

LETTER FROM HARRY ROSE ABOUT MR. BARROW'S MEETING WITH SR

Dear Mr. Chadwick,

Thank you for your letter of the 20th. February. The copies of the photographs which were included with your letter are of an excellent quality and I am happy for you to keep the "originals" which I had sent you. I have no need for duplicates, but you will probably want to re-check the pictures with the list you made of their locations. For example; picture number 2 is listed under number 11, pictures 4 and 12 are identical and are correctly listed under 4, pictures 10 and 11 are probably both of the Obon festival rights. Pictures 6, 14 and 15 have no identification and I am afraid I cannot help you with these last three. It was kind of you to send me the copies so promptly.

I have found what I am fairly sure is a piece written by David Barrow. He is the person to whom I referred under answer to your question number 36. He accompanied Nona Ransom for a part of her exploration of the monasteries in Japan, during the years 1927-1930. I am enclosing the original script, which you may retain, together with a copy which I have typed for ease of reference. It may have been David's intention to prepare a series of notes on his Japanese vacations under the heading of "The Crooked Brim". I have no information on whether or not any such intention was ever fulfilled, neither have I evidential provenance for the piece other than that the story is clearly about Suzuki and Nona.

If I discover anything that might be of interest to you in the course of your researches, I shall, of course, let you know.

Yours sincerely,

Harry Rose

THE CROOKED BRIM

Priests' Tales

We sat on the and the air filled with the song of the cicada, each insect body an organ pipe. "Has ever singer exerted himself to his utmost limits as these insects do?" I asked.

Very occasionally the cryptomarias raised heatlazy arms in recognition to the gentle breeze, and the bamboos gossiped only in their highest leaves.

"What is an artist?", asked Nona.

A man who paints, or draws, an apprentice to the plastic arts- I knew Nona meant none of these things.

"I don't know", I said easily. 'Pine sun shone on my insteps and on the clean unstained boards, and back of me were the deep cool places of the Buddha hall. I wanted to feel - not to think.

Suzuki San came out and sat beside us, holding a bundle on his knee. Suzuki San was the young priest and master of the temple.

"What's in that Suzuki San?", we asked him.

"This?", said Suzuki San, looking at the bundle in astonishment, as though it had slid off the roof into his lap. "Oh, this is a little thing".

"Open it up", we demanded. Suzuki San laughed. He was getting used to our blunt, unmannerly English way of going straight to the point.

His unhurrying graceful hands, pulled the knot and laid back the points of the furoshiki.

What went ye out for to see? My mouth was watering in anticipation of a water-melon. And then -

"But Suzuki San - where did you get them - they are lovely, they're exquisitely lovely - tell us, tell us all about them".

Suzuki San had unwrapped five plates. We passed them reverently from hand to hand, letting our fingers stray over the uneven surface of the pattern. They were all so unusual, so beautiful, they all differed so from one another. The tendrils of Morning Glory, winding around over the edges. The balance of the willow bough, which looked as though it had been thrown across the plate, and baked in with green glaze.

They were exquisitely lovely and here was Suzuki San unwrapping them as though they had been watermelons.

"Tell us, tell us all about them. Why haven't you shown them before -".

"They nave only just come; they have been exhibited in Tokyo -".

"They must be worth a lot."

"Oh yes, more than a 100 yen each".

"But, Suzuki San, you extravagant little priest!"

"Oh, I only gave 5 yen for the lot". Would Suzuki San ever cease to astound us. "In Kyoto, I went to a potter to buy plates. He had a hundred like that set out in his shop. "Which do you like ", said the potter. We drank tea, I liked these five I said. "What will you give me for them oh priest?" I have five yen here in my bag, I said. "They are yours for five yen". He laughed. "I have just made these hundred plates. I select five for an exhibition, the rest I destroy. They are not perfect. You have chosen the best five, the five of my choice for they are perfect. They must go to the exh bition where they will be valued at a hundred yen. When it is over, for five yen they are yours". And now they have just this moment come", said Suzuki San. I tilted my hat off my forehead. Oh to be so simple and to have such perfect taste.

Inferentially written by David Barrow between 1927 and 1930.