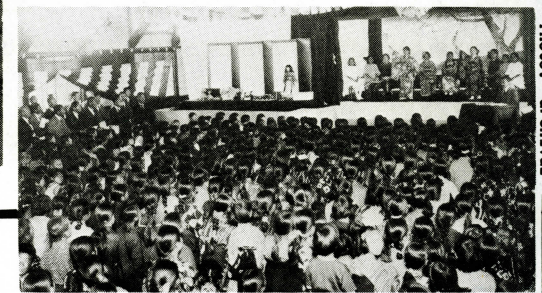


# Miss Kyoto Reunited with Old Friends

one of few known remaining blue-eyed dolls, was also on hand. Most of the American dolls had been destroyed in 1943 when the war clearly turned against Japan. Likewise, the fate of the 58 Japanese dolls is largely unknown: only 19 have been located and few are in perfect condition.

At the end of a banquet following the Kyoto ceremony, Mayor Imagawa expressed his hope to visit



Miss Kyoto's good-bye ceremony in 1927.

Photo: archival

Photo: Fay Foto



Governor and Mrs. Michael Dukakis and Consul General Sadakazu Taniguchi "meet" Miss Kyoto in the Japanese House at The Children's Museum.

At Kyoto City Hall in March, Governor and Mrs. Michael Dukakis met with Mayor Masahiko Imagawa and other Japanese officials for a very special welcoming ceremony. They were joined by Mrs. Tsugi Tomooka and Mrs. Toshiko Kirimura who, as sixth graders 57 years ago, participated in a good-bye ceremony for a "Doll Ambassador of Goodwill" named Miss Miyako Kyoto.

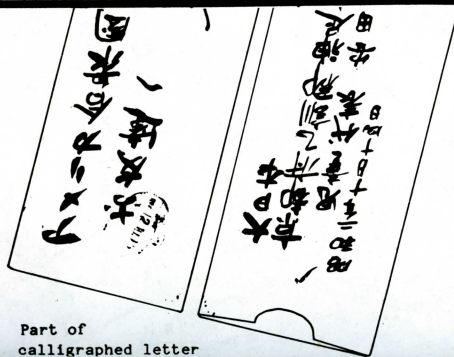
Remembering the past, Mrs. Tomooka, now 68 years-old, wept at the unexpected reunion with her "friend", Miss Kyoto. "She will not come back to us again", Mrs. Tomooka wrote in a letter which accompanied Miss Kyoto to the U.S. in 1927. "She has never left Japan", it continued. "She does not know America at all... Please take care of her forever."

countries might succeed since political and diplomatic maneuvers were failing.

Dr. Gulick became the guiding force behind a nationwide effort to purchase dolls of moderate cost. Over 12,000 dolls dressed in handmade clothes were collected from children across America. The "Doll Travel Bureau" gave them an American "passport", a "visa" from the Japanese Consulate, a transportation ticket to Japan, as well as a message of goodwill. An elaborate farewell party was held at the New York Plaza Hotel in December, 1926.

"his daughter", Miss Kyoto, in Boston. Mrs. Kirimura and Mrs. Tomooka also presented the Museum a gift of ¥100,000 to buy Miss Kyoto "something special".





Part of  
calligraphed letter  
from Mrs. Tomooka to the children  
of America in 1927.

Miss Kyoto was one of 58 dolls sent to children here from the children of Japan. It was the idea of Dr. Sidney Gulick, an American missionary who lived in Japan in the early 1900's. Upon his return home, he was disturbed by rising anti-Japanese sentiment. He felt that a friendship gesture between the children of the two

ork Plaza Hotel in December, 1920.

Upon the dolls' arrival in Japan, they were distributed to primary schools throughout the country. Soon after, thousands of letters came to America, all written on delicately decorated Japanese paper. A song, aoi me no ningyo (A Doll With Blue Eyes), gained popularity in Japan.

In response, over 2,610,000 Japanese schoolgirls each contributed one sen (about one half cent) to commission the making of 58 dolls. The dolls, each 33 inches tall, were dressed in fine quality silk crepe and brocade robes. All had a set of lacquered furniture, geta (clogs), toys, lanterns, parasol and tea sets. Some were accompanied by a younger brother or sister.

The Japanese dolls were given an elaborate welcome upon their arrival in San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and New York City. They were then divided into six groups and toured 479 U.S. cities in six months. Permanent homes were then selected for the dolls with preference given to already established Children's Museums. The Boston Children's Museum became Miss Kyoto's home.

Adding poignancy to the March ceremony in Kyoto was the fact the Ann-Chan (Little Miss Ann) from Portland, Maine,

Thanks to the patient guidance of the International Cultural Association and the Boston Japanese Consulate, Miss Kyoto returned to her homeland for conservation. Upon her arrival at The Children's Museum in 1927, she had four large cracks in her head. During the following years, her kimono faded and the cracks became worse. Although the original doll-maker is now dead, four of his disciples, under the supervision of the Yoshitoku Doll Company, will restore Miss Kyoto to her original condition using materials and techniques of the period. She will return home to the Museum in early 1986 and be back on permanent display in the Japanese Study Storage collection. ☐