

October 14, 1955

Dearest Tommie,

We've been busy every day since you left here for Japan three weeks ago today. How time passes. We have shipped out approximately \$24,000 this month so far, up to the 13th, and the week since you left (last wk of Sept) we shipped out about \$15,000. Altogether, we have sent out about \$40,000 since you left for Japan. We have to do an awful lot of shipping to send out that much.

And that is the reason we are in dire need of more merchandise. We are at present out of stock of steak knives, hanten, medallion kimonos, brooms, matches (shipments due to arrive in a week or ten days) judo coats, fireman's jackets (should be in in ten days) guest books, lacuer coaster sets (network) and LT-11 R lacquer trays.

I have noticed, after analyzing our shipments, that anytime we have hanten, calendars, steak knives and kimonos going out our total gross shipments are very good (in dollars and cents, I mean). But when we are shipping potteries and small paper mache trays our shipments are big and hard to pack and very poor dollarwise. More people also spend more energy and time packing the latter and we get very poor results. So, Tommie, next year we must watch our purchases and buy items which is easy to pack and ship--with minimum of effort and maximum of volume. Items such as garments and knives are good because they are easy to pack and ship. It is easy to pack and ship a thousand dollars of steak knives with only two inexperienced packers. Joe is sick and has been sick for two days, and both Wayne and Shig are doing just that, because our shipments of steak knives and calendars just came in this week. The hardest and most tiring work day we ever had in the packing room was when the paper mache trays and Mishima potteries arrived. We were so busy opening the many cases and sending out the heavy shipments. And we only sent out \$22 dollars--and there were about seven of us busily helping, including myself. Thus is the trials and tribulations of a growing business.

Last month, September, we sold \$38,633.30. We have shipped out about \$26,000 including today this month. To date, we have sold \$179,885.51 for the first nine months. At the rate we are selling, we should reach our planned goal of \$300,000 for this year by Dec. 1st. Providing our merchandise holds out. Unfortunately our more expensive items are always running out (fortunately, perhaps?) and we are left with slow selling potteries and some toys so unless our hanten and scrolls and silk scarves and steak knives keep rolling in we may not reach our goal even though our sales are brisk. We have already sold the first 1000 hanten we bought from Nanri, 500 in the summer and 500 which arrived the first part of this month. That is \$4000, Tommie. We can sell another 1000 hanten by Xmas. So please get more soon. Steak knives are selling like hot cakes once again. And it looks like a great Xmas on knives once again. Despite Pacif Dry selling at \$18 doz box of 4. We sell to so many others in other areas that their knives are not affecting our sales.

Otagiri will be selling bar aprons soon. At \$12 doz with pockets. "ICHIBAN" on the pocket and "COOKSAN" on the bottom. Ken Hirose's idea sezhe. I don't know about pockets, but we should lower the boom on the price and sell at \$10.80 as we planned. Please buy more with dying on one side only. Should get them in before Xmas is over. Tell Soh to make more ~~staples~~ of "Kampai" aprons for us right away. 1000 more for Nov 10 shipment if possible. If you can get colors, try a few of the staples--like red, brown, grey, mustard. The more the merrier.

Mrs Iwai finally showed up here with her son. She is leaving for Japan Saturday and will be in Tokyo Monday. Am sending this letter to you via her.

Mrs Iwai purchased a TV 17" set, a GE vacuum cleaner, a GE toaster, and a projector for 35 mil slides. We are giving her our best prices, since we are able to purchase them wholesale. We are going to pack and ship for her later as unaccompanied baggage. She expects to take the toaster with her on the plane.

I am taking her to the airport tomorrow morning at 10 AM. I understand that Tak Kusano is also leaving on the same flight with the Shigeta tour. Perhaps he will be seeing you in Tokyo. He can bring back a lot of things for you, Tommie. If you are able to use his influence, don't hesitate. You are his number one customer, you know. We spend thousands a year with him. You can send us some of your special purchases thru Tak. Expensive and light items like silk kimono and the like. In this manner you can declare at very low values. But don't load him up with too many commercial items.

We are interested in the samples you are probably now assembling. Garments, if you are able to make and ship by Nov 10 can be sold right now. Kimonos and short hantens are always saleable.

If you feel that you must stay longer than the four or five weeks as you planned, let me know immediately. Pinkie and Norman are ~~is~~ fine and healthy. We all had a cold but we are all in good shape. Please be careful, darling, and take care of yourself. Don't try to work at a high pace this fall. Concentrate on higher priced goods (that retail at \$2 to \$10 each) instead of the low priced toys and novelties. I have come to the conclusion that a good \$4 wholesome item (hanten) sells just as fast as a good \$18 gross item (pencils). For example, we sell about \$2000 a month of grass mats. That's fine. But we make only about \$200. But we sell about \$2000 every time 500 hanten come in in the same time and we make \$1000. See my point? We sell equally fast on our steak knives at \$4 a box of 6 stainless. About 500 sets went out in the past three days. That's \$2000. No effort, no pain, no bother. In fact, had we contracted on such items for this fall we would have been shipping thousands of dollars with little effort and the minimum of office work. So easy to type one line (2 doz. XSK-DL6.....@ \$4 ea..\$48.00). Look at the labor saved in the office, from typing to posting and bookkeeping. About time we learn our lesson.

Takumi's salt/pepper sets are selling like hotcakes. Get them on the ball. Need more right away. Slimmer and taller. And mostly dark--75%--25%. Calendars are moving fast, surprisingly. Not selling in the stores, necessarily, but getting lots of fine reaction. Might be pretty good. Find out how many Takumi has made, but don't tell them about how good they are. We have told them that we'll be taking the rest of the 1000 (to make a total of 3000). There might be a possibility of selling more if business gifts houses sell them.

The cherry wood steak knives are very popular at this moment. We do not have the reaction of the dark ones as yet, for they are just now going out to the stores. But Gumps have just reordered 6 doz. old sets of 4 after just purchasing 100 sets a few weeks ago. Selling like hot cakes again.

Pencils are selling like mad. And so are pencil boxes, wrapping paper, hanten, calendars, steak knives, salt and pepper, matches in tin (and they are beautiful), hanten, iron monkeys, LT-11R, LCS (coasters) and some paper mache trays are just catching on. Reaction is fine, according to Jack M. Furoshiki are still selling. So are grass mats, of which we are practically out. So it seems that last year's purchase of steak knives, pencils, pencil boxes, matches, and grass mats are still very good this year. To these we can now add hanten, calendars, salt and peppers, matches in tin, iron monkeys and the paper mache trays. All the following are good dollar producers.

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One trouble with me is that I don't know when to stop writing. It is midnight already and I am only on the third page.

We are planning our big sale during the first week of November. We think we can manage the sale by ourselves, so you need not try to return by then. The store is plugging along at an average of about \$1500 to \$2000 a month, or very slow. So please do not purchase in large quantities for the store.

Jim went to Los Angeles Thursday and will be back Sunday. To try for his citizenship status. We footed his plane fare. He's helping quite a bit in the past few months.

We are now members of the Blue Cross. You are also covered even in Japan. If you are hospitalized, please keep all receipts. You will be reimbursed when you return. A comfortable thought, although I pray that you do not become ill at any time in the very near future. So please be careful. You have two children and a husband anxiously awaiting your return, you know.

The screen business is not too promising, Tommie. We sell on an average of about 40 to 60 screens a month. Hardly enough for two carpenters and too much for one. We have to sell at least 75 to 80 a month to make any money. Can we do this with an importation from Japan and with additional designs? We must think about this more carefully. Perhaps if we buy them ready made we will have less troubles. Get prices again on horizontal grids made along Japanese specifications of 18" by 8 1/2" and 24" x 8 1/2" and 36" x 8 1/2" once again--FOB Japan, please. Perhaps it is better that we import them in 300-panel lots instead of making them here in SF. We then need not pay for them for 60 days and we can try to sell them before we have to pay back the bank. The way we are presently operating, we must pay for the lumber and the fibreglas and the labor before we sell the screens and before we get our money back. If we import from Japan we may not use our money at all, Tommie. Our money won't be so tight, then. All we need is one man to spray and paste for us for all the screens we sell. Sounds very practical for me. Labor is such a big headache. Think it over. We can buy screen panels during the cold winter months when Japan is dry and crisp and cold and wonderful for woodenware. I am at present ~~thinking~~ thinking that having a man sent here will prove to be a big headache. We must clothe and feed him and be responsible for him. Suppose he gets sick? We must take all responsibilities, you know. Let us not get into any difficulties. Not just ~~for~~ now when we are just building our business. We can exist without screens, too, Tommie. Our business is big enough to go along without selling anymore screens and lamps. We have been losing in the manufacturing end for the past two years., although we have built up our reputation considerably in the same period, due to our screens. But we are now able to stand alone with our imports--which, in fact, have been holding up our manufacturing for these past two years.

Pacific Dry are now selling a pack of 6 matches for 25¢ retail (\$1.50 doz). East West owner confided to me and Jim that our 50¢ matches were selling faster despite the price difference. "More colorful", he said. Which is good news. Also, PDG sells only in Chinatown. Does not affect our sales. No competition. Their matches are not very nice--just like Orient's taste. Otagiri's horse matches due to hit the stores shortly. Will hear repercussions then, I believe. Will keep you posted. Our big ones are still king of the matches, as of this date.

It's way past my bedtime so will retire to Arguello now. Goodnight, dear. Rest easy this trip, Tommie, for we will earn more than we made last year. It should be in the neighborhood of 30,000 pesos. At this stage of the game this year we can't lose.

Mrs. Iwai was just here Saturday AM. I am now going to take her and her son to the airport. I am giving her this letter to take or mail to you. Love

WORKSHOP-LOG

DATE: 8/15/55

SECTION: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: J. MURAI

HRS SPENT		TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED	COMPLETED UNITS	MATERIAL	USED	REMARKS
FROM	TO					
8:30	10:00	PLAN COMPRESSOR JET UP				
10:10	12:00	CUT 1000 PAPER 55HT " SCREEN " 75HT FIT 1000 LAMP 5				
12:30	1:30	LAMP INSPECTION UA LAB				
1:30	3:00	HINGE SCREEN	1 (3 PANEL 18-84) 1/4 " 18-84)			
3:10	5:00	CUT SCREEN 45HT PANEL ASSEMBLR SCRRRN HINGE SCREEN				1 (3 PANEL 18-84)
TOTAL HOURS						BALANCE

REMARKS:

COMPLETED.  
1 3 PANEL SCREEN 18-84

WORKSHOP-LOG

DATE: Aug 15

SECTION: SPRAY

NAME: S. SUZUKI

HRS SPENT FROM	TO	TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED	COMPLETED UNITS	MATERIAL USED	REMARKS
8:30	10:00	(LARGE) CONSTRUCT LAMPS	8		
10:10	10:30	TOUCH UP SCREEN			
10:30	11:00	REPAIR COMPRESSOR			
11:00	12:00	CONSTRUCT LAMPS	5		
12:30	2:15	CONSTRUCT LAMPS	10		
2:15	2:45	TOUCH UP SCREEN			
2:45	3:00	SPRAY PANELS	2		Final (top)
3:10	4:45	SPRAY PANELS	13		Final (Top)
4:45	5:00	SPRAY PANELS	2		Final (bottom)
TOTAL HOURS					BALANCE
		1 6 panel LONG SCREEN			
		1 6 panel LARGE SCREEN			
		1 3 panel LARGE SCREEN			
		1 4 panel LARGE SCREEN			

REMARKS:

WORKSHOP-LOG

DATE: Aug. 16,

SECTION: Packing

NAME: Naomi Luna

HRS SPENT		TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED	COMPLETED	MATERIAL	USED	REMARKS
FROM	TO		UNITS			
8:30	10:00	Gift paper	50	rolls		
10:15	12:00	"	85	"		
12:30	3:00	"	98	"		
3:15	5:00	"	68	"		
			<u>301</u>			
TOTAL						
HOURS						BALANCE
		8 Wrapping paper				

REMARKS:

WORKSHOP-LOG

DATE: Aug 16

SECTION: Pasting

NAME: Ernest Wheeler

HRS SPENT		TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED	COMPLETED UNITS	MATERIAL	USED	REMARKS
FROM	TO					
8:30	10:00	gift paper				
10:15	12:00	gift paper		140 rolls		
12:30	3:00	pasting diben glass	20	1000	20	1st coat
3:15	5:00	pasting diben glass	15	Screen	15	1st coat
TOTAL HOURS			35 sheets			BALANCE
3 1/2		gift paper		rolled	140 rolls	
4 1/2		pasting diben glass				35 sheets

REMARKS:

WORKSHOP-LOG

DATE: 8/16/55

SECTION: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: I. MURALI

HRS SPENT		TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED	COMPLETED UNITS	MATERIAL	USED	REMARKS
FROM	TO					
8:30	9:00	CUT SCREEN PAPER	35HT			
9:00	10:00	ASSEMBLE SCREEN	3 PANEL			
10:00	12:00	HINGE R SCREEN	2 (3 PANEL)			
12:30	1:00	" "	1 (3 PANEL)			
1:30	3:00	ASSEMBLE SCREEN	6 PANEL			
3:00	5:00	CONNECT COMPRESSOR				
TOTAL HOURS						BALANCE

REMARKS:





WORKSHOP-LOG

DATE: Aug 16

SECTION: SCREEN & LAMP

NAME: TOM SAKATA

HRS SPENT		TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED	COMPLETED UNITS	MATERIAL	USED	REMARKS
FROM	TO					
8.30	10.00	ASSEMBLING LAMP				
		150 (MIDDLE)	5	COMPLETE		
		100 (SMALL)	3	"		
10.10	12.00	ASSEMBLING LAMP				
		1.000 (LARGE)	5	COMPLETE		
12.30	3.00	CONSTRUCTING SCREEN PANEL (MIDDLE)	7			BLACK
3.10	5.00	CONSTRUCTING SCREEN PANEL (MIDDLE)	3			
		MILL WOOD				
TOTAL HOURS						BALANCE
		ASSEMBLING LAMP COMPLETE				
		100 (SMALL)	3			
		150 (MIDDLE)	5			
		1.000 (LARGE)	5			
		CONSTRUCTING SCREEN PANEL (MIDDLE)	10			

REMARKS:

WORKSHOP-LOG

DATE: AUG 17

SECTION: LAMP & SCREEN

NAME: TOM SAKATA

HRS SPENT		TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED	COMPLETED UNITS	MATERIAL	USED	REMARKS
FROM	TO					
8.30	10.00	ASSEMBLING LAMP 500 (SMALL)	6			
10.10	12.00	CONSTRUCTING SCREEN PANEL H. (MIDDLE)				
12.30	3.00	CONSTRUCTING SCREEN PANEL (MIDDLE)	2			
		CONSTRUCTING SCREEN PANEL (LARGE)	3			
3.10	5.00	ASSEMBLING LAMP 1000 (LARGE) 500 (SMALL)	2 5			
TOTAL HOURS						BALANCE
		LAMP COMPLETE (SMALL)	11			
		(LARGE)	2			
		CONSTRUCTING SCREEN PANEL (LARGE)	3			
		(MIDDLE <del>(SMALL)</del> )	6			

REMARKS:

WORKSHOP-LOG

DATE: Aug 19,

SECTION: Packaging

NAME: Naomi Duma

HRS SPENT		TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED	COMPLETED UNITS	MATERIAL USED	REMARKS
FROM	TO				
8:30	10:00	Gift paper	60		
10:15	12:00	"	64		
12:30	3:00	"	100		
3:15	4:00	"	36		
			<u>260</u>		
TOTAL HOURS					BALANCE
	70	wrapping paper			

REMARKS:

WORKSHOP-LOG

DATE: Aug 19

SECTION: pastoring

NAME: Howard Whidden

HRS SPENT		TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED	COMPLETED UNITS	MATERIAL USED		REMARKS
FROM	TO					
8:30	10:00	pastoring 2 ibu glass	15	906	15	1st coat
10:15	12:00	pastoring 2 ibu glass	20	maple Bamboo	20	1st coat
12:30	3:00	pastoring 2 ibu glass	29	Hinks Clowd 1000	10 3	1st coat 2nd coat
3:15	5:00	pastoring 2 ibu glass	16	Bamboo Clowd maple		2nd coat
TOTAL HOURS			80	Spule		BALANCE
		8 pastoring 2 ibu glass			80	Spule

REMARKS:

WORKSHOP-LOG

DATE: Aug 29

SECTION: SCREEN & LAMP

NAME: TOM SAKATA

HRS SPENT		TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED	COMPLETED UNITS	MATERIAL	USED	REMARKS
FROM	TO					
8.30	10.00	ASSEMBLING SCREEN PANEL (LARGE)	5			BLACK
10.10	12.00	HINGE SCREEN PANEL (LARGE)	8			
12.30	3.00	HINGE SCREEN PANEL (LARGE)	8			
		MILL WOOD FOR NEW STORE SHELF				
3.10	5.00	FIT STORE ROOM SHELF WORK SHOP CLEANING				
TOTAL HOURS						BALANCE
		ASSEMBLING SCREEN PANEL (LARGE)	5			

REMARKS:







WORKSHOP-LOG

DATE: Aug. 22,

SECTION: packing

NAME: Harumi Iduna

HRS SPENT		TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED	COMPLETED UNITS	MATERIAL	USED	REMARKS
FROM	TO					
8:30	10:00	gift paper	50	rolls		
10:15	12:00	gift paper	69	"		
12:30	3:00	gift paper	101	"		
3:15	4:00	3:20-4:00 break				
4:00	5:00	gift paper	31	rolls		
			<u>251</u>			
TOTAL HOURS						BALANCE
8		wrapping paper				

REMARKS: