

Letter # 25, May 6, 1958

Dear Henri. We received your letters, May 1, 2, 3, today.

First before I forget, please tell makers of all pliofilm bagged merchandise that there must be perforated with several wholes to allow moist air to escape after arrival here. Those awful crying cloth doll samples sent here by Kato the other day are sitting here in the office and I notice that they are all perspiring and will probably mold if left closed. The bags are tied on top with red ribbon. If a hundred doz. of these come and we have to untie all the ribbon, it would be a mess. I believe that's the trouble with the circus banks bells rusting. You must be very cautious before bagging in pliofilm. Please bear in mind that humidity in Japan may be about 50% higher than here, and as all things are in equilibrium with the surrounding atmosphere, which means things are full of moisture and have to come out when they arrive here. If they are in a moisture proof bag such as pliofilm, the moisture remains in the bag and from one doll, I would say $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ teaspoon of water can come out. If you don't have to, to avoid trouble, don't put in pliofilm bags.

Well, we are just as happy as you are in receiving your letters. I don't know why they come in bunches, but thanks for writing. It does take a lot of time to write, I know. With so many interruptions, I find that it takes me ages to write to you. I always end up doing it at the end of the day after everyone goes home.

I'm so glad your leg is better. You had us worried for awhile. Hope it improves.

As I said yesterday, a few samples arrived from Kato and Hashimoto. So far, that's all.

DEAREST HENRI, Martha went out for a while, so I am continuing on the paper at her machine. Pon-pon Amma came with 2 pcs Kimono doll of larger size. Hideous, isn't it? Why the sawed off kimono? Imitation of a strip tease? Aki laughed disdainfully. She said you have talent for finding odd things J. wouldn't be able to find. How come only happi, no clothes on? Today is last day of Mr. Nagata's visit in SF before LA, then back to Kobe where he says he will see you. I got my usual period, only I poured, and had an accident at the office, so I had Jim go in my stead, picked him up at Sumitomo, take him to lunch, show him our warehouse, and take him back to hotel for 3:30 air port ride by friend. Got him a Danish chair via Sven Wohlert, 29.50 less 40% plus tax. K Line to ship it free to him. Gave Jim Ten Dollars told him I expect change.

Re: J. center for SF if J's imp. interests give backing, that will be great. But we need some unified names on a roster here. At the luncheon for Housing the other day, Morse Erskine told me his man, Mr. Tully, was exp. in organizing surveys and reports for such enterprises and will help gratis as his boss, Erskine, will make him. Then the men with the know-how will have to be hired or gotten and money backed. The GREATEST ENEMY OF IDEAS IN HOUSING IS TIME. This was emphasized by all the speakers worth a darn. Three years ago, some project cost-----\$ now, it is 25% more, etc. Ideas die by the roadside when there isn't the know-how to go after capital, finagle the legal problems, get on the inside politically, and snag the sites, etc.

I met a homely quiet girl there at the meeting who took the same cable car with me. Turned out she works in Redevelopment or in the city hall or the city permits dept or something and went. She listened to my idea of J. development on the street car & my dismay and disappointment re: highest bidder getting land in new area. She went into the law and phoned me after 3 tries, got me, and told me I could have copy of law that says any group acting for public interest can buy this land with public hearing, but not subject to public bidding. So there has to be organization.

Well, the greatest enemy being time, and with each season and year or month hoisting prices skyward the real estate around Amthor and Post and Geary around Polk, Van Ness is zooming even after we talked about it, bec. the hotel is taking shape on Van Ness, Post, Franklin, Geary. I cruised the area and think there are a few good pieces....the price is about \$75,000, for the place next to Amthor that houses the candy factory back to the alley. The antique store goes back to the alley and is about \$50,000, for a two story affair. I really think TTCO should think in terms of its own neck & future. Well, M just came back from errand I sent her, Gift Show office, treated cordially, shown next Show space assignment, revealed who goes where. Otagiri taking 8 spaces, each space 10x10. All others taking 4 spaces each. We're taking 2?

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This is Martha again.

Just got back from the merchandise mart where I looked over the floor plan of the SF Gift Show. Our booth will be changed because this year it will be at the Mall Hall, and everyone will get a new space assignment. I asked the man to move the other Chinese and Japanese importers away from us because we don't want to be too close. We got the same sort of end booth between isles as before, but I told him I didn't like Royal Cathay and The Orient to be so close and he said he would move them. Otagiri has eight spaces, four on either side of an isle.

Just got lacquer sigrette box samples from Suzuzen in all three colors. The red matches quite well, the white is slightly creamier in color than the lighters. If you plan to buy the boxes for wholesale, it means that you should order enough matching lighters in larger numbers to anticipate the sale of the sets, especially for the fall gift shows. The sets are nice Christmas gifts. I hope they will be very careful with the lacquer work on the boxes. As they are so plain, every flaw will show, and there were some poor spots and blisters on the samples. The white is especially bad. The color underneath shouldn't show through.

Nanri just sent more samples of mats. $70\frac{1}{2}\phi$ /dz. mats are new, look like plaid, and ~~82~~ 82 ϕ mats in G-17 weight which look familiar. They sent similar ones before you left. The $70\frac{1}{2}\phi$ mats are G-22 weight. They are not too bad, but I guess you saw them already at Nanri.

Asked Betty Soderstrom for prices of linen table cloths. She says American made linen table cloths:

52 X 52 \$3.50

52 X 72 4.25

52 X 90 5.25

52 X 90 7.00

These prices are probably wholesale and not boxed individually. She says these prices are higher than imported sets from Belgium or Ireland. She will check further into prices next week and let us know.

Every day we get phone calls on the large parasols, 72" and we are swamped with orders which we can't fill. Hope we get lots and soon. Our colors are so good, and we will sell all we can get if we get them in time. You might think about re-ordering more. The turquoise, persimmon and lime/green all sold well in all patterns. Of course all the colors were very good and the character ones were very popular too. We are down to our last doz.

On the raw silk coolie coats, we note that you asked for samples in the striped noil, but when and if you order, can't we get them in the solid colors like the kimonos? I think they would look better than the stripes, no?

Jim says the zabuton covers with tassels will be 45% duty. He asked the appraisers. The tassels should be made in Japan even if they are to be attached here, to save our labor costs. We haven't received the samples from Kamei so we really can't pass much comments on them.

Glad you ordered the noil kimonos.

We are all out of the white-square fish nets. ~~Please order more.~~ Unopened cases (50 pc each) at the moment: 150 pc. XFN round white, 250 pc. XFN round black none in ~~new~~ square white and square black. I've asked Jim to order the square ones and a few round white to play safe, so he will order direct and if you don't want it, you can change it when you get there. I asked him for 200 pieces of each in the square and 100 pieces of the white round. The orders for them are not too many, but as we have them in the brochure, etc., we should keep some in stock, don't you think? If you are thinking of new shapes, etc., maybe they can be narrower in diameter and longer in length with a few more hoops, alternately larger and smaller rings to make it interesting.



Thanks for the photographs of the salad bowls. They are very nice. Hope you can iron out the difficulties and get them. They should retail about \$10. to \$12.00. Jack said so. He says there are plenty of good ones at higher prices on the market. I keep looking whenever I can for them, but find that they are either very cheap looking cherrywood ones at less than \$5.00 or very expensive hand-turned ones at high prices, \$15.00 up to \$50.00. The shapes are all very good, although we can't tell the (in picture) sizes too well. Large ones can be as high as \$20.00, but of course you won't sell too many at that price. The lighters are not so good and you better not try any. There is too much competition and not worth the bother. Other items such as candle holders, of all wood will be better. It's too bad about ~~the~~ Aomine. He has to wake up or he won't get anywhere. All the shapes of bowls in the pictures you sent are available here, and there are many more, in fact. The Danish are way ahead as far as designs, and there are plenty of Americans too who make each piece one at a time and sell them for \$15.00 and up in nice woods like prima vera, like mine that you have seen. So you can tell them to get off their high horse or they won't be able to sell anything. Their workmanship is so unreliable that the price has to be lower. Although Danish salad bowls are very expensive, each one is perfect. The duty is the same whether they are seconds or firsts.

Jack just came in and said he saw Roger Barber today and said he was in a grouchy mood. Jack says he would like the old PGW gift wrap paper again to go with the ribbon, and says the paper should be rolled rather than folded. Well, if you can possibly get it rolled there, it would be wonderful. That's the best paper, after all. Printed paper is hard to find, and if the designs are not very good, or too busy, and won't go with the ribbon, it's no good. There are so many nice papers in this country. Instead of taking up lots of time with finding good printed paper, can you get the same PGW paper and spend the time finding ways and means of getting it rolled? Between the paper and the ribbon, it really should sell well. Jack says Otagiri copied our G-22 mats now. Isn't that terrible? I think he sells his G-20 and 22 at \$15.00/gross and less on quantity.

I had Jim order 400 doz. EB-2 today to save time. As soon as you get back, we can work on re-orders for all the sizes. The next size we will run out of will be EB-1. We still seem to have plenty of storks. We sold the first shipment, but we still have two other shipments untouched. People seem to like the doves better, for some reason. Jack says Trade Fair went to the dove maker and bought. He says dove maker thought the recent floods in California caused so many deaths that Takahashi is selling so many for the funerals! So the floods must have been very bad.

What a busy day. Business must be picking up again. Everyone in a rush to get things. Our G-10 fans haven't come yet and I'm wondering what happened. I wish they would ship the old colors, especially the green and purple right away. Will you see them?

We think the feather shuttle cocks are not that sensational, to put it mildly. We asked them not to use the polka dots, and to use softer colors as well. Wish you would order the paper balls again. I remember you said you wanted to quit because it's so cheap, but some things you ordered are just as cheap and not as nice. Please.

The stationary sounds good. It's hard for us to imagine many of the things you ordered because we haven't received the samples. If they don't come soon, you will be back before they get here. Jack wants to sell the Pon-pon anma. He thinks Nut Tree will buy. Tro Harper already has them from Nonaka. Tro Harper also wants small Japanese scissors. I guess Tami already told you.

Magnin's ordered 3 doz. zabuton. They want doz. for LA, Palo Alto, and Seattle stores. They are having this Far East Festival in all their stores, apparently and also wants the 72" umbrellas!, which we can't supply. The cotton people called today that their strike is over, thank goodness, and luckily we haven't been short since you left so we are getting the zabuton done.

Well it's late so I'll write again tomorrow. martha