

October 28, 1955

Hello,

Thanks so much for the soup... such a lot of it, and all my favorites.

You must have gone through a lot to get them on board the JAL and to think you worried so much for me... I'm so sorry.

I had fever badly for two days or so, but it came down rapidly and I was able to do work a little from my bed sometimes, and direct the work being done for me by others. At no time at all did I suffer from lack of constant care, day or night, so please don't worry. My doctor was Dr. Kimura of Berkeley who came to the hotel. I never moved out of my room. I had all the ice I needed, and (anything hot) or cold I wanted. I had lots of juices and everything in the way of medications. I recovered rapidly and I've been working steadily since without discomfort.

Kat-chan saw to it all.

This morning I saw Kuroda. He came to Tokyo on his regular twice mo. visit on business and stays at the Nisshokan ever since he visited me here. I told him re: competition on trays, shipping weight difficulties, finish being too poor and smears, blurs, doubled designs, (messiness. Sets not matching in color, price higher to us than Kessler, horse ugly, etc. Reply: L/C expiry date too close, so hurry work and craftsmen horsewhipped at top speed resulting in poorer work; mismatching of sets actually not so, the varnish finish is put on three times on big tray to give it extra servcibility, while small tray gets two usual coats; TFCO trays get extra attention such as coating of black on wrong side; price guaranteed abs. not higher than Kessler's... that the Chi. firm selling cheaper (It told him about Chi. Show competition on old grey designs of native men and seahorses, etc selling at much cheaper) source is Kuroda's competitio's in Nagoya who makes cheaper and lighter weight trays of inferior work and more breakable, chips, etc. The BODIES are made of cheaper composition. If horse ugly, not the Urushibara reproduction, it is poss. that PDG's or China Dru Goods trays got mixed in bec. both being done same time, but ours are supposed to be not hand-painted but decals, from the prints. Re: 7" square net trays, they say they are stocked for us esp. made to our order and won't we please take, next year's order please to give early in plentiful time, for this yr's came at the tail end of their full-up period of order taking, and squeezed in our work, which they want to devote more attention to. Which designs will be continued, which discontinued, what added, please inform, and let them start in on next batch production bec. they are free now to do so.

Next. appt. was handled by K-zhan who meantime was arranging ship sailing passenger privilege on cheapest freighter for Chie Miyagi whose visa was OK'd this AM. Next appt. was the hardware maker who delivered Bill Little's special order of hardware for his sea chest, whose hdw. I'd like to see pushed more by us in the States bec. I know Hirano's is the only other ones available, and look at the demand... why be secretive about our stocks? we can stock the cheaper ones, not one made like jewelry, but handsome ones that are within reason, yet handmade, and available in quantity. My next appt. is man (friend of Sumio Kawasaki of J. Trade Center SF) who wants to buy LP records from us, & I can serve him thru Jerry Prager of from Westminster direct. Jerry sent me complete catalog just before I left SF. Now phone rang, advised of your incoming call in 30 minutes. Appt after LP man is silk weaver. I bought HANAO yesterday

*Weak finish
L/C expiry date*

What demand?

20 minutes. About 10:30 PM when I still was... I don't know
just before I left 2B. Now phone lines, scattered of local incoming call in
jelly filter of flow westminster direct. jelly sent me complete copy of
center 2B) who wants to pay 100 dollars from us, & I can sell the film
in downtown. My next step. Is when (friend of Jim's) KAWASAKI of 1. Place
in bright colors to fill order to coordinate with the yukata and it all
looks very beautiful. Stock the sweater ones, not one more like jewelry.

Handwritten notes:
3/27/55
3/28/55

Re: Kow Kaneko's things, so far as I know they don't pass inspection &
can't be shipped for export & lay in warehouses bec. of export standards.
This makes us think carefully what of the native things pass regulations
on standards for export especially in the textile field where inspection
is very rigid.

I was awfully happy to see our lacq. fans, bowls, etc used for publicity
for Tours de Decors, clipping of which was sent me in Karen's letter.

I guess Kow Kaneko will go ahead and make Japan inspired fashions out of
US goods, some of which have J. flavor. Oct 29th 1955

10:30 AM Saturday just 1 1/2 hrs. after the telephone call. It was very
nice hearing your voice on the phone, and will be encouraged to do lots
of work newly inspired. I will contact personally some apron makers from
Tokyo and see if they will do work here that I can personally supervise;
carry on by K-chan, designed by me. You have the shell and lobster pattern
stencils in brown paper I referred to in previous letter... these sent to me
in Tokyo would prove very good reference to compose new apron designs.... or
do them up in SF by using stencil and thin poster paint or thinned coloring
and brush onto paper and send me.... lots of dyers in Tokyo, can do for
aprox. same price as Osaka, I think.

Next, send me Melva's new ideas by air. Tell me exactly what you want me
to do with them, & I'll do it.

Striped HANTEN of ALL-COTTON, can work on for Spring. new stripes. SEE EN*
CLOSED ARTICLE: "McGregor Sportswear introduced David Donegar (?)'s designs to
press, designed in US by William Donegar (?) 1956; sport shirts, sport coats,
swim suits, beach wear, shorts, slacks, influenced by India, Japan, Thai,
in fabric, color, feeling, emblems, but J. influenced most pronounced. Bright
red hanten most striking. Dyed on back and neckband front "Uo-gashi" Fish Vendor
Also light blue Hanten of design similar to fireman's coat design stripes
across shoulder and hem, with "Kesu" emblem on back (Extinguish) Easyfit,
and some have terry-cloth lining to act as absorbent toweling for swim suit
wrapper coat, after getting out of water. (Like Melva's) Also brief shorts
named FUNDOSHI introduced. J. Names are being used in fashions in such ways."
Foregoing my translation in brief for your benefit. If Jim reads aloud you
will get more out of it, after reading this translation first.

APRON... any color available, will go investigate fabrics bec. effect depends
upon quality of goods the appearance of apron resulting from dye, but aprox.
Y70-90.00 /pc ex-factory, low quality. Will compare with actual sample from
Soh in Osaka by requesting actual sample by mail from Soh and taking same to
Tokyo makers & let Hagiwara ship, so I can work on design.

Re: HANTEN... by phone just learned striped goods all available from Hamamatsu
in Shizuoka, and since source is small, everything about demand becomes known.
But almost everything there is sufu or comb. of sufu. If we don't like what
they supply & want to get all-cotton, we have to take the striped design sample
to Ome outside of Tokyo 2 hrs by electric train, a suburb, and have same woven.

Re: Sakurai, wood worker... sample taken by Jiro Iwai is his beginning attempts
can do better now, can make steak knife boxes, sugi boxes, anything right there.

October 29, 1955

Young Sakurai demands no stipulated salary, wishes only to introduce his craftsmanship to US and to observe and learn there and come back to Japan to contribute over here eventually.

how fast?

He is quiet, and is not an agitator, gets along with K-chan who will eventually also need to be trained in US to be of better use to us, and you will find him a willing and good worker. I'll see him again for an hour or so Nov. 1st from 10 AM - noon while I do my phoning, and seeing other makers or making other appts by phone, and he'll hang around while the activities are going on so he can observe me, and me him, and get acquainted. He has been called the Hidari Jingoro of modern Japan by Mr. Iwai so he is considered a genius of wood working. He looked at the steak knife boxes and said he could do it, it was simple, and finish is easy, etc. We went to lacquerware and wood exhibit last week and K took notes on how to do the finish of burned effect by chemicals to do quantity, and the young man knew all about it. It was the first outdoor venture of my convalescent days. I had a fever that was mysterious, but am now OK. I was glad to hear your voice and that of Pinkie's.

Mr. Iwai was so amazed that he should have been here when Jiro was on the other end of the wire he will never get over the delight. He is happy to have Jiro make his own decisions as to where he wants to spend his time as long as it is beneficial to himself, and if bec. of weather or study purpose SF is better, he'd better stay around there he says.

Mr. Iwai brought over last week the most amazing get-well present! a Nagasaki style kasutera in such tremendous proportions in such a huge deep sugi-wood box....beautiful. Am cutting it up and serving it carefully to guests as they come to talk business, and have made at least fifteen servings of it already, and have $\frac{1}{2}$ of it left yet. Lunch, time out.

Had a bowl of cold Chinese noodles sent in for forty cents. Had stuff on top like pork, eggs, etc. Had tea, and am back at this typewriter so I can send it by deadline this pm. Last night had chicken-noodle soup to supplement my otherwise J. dinner, and enjoyed it very much. Appreciate the thoughtfulness and trouble you went to sending so many of them.

Sending samples of work I intended to take back with me...please criticise and will correct from this end while here. Can stay until about 15th I guess...then you'll be needing me.

Re: Jiro Iwai's \$1,000 his father says he has told Jiro that the money is for emergency and that we should keep it for him and dole it out if he should need it, and he shouldn't have it in fear of hold-ups.

Next time I come to Japan, I will bring insect repellent...mosquitos are still out...it rains so often. It rained all day yesterday & today it was sunny and hot. Tomorrow it is predicted over the radio it will be 50F in the morning which is cold, bec. damp. Tonight Chie Miyagi will drop over and we timed her visit to coincide with Kassai-san, Jiro's friend, who is going to study while staying with relatives...Pasadena Junior College? in Feb....so everybody is going to the States, & it is a lonely soul who hasn't it to look forward to. I have tentative order for records (LP & tape) to sell in Japan, amounting in first order to about \$100 and it will grow.

Will write you more tomorrow, hoping that tonight you will be writing me re: Sakurai, the woodworker; Melva's styles; if OK to start work on all-cotton stripes for hanten, etc. Tell me if I can go ahead to print new match labels like cotton prints I sent....or of wood block prints from cards I mail today.

four

Sat. Oct. 29-55

Re: YASUDA ..chinaware...Nagoya...Mr. Torii, Mgr, wrote saying they are willing to make right and pay shipping costs, duty, and cost fob of all Mishima arrived in SF in broken condition, so please report loss in terms of number loss, in breakage, item number, and total cost, weight in freight, amt of duty. They want to make it right. Also they want L/C on the tokusa design bowls & dishes in their warehouse with their money tied up in it, and will repack them so they will not arrive in the same sad condition as previous packing on Mishima which they regret...their own men did it in their warehouse but without supervision and they are sorry and are ready to make amends bec. they want our business for continued trade in future. I know you are busy and haven't the time to do this inventory but maybe you can get Jiro to go to work and help do this? His father suggests he help around the retail store, do wrapping, etc wherever he is useful. But he is not used to hard work or heavy work as I see him, he is a little on the fancy side, so he can't do heavy work, but can take inventory or check on broken pieces of Mishima, I am sure. He really should enroll in orientation classes for adult foreigners English...he understands almost everything but lacks the familiarity to use the conversation himself.

Too late for max & heavily for Japan

Next week I think I can send you several pcs. silk/rayon (chief value silk for duty purposes) pajamas, kimonos, sleep coats, short bed jackets. White, and available colors will be from color card.

Fans: shipping samples, bec. my return is delayed. Each firm quotes diff. about 22¢/pc fob ~~silk~~ 9".... 13¢ fob in paper 9"...very good grade. Each firm puts diff quality. Please communicate directly with K re: this. No commission req. when he ships. Silk fans, 9" fob 24¢ tops for best quality. If we contact Kanoh Sesuten, Nagoya, they can do cheaper...sample was apparently Kanoh's...Ibasen Fan Co. Tokyo does better work, is higher as quoted above. Diff. very little, quality as well as price, but the workmanship with the materials on the Tokyo items is much better in most all things, fans incl.

FAN EARRINGS.....Never had so much trouble with anything as this item which I wanted so badly. Please order from Kyoto Bito at once, tell them to send by parcel post or whatever is fastest, and handle your own way, for Soh in Kansai and we in Tokyo can't do any better in price. Kyoto Bito offered me fan earrings 20¢ and no one here can do better FOB bec. they're made in Kyoto. Kyoto Bito is well situated socially, financially, etc and can do things. Recommend you order direct. immediately. Meantime, since production is lmt. to 200 prs kiri-boxed monthly, I ordered 500 prs; shipping 200/month @ 20¢ fob.

Do not remember

Re: Sample of silk shike-silk dark brown desk-type memo with pencil copied from Takumi's retail Y180 (incl. 25% markup fr whsle) which Kchan quoted at Y80 ex factory, about Y88 fob, is it not acceptable? Post cards, etc were never acknowledged, and sample shippers are almost without exception complaining of Takahashi's lack of response. AS I said when I left, also when I got back to SF last summer, PLEASE PRINT POST CARDS WITH SPACES TO FILL IN: item recvd, acceptable or not, why, don't like price, color, quality, workmanship, style, shape, or etc, write it onto a mimeographed post card or 3x5 in. file card and send by seemail, even, but just let them know to encourage them to keep making samples.....they have plenty of work without ours, these hand craftsmen of the type our particular firm deals with, and we can't alienate them, for they eventually get to know each other one way or another and hear of our firm. They quit all other work while they make a sample, and we don't tell them we got it or not, & it makes it very difficult to come to Japan again to face them, bec. they say what are you here for. Nanri picks up samples that are submitted to them for sale and asked to ship to possibilities among their import contacts, so their position is directly opposite many times...but then you will see the same samples submitted to our competition. We are designing and then don't react, it's a bad position. Also, can we

25-29 Oct. 55

Re: YASUDA... Mr. Torii, Mr. wrote saying they're willing to make right and pay shipping costs, duty, and cost of all missing arrived in SF in broken condition, so please report loss in terms of number lost in issue or L/C a little farther in advance? When there is insufficient time allowance, hurried making results, if it rains, they burn charcoal and the soot flies and results are not clean, cost of sumi is high, (charcoal) results are not good and everyone is unhappy even at this extra effort to please.

Almost noone starts to make anything on order, until the money is on the line. The economy of Japan is not like that in US, and money doesn't circulate as well, and gathers high rate of interest per month. Workers have to be paid with cash, materials are bought by cash, so it is difficult with the type of work we want and the type of makers we are dealing with.

Re: HATTAN SILK SCARVES WHICH WE CALL ASCOTS, CALLED MUFFLERS IN JAPAN... if you do not want them to continue making 1,200 pcs ~~per month~~ to be shipped November 15th and another 1,200 pcs end of November or first of December, you had better cancel imm. by wire through Hashimoto... because I think they are too late in arrival, being one month late in initial shipment going out, bec. we had to finance the buying of the thread and dyeing, and they didn't budge until we did so, and K had to write us back and forth, etc and there was this loss of time. We have now found bigger maker who has own dye plant, dyes for others, has 36 hammock type looms against only two of our first maker's, and is recommended by the Nozawa family to me this springtime but whom we could not make proper connection and did not do business, bec. we did not meet. Now he came to Tokyo, I saw that our original mpls bought at Miyai Auroshiki wholesalers were mostly supplied by this man, Mr. Koyama, and what it all amounted to was that TTCO had Osano, our first maker copy Mr. Koyama's samples I picked up in Kyoto. Now the original maker is found, he is bigger and better, requires no advance money, will do smaller lots of any color, will dye to order, will do any quantity, is ~~per~~ priced at ex factory Y135 with same kind of threads or better, with better quality rolled hem, as against our first maker, Osano, who wants 5% more per scarf now, since we are more exacting about the quality of the rolled hem which costs him more than he originally figured. Koyama, on the other hand, has a group of war widows who can do this, and does it for scarves made in Fukui Ken and finished in Yamanashi and shipped out of Yokohama for export to US.

Since brighter colors are desirable to ship for spring and summer and since the designs of only the best winter colors ought to be repeated for spring, we can use this chance to change makers, bec. Osano is too much headache. Boy, wish you people could all come here to see the situation... close to 90 million people and in 15 yrs they will not be any more room, they say. All in territory smaller than California. This is a real problem of tremendous proportions and opportunity for making a living is almost nonexistent for lots of people, jobs are scarce, and living precrious, and life is all mixed up with desires, ambitions, hopes, dreams, but mostly frustrations. Everywhere, in comparison to America, the economy is at a new low. Well, so much for this moaning... am going to mail this, and see a dyer of aprons with some ideas for color. Will report....

Love, et

Will have some time

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