Resolution urging the San Francisco Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) to acknowledge the existence of, and honor, an agreement made between the San Francisco YWCA and the Soko Bukai which placed the Japantown YWCA building located at 1830 Sutter Street in the trust of the San Francisco YWCA on behalf of the churches that make up the Soko Bukai.

WHEREAS, The Japantown YWCA building is located at 1830 Sutter Street in the heart of San Francisco's Japantown neighborhood; and,

WHEREAS, The YWCA was founded in San Francisco in 1912, by the organization's national board, and has traditionally operated community centers and schools throughout the city; and,

WHEREAS, Due to practices of segregation within the YWCA during the early part of the 20th century, churches making up the Soko Bukai founded the Japanese YWCA; and,

WHEREAS, By the early 1920's the Japanese YWCA had outgrown its small space on Gough Street and the women decided to raise money to buy a new building; and,

WHEREAS, The California Legislature had passed the Alien Land Law in 1913, and until it was deemed unconstitutional in 1950s, only persons eligible to be U.S. citizens could own property; and,

WHEREAS, A congressional act, at that time, prevented Japanese immigrants from becoming citizens; and,

WHEREAS, The creation of "trusts", the practice of an individual or a group who was ineligible for owning property finding a white person to hold the paper title for the property, was a strategy for circumventing these restrictive property laws; and,
WHEREAS, The Soko Bukai raised the necessary money and requested the San Francisco YWCA to purchase a building and hold the property in trust on behalf of the Japanese YWCA; and,

WHEREAS, The minutes from the San Francisco YWCA board meeting from February 4, 1921 states: “The Japanese people have $2,000 pledged…for the property to hold it in trust for the exclusive use of the Japanese YWCA.”; and,

WHEREAS, The San Francisco YWCA contests the legality of this agreement and in 1996, due to financial difficulties, decided to sell the 1830 Sutter Street building; and,

WHEREAS, Following the attempted sale of the 1830 Sutter Street building, the Soko Bukai filed a lawsuit against the YWCA; and,

WHEREAS, The Japantown YWCA building is an important community-serving resource; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the San Francisco YWCA to acknowledge the existence of, and honor, an agreement made between the San Francisco YWCA and the Soko Bukai which placed the Japantown YWCA building located at 1830 Sutter Street in the trust of the San Francisco YWCA on behalf of the churches that make up the Soko Bukai.
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July 23, 2001  Board of Supervisors — ADOPTED
Ayes: 11 - Ammiano, Daly, Gonzalez, Hall, Leno, Maxwell, McGoldrick, Newsom, Peskin, Sandoval, Yee

File No. 011328

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on July 23, 2001 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Gloria L. Young
Clerk of the Board

Date Approved

Mayor Willie L. Brown Jr.