

January 11, 1940

Tomoye . . .

This is the first letter of this new year for me. I am so sorry that I did not write sooner. It's been over three weeks since I last wrote to you, ne? I think that it was the 19th that I last mailed my letter to you from Gifu.

Just after finishing the letter I got off at Nagoya on my way to Gifu from Kamisuwa in Nagano-ken on the 19th. I exchanged trains at Nagoya and got off at Gifu and found Mr. Takekoshi's home after roaming around the place asking chance passer-bys and people thereabouts about his place of residence. I finally found his place and gave him the photographs that you wanted me to take to him and Mr. Takahashi. I did not meet Mr. Takahashi since I had to catch the next 'kyuko' which left in about 40 minutes after I landed there. I received a letter from Takekoshi-san saying that he wanted me to take something to you and also that he wanted something bought in America, a Waltham wrist-watch and some other articles. I'll write to him and deliver the message and articles to you for him. While in Gifu I visited a paper mill accidentally while looking for Takekoshi-san's home. It was quite interesting. I also bought an amagasa from him for 1 yen fifty sen. It's good, too, like the one we received from them while they were at the Pavilion. Which reminds me that the Pavilion is going to open again this year, according to newspaper reports over this way. Are you going to work there again?

After leaving Gifu I headed straight home and arrived the next morning, the 20th. That evening I took the train for Kyoto and did some shopping in Kobe, the 21st. I spent over 100 yen for silk goods and silver gifts and books. All in one day, too. Gosh I never did so much extravagant shopping in one day. It doesn't sound so much when you change the yen into dollars, but, darling, the buying power of the yen is just as strong as the dollar in America. I purchased many gifts that I believe would be very novel and appreciated in the United States. Wait until I get back, darling and see what I got for you and Helen. I think that I am going to buy some more things of the same sort as presents and also for our own personal use. Many things can be used so well and in such novel ways, dear. I do hope that you will appreciate them. I won't mention the presents I bought for you or your sister or for Helen and other persons. I'll let you see them when I return on the Kamakura Maru which sails from Yokohama on the 25th of this month. You'll be so thrilled. I plan to purchase a lot of things yet so I'll be packed with many surprises and delightful things. At least, they seem that way to me.

The books that I bought may not seem very interesting to you, perhaps. They are Kojiki by Chamberlain (¥10), Hizakurige by Ippei Jippensha (¥20), Things Japanese by Chamberlain, 1939 edition (¥8) - The Bamboo Broom by Henderson (¥3), Japanese Literature by Aston (¥13.95), Haiku, Ancient and Modern by Miyamori (¥10), and numerous other books.



The above mentioned books are new, and also hard to get. I found that those printed in the United States were very expensive and also that they could also be purchased in the States so I did not get them. I bought only those that were printed in Japan, mostly, and those that I thought would be difficult even to secure in the United States. Some of the second hand books are very interesting and entertaining. Some were published in England though most of them were printed in Japan. I am trying to get most of Glenn Shaw's works, Natsume Soseki's translations and various other translations of Japanese classics. If you do not want them I am sure that I want to keep them. I bought them mainly because I was interested in them, hoping that you too would like them also. They'll be ours anyway, ne darling? I have spent about a hundred yen for books alone, and am thinking of spending some more for more books before I return. The only way to get those books is to browse around the book stalls in Kanda and in Kobe. It's very interesting, dear. I enjoy it very much.

Darling, I looked all over for the Korean or Chinese chest in Moji and around here but I could not find any. In fact, not many persons have heard about them around these parts. So I decided to take a hurried trip to Fusan in Hosen this year but since the boats were packed to capacity every sailing, which is ~~like~~ similar to sardines packed in cans, I decided not to make the trip. It would have cost me only about 15 yen round trip to Fusan (second class) but since even second class passengers were forced to wait a day or more ~~for~~ before they could get on board that I gave up the trip. I hope that you will forgive me. But I will look around the second hand stores in Kobe and Yokohama and try to find those chests before I return to America. I have not given up hope as yet. I know that you value such a chest, darling. I'll try my best to secure one for you somehow.

After my extravagant shopping in Kobe I went to visit a friend of my father in Uji, a Mr. Mizutani, who owns the Maruki Yeast and Bakery chain stores in Kansai and throughout the country. He is a millionaire. In our chat together, he was very interested in <sup>opening a</sup> branch in the United States selling Yeast products. He was ~~interest~~ intensely interested in starting an advertising campaign throughout America advertising his newly produced yeast compound which is highly nutritious. He seemed to want me to become a sort of branch manager in America. I am also jumping at the opportunity, darling! He wants me to send him, first, some second hand magazines from America which I think would best be suited to advertise his product. We can do that, can't we darling? Then he wants me to contact various advertising firms, if I can't do my own advertising for him and various other work. In other words, here is an excellent opportunity for me to seize a job that has a very good chance to expand in America, a brand new firm which is progressive and expanding. Mr. Mizutani studied in Chicago for one year and is a very good friend of my father. I can be a contact man in San Francisco for him, finding some good firm to sell his products and taking care of his numerous tedious business that might arise in America. I am going to talk to him further before I return to Yokohama. I plan to visit him on my way back, possibly with my mother to conclude a hasty contract or agreement. At least, I won't lose anything by trying out his scheme. At first he doesn't want a full time contact man, just a fellow or man who can do small things for him in America until his business and product becomes more well known. In that capacity I think that I can serve him.



I returned to Moji on the 23rd. On the 24th I went to Fukuoka (Hakata) where I visited several book stores (second hand) among other places. I purchased some books that were very interesting.

On the 25th, Xmas morning, we received your box of Hersey Kisses. Wonderful how they arrived on Xmas morn. There must be some strange power behind all this. We appreciated the gift very much. You don't know how much these Japanese treasure a few of these kisses. Also the colored napkins that Helen and you bought one day. Since paper is getting scarce in Japan, practically anything is appreciated. The colored napkins are so beautiful that they keep them in hiding and do not use them except on special occasions. If you send some of them to friends in Japan I am sure that they will like them. They cost about a dime or so, I believe.

Xmas Day I visited Miyajima and purchased some wooden articles. Cheap things that are hard to get in America. It was a warm day, such as seen on a good autumn day in San Francisco. They'll be useful around the home, besides being rather decorative.

On the 26th, mother and Julia, (my sister) and I went to Beppu and visited the sights there. We toured the various "Hells" or the famous Beppu no Jikoku. They were wonderful things. I took a snap of one which came out very well. The next day I went to Mt. Aso and viewed the volcano which was roaring and mildly erupting. I took a lot of pictures there, all of which came out well. After tramping around the volcanic region I left for Kumamoto where I took another train for Tosu where I spent the night at an ancient inn. They charged me the extravagant sum of 3 yen for breakfast and a night's lodging. For the service and place I thought that 1.50 was sufficient. On the 28th, the day my railroad pass expired I went to Nagasaki where I roamed around the busy section and then returned to Moji that evening.

And from the 29th I have been home resting and doing various things, including going to church and entertaining friends and visitors. The way the visitors stream into our home one would think that we were somebody. Everyday we would be kept busy entertaining people. My mother hardly has time to do her own work since she is kept so busy serving tea and cakes to the visitors. There was a lot of bother preparing for the new year and when new year came along there was a lot of bother entertaining. A vicious circle. And all that time I have been here entertaining and wasting time. I have been busy developing and printing pictures that I took in Japan. Nearly all of them have come out well, with only a few casualties of no importance. I have purchased a contact printer for 6 yen, a bakelite tank developer for 5 yen, some pans for a yen, paper and other articles of the dark room. Since paper is cheap here in Japan, speaking in terms of dollars, I plan to buy a goodly supply before returning to California. Chemicals are also cheap. The DK-20 developer produced by the Eastman company is sold here for 45 sen a tube. This tube is good for 500 cc or 16 ounces. The hypo here is just as good as the US products. I plan to stock up on them. Don't tell the kids back home about the DK-20, ne darling? Also about the other camera things. I have not bought an enlarger yet.

I have bought some albums and am busily pasting my pictures. I am kept busy at nights printing hundreds of snapshots. I'll show them to you when I return to San Francisco.



I am fine and dandy. Those vitamin pills have kept me in good health since my downfall early in November. The climate here in Moji is similar to Claremont weather so I do not feel cold at all. Although it is snowing in Tokyo, it is warm and sunny here. Since I have endured the cold Aomori weather, the week that I will spend in Tokyo and Kansai will not be so very severe. And when I get on the Kamakura Maru I think that I can discard my woolen underthings and leave them in Japan for my folks and friends to use. Dry goods are very poor in Japan nowadays. Cotton and woollens are very scarce, practically everything is forced to contain at least 10 percent sufu or staple fiber. Even pure silk goods are hard to get. Rayon is practically beyond the reach of average Nipponese. All cotton and other fabrics have gone up so high that the people are sewing over old garments and wearing them. It is not uncommon to see people, well-to-do, wearing clothes that have been <sup>ago</sup> turned over. What we could have bought for 60 yen several years can't be had for 100 yen today. In fact, many articles can't be had for any price because there aren't any on the market. Matches are so scarce that people are scrimping on old ones and using wrapped paper to transfer a flame from one place to another. You can't buy matches in many places in Tokyo. Coal is a scarcity in Tokyo. Schools are foregoing the burning of coal this year because of its scarcity and its forbidding price. Bath houses are closing down because of the rising prices of coal and wood and other fuel. Homes are not having baths as frequently as before, about once or twice a week as compared with every day some years back. The scarcity of everything is appalling. Even rice is scarce, and expensive. New Year's was celebrated quietly and inexpensively everywhere this year due to shortage of mochi and other commodities. Also due to the expensiveness of those goods. Living expenses have gone up tremendously in the past two years, so much so that many people are going without many things that were common in their everyday diet. On the other hand, those making fortunes in the munitions factories, and other places which are reaping a profit from the war, are experiencing a boom that have not been seen here in years. There are so many newly-rich nowadays that the highest priced goods in the best department stores are seized as soon as they are shown in the show windows. This class of newly-rich are swaying the buying public that everything expensive is being bought right and left without discrimination as to price. The extreme difference existing today here in Japan is appalling. There is the newly-rich class and the struggling salary people who are suffering from the rise in prices. Somehow the two classes don't mix. Stores are selling according to the rich class and are causing the poorer ones to become poorer. The rich yokels are spending money as they never dreamed several years back. The second class and first class compartments are full every minute of the day, a surprising fact. And the quality of these second class travellers are of a low order. The contrast here in Japan is causing the government very much concern. It is hard to explain such a fact in such a brief letter as this.

To depart from the present train of thought, Darling, I do hope that your friend, the customs officer will recognize me when I return to San Francisco. I don't know what I'm bring back, I mean, I don't know whether I am bringing back anything that might be taxed so I hope that I come across him on my return. You'll mention my returning to him, won't you darling? Tell him that I have something good for him.



Tell him that it is from us. It is a piece of shira-kaba or white birch art work that is very beautiful and artistic. It is all hand made and painted. I don't believe that I have seen anything like it in California. I am sure that he will enjoy it. I bought plenty of them for presents.

We can give them to Bert and the rest of our friends. We can also sell them for a pretty handsome sum. In fact, we might become agents for selling them if we can contact the proper stores. These articles can't be bought anywhere in Japan except in Matsumoto and in Nagano-ken. In fact, many Japanese have not heard of their existence until I brought some home and showed them. They are hard to obtain; I am sure that they will sell well in America.

On the Kamakura Maru sailing with me will be, I think, Maki Ichiyasu. I don't know who else will be on the same boat. I hope that I have an enjoyable trip. I think that the boat will arrive in San Francisco on February 8th if there are no mishaps. I'll send a wire from Honolulu also to make sure that I am on the boat.

I am now very busy preparing to return to America. I have to repack my goods and belongings and send them to Yokohama. Since there are so many luggages at the dock here in Moji, it takes over a week before anything can be unraveled. In fact, some articles take about a month. The situation this year is especially terrific, about 30 per cent more than last year. There are almost one-third as many travellers passing through Moji this year, or in the last year, that the station attendants are kept busy from morning to morning with overdue work. There are baggages piled up from pier to pier at Moji. It's a wonder how some of the things are delivered in a week. I pity the poor workers and also the people who are waiting for their things. Fortunately for me I was not forced to wait for my things for long. However, I do not know about this next time. I am packing early to avoid any such difficulties.

I hope that my car will be in good condition when I return. I hope that you can be waiting at the dock for me. Then we can take my packages and luggage right away and then return for the heavier things with my car. Can you tell the Kumamoto-ya lady, or Leo to reserve a room for me? Tell them to reserve a cheap for me by the month. Ask Leo to do this for me. I might be his room-mate if everything goes smoothly. Anyway, I want a room to sleep in the night I ladd. Will you please tell Mrs. Toda, or Leo for me? I hate to sleep in a car that night or at an expensive hotel. I think that they'll have a room for me. Tell John Nakahara that I'm returning, also so that I can use the car that day for sundry purposes. I hope that I'm not causing you too much bother, darling.

How is your rebuilding getting along? I hope that everything is progressing faultlessly and to your advantage.

The fan is repaired, and for 10 yen. And I have bought Mr. Chappari's kimono and bath robe. The price of those goods have gone up considerably since the past few years, dear.

I plan to sell this typewriter and get about 400 yen for it. When I return to San Francisco I can get a lucrative salary by selling typewriters to people who are planning to return to Japan. But keep this quiet until I get back to America so that I won't have any one competing. I can sell without giving so much discount then. I plan to contact typewriter companies in Japan so that I can send the buyers to those places so that they can feel assured that they can sell them in Japan.

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I'll be going to Kobe and Osaka on or around the 15th of this month. My mother and I plan to visit some friends and do a bit of shopping before we leave for Tokyo. We plan to receive your gifts from Takekoshi-san at Gifu then continue on our way to Tokyo. In Tokyo I'll be there about a week before I sail on the Kamakura Maru. Only two weeks remain before I return to a life of a sailor.

Less than a month lies between my writing this letter and my seeing you again. Only a few days will pass after you get this letter when I will return. Gosh, how time flies.

It seems that I have left you, and now I'll be seeing you again. And I'll have to leave my folks after a brief trip. However, we'll come back to Japan together soon, won't we?

See you soon \_\_\_\_\_

Hemi



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