

The Imperial Hotel

of Tokyo

March 21, 1931

Dear Mew -

Just a moment while waiting in the lobby of this strange looking (fantastic & yet appropriate to Japan) hotel, ^{christened by the architect; a monument to the human imagination} designed by Floyd Wright to start telling you what a busy and interesting week I have had. It has been luckier than I could have hoped for.

Last Monday morning I came up from Yokohama, and, following your advice, looked up Mr. Doud at the Commercial Attache's office. He started spinning me around at once - first to a special exhibit of prints at the National Museum, then to the American Club, where he gave me a temporary membership card, then to his house, (an American one which he has borrowed from friends for the winter) to meet Dorothy at dinner (She is working in some stock brokers office which is being established here) then out to see the town and to dance at the Florida where pretty, kimonoed Japanese girls dance to American jazz in their clumsy slippers, and where others have become so modern that they are more flapperish than American flappers.

Sunday, March 22. chez Doud. The next day Doud had several men to lunch who knew much of Japanese art, and who gave me a good bit of information. They passed me on to Japanese dealers who could speak English and so I was put on the right track at once. Then the vice consul invited me to dine at his Japanese house, to meet the editor of the Japan Times, and Isamu Naqueti, a Eurasian sculptor whom I had already known a long while in Paris! Naqueti & I went to a production of one of the

most archaic forms of the No drama which was painfully dull, monotonous and unentelligable. But the following night we saw other No plays which were lavishly staged splendidly acted, and extremely exciting drama. The best were those which kept completely to the classic artificial form with musical accompaniment, so that the whole was rather a dramatised dance, all in one very tense and heroic rhythm.

On Thurs. March 19, Dr. Hirschfeld arrived from S. A. and Honolulu. We were both equally glad to see each other - he proposed that we continue our travels together thru the Orient - which may be possible to a certain extent. We have already had pleasant times together, visiting the "Loney Island" of Tokyo, Japanese movies, and merely strolling in the Parks or on the "Broadway" of the city. Today Dorothy was not well, so Mr. Dowd and I went to Kamakura, on the coast near Yokohama, to visit the shrines, the great Diabutsu - the bathing beach and the beautiful island of Enoshima which is a group of jagged rock cones rising abruptly from the sea; the peaks of which are crowned with temples and tea houses, with stone steps leading to them between charming souvenir booths and groves of gnarled pines. There are everywhere gay and happy people about, clean and carefully dressed, the girls like delicate flowers and the men bright and alert and strong. Never have I seen such cleanliness and such apparent wholesomeness. In the buildings both ancient and modern, there is evident the same perfection of detail and exactness and a love of daintiness. In many ways the Japanese have gone madly modern, yet there is a certain restraint and unpretentiousness that preserves them from vulgarity.

Dr Hirschfeld too, was very favorably impressed with the people. Their thoroughness and thirst for amazing facts has something akin to German qualities. On Tuesday, perhaps, we will go together to Nikko, then I will go on to Kyoto (after returning to Tokyo) Yara, then the inland sea to Nagasaki and from there to Shanghai. He will stay about six weeks in Japan before going on.

I am hoping that I will be able to work in Shanghai and, if so, will make that my longest stop. My mail is still going to Hongkong and so it will not be until I have it forwarded to Shanghai that I will have any news from America.

The weather, except for two greyish days, has been perfect; the plum blossoms are bursting out & in a couple of weeks the cherry blossoms will appear. The atmosphere is more brilliant than at this latitude in the States, and with that there is a certain fresh sparkle which is not at all tropical. What a contrast this week has been to my first uncomfortable and exasperating days in Mexico!! I cannot ask for more than that my trip continues as successfully.

I think it is not expensive to live here if one knows the way, but for a newcomer there is no choice but to pay tourist prices. I have tried to resist buying things, but have acquired a few prints; for one example; the first volume of Hokusai's Views of Fuji, of which the two books from Joseph Longwood are the 2nd and 3rd volumes.

Today I saw Mt. Fuji for the first time; it was covered low with snow, and it is so perfect in form that it seems more a spirit mountain than a real one.

Love
Selso.

P.S. Mrs. Dowd and the three other children are planning to come here from Seattle in June.

He will stop about six weeks in Japan before going on to Nippon (after returning to Tokyo) then to Nara, then to Kyoto, we will go together to Nippon, then to Osaka, then to Tokyo.

I am hoping that I will be able to work in Shanghai and, if so, will make that my longest stop. My mail is still going to Hongkong and so it will not be until I have it forwarded to Shanghai that I will have any news from America.

The weather, except for two previous days, has been perfect, the humidity is very pleasant and the humidity is very pleasant.

The atmosphere is more brilliant than at the latitude in the States, and with that there is a certain fresh spirit which is not at all tropical. What a contrast this work has been to my first mountain-top and experimental days in Mexico! I cannot ask for more than that my trip continues as successfully.

I think it is not expensive to live here if one knows the way, but for a newcomer there is no choice but to pay tourist prices. I have tried to re-visit things, but have acquired a few prints for one example. The first volume of Hobbes's 'Leviathan' of Fiji. Of which the two books from Japan had been one the 1st and 2nd volumes.

Today I saw the Fiji for the first time; it was covered with snow, and it is a perfect in form that it seems more a spirit mountain than a real one.