

May 12, 1958 (letter #27)

Dear Henri:

Thanks for your letter of May 7th which came Saturday. Nice that you got to see Ferd and Else. I can imagine what a relief it was to see and talk to people you know outside the business for a change. Glad you are feeling so much better now. Sorry that we complain about your purchases and I am especially conscious of your lack of time both to do business and to write to us about them because I find that there is very little time here to do letter writing also. So many interruptions, and everytime I go downstairs to the store to go to the John (the upstairs one is on the blink), some customers get a hold of me and I'm detained some more. Really is hard to get everything done.

Well, I have hesitated to pass on too many complaints because we have received very few samples in comparison to what you bought and it is impossible to judge without seeing the merchandise. Also even when we see the samples, I have known many things that no one here likes that sell when shown to hakujin customers. We shall just have to wait and see.

The kitchen utensils arrived today and we had some sent over to here. We don't know how to price them, but I believe the store is making a guess somehow, perhaps by Tami's old $\frac{1}{2}$ 5X formula.

Didn't know that you changed schedules so I wrote to Moji last week. You probably won't get the letter. It sure is hard to write a sensible letter with so many interruptions and so many things on one's mind.

The foam cushion man came to see me this afternoon. He says Lazy-back uses this poly foam. He is making me a sample 20 X 20" X 3" cushion foam and the cover must be smaller than this measurement in order to fit snugly. They don't have rounded edges like the foam rubber. It is cut really square at the edges like you cut tofu with a knife. I plan to make a sample cover for the cushion out of noil, if I can get some noil and see how it is. I don't think it will work on the hattan silk. The foam is too square at the edges to look right. The cover sent by Kamei must be the same sample they showed you as it is very poorly sewn and has the center tassels. If you do decide on noil covers and use this foam, the covers must be boxed at the sides as Jim drew for them before you left or it won't work very well. I plan to make my sample that way and I was rather surprised that the sample they sent us was not boxed. I am beginning to wonder if this is ever going to work out at all because although noil is pure silk, it isn't like the hattan in feeling or looks. This whole thing may take time, so let's not get too impatient. According to the foam man, 20 X 20 X 3" polyfoam will be about 2.78 ea. 18 X 18 X $3\frac{1}{2}$ " is \$2.04 each. In foam rubber it will be about \$1.30 more each. In foam rubber, 18 X 20 X $3\frac{1}{2}$ " will be \$3.40 ea. Rubber is higher, but edges are more rounded. Disadvantages, of rubber is high price and heavier. Disadvantages of poly-foam is square edges and less resilience (not as soft to sit on), but it is light weight and cheaper. It is not as highly recommended as foam rubber for sitting on, because eventually it will get compressed, so he says. As far as price, he quoted for 100-200 pieces per order and will verify prices from the factory. The factory will cut to any size. If the San Francisco outlet does the cutting, as they do for smaller orders, then the price will be higher. As you see, this foam stuff is not cheap so I wonder if it will sell. We would have to charge at least \$10.00 each wholesale, for cover and foam don't you think? Let's let it ride til you get back. So glad you are coming home.

Got lots of orders over the weekend. I really believe business is picking up fast. Although we are very busy, it is good to know that orders are coming in. The yo-yos are our biggest headache. The retail store is doing very well and so many out of town customers lately. Aki is on vacation this week and we are oh so busy.

We got the price list and quantities of the things you ordered in Kyoto, the paper and other novelty items, but no samples yet. The kitchen things came but as we never got the samples except for the pon-pon anma, we had no idea until today what they were. We hope they send more samples. I think I told you we got the samples of the raw silk kimonos. They are ok as far as the cut so they can go ahead. The pongee kimonos are selling very well and as I predicted, the blue and red, especially the blue is flying and we are oversold again until we get the new shipment in that you ordered.

Perhaps later we can get other colors in the kimonos in pongee, if they seem to go well. or even next year, come out with other colors. They are always asking for new things and it seems to me that garments are pretty good. For this year, we should get more pongee kimonos for the fall if you think they will be good Christmas items. Try and get some good color swatches from Kamei before you come home. It can be other fabrics besides pongee. A type of brocade is good too, you know the kind they made shirts out of and sent to you? The pattern is woven in. I suppose that's more expensive? Anyway, tell kamei to send all kinds of swatches and colors of all types and we can think up the styles here. That's cheaper and easier than for them to sew up things we don't even want and they send to us. I found some grey swatches and they call the fabric Jacquard shangtung.

Hope you have luck with the matches. We are waiting with bated breath.

Rained here yesterday, but nice and clear again today. Hope the good weather keeps up until your return.

I would like you to see the sun again. It must be quite rainy there.

As soon as you return, we should go over the stock situation again. I try to keep up with it but ~~can't~~ make decisions on quantities except for the few things we ordered that we have told you about. I feel it is too great a responsibility. I told you that I did order some EB doves and things like that which we sent you copies of for expedience and to assure stock on things running out and which I'm sure we shall need. Tomorrow I hope to have more time to go over the stock to order other things that we are sure to need until you get back. I'm only filling in and by no means ordering quantities to last any length of time. On paper doves, the EB-2 was short so we re-ordered just enough and we really should order larger quantities of all of them before too long, all but EB-5. Hope we get the parasols soon. People are yelling for them daily. Good to hear that Tsunoda is shipping the ZAB animal trick banks. Sent Jack to sell them. He wouldn't take them until he knew when they were coming. We just got the notice today. Hope also that the lacquer lighter people will hurry and ship the other colors and shapes. We are short on mustard and blue because they didn't send it in their last shipment nor the one coming this week. We have lots of #1, but #2 and #4 are the best sellers. Black white persimmon and red are best but black and white by far. We do need other colors for the "assorted" orders, however.

We will need more ~~11#~~ 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " teak trays again, I'm sure. Although we haven't sold these trays expensively due to time of arrival after gift show, the quantity we got were so few, we are just selling it only locally, though we put it in our new price list.

Please bring back all clippings we sent as we cannot duplicate them. Thanks.

martha