

Tokyo Oct. 12, 1955

The typhoon by-passed Tokyo and we got only the accompanying rains and only water damage, instead of rain/wind damage was incurred..... but this has delayed boats, and yesterday, the day of the scheduled typhoon, was all-day to no avail, all appts. having been cancelled.

Schools and colleges, some offices, were closed, trees fell, streets inundated, and I ordered my lunch brought in early, or I may not have had it delivered, because around 12-2 pm it was really bad.

Today, you'd never know it was so bad yesterday, for the streets are dry, and we have azayaka-na-Aki-bare. Gee, this ought to make Jim homesick.....

From Hamamatsu, leaving in the early morning hours, a 36" hand printer came with Yukata samples of 12yds. each 4 colors made up for Gantner's. He came accompanied by Kamei's Mr. Hiramine who is in charge of US exports, an asst. Mr. Isobe, and maker, Mr. Yazawa who does high quality work.

KAMEI CO. ....can do highest quality work after the manner of Wa-Vel's and Madam Butterfly, for Mrs. Martin of Bullock's Wilshire, I. Magnin, etc. trade. I think in order to do work with better class merchandise we just have to get such persons whose experience warrant mutual trust in export.....good craftsmanship, sincere attitude, interest in us, desire to produce quality goods. Kamei is sending 2 samples with offer. You can see the short jacket as well as long Ch. thing is made nicely. Can change to any style, proportion or length. Colors: any variety. Design: any thing we have in SF or reproduce anything we see in Japan. (out of season, can't find anything on market, have to ask to see dyers sample cuts of 27 inch lengths such as we have in SF) Every dyer has hundreds, and can't begin to select a 20-30 sheet cutting group that is usually bound together across the top with thread such as our samples from Bigham some years ago. They are as good a selection as any..... most Tokyo dyers make more modern designs many being abstract..... but Maru-taka brand people who dye for Kamei & Co. dye for the Kyoto geisha market and their designs may have more appeal to me...they'll send out some by mail to us to look at, cut off (remove) ones we like.

FORTUNE MAGAZINE mail weigher.....let it go for a while...I think I can find it, and think I know where it is....it was with the things I didn't pack the morning I left, for I had it in my black calf handbag all summer from Show to Show.

MELVA DOREZ.....didn't understand why you sent her two jackets.... what am I supposed to do with it? Copy it for size? Just said in your letter you were sending them, but for why? Are they supposed to be what a hit number looks like, or am I suppose to produce something here by the paper pattern? I've looked at them daily and see so many things wrong with them both that I don't know why you sent them. Am I supposed to do something like that? Is that the result of your conferences with Melva and her enthusiasm? What patterns of yukata am I supposed to select? Is that the "designing" she did for us? I've shown them to several makers, and they don't react wither, neither do anyone else. They sag, bag, and drag. (but maybe I'm blind to their merits. Did they sell? If so, to what extent? What do you see that's so good? Please tell me. I want to do what you want me to do.

Re: SHOJI MAKER I have had two meetings with Mr. Iwai and can report to you the following:

The Tokyo Tategu (door, screen, shoji) Association president is usually a top flight manufacturer. The managing director does the actual running of the organization, and is a Tsuruoka Eizo who guarantees and sponsors a man, Mr. Sakurai.

Sakurai is a designer, cabinet maker, carpenter, finisher, furniture maker and designer, shoji fitter. Highly skilled, in fine health, 26 yrs old, no family, non-drinker, sometime-smoker, good morals, very few words, no parents, (dead in war), no brothers and sisters? and few relatives. Has unparalleled personal situation where he is absolutely unattached and owes no obligations to others. Then, too it is said he has no known bad habits and is a good worker. Not prone to much talking, but will do the work, and can work on machine ~~top~~ production as well as hand tools.

I'm to meet him today at three. Mr. Iwai is taking time out to arrange to be with us, too. He's busy as three men, but he came to see me yesterday afternoon to arrange this meeting, and says I should see him two to three times before I commit myself or talk about money arrangements bec. I am a to-be employer—perhaps, and must keep my distance, my level, and my position above him and not let approach be too easy. He prompted me in this in a most fatherly way. Mr Iwai is a tall, gentle, fatherly and most understanding high type gentleman representing Japan's finest., I think. Got there the hard way by working since early childhood in a fatherless family of many children, and helped his mother achieve leisurely living in her last years through his own success, has lots of relatives and cousins in his business as well as in-laws and has helped them all.

Go back to this Sakurai, most tategu men get Y12,000 to Y15,000 mo. in Tokyo less elsewhere. Tops among 450 workers in Iwai's own plant gets Y47,000 but he is probably the top paid man in his field in Japan. His take-home pay is therefore Y35,000 since there is a tax for income. He does piece work. More later. 5:30 pm

Back now from 2 places. One, saw plant making screens of Obi material and also of shike-silk with sumi painting done on it, and regular silk with colored pastel scenes, also gold screens done for about \$30 of four panels approx. 24" x 6 ft. and bound in black, with brocade mounting of about 2 inches around the border. Ten artists produce anything you want painted or reproduced. Terrific to see. Like the gold screen produced by Gene Fowler? of Anaheim Kay Asari knows, in showrooms of Carolyn Kelsey or whoever, in Maiden Lane. How about it for export to us? Mr. Iwai suggested it, accompanied us, K-chan can make further connections. Owner in business for 40 yrs, knows Mr. Iwai, after speaking to him, found out he was Yamanashi man, & he told me to drop by before I left, and he'd present me with anything I wanted for Omiyage.....poor guy, I would never hold him to it...for he was very impressed by our visit and arrival on chauffeured car acc. by Mr. Iwai himself.

IWAI KOGYO KK is a one-man owned company and directed by relatives and is the largest and therefore most important Tategu maker in Japan. It furnished doors, etc for every large bldg & skyscraper in

not Sakurai

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NO \$60 lowered

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Japan, all ships, trains, anything that has doors, and does tables, furniture like chairs, etc. It is a terrific outfit. Mr. Iwai goes to work at 6:45 every morning, and the plant starts its wheels working at 7:30. Jiro Iwai, his 24-5 yr. old son is going to Dartmouth College and leaves for the States the 15th arr. SF Prez. Cleveland 27th 1:00 pm Please meet, if I'm not there by then....which I DOUBT THE WAY THING S ARE GOING NOW. Though I'll try.

Two, about Sakurai. Name: Takeji Sakurai from Miyagi Ken, now working at firm name: Hashimoto (highest quality workmanship in Tokyo area), age 24 yrs. Has mother, 4 brothers and sisters in Japan, all married. Is first class cabinet maker, can work any tool or machine, one yr. training on machine work after full training on hand work. Owns full set tools for all kinds work, can do about ten pcs. kumiko screen work in 1½ days, Snowflake or diamond shaped pattern, sample workmanship going to US via Jiro Iwai's baggage. Can do all kinds door or shoji making plain or fancy, furniture making, knows woods, finishing, etc.

Height: about 5 ft. light complected, weight about 120 lbs. well behaved, had on a dark, shibui tie, neatly dressed, acts well self-controlled, is not so shy but is responsive satisfactorily with opinions to direct answers instead of the typical yes or no, which I like. Asked *Sendai* him if he knew about Abe Masajiro's work...we have their kumiko designs in album in SF....said he thought they were yuumei, and finest work in that area. Tiny fellow, but probably very loyal and sincere.

My recommendation: get him over, have him around instead of the Cadillac Henri wants...they're both deductible.....He'll slay the Jackson Sq. boys....we'll have a gem in him. Compared to the other man I interviewed last spring, this one is terrific. A nice, good boy. Mr. Iwai likes him, too, and if this boy is OK after one or two talks, I think I would like to get the papers going on him at the Am. Embassy for visa because he may take some time to go through screening, et c. They tell me...Mr. Tsuruoka who is sponsoring him (the biggest shot in the wood-working industry) says he is abs. reliable as to labor relations and political leanings. Everyone is afraid of communist leanings and labor strikes here, and this is one of the first things they speak to me about. I'm enclosing the recommendaton letter from Mr. Tsuruoka, mg. director of Tategu kumiai, and the actual person's photo and history.

Mr. Iwai recommends us to them in return, and acts as go-between. Sakurai acts like a real conscientious fellow, and after I get to know him by having him come over once or twice for after work sessions, I can report t again. I think if he can put together several screens more per day than any two men, then it's worth having him around as an adjunct, don't you think? He can spray, do screens, and lamps too. Also make furniture, etc, what more? I'll ask him if he can make tansu out of US wood so it won't warp. Tell me what else I should get from him. Even if screens have slowed we can still keep an all-around *m*an and dismiss others if this one man can do everything but order materials. His performnce is OK, I think. More later.

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