

Mr. Tatsuzo Sane,  
Mannouebi,  
Tokio. Japan.

My dear Mr. Sane: —

I have enclosed herewith but a rough sketch of my husband's life, but you have the facts. Please use whatever seems best for your needs — I am sorry that I have not the leisure to send you a more finished piece of work. Please accept them.

Respectfully,

---

---

## Brief Account of the Life of Iwahiko Tsunamura.

Iwahiko Tsunamura, architect, was born June 7, 1878 in the city of Yamagata, province of Uzen. His father was a building contractor, besides owning supply stores for the #32 Regiment and a hardware store at #110 Kajimachi, Yamagata.

In the year 1893, young Tsunamura graduated from the district school, called Koto-Sho-Gakko, following which he entered an English school in Yamagata, where he remained two years. At the age of eighteen, he was obliged to discontinue his studies in order to assist his father in business. Four years passed, in which time he made some money but at the end of the fourth year, he lost many thousands of dollars due to his miscalculation and lack of experience. As a result, his father was obliged to go into bankruptcy.

Young Tsunamura was ashamed and broken-hearted that his beloved father should have to bear such disgrace through

his fault. But his father, without blame or censure, told his son, he was too young and inexperienced to handle large jobs, and that now he realized that one must be prepared to handle such a business. And so he advised his son first to study architecture and make a solid foundation on which to build his future.

Very lonely and sad, the son left his father's home, vowing not to return until he could return with honor. He went to Tokyo, refusing to take any money more than a few yen altho mother and sister begged him with tears to share with them what they had. Seven months he remained there without friends or money, existing by odd jobs. March 1900, with only thirty yen in his pocket, he ventured to Canton, China. With the optimism of youth, he hoped for an opportunity to earn sufficient money to start him on his long journey to the States. But there again he met only with disappointment. China was engaged in the Boxer War. From then on,

for four years, he wandered through Malay, Sumatra, Africa, India, Europe, earning his way as he went on a pitifully small scale, enduring all manner of hardship, lack of proper food and sleeping accommodations. He passed. It was in Mysore, India, he attended an English school for one year, where he adopted the Christian faith and was baptized by Bishop Thomas. Young Tsunanuma now adopted the name Thomas and with the translation of his own given Japanese name was henceforth known among Americans as Thomas S. Rockrie - Student from Japan.

His travels in foreign lands ended when he set sail from Naples. He reached the U.S., port of New York, September, 1904.

By means of self support, Tswaluk's Tsunanuma entered Buchtel Academy in Akron, Ohio, 1905, graduating two years later. Following year, he entered Buchtel Academy, now known as Akron University. Remained there one year, studying mechanical engineering. Upon inquiry, he was informed that Syracuse University has one of the best schools in architecture. Passing the required entrance examinations, Tswaluk's Tsunanuma was admitted to the

Architectural Department, September 1908. In various ways, he earned money upon the campus, tutoring, waiting on table in the men's dormitory, etc. Each summer, vacation, commencing end of May, found him, however, in Sea Isle City, New Jersey, a summer resort, where he kept a Japanese art store, selling on consignment. By his sincere and pleasant manners, he made many friends among the summer visitors. Business prospered and when the end of each season came, all expenses paid, including those for helpers, Japanese and American, he had cleared enough for most of his expenses for the coming college year.

One winter, obtaining temporary absence from college, he opened a store in Ithaca, home of Cornell College, but it was only an experiment. Jirohiko Sumasuma lost one half year's work (first semester) of his Senior year and made no money. However, by concentrated hard study, he regained lost ground and in June 1912, graduated with highest honors in his class, <sup>having completed all the work in 3 1/2 years</sup> was awarded the Luther Seiffard prize of \$100.00 for having the highest

marks for the four years; also granted membership in the Honorary Society which corresponds to Phi Beta Kappa in other colleges.

A great sorrow came to Mr. Tsunamura in the late spring. He received word of the sudden death of his father. Added to his bereavement, was the knowledge he could not see his father once more to tell him of his fulfilled promise made to him, and make his heart glad. Therefore, instead of returning to Japan, following <sup>graduation,</sup> ~~Japan,~~ as he had planned, he went at once to N. Y., securing a professorship in a small midwestern college. After three or four minor contacts, he entered the office of Trowbridge and Livingston. Remained there over a year, changing to Burrell Hoffmann's office early part of 1915.

December of the same year, Mr. Tsunamura married Miss Agnes Asbury of Brooklyn, N. Y. To them was born, one year later, a son, who was named George. He is now a Senior in

Syracuse University, also of the Architecture Department.

Mr. Isumamma, encouraged by the success of his small house design jobs outside his office work, decided to open his own office. He wanted to be able to "bring his own ideas". Accordingly in 1918, he entered into partnership with Mr. Shota, a landscape gardener, but this firm did not exist for long, as Mr. Shota had an opportunity to go south. Mr. Weston Hillard now became manager and head draughtsman.

January, 1920, saw the fulfillment of a dream. Mr. Isumamma went back to Japan to see his mother and also to <sup>try to</sup> get some jobs for his office. In this, he was very successful. Kawasaki Hospital and the Nanyang Building were among those he brought. Returned in June of same year. Shortly after this became member of A. I. A., I. J. A. and of the Japan Society.

About this time, a new partnership was formed with Mr. John A. Thompson,

hospital design expert. Frier was known as Rockrise and Thompson. End of July 1921, both sailed for Japan for a three month's business trip.

Following this second trip, Mr. Isumama's health began to fail. Doctors examined carefully, but they could not discover real trouble. A year passed, and a new doctor was called in and advised an X Ray and then it was, that the truth was discovered. Tuberculosis. Plans were made at once for him to go to Saranac Lake in the Adirondack Mountains, April 1923, he entered a nursing cottage where he cured and rested for six months. (Enclosed picture was taken at this time). Wife joined him and remained with husband ten years. In that time, had severe setbacks, due to efforts to resume work in local architect's office - but each time ~~health failed~~ with well nigh fatal consequences.

Convinced that he no longer could



draught or design, ~~to~~ Mr. Tsunamura's active brain turned to study and writing. He began to study carefully Japanese and Chinese classics and wrote at great length of his own life, and philosophy. Two years were devoted to collecting material for a book, but only a few chapters were completely finished, ~~due to~~

After thirteen years, invalidism, in which he showed boundless patience, courage, cheerfulness and consideration for those <sup>around</sup> ~~about~~ him, Iwaki's Tsunamura passed away, February 5, 1936.