

1-2788 Honmura, Moji, Nippon
January 15, 1940

Tomoye

I am going to prolong my stay in Nippon another month, darling. Your two letters written on the 20th of December (or thereabouts) have influenced me. They clearly showed that I needed that extra month here that I have decided to catch the next boat home, the Adama Maru which sails from Yokohama on the 22nd of February.

Your two very influential letters which arrived on the 13th of January, in the morning, have caused a minor change in my plans. Thank you very much for you kind thoughts. My mother and the rest of the family appreciate your timely letters considerably.

I was so busy packing and preparing for my homeward voyage that I had very little time to do much else. My mother was so busy doing little things that she had hardly enough time with me, that is alone. We are always swamped with visitors from day to day that there is hardly any free time for ourselves.

You don't know how much your letters influenced my making the change in sailing! I was bent on returning on the Kamakura Maru, until your letter arrived. We had already packed three full boxes, all larger than these I brought from San Francisco, and a small cardboard box and were getting ready to depart for Tokyo when your epistles came through the slit in the doorway.

Now that I have postponed my trip, we won't be with each other on Valentine's Day. I did so much desire to be home then. However, I'll be there for Easter, I hope.

During my extra month in Japan I plan to do as you so urgently requested me to do--to study my Nihongo. I hope that I can accomplish something during that short a time.

Several friendly souls here have been telling me stories of how some Nisei were drafted to the front after staying a few months in Japan. They fear that I might fall in the same category if I loiter in Nippon too long so warn me to return to the United States. My father also suggests that I stay no longer than March for fear of being conscripted. We all think that it would be a waste of several years if I am called to the front. Three long years are too much for me to be separated from you, darling.

In the last two letters you seem to mention quite a bit about your father and sister coming to Nippon, and that you might follow them here with them. I am sure that a trip to Japan will not harm you but I am afraid that your father might not return. When how in the devil am I ever going to see you again if such a calamity comes to pass? However, if it is certain that the whole family will return to San Francisco, then the trip to Japan will be very interesting and will not cause me any anxiety. Rather selfish of me, ne? But I hate to miss you. I don't know what I'd do. You also mention that you might remain in San Francisco and act as 'orusuban' while your family is visiting in Japan. If they play to return to San Francisco, then you ought to accompany them. You'll be surprised at the way the Japanese are living today, enduring many hardships during these trying times. One realizes how the 'have not' nations live after visiting Japan, now that this nation is living on a war time basis. You can then realize the hardships suffered by the Germans, British and French peoples, and all the nationalities suffering from the war. Eggs cost about 7 to 8 sen each, a small carrot about 7 sen, a head of cabbage about 32 sen and so forth down the line. It costs more to live here.

We don't want to live in a country where we have to pay from twice to four times the price we pay in San Francisco, do we, darling? It is a wonder how so many poor people get along here in Japan! No wonder there is so many sicknesses, so many people with tuberculosis, so many people with defective teeth and eyesight and sores all over their bodies. The common people is disgusting. One would very much like to help them but their proximity is so very undesirable that such philanthropic thoughts are immediately dismissed. Although one can't compare a standard of living of Japan with the United States, the way of living being to entirely different, one can't but feel that the standard here is considerably lower. I guess I am not very democratic, for I do not like the idea of rubbing shoulders (in street-cars, especially) with drunken rustics, laborers, and the common riff-raffs so prevalent in all parts of Japan. Perhaps I am exaggerating slightly, however, most of the vulgar common lot do not appear any too clean nor neat nor orderly. I guess my judgement is too severe. But you ought to come to Japan and view the contrast that is so evident here in this modern feudal Japan. There is the rich bourgeoisie class that can favorably compare with the best that America can offer, but the vast difference from this class and the common ordinary man is so great that one oftentimes wonder about the even distribution of wealth and the like. If we stay in Japan, dear, we have to belong to the upper bracket or else not live here at all. You can't live comfortably here with a small salary, the expenses being so enormous. Rent is high in Tokyo, and many other expenses, such as traveling and eating, would make a hundred yen fly away in half the time it would take in San Francisco.

I guess you have to take a trip to Japan to see the hardships endured by the majority of the people here to appreciate the efforts of this great nation. When you come with your father and sister this summer,

I hope that you don't stay here too long, for I would like, for selfish reasons, to see you off and on this year. If you do come to Japan, the year 1940 is going to be a lonely year for us, we both being away from each other a goodly number of months. Oh, why couldn't my trip have come this summer instead! Then I would have been able to travel with you. I would also have saved some too.

Mrs. McAllister's fan is repaired. It cost 10 yen, dear, for it was hard to find the correct bones or fingers or whatyoumaycallthem. Ordinarily it would have cost about 3 yen. Mr. Imanishi of Kyoto is the man. He has displayed in the front of his store a picture, two of them, in fact, of the Japan Pavilion on Treasure Island.

Your suggestions of the stamp albums for photo albums (very good idea) and the phonograph record holders have been received enthusiastically by ye writer. Ye editor of this epistle will carry out said brain child's with the greatest of gust and return to San Francisco laden with sundry parcels and luggage fully carrying out said suggestions. Also, humbly adding a few itams, ye author of this humble letter will also purchase some good Columbia or Victor classical records, for they are cheap and just as good here. I am going to get my Bolero and Scheherade Suite (misspelling, I guess). How in the heck am I going to reckon your 200 yen. Some of the books that I bought were not mentioned in your list. What shall I do? I'll leave the left-over money in my father's hands so that you can have them in yen and spend accordingly. Anyway, I'm keeping track of how much I spend for the various things so we can figure it all out when I return in March, ne darling?

I have bought an album and have practically filled it with pictures taken in Japan. I have already snapped over 180 photos. Most of them are printable and pasteable in the album.

Since I thought that I would be returning on the Kamakura Maru, I did not send any pictures that I took while on tour. However, I'll print some extra snaps and have them mailed to you shortly. Some of them are quite good, accidentally. I do my own developing and printing, and I must confess that I do a fairly good job. I can say that I'm better than the local photographer. But that is a poor comparison, for he is rotten. I too have a printer. I paid 6 yen for it and it is quite good. It has an adjustable celluloid mask, two frosted glasses plus a clean ordinarily glass so that the frosted globe will give out an even lighting throughout the contact print, a place for a red globe and automatic lighting so that the developing light goes on when the cover is clamped down. Rather a convenient device for a cheap article. My tank is a 4.90 affair so I guess your bakelite is much better than mine. However, we now have two of them in our possession, ne? And I used the Sakura fine grain developer the other day. It was swell, and it takes half to 1/3rd the time the DK-20 does. So I guess I'll have to deplete the local store of all its Sakura Fine Grain Developer when I sail on the Asama on the 22nd of Feb. I'm also buying some printing paper and some enlarging paper also. I'm supplying myself with some hype, too.

As for other equipment, I have not made any purchases to date. Thanks for the tip on the Asakusa store. I shall make a trip there when I go to Tokyo. I shall also ask Welly Shibata for information about camera accessories. He is very much appreciative of magazines, old or new, on camera craft from the States. He suggests that I exchange magazines with him when I return to the States, he sending me the Nippon journals while I supply him with the American variety. I guess it's about an even exchange and I won't lose anything on the deal. I have secured a five inch tripod which comes in very handy, and a half dozen books which hold a hundred negatives each. They are handy

little booklets. I guess I'll buy some more for us, ne dear? I have yet to purchase a wooden tripod and numerous accessories. However, I won't fail to do so before I return.

My folks take you as part of the family, now. I hope that your father has no objections. And I do hope that I find a good job. I'm looking for one now and always. Let's hope I get one soon for our sake.

I hope that your family have started the reconstruction work on the laundry. You and your father must have worried considerably over the new buildings. By this time, I hope that everything is going on smoothly and that everything will be finished so that you can travel during the summer months.

I haven't gone to a show for a month, now. I would like to see some when I return with you, the good ones. I hope that you are saving some for me, so that we can go around together again. I do enjoy going to the second run theaters with you. so much fun. And eating out. Ah, the good old days. May there be innumerable others.

So far I have received over 58 yen in seh-betsu from friends and relatives. So my trip to Japan has been rather cheap as far as financial expenses run, but the experiences have been priceless. I have traversed over more of Japan than the majority of the native Japanese. However, I guess that I have not soaked in as much knowledge as they, since I lack sufficient background.

When we tour Japan together some day, we'll have to cover the ground I traveled during the first two months. They were a lovely present from you, who were the main reason why I am now in Japan today. I do not know how to thank you. My parents also realize that also, since I have been talking about you constantly during my short stay in Moji.

If I am not dragged to the colors, I shall be seeing you again (for the first time this year) in March when the Asama Maru sails into port. Please reserve a room for me at the Kumamotoya, ne dear?

I feel relieved to learn that the car is running smoothly. I do hope that nothing very bad happens to the coupe before I return. And I also feel relieved to know that the car is to be worked over during the winter vacation and that John Nakahara is going to get the license plate etc. I'm sure he is keeping it in good condition, for he is a reliable chap, quite a sincere character, and a good fellow at heart.

Thank you darling for banking the \$1.50. Who in the dickens gave it to me? Now I am possessed of a bank account which soars considerably over six dollars, eh wot? I feel like a millionaire, mostly air. (Beg pardon for dishonorable pun).

I hear that it is getting harder and harder to change yen into dollars, nowadays. The government does not want to let the yen go out, nowadays. Nowadays practically anything is hard to get, nowadays. Even tobacco has gone up. The Golden Bat which formerly sold for six or seven sen is now costing nine sen, or maybe seven, I dunno. Anyway they have gone up a helluvalot. "hy, you can't even buy second class sleeper-car tickets unless you reserve a few days ahead of schedule. And you have to pay about 15 to 30 sen for a small cup of coffee, which is terrible. I paid 40 sen for 'molted milk' which was nothing but an average *of* cup of chocolate. Imagine! No wonder people have a hard time in Japan, I mean the Nisei who are living on their own, like Jun Ajari and the like. They have to have something of the American about their foods and meals, and what they want are so very costly. He gets 90 yen a month plus bonuses, but he says that he barely gets along. He pays about 15 yen for his room. His car fare is quite a bit, also, and his winter expenses of charcoal, and other heating devises, including the bath, amounts to quite a bit in the long run. I guess I prefer to live in San Francisco, darling. How about you?

It'll be another month and a half before I

see you again. What a long time away. It will be almost five months since I sailed last October. Gosh, to think that almost half a year of our lives have already been spent without us having met once or talked or saw each other. And if you plan a trip to Japan, another four or five months (maybe forever?) will again separate us. I do hope that you return to America after the summer's trip to Japan. I am so anxious, Darling, you mean so much to me.

I'll also get your books that you requested in your last two letters.

I was planning to return on the Nitta Maru, the newly constructed NYK liner, but the newspapers seem to say that it will be used for the European run, which means that I won't be on it when it sails on its maiden voyage in March. If it were sailing for San Francisco in March I was going to postpone my trip until then, but since it is not, I am returning in February.

I am in fine health, dear. I am taking quite good care of myself. I hope that you are too. I was glad to read that your friends were telling you that you were looking much better and healthier. I hope that you also gain some much needed weight before I return. Just a few more pounds and then you will be perfect. You are practically perfect, anyway, looking at you from a dispassionate and impartial point of view, purely from the scientific and calculating observation tower. You are second to none, unsurpassed. No fooling. Now that I can view you from a good perspective I realize it more and more. "Gosh I'm lucky, the first time I fall in love I fall in love with etc." (that song from "Shall We Dance" or some such Astaire-Rogers film.

I muz go to Mozkow, said the actor.

I muz go to bed, oh, said ye author of this weary letter.

I'll be seeing you in March when the Asama sails into port, darling.

Ine Denis

remember?

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786 Stanyan Street
San Francisco
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United States of America

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