

how the **Ku Klux Klan** &

**Alameda Housewives**

**TRIED TO STOP the**  
*alameda*  
**Japanese School!**  
in **1926**



## It was Takuritsu Morita's

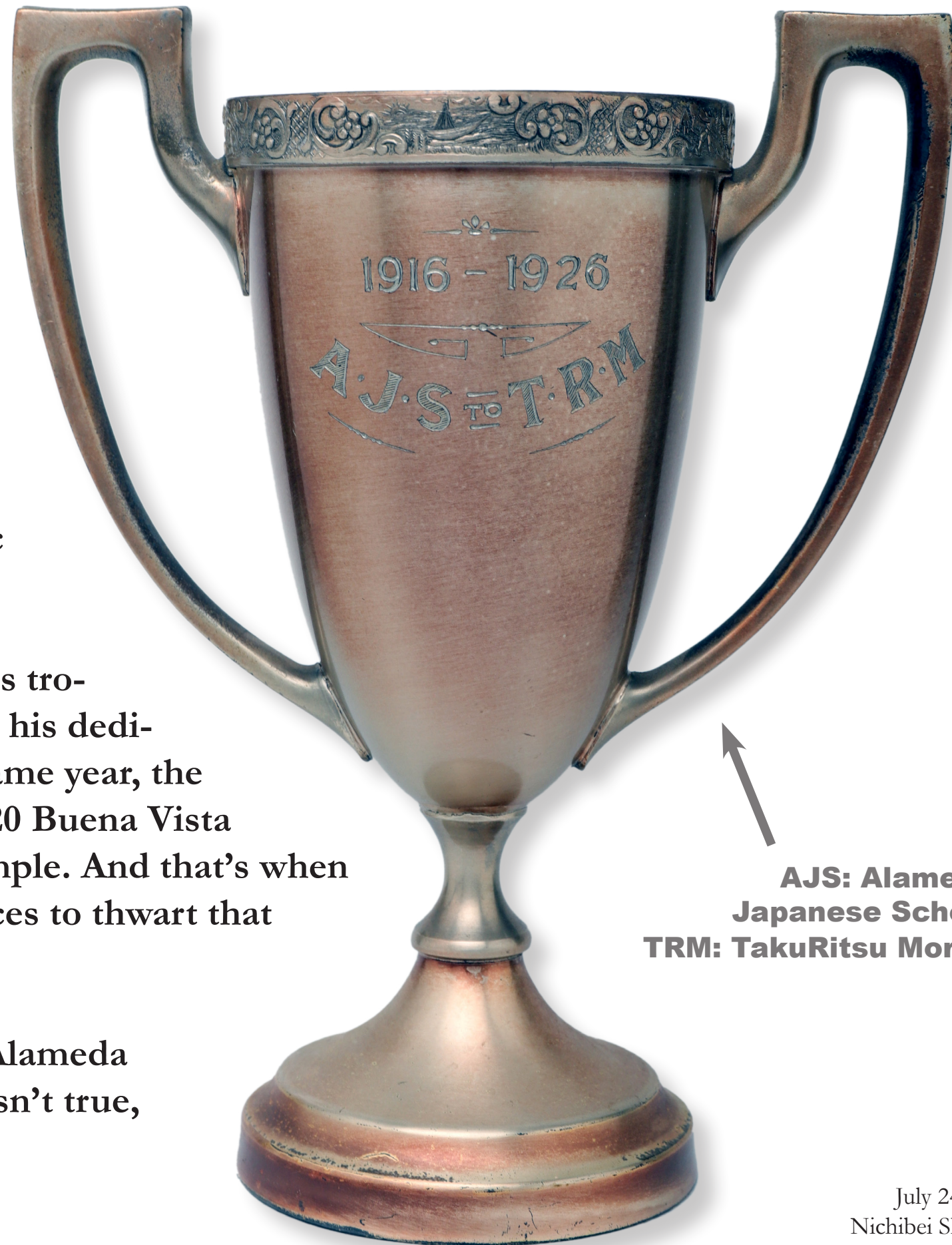


10th year, teaching the Japanese language to the young American-born Japanese

students at the California Official Japanese Elementary School, located at 2256 Pacific Ave, in Alameda, CA.

For his efforts, he received this trophy in 1926 in appreciation of his dedication and hard work. That same year, the school decided to move to 2320 Buena Vista Ave, next to the Buddhist Temple. And that's when an unlikely pairing joined forces to thwart that move.

The Ku Klux Klan... and the Alameda Housewives' League. If it wasn't true, it would be laughable.



**AJS: Alameda Japanese School**  
**TRM: TakuRitsu Morita**

July 24, 1926  
Nichibei Shinbun

### EDITORIAL

#### ALAMEDA GAKUEN MEETS AMERICAN OPPOSITION

THE Japanese language school question, which has lain dormant in the public mind for some time, has been suddenly resurrected when various protestants, including persons who claimed to be representing the Ku Klux Klan and the Alameda Housewives' League, made an opposition to moving the Alameda Japanese Language School from its present site to its new ground on the south side of Buena Vista Avenue, near Park Street, Alameda. The anti-language school group, as expressed by its representatives before the Alameda City Council last Tuesday, held that a Japanese language school in the city would establish a dangerous precedent for other divisions of the American populace to establish schools apart from the public school system, thwarting the assimilation of American ideals by foreigners.

Whatever may be said against language schools, this opposition on the part of the Alameda group is a flimsy one. To infer that Japanese language school is incompatible with Americanization is uncalled for because it is unfounded. These language schools are conducted in accordance with the law of California. Every teacher on the faculty must have passed a state board examination on American history, Constitution, and government. For this reason we see no justification in this superficial protest of a certain group of citizens of Alameda, especially in view of the fact that this particular school has been in existence unmolested for more than seven years.

Notwithstanding allegations to the contrary, teaching of foreign language in America is a national asset. In this era when nations become increasingly interrelated and national isolation is no longer possible, mastery of foreign language is not only valuable but necessary if American would maintain her position of influence among nations of the world. The principles of American Democracy should not be interpreted in terms of narrow, self-inflated nationalism. America, as differentiated from any other country, is essentially a cosmopolitan nation into which diverse culture from many lands have flowed to produce its present civilization. This being the case, to charge that teaching of foreign language is "against American principles" is to show an utter lack of knowledge of those very principles.



see certificate page 8



ALAMEDA JAPANESE  
SCHOOL  
加州公認  
アラメダ日本小学校

2256

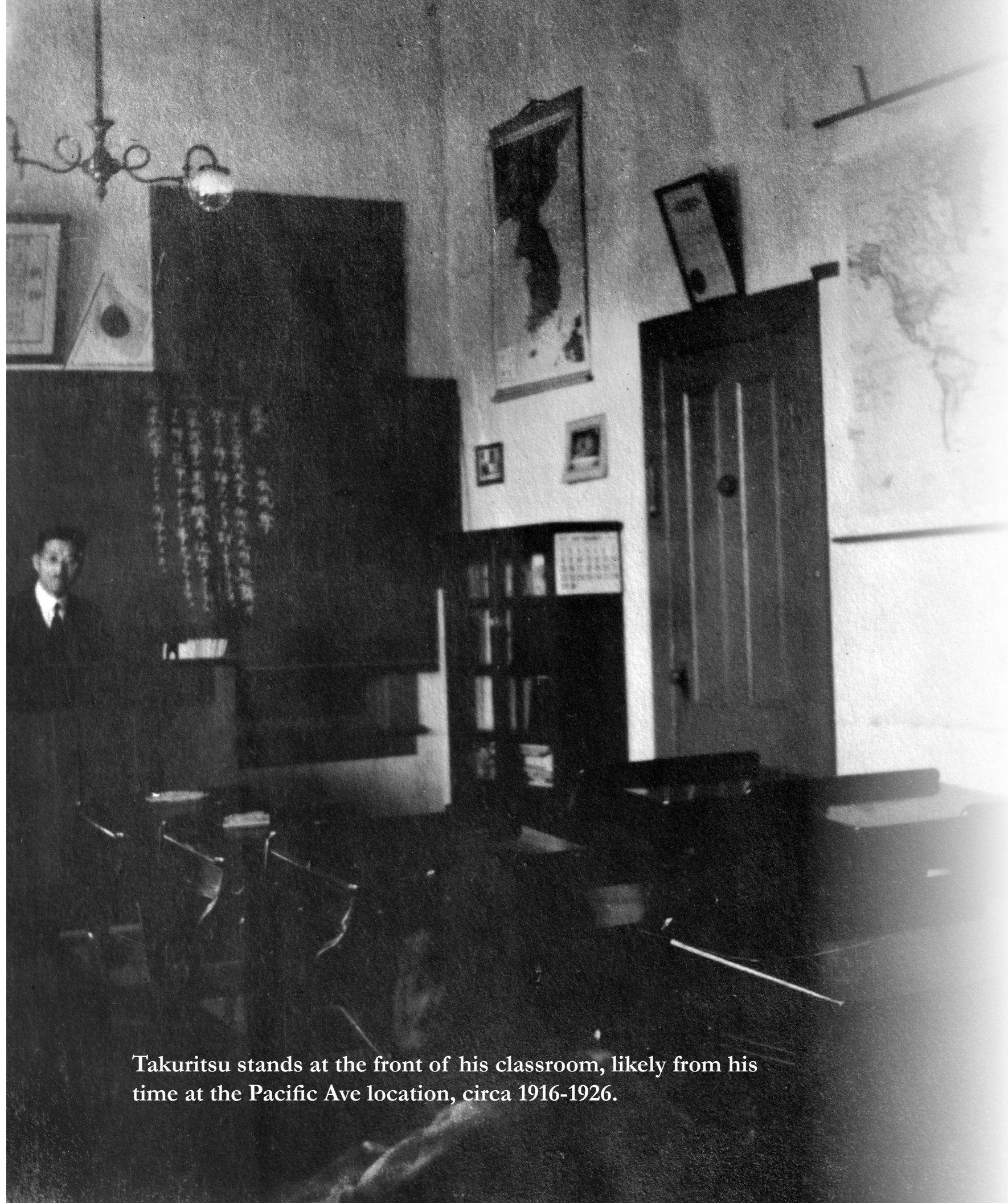
**Takuritsu  
Morita**

**Makoto  
"Henry"  
Takagi**

An early photo of the school's existence at 2256 Pacific Ave, circa 1916, the year the school began.

**At center is Takuritsu, standing before the school, perhaps in 1915. Note the sign to the left of the door is for the Japanese Association of Alameda, which was also housed here around this time. Compare to the photo on the previous page, where the JAA sign is missing.**





Takuritsu stands at the front of his classroom, likely from his time at the Pacific Ave location, circa 1916-1926.

## K. K. K., HOUSEWIVES' LEAGUE HOLD JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL AS DANGEROUS PRECEDENT

Moving of Alameda Gakuen Is Opposed; City Council Defers Action

At the meeting of the Alameda City Council held Tuesday the moving of the local Japanese Language School to its new site met the opposition of several citizens who claimed to be representing the K. K. K. and the Alameda Housewives' League. According to the report that appeared in the Chronicle Tuesday, "A Japanese school, protestants hold, would establish a dangerous precedent for other divisions of the American populace to establish schools apart from the public school system, thwarting the assimilation of American ideals by foreigners."

Mr. Kono, principal of the school appeared also at the meeting to explain in behalf of the Japanese that the school has already been maintained for seven years on Pacific Avenue, between Oak and Walnut Streets, and is only seeking a new location. It is for Japanese children to attend after the public school hours are ended, he said. The council deferred action.

The permit has been already issued by the City Board of Education some time ago, but it required the ratification of the Council.

Mr. Kono would be Hikotaro "Harry" Kono, of the Alameda Taiiku Kai (ATK) baseball team. He was among the foremost of Issei Japanese leaders in Alameda at the time.

It is unclear why this 1926 story says 'seven years on Pacific' when it had been there 10.

July 24, 1926  
Nichibei Shinbun



**Kanjiro Inouye**

**Shujiro Nakano**

**Takuritsu Morita**

The City Board of Education issued the permit on July 7, 1926, nearly two weeks before the City Council scheduled meeting to discuss the KKK and Alameda housewives concerns. That permit listed Harry Kono, Mr. Nahara, and Mr. Takagi (probably Kumagoro) as owners. The contractor was M.H. Fish and the job cost \$4,500. Regardless of the opposition, the school made its move to Buena Vista Avenue (seen here), and Takuritsu would teach there, too.

Note the Japanese Association sign to the left of the door, and the Japanese School sign to its right. This is the beginning of what most people think of as the Alameda Temple Gakuen, in October 1926.



“We had individual desks, but at one point they had this big room and we had long tables, and about two or three of us would sit at these long tables,” recalled Cookie Takano Takeshita, who attended the school at 2320 circa 1935.

There were at least three classrooms inside the building.

Cookie’s father, Yasutaro, was tough on her and her brother, Mas, making them speak Japanese at home, at the expense of Yasutaro learning better English. When Cookie’s friends came over, Yasutaro made them speak Japanese, too. The discipline worked. Not one to boast, Cookie said “My brother, sister and I were the number one students in Japanese school.”

## NEW ALAMEDA GAKUEN IS COMMEMORATED

Performances Are Presented Brilliantly  
by Children; Accomplished  
Shibai Fascinates Audience

Completion of the new Alameda Japanese Language School building, situated at 2320 Buena Vista Avenue, and the tenth anniversary of the school were commemorated Sunday, October 10, in an unusually large scale. A very impressive ceremony and an extensive program of entertainments, which required the school children and "Seinen-Kai" several months to prepare, featured the celebration.

Seventy-five hundred dollars were expended in the construction of the new building, which has modern equipments and which is of an attractive bungalow architecture. A spacious play-ground partly surrounds the building. At the present time there is an attendance of 90 to 100 pupils, who are receiving instructions from two teachers.

### Hon Taketomi Delivers Address

The ceremonious program opened Sunday afternoon at two o'clock, and among the numerous notables who spoke were Consul-General Taketomi and the two representatives of the Japanese American News and the New World News. Following the ceremony, bounteous refreshments, prepared by the mother's club, were served to hundreds who attended.

The second part began at 7:00 p. m. with a huge crowd pouring into the large Buddhist Hall. Every performance was brilliantly displayed and indicated the result of careful practice. Russian folk dance and various classes of Japanese dances such as the "Oryoku-Ko Bushi," "Iso Bushi," "Yasuki Bushi" and others were amazingly beautiful. Another special attraction portrayed by the school children was a dance entitled "Dojo Sukuui." The principle feature of the evening's program, which was a modern play performed by the talented "Seinen-Kai" actors, won a great deal of applause.

Nichibei Shinbun • October 13, 1926



The racism fomented by the KKK and the Alameda Housewives' League failed to derail the new school building's construction.

On the 20th anniversary of its existence, this trophy was presented to Mr. Takuritsu Morita on October 10, 1936 by the Alameda Gakuyen (Japanese school).

The oddity is that Morita was not teaching in Alameda in 1936. The school must have thought so highly of Takuritsu that they awarded him this, even though he had moved his family from Alameda to Mountain View, CA three years earlier, in 1933.

Teachers' Training Institute  
of  
San Francisco

This is to Certify that Takuritsu Morita

has regularly attended and completed the prescribed Course of Lectures  
under the auspices of the Teachers' Training Institute of San Francisco,

August—September, 1921. ←

Lecturers:

Harvey Augs Gay American Ideals  
Anna Cleghorn History  
Warren Sydes Government  
V. R. French Civics

J. Yamato  
Secretary

**Morita's August-September 1921 graduation certificate from the Teacher's Training Institute of San Francisco, showed his coursework included American Ideals, History, Government and Civics. He would only teach Japanese at the Alameda and Mountain View schools, however.**

*See news article, page 2.*

• *From the Densho encyclopedia:*  
On August 2, 1921, the Parker Bill went into effect that required that teachers and administrators at foreign language schools be licensed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, demonstrate knowledge of American history and English language skills, and pledge to make pupils good and loyal American citizens.



ALAMEDA  
*Japanese*  
*American*  
HISTORY PROJECT

Fond of self portraits,  
Takuritsu was Alameda's best  
Issei amateur photographer.  
He died in 1962.

Special thanks to Woody Minor,  
Cookie Takano Takeshita,  
and Lynn Dunbar (of the  
Morita family) for their assistance  
with this story.

