

Saturday, Oct. 1st, 1960

Dear Eunice and children:

I am settled down in the YMCA scratching out post cards (sent 14 so far). Had a nice trip up from Manila altho we were 2 ½ hours late. Our late arrival meant we missed getting to the Interboard Office. This morning it was closed. Monday we leave at 6:30 AM for a trip to NIKKO. Tuesday we go to Nippon Christian Academy at 8:30 and Friday to I.C.U. All of which means that I am without much money and hardly any chance to get it since the offices don't open until 8:30 – 9:00 AM. Dr. Schmidt has this consultation so packed from end to end and I do mean packed. He's getting every Deutsche Mark's worth out of this Consultation. Today he told us how this was a new thing for the German churches. They have never given for anything like this before. Bishop Dibelius of Berlin raised some of the money there.

In a meeting in Stuttgart, Germany, 10,000 Protestant German workers gave \$1,200 for the travel expenses. He is such a warm person and he says things so sincerely and humorously without knowing it. He wants the Germans to give, not to pray for the Conference – he said he can do the praying right here when he goes to sleep. When a man gives money then he wants to know what happens with the money, and then he can tell him something. I've had more stimulation talking to him in a half hour than sometimes I get for weeks (except from my dear wife). He's a happy combination of the deeply theological German with the warm human German. I've taken to writing down some notes from our conversations.

I went shopping today in the moments I could squeeze in – just to get the lay of the land since I was so scarce on cash. Went to NORITAKE- They say they have stopped making this China but she took the cover picture and she would try the factory. Better take good care of that set we have. Went to Cloisson ware – they were having inventory, then Department stores and I didn't know where to begin there. So I hope I will be able to slip some shopping in.

We have a change in schedule. They want us to stay in Japan until the 23rd which means we either cut short our visit to Taiwan or we lengthen our time on the road. We will be taking THAI airways out on the 23rd. You might as well send the mail to the "Y" with a note "please hold" on it. I think we will be out for the 11th until the 22nd. The best person to reach in the KANSAI area the 17th to the 22nd is Masao Takenaka.

I really missed you on my shopping trip. Val Montes is eating up all the variety of shops and goods. It takes a woman to give a purpose to shopping however. Send my love to the children. I thought of them as I browsed through toy departments. (but I don't know where to begin).

Love,
Dick

Monday night, October 3rd, 1960

My dear Eunice and children:

Just had a shower which I consider a luxury. The days have been long and tiring. We got up at 5:30 AM to catch a train for NIKKO. Got to the train station at 6:50 –waiting for Hendrik Kraemer until 8:20 AM, then took the train without him. We were supposed to catch a 7:20 train but the fellow who picked him up took him to the wrong station.

The train ride was 3 hours – we hopped on a special bus which this other fellow Pastor Saito arranged for us (since he got there before us by taking a train at a different station). We saw the lake and the falls at NIKKO – a Zen-Buddhist Temple, a tremendous Shinto Shrine (the Roman Catholics have nothing on the Shintoists – these guys are professional religionists).

The place was packed with Japanese and this was Monday. Hundreds and hundreds of people with many school children. I couldn't make out whether they were visiting out of homage, out of a sight-seeing urge or out of a reverence for a historic spot. Probably it was a little bit of all these.

Prof. Iisaka who took us on this trip had some interesting remarks to make about Japanese religion. I mentioned how I felt that Japanese culture under the impact of technological influence was really very much secularized. He agreed but said that the secularization, or the basic tenets of secularism, has been here for some time. He pointed out that Japanese religion, since it has no belief in the other-worldly, or God, has basically a world-centered faith. Japanese religion affirms this life and Japanese seek satisfaction in this life. He contends that there is an overall religiosity to Japanese life so that now when modern secularization has come, Japanese this worldliness adapts secularism to its own scheme.

Secularism in the Western world is basically anti-theistic – it is God denying since it concentrates all its concern on this time and place. Since Japanese religiosity is basically this worldly – secularism here fits into the scheme of things, but it doesn't make the Christian church's job any easier. In Western society a decision is demanded of a Christian to choose for God, but in Japanese religion there is no choice necessary since life has a religiosity and there is no God to choose for (all this is by way of digression – so you might save this so I can write it down permanently).

We had lunch at the Lake – Japanese style – since we had no breakfast it was good to get something inside us. I've decided the way to really get to like foods and to try everything is to be really hungry. We had lake trout – my first in years. We got the 3:20 PM train and stood for 3 hours on the way back.

Six of us are here so far – two Okinawans, two Hong Kong Chinese ie. James Pong, Gen. Secty. of the Diocese Hong Kong, is really a good fellow. He is Bishop Hall's right hand man – studied in Chicago, seminary in England; Peter Wong, Exec. Secty. of the Church of Christ in China- so

we have the big brass from H.K. then Val and myself. The Koreans have thus far been refused visas and the Taiwanese come tomorrow.

We came back to Tokyo and looked for that place where we had "Suki Yaki" with Reg Arvidson – no luck – so we went to another place which was also good.

Right now I'm beat so I'll turn in. I did a little shopping yesterday afternoon but had to conserve my money. I am hoping to get to the Interboard Office tomorrow by skipping part of a meeting.

Love,
Dick

Wednesday, October 5th, 1960

Dearest Eunice and children:

The consultation is now underway. It has begun slow these last two days – nothing radically new which I have not heard before. The Japanese participants have not really contributed as much as I hoped they would except for Iisaka and Takenaka. Takenaka is the critical thinker and Iisaka is coming along and should be one of the outstanding men in the Japanese church. However, there is a general groping after meaning and there is no real break through.

Kraemer will speak tomorrow. He has already spoken in the discussion and always has good things to say.

The Japanese kid him good naturedly to keep his remarks brief. George Todd is here – quite a different guy than I expected. I thought he would be more of a Don Benedict type of guy, but he seems not overly aggressive. We went out last night to see some of the town which included Asakasa Park which is like Coney Island with lots of small shops and a very large Shinto Temple. We went back down town to two coffee shops – one which has a jazz band and is packed with teenagers. The other which has a band playing classical music.

The jazz band was good but I felt they were only going through the motions. The teenagers were well-behaved, in fact, they stared at the combo in rapt-attention. I felt that the music was not really getting to them. In Harlem or even in Manila the joint would have been jumping. I mentioned this to Iisaka and we got back to the point of the covertness of Japanese feeling which is not expressed with the body or with emotion but is communicated on a subterranean level. This could be compared to the Noh plays which express no emotion but use masks to communicate. So even Japanese jazz is stylized.

The first section of our consultation closes tomorrow. I'll be eating at the Franklins on Friday with a trip to I.C.U. on Saturday. We visit two factories, one of them Sony transistor and eat at the Schmidts.

I did some more shopping this evening with Chul Awe who arrived from Korea after a struggle for a visa. The evening is about the only time we can shop and fortunately the shops stay open until 9 PM. I called NORITAKE and they said this line has been discontinued so I just let them keep the sugar bowl top since it is of no use to us. Perhaps there may still be a possibility of asking Irene Davidson when she goes to Sangley to see if the PX has some stock in it.

We take the train each morning and I was commenting to Val how much at home I feel in Tokyo. The subway cars are packed with people, faces pressed to the windows. They fall out when the doors open – people rush in. The last ones are pushed in by the platform man. The New York subways have nothing on Tokyo which is becoming the mass society par excellent.

Love,
Dick

Friday, October 7th, 1960

My dear Eunice and children:

I received your letter yesterday and it added a note of joy to my day.

Yesterday ended the first part of our Consultation – Kraemer spoke in the morning and we discussed the issues in the afternoon. The major point he drove home was that the greatest witness the church can make is a real striving toward achievement of unity. He called the church hypocritical talking about the peace and unity of the world when it is split asunder. But he also took his crack at the professional ecumenists – those people who are in the National Councils and the World Council whose jobs depend upon ecumenical talk but who do not have the real passion for ecumenism.

Last evening Yoshiko and her husband came by. He really is a bright fellow – works as district sales manager of a large soap manufacturer. He had a copy of one of Peter Drucker's books and is doing reading in industrial relations. He knows all of the human relations in industry books. He is reading about human relations and marketing at the same time. I am thoroughly amazed at the extent to which Japanese society has become urbanized and industrialized. I have a feeling there is a system to it. It is not just happening in spasms, but there is some kind of inner discipline to the whole process. Everybody seems to be moving forward dedicated to seeing Japan become a modern society.

Yoshiko's husband goes about his work with a theological understanding of life. What moved him into this concern for human relations was a series of lectures by Emil Brunner on "human estrangement." He knew the theologians William Temple, etc. I felt even as difficult as some of his English was, we were really communicating. It was like talking to a seminary student except that he is really in difficult decisions in business.

We went to two different coffee shops in the course of the conversation. I will have supper with them on Sunday afternoon. Talking with him has brought the three days of the Consultation to a fruitful end. He represented exactly what we had been talking about in those three days. The Christian who can find no place within the church because he feels no real call to live in the world which has problems changing the life of men. He doesn't attend any church – people in the church cannot see his desire to make his faith social – to meet the problems of efficiency of an industrial society on the one hand and the problems of human relationships on the other. It really was a delightful evening.

Today we went to the International Christian University in the rain and I forgot my rain coat. I have been in the rain most of the day and I've just taken a hot shower and really feel relaxed. They had convocation at I.C.U. at 11:00 and we heard the Ambassador from Ghana on Africa Today. He talked about the African personality –non-alignment and seeking help from where ever they could get it; moving away from economic aid by working toward an economic union within Africa. He blasted the Belgians in the Congo and talked about the Balkanization of Africa in trying to turn Africans against one another. All in all a very potent speech.

We had dinner at the Sam Franklins (George Todd's father-in-law) which is about 5 kilometers away. Here I met two army chaplains – one was a fellow Wooster graduate of my day. Floyd Chambers (he also knows the Marquis' since he married a girl from Athens, Ohio). It was quite a surprise to walk in, have him come up to me with hand outstretched. At first I didn't recognize him, but then it struck home. After an after lunch conversation we went back into town, stopping off at the Japanese Folk Arts Center where George Todd thought there was some craft goods for sale. There was a limited quantity, some block prints. They will have their exhibition in November when their goods will be on sale.

We went on to downtown Tokyo, still in the rain but now I had an umbrella from the Franklins, stopped in at the Christian book store where I saw some hand-painted Christmas cards. I am sending one for you to look at. They cost 15 cents (U.S.) each, but I thought we might be able to do a Philippine scene or I could get several of these for extra special friends. Continue to write me at the Y.M.C.A. They will hold my mail.

Tomorrow we go to factories – a nuclear reactor and Sony transistor. In the evening to Dr. Schmidt's.

My love to you and the children.

Love,
Dick

Sunday Evening, Oct. 9th, 1960

My dear Eunice and children:

The past weekend has been eventful. Yesterday we visited two plants. In the morning the Nuclear Research Institute under the University of Tokyo and in the afternoon the Sony Corporation. These visits confirm my feeling that the Japanese really aim to be the leading industrial nation of Asia.

The Nuclear Research Institute aims at pure nuclear research – no work in atomic production. They have one of the five cyclotrons in Japan (we went right in the room where it was operating) and have a synchro-cyclotron under construction at the cost of \$1 million. This is to do work in meson physics which is high energy research (meson from what I can gather is the “glue” holding the nucleus together, or something like that). The huge magnet is Japanese made. The man constructing it, Dr. Kobayashi, is a Christian, as well as another top nuclear physicist Dr. Nishiwara. There are five of six Christians out of a staff of 40. They hold Bible studies at Wednesday lunch.

The SONY visit really points up the business drive of the Japanese. We were taken to the showroom – tape recorders, all kinds of transistor radios, a portable TV – tea was served with stereophonic music in the background. Then the soft sell – a carpeted projection room for a slide history of SONY with stereophonic background music (recorded by SONY microphones on a SONY recorder on SONY tape played over a SONY stereo). The U.S. transistor industry and public relations haven't got anything on SONY.

The success story – begin with \$500 capital in 1946 (by a Christian by the way) and in 1960 is worth \$250,000. I believe if assessed in the U.S. on its good name, it is easily worth \$2 million. It exports 70 percent of its SONY products. They're building like mad to meet the market. One of the reasons for the market is the low price based on low labor costs. High school girls get 10,000 yen per month (about \$ 28) but are provided housing, low cost food and have good working conditions.

Last evening we ate at the Schmidt's – a real Deutschen Abend essen (supper to you) – salad, dark bread, *wurst*, und *ein glas* von Beer (und *zwei glas* und *drei glas*). Chul Awe brought Korean apples which we had for dessert- and we saw slides and topped the evening off with a glass of Rhine wine. Herr Schmidt said to me he likes to see a man who enjoys himself – and I said it's all according to the atmosphere – when in Rome do as the Romans. It was Schmidt whom I was talking about in my first letter. Just to let you know that I was not the only one drinking beer and wine – George Todd, Val Montes, Chul Awe, James Pong (Anglican from H.K) all had a glass. The Taiwanese took the beer but refused wine enthusiastically – which George Todd says is the enigma. Taiwanese Christians drink beer but think wine is anathema. What a paradoxical lot these Christians!

Sunday we went to the Asagaya church – pleasant church in a Tokyo suburb stuck between the Shinto shrine and the Buddhist Temple. It is well constructed – simple but fits into the environment. Japanese houses are most unpretentious and lacked any kind of showiness. The church was crowded – met Sue Olthouse who came to hear Kraemer. Kraemer was good. He really enjoys preaching and fits into the situation well – bridging the gap between Japanese theological concentration and practical application. We ate dinner at a member of the congregation’s home – a man of substance, but you could not tell from the home itself. Simple lines, a lovely garden and a mixture of East and West. We ate on the *atami* mats while others ate at a higher table. I really felt like I was in Japan. The family, mother and father and three sons, were only baptized last year. He was in the Ministry of Transportation and is now in private business.

Yutaka Yumata came with me to church and in good Filipino style I brought him along to dinner. (It appears to be a custom here as well). He met his old professor who is a member of the church and who had dinner with us. (about fourteen in all).

I finally discovered what I had suspected – that Yutaka is in the no-church movement, which makes the whole matter even more intriguing. We discussed it on the train coming in – he thought Kraemer added fuel to the fires of his own belief. Putting 2 and 2 together I believe the no-church movement is really a lay movement which first began within the organized church – first as an anti-clerical, and strongly intellectual movement. It was a movement against the paid clergy in a county where the Buddhist priests had gotten fat off of the money collected and invested. It also resembles the lack of organization which exists in Buddhism and also the emphasis upon the teacher. I really believe that Kraemer maybe what the doctor ordered in that he emphasized the lay movement but inside the church, but with a change of church structure.

Yoshiko met us down town. We did some shopping and then went to their apartment. It is situated on an island of fisherman. The Shogunate of Ido many years ago brought different groups of workers to Ido to supply the needs of the Shogunate and the city. This island was especially set aside for the fishermen. The apartment is set in the midst of the older fishing houses. On the first floor is a public bath, upstairs eight families live on each floor of a two story building. The room would be about the size of our dining room space, perhaps a little larger. We had “suki yaki” put together by Yoshiko in her little kitchen.

You will be happy to know Eunice that you single-handedly (or almost single-handedly) introduce to Japan its first liquid soap. When you left Yoshiko the liquid Vel 3-1/2 years ago she took it to Yutaka who was then working for MIYOSHI oil and soap. He took the container to the Board of Directors and with the help of one of them convinced the company to go into production. Since they were producing a kind of liquid detergent commercially for the textile industry they did some research and came out with a liquid soap for the Japanese housewife put up in plastic containers, so you can see how much is left. I have one of the containers which Yutaka has proudly presented me saying it is little enough for the contribution you have made.

Think of it Eunice, your name although unknown and unsung, will go down in the history of the Japanese soap industry as one of the benefactors of the Japanese house-wife who no longer needs

to use that harsh detergent which gives her hands that rough chapped look. (I release all rights to this last paragraph which can be used in a family letter on the real Poethig contribution to Rapid Social Change).

Yoshiko has given me an album as a gift to you plus some small dolls for the girls. I felt embarrassed but said I would like to send her something from the Philippines. It was past 12 o'clock so I have to hit the sack. Industrial Evangelism Committee meeting tomorrow - Tuesday morning to Amagi Sanso for three days.

Love,
Dick

Wednesday afternoon, Oct. 12th, 1960

Dearest Eunice:

Just came back from a walk to a water fall. It seems Japan has water falls popping out all over the place. Amagi Sanso is an excellent spot for a conference grounds – it is 3-1/2 hours from Tokyo set in the midst of hills – the hills appear well-manicured even the trees are grown in a pattern.

Last evening we had a splendid “suki-yaki” dinner on tatami mats. (Usually we eat at tables). Then we had a very difficult lecture on Christianity and Japanese culture. It was difficult in that the professor is one of those Japanese theologians who while brilliant in analysis, never gets down to earth. Secondly it was difficult because our translator was disjointed. I had someone translate it over again after the lecture. I had read the outline of the professor’s presentation before but even that was hard to delineate. George Todd says this professor, who teaches at Tokyo Union Seminary, scoffs at Sam Franklin’s Christian Ethics as unimportant since it deals only passing temporalities.

Kraemer spoke this morning and gave a very good presentation. I’ve decided that he is the kind of person that grows on you. He knows every situation before he comes into it, and he deals with its basic problems. It may appear that he is long-winded, but it all has a purpose. It is a kind of preparation for his point of direct confrontation. This morning he dealt directly and quite devastatingly with the Japanese church’s over-concern with theology (and as a by-product really pulled the rug out from under Prof. Kitamori – last evening’s speaker). He spoke about the theologian’s vocation to make direct contact with society – not to deal in concepts and ideas but to prepare the way or strategy (one of my favorite words) the real dialogue between the Christian faith and the world. If the Japanese take him seriously a real break through could happen in the church. I believe he is really what the Japanese need. He is accepted because he is Continental, and a Barthian of sorts, but he is also a practical Dutchman, as he says, who wants to see theology worked out practically (which is where the Japanese church has failed). He is really an evangelist in the more comprehensive understanding of the term.

Thursday afternoon, October 13, 1960

Went for another walk to the falls with Val and George Todd. Had my second Japanese bath last night. This is a church conference and women take their baths separately. The bath relaxes you completely. One of the missionaries says the bath is the reason why Japanese theology never gets put into action. After all those hot theological discussions, the Japanese get into these baths, sink down into the hot water, put their towels on their heads and say “There are no problems in this world.”

Kraemer had a question and answer period last night in which he dealt with adaptation – the element of gain in religion (which is prevalent in new religions), ancestor worship, and resurgent religions. The second set of questions was just as varied – communism, rapid social change and Billy Graham’s campaigns. This morning he spoke on the laity and was not really as good. He’s repeating many things which I’ve heard before and I expect he is tired from his rigorous schedule (although he never shows it). We are going to leave early tomorrow for Tokyo and skip the morning session. We stay at the YMCA in the evening and on Saturday morning travel to Tsurakawa which is an agricultural school and seminary. Saturday evening we are back in Tokyo to leave on the night train for Osaka and Kyoto. We will leave on the 23rd for Taiwan – take the night train to George Todd’s home in Taiwan. Back up to Taipei to catch the plane on the 26th for H.K.

Am getting lonely for home.

Love,
Dick