re-establishment of Japanese language schools on the West Coast. Kimono Gakan reopened in the fall of 1944-1945 with 32 pupils.

With ever increasing enrollment at Kimono and years of fund-raising among the hard-working Issei families, design and construction of a new school commenced in the early 1920s. Finally, in 1926, Kimono dedicated its new school building on this site.

**A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES**

*映画上映会*

A favorite event in the Japanese community was Movie Night. Kimono’s parents held their first Movie Night on November 11, 1928 which raised $1600 for their building fund. Other community groups also used Kimono’s auditorium.

Chizu lyama recounted her childhood memories of these film showings.

Our assignment was to rest zabuton (cushions), because the wooden folding chairs were very hard. During reel changes, we also sold refreshments.

We hurried to Kimono before the opening, and would shout loudly, “Zabuton, five cents. Naikku desu yo (It’s warm).” And we always sold out. During the first film we would wait breathlessly for the break so we could drag the heavy container of soft drinks. Again “Soda water – five cents. Oshir desu yo (It’s delicious).” The movies were silent, but there would be a barker, a marvelous commentator. He really was an actor who would take on all the speaking roles. And always there was a dramatic scene—like the heroine at the edge of a canyon cliff—gazing longingly at the sunset then, at the turbulent waters below before jumping in.

**SIGN 10B**