

May 2nd on a drizzly day overlooking an unfinished 7-story building. The day opened cloudy and overcast with intermittent showers. Henri Takahashi our lazy-boned hero yawned out of his dingy bed and rolled groggily to the bathroom. Thus began his day of work and toil, neverending, relentlessly dreary and unexciting. (Continued next week.)

On April 27th I was with Sugihara all day and strolled Ginza. That was last Sunday, altho it seems that every day is a Monday to me while in Japan. Somehow it comes to me as a shock when I discover that there is a holiday here or Sundays and that some businesses are not operating. Since I do not take any days off or holidays off I am definitely off beat somehow.

On the 28th I met a representative of Ito Shoji who showed me some jewelry accessories, similar to Kuwamura, and I had to regretfully reject his kind offers and attention. This company has been in operation for sometime but is not experienced in exporting. Strictly domestic stuff, copies of Western cheap trinkets. Should do fairly well here in Japan but in US? Not for us. I did tell them that I was interested in genuine Kanzashi (comb type) and samples will be obtained, maybe. Don't count on this company to produce.

I then went to Kagawa ken showroom to see samples made ready for me by Aomine and group. There was a nice teakplywood tray which was nice. Pardon my redundancy. Price was \$1220 (1.20) FOB and it is in the shape of a huge ~~leaf~~ diamond shaped leaf. I shouldn't use the word leaf, but that is the only word I can use to describe its shape. At \$1.20 each it should reach SF @ \$1.50 each and sell for \$5. each. We should try to get it a little cheaper, at least 5% to 10% cheaper. I saw other bowls shaped like lacquer bowls only larger and I think they are quite good. The prices are from 1100 yen and up to ¥1600 each according to size from 10" diam. to 14" diam. This is teak. Rosewood is 25% higher in price, and Keyaki is 15% cheaper than teak.

My impression today is that Aomine has changed into a vicious merchant from the pure and simple Bonsan that he was last year. He has tasted money from his designing and his hunger has become insatiable.

The designs of teak bowls are certainly not anything original, but simply turned pieces similar to bowls already being sold in US and I refuse to pay any commission for them. Let the maker pay this commission or I shall have to find another maker. I just had a long talk with Hirai about this matter and told him that I will not do any business with this maker if he insists on paying commission on these bowls because the price will go up ~~14/67/66~~ and make it impossible for me to compete with anyone else who imports similar items from Japan. And I discovered that there are other regions who are interested in this type of manufacture. I have not had time to contact them as yet because I was not aware of the Kagawa ken situation and ~~the~~ I did not want to encourage too many makers to make the same thing--like stirring up a hornet's nest. By encouraging others to produce the same bowls (just to get a good cheap price) we may make it hard on ourselves later when these firms we do not buy from will market the bowls thru other channels. So I was caught in a dilemma. I asked Hirai to contact the maker so that I could talk to him in person in order to make him understand my position. I'm sure this maker is really inexperienced and is doing his best but thru ignorance and desire he has been going at it in the wrong manner. He is definitely incapable of realizing that Aomine is now a drag on his business. He insists on paying commission to Aomine, even on the simplest of designs, designs we have requested thru Hirai, but thru blind faith in Aomine's design talents, the maker won't make samples until Kamisama Aomine tells him to do so. So now we have built up Aomine's ego and the maker will listen to no one else. So what are we to do now? Quit the stuff? Buy and sell high? Buy only in small quantities and let everyone else into the picture? Or else the maker who has 12 people working for him plus some sub-contractors will go bankrupt. What to do. It seems as though we have really got ourselves in a sweet pickle. The maker has kept on making more salad sets and letter openers (150 dozen salad sets and 450 dozen letter openers) since we were supposed to buy up the balance last year. I blew my top when I heard that. I told them that I did not make a damn penny on their Teak items and that I had a lot of stock in the warehouse and that I bought them just to help them out.

I heard that Kessler went to Kagawa ken. I wonder if the teak items will be sold to him also? If so this is the last straw. I shall have to find out somehow.

in Kyoto but I thot that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. I do not know what will be made in Kyoto (Aizu, but thru Kyoto Bito) so I bought 600 dozen (ta talling not over \$600) to play safe. I can always continue to buy from Fukunishi later on ~~1/1/1~~ when sales prove good. The extra costs will not break us, I do hope, but I wanted to get started early this year for early sales.

I also ordered 50 kimonos each of the five patterns (colors) sent in by Martha. I talked to the weaver of the noil material when he came. Price is about \$2.55 each FOB. (2.15)

Getto go now. K. Kato is coming too and I must see Serizawa later. Bye now.

Get same showrooms at all shows for this year.

RECEIVED MAY 6 1958

折込線

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Am in tib jab shaka



折込線

I expect Daichi Shoji, linen man, to show up at any minute so I will not be able to finish this letter, but I will mail it just the same to save time. On the 29th I went to see my Uncle and Aunt in Asagaya. They are getting old and so are my parents. I went with Takago Gomi whom I saw for the first time since I came to Japan. Had her read a few letters which came to me from Kansai in Japanese. Mie Trading, Daito Match, etc.

On the 30th I purchases some lacquer cig boxes from Suzuzen who got the colors from the Aizu lighter base makers. In Red, Black and White and they are similar in color to the lighters. I bought a set of 2 boxes @ \$1.15 a dozen FOB and a narrow long box @ 85¢ each FOB. I purchased 100 dozen of each kind and color, a total of 300 dozen sets of 2 and 300 dozen long boxes, 100 dozen of each color (red, black, white). (Daichi man is here.)

I asked him to ship in partial shipments -- in about three shipments or possibly 4 shipments. This is will be easier on us and assure us of a steady supply for the rest of the year. I know that I will see Fukunishi's samples