

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

April 5th 1949

UENO PARK,
TOKYO, JAPAN

Mr. Karl W. Onthank
Office of Student Affairs
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon, U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Onthank:

Yours of February 26 came to me some time ago when I was writing English notes for Vol. 8 of the Illustrated Catalogue of Nezu Collection. Before I was able to write to you, another hurried request came for a translation of an article on Chinese ceramics for publication, followed by still another translation of an article on wood-block colour prints. So many weeks passed before I was aware of it, and I am ashamed of it. I apologize most sincerely and thank you heartily for your concern of me. I am reminded of an incident that happened during my stay in Eugene. There too I was very slow in answering letters and one day Dr. Barker came along to my office and kindly made arrangement with you to let Miss Webber come to me once or twice a week to help me answer my letters and assist me otherwise. That was a great blessing to me, and I was able to accomplish much with her assistance. I wish I had somebody like her here, but it is out of question. I have to do all my work, typing and all. Consequently I have many letters still waiting to be answered, I am ashamed to say. There are some excuses on my part for this beside my trying to do more work than I should perhaps. For long time it has been almost impossible to do any work at home. There was hardly any means of heating the room due to scarcity of gas and electricity. The supply of gas is still limited to one to two hours early in the morning and early in the evening to help cooking. The electricity is cut off almost any time during the day and night, often hours at a time. I often had to correct proof by candle light, and the candle, as well as oil, is scarce and expensive. I should not go on like this any further, and please understand I am not complaining. Things are getting better, and we are more hopeful than last year.

A fortnight ago I finished a series of five lectures on Japanese art to the Occupation personnel sponsored by the Society of International Cultural Relations. That reminds me that I have another lecture to give to the Occupation personnel at the Chapel Centre a fortnight from today. I have been assisting American Red Cross and Service Clubs with their activities, taking tours to different places, such as the wood-block printing, lacquer making, dwarf-trees, art exhibitions, incense "hearing", etc. For more than three years we have been having tours to our house for tea ceremony every other week. By these means I have been trying to impart to the Occupation personnel something of the spirit and culture of Japan.

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UENO PARK
TOKYO, JAPAN

April 25th 1949

Mr. Karl W. Oshank
Office of Student Affairs
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon, U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Oshank:

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At the end of the last year I finished my part of work in the preparation and publication of "Masterpieces of Japanese Art" in three volumes. Vol. 1 on "Painting" ^{came out} when we were having troubles in China; Vol. 2 on "Architecture and Gardens" came out during our war in the Pacific; and Vol. 3 on "Sculpture and Art Crafts" was finished at the end of the last year. In spite of enormous expenses, a number of costly books on art and culture are being published; there seem to be a call for them, I am glad to say.

Yes, that fire at the Horyuji Kondo was a catastrophe. We are ashamed of it. You spared Nara and Kyoto from bombs, and we destroyed it. The ironical part of it is that those who were engaged in the preservation, in the perpetuation, were the ones who caused the destruction. Fortunately the upper part of the building was dismantled and the materials kept safely in another part of the compound, and all the irreplaceable sculptures and other objects were removed to another building a few years ago when the repair was begun. In other words, the building had been emptied so as to safeguard treasures from possible damage in dismantling the building for repair and in order to facilitate the work of the painters in making exact replica of the paintings on the walls. It had only a temporary roof to protect the walls. But the irreplaceable 8th century wall paintings were completely damaged, leaving merely faint traces. I have not been able yet to go down there to examine what was left. Indeed, it is a great loss to the art world. In way of paintings in this building, only the small panels with flying angels were saved, because they were removed to another building in dismantling the building. But these are trifling compared to the greatness of the ones destroyed. Thanks you for the clippings you sent me.

Thank you also for your letter sent through Mrs. B. L. Johansen which was duly received. Yes I remember you drove me up the McKenzie Highway. You have revived my memory of the wonderful autumnal colors I enjoyed. So that was Scott Lake, was it? It must be the same one that I used the photograph of in my book, "A Glimpse of Japanese Ideals", one with Three Sisters Mountains reflected on. I was not sure of the name when I was writing a caption for that photograph, and there was no time to write and ask you at the time. I remember many of the trips you were kind enough to take me. The nice lunches I enjoyed in the woods, in the country inn, etc. and I never had reciprocated any of them. I have been looking forward for a chance if you should come to Japan. By the way I had an impression that you were coming to Japan in connection with education or something connected with it. But you evidently changed your plans. It must be difficult for you to leave your University even for a few months. But even in a short visit you will be able to do a lot, I am sure.

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April 26, 1949
so even in America, no wonder that we have to struggle to live. Yes, many of us are struggling, and not without hope, I am glad to say. I had to pay 65% tax on my property, and the income tax, house tax, and citizens tax are all quite heavy, and many necessities of life are 50 to 100 fold, but the salaries cannot cope with all these. So nearly everybody has to live the life of bamboo sprout, as our saying is. That is we have to pull off one sheath after another; sell one thing after another, if they have anything to sell. Fortunately I have a healthy constitution and zeal for work and an optimistic spirit. Things are really improving, no one can deny that.

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Nature is in accord with me. Thousands of cherry-trees in Ueno Park in which this museum stands are just beginning to bloom. In a week or ten days all these trees will be covered with blossoms, and be at the height of their glory. I wish you were to enjoy our cherry blossoms.

I am glad to hear that Mrs. Onthank and all your children are well and prosperous. Please remember me to all of them. Hereafter I shall try harder to be more prompt with my letters. Please give my regards to my friends on the campus. I shall write to some of them before the cherry blossoms scatter.

Perhaps I have not told you yet that the Imperial Household Museum had changed its name to the National Museum. The emperor had to pay property tax of 75%, and he handed over his Imperial Household Museum to the nation with its more than 81,000 pieces of art and historical objects. The museum was greatly expanded, and there are now more than 350 on its payroll, but my connection with it remains the same, though I have to be more regular with my office hours, and I have to spend considerable time for the liaison work between the museum and General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for Allied Powers.

I am sorry to hear Mrs. Warner is not well, and that she is likely not to come back to Eugene. I have not received any letter from her yet, and there came from her at the end of January this year a gift package. I wrote to her immediately.

When you see Colonel John MacGregor again, please give my best regards. Here in Tokyo I occasionally come across people from Oregon, and I naturally feel certain attachment to them. I also met some who were in my class. That gave me great joy.

Again with apologies for neglecting to write so long,

Very sincerely,

Sho Harada

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as even in America, no wonder that we have to struggle to live. Yes, many of us are struggling, and not without hope, I am glad to say. I had to pay 5% tax on my property, and the income tax, house tax, and citizens tax are all quite heavy, and many necessities of life are 50 to 100 fold, but the salaries cannot cope with all these. So nearly everybody has to live the life of bamboo sprout, as our saying is. That is we have to pull off one sheath after another; sell one thing after another, if they have anything to sell. Fortunately I have a healthy constitution and zeal for work and an optimistic spirit. Things are really improving, no one can deny that.

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