

7929-35th. Ave.
Kenosha, Wis.,
Dec. 25th. 1939

Sherifa H. E. S.

San Fernando, Calif.

With Most Reverent Greetings:

I promised to write in few days because I had something important to tell you but had to wait for new developments which took little longer.

Well on the last meeting we had in Milwaukee I proposed to Mr. Meyer, Mr. Susek and the group about the derrick I had in mind to by for the work at the Ashrama and Mr. Susek was deligated to loock around and see if he could find something better adapted for our purpose, but if he should fail to find something better and more reasonable in price we can always buy the one I proposed. We have some money in our treasury to pay for it and the balance will be raised amongst us individually so you can rest assured that when the time comes we will have it there.

But the most important thing I wanted to tell you is that I wish to keep the solemn promise I made, "i.e. " to be there myself by next summer at any cost. Since my work takes place here just at the time when you need me there "there is" in summer time and since the building business ~~xxxx~~ seasons here are short with the exception of some unusual seasons, it would look foolish for me to leave just when I have the chance to earn few dollars and return when the building season is over, so my plan is to leave here right in midwinter before the season starts and try to locate some work there some place until the time comes to go up at camp and at the same time possibly establish some connetions which

will enable me to find something to do when we come down from camp and not being forced to come back east again because it will take more than one summer to complete the Ashrama and it is impossible under my present economical conditions to come west every summer, whereas if I am able to find something there "as I have been wishing" I can more easily spent some time each summer or probably work out some other plan whereby we can complete the building in shorter time.

I am hoping that business is much better than was in 1931 when I was forced to return here in spite of all the efforts I made to stay there.

The building business has some what improved here lately, I had just repair work all summer and lately I started two small houses, one is to be completed by the first of february and the other by march, I hope the weather will continue to stay milde as it has so far so I can have the second one completed and leave not later than march before the new season begins.

Of course that is another problem, and that is "what will my family live on while I am gone without any other sources of income other than what I produce"? I happened to discuss this problem with Carmen and after due consideration he suggested that if it would be agreeable with you for him to stay on the job here and turn over the money he would have to loose in wages while away to my family. I refused at first especially to take away his privilege of himself serving direct, but he still maintains that one should not refuse an opportunity when it presents itself which I agree with him and do not refuse the opportunity, only I don't wish to take advantage of his privilege and would

rather work out my own problems which I hope they will be worked out somehow,, but if that should be the last resource and no other alternative, I will submit myself to whatever the case may be as long as I am able to serve I will try my best to perform whatever job may be assigned to me.

I will be very anxiously awaiting to hear whatever comment~~p~~, criticism, suggestion to my plans, or any other plan you will offer me to follow.

I have not revealed this plan to my family as yet for the reason I mentioned to you with my last letter but I have with few of the Order those that can see the importance of the erection of our retreat as soon as possible and at least can hold a good thought for me to succeed.

I received your Christmass Gift which I very highly appreciate coming from you and Yogy and you both have my sincere thanks.

Wit Love and best wishes for our success.

Reverently Yours.

Peter.

B/day Ashrama

San Fernando, Calif.,
Jan. 19, 1980

Dear Peter:

Sherifa ave me your letter for consideration and answering. The problem lines up as follows:

We propose to construct the walls of the building out of stone and concrete partly because the greater mass of the material required is already on the ground and partly because of the superior quality of construction, as compared to a frame building. This kind of construction requires the bringing to the site of cement and other building materials and water. In as much as the packing in of building materials by horses would cost considerable and the old trail with switch-backs was not adapted to this it occurred to us that it would be a good plan to build a five-foot trail on the south side of the canyon down to the old abandoned road on that side with the view to using a small track-laying type of tractor with a trailer for transportation. Thus the money that would have otherwise been paid a packer would be invested in a tractor and trailer and then we would have a permanent means for transportation after the building was finished. But to do this we had to apply considerable time to the construction of an adequate trail. This took more time than expected, partly due to the limited amount of help and partly to the delaying problems which could not be calculated. But now, except for a little finishing detail this work is done, although each year the trail has to be cleaned out until the bank wall works back to a stable angle. But the problem of getting the water to the Ashrama site remains. For this purpose we found that a pipe-line would involve too much money so we decided on a ditch similar to those used in the gold-country. To get a water-grade the ditch will be about 3,000 feet long. Three years ago we made a start on this, enough to show that the idea will work and to determine what will be required. We need a ditch with a patrol walk on the outside. That means a trail about three feet wide with a ditch about one foot wide on the inside. This must be completed with a small reservoir about 75 feet vertical above the site for water-pressure. This work must be done before we can begin actual construction.

Now, in addition to the main building we will need a small structure for the tractor which can also be used for storing cement during the period of construction. We are too much subject to small rains up there to leave cement in the open. We have planned to place this structure in a dug-out space beside the big trail and a little below and south of the Ashrama site. For this work we could pack in the necessary cement and water with the donkeys, but there is the problem of the sand. When making the cut for the building site we found about three feet under the surface deposit a curious material that looked sandy when wet, but seemed to have considerable clay when dry. But examination under the glass indicated that the fine portion was nearly all quartz; apparently a product of glacial grinding. Joseph Goldspring had it examined by an engineer in his office.

and he found that the clay-component was only 3% and said that it could be used for cement work, but owing to the extreme fineness of much of the quartz sand, the ratio of cement would have to be high. To off-set this it occurred to me that we could wash the sand (a small test showing that about 15% would float off) and in that way eliminate much of the excessive fines, thereby reducing the amount of cement required. But for this we need a good supply of water at the site. It is possible we could transport sand from the creek by means of the donkeys as we did when you built the altar. I am thinking of this only for the small garage and storage room in case we were to build it before the ditch is finished.

If we had enough men on the job we could complete the water ditch and reservoir and start actual construction on the main building this summer, but we have been short of man-power. Carmen has been our main help the last three years both because of the time he could give and his adaptation to the job. But he is not fitted for the thinking out of the construction problems and is well aware of this fact himself. For that work we need you. There are problems for which I feel the need of help of some one who has experience in construction and yet is able to adapt his mind to the atypical situation we have to face. You are the best fitted of all the students we have for this. Mr. Meyer would be very valuable if he could come. I suspect Mr. Susek would also be a very real help, but I do not know whether he has had any experience with mountain problems. Constantly it is necessary to adapt one's self to situations which do not arise in flat country and the result is that one has to change the formal rules of ordinary mechanical procedure. Mr. Meyer and you have the advantage of knowing the mountains already, but Mr. Susek might have to unlearn a lot and then relearn it. I simply do not know what his experience is. But in any case I think the three of you are the best in the Assembly for the construction problems.

From this end, I can figure that John Schutte will be able to give us a month. He is a strong man of exceptionally fine character and loyalty and has built well and substantially on the trail construction. The loss of his right hand somewhat limits his functioning, but much less than one would expect. He is not qualified for the construction problems. Joseph Goldspring has given us from two-weeks to a month heretofore, but he is now in the drafting department of one of the airplane companies and they are over-crowded since the war started. I doubt that he can get away for very long. Further he is not physically very strong and most of our work persists in being heavy. I do not know whether Eugene will be able to come this year or not. He is strong, cheerful, willing but not thorough. He does not seem to realize the uncompromising necessities imposed by inorganic nature. For my part, I am on the job from the beginning to the end and am most familiar with the total problem but am limited in the amount of rugged effort I can put forth. The drilling and blasting has been my chief physical function on the construction. Last summer I drilled over 1,000 inches in live granite. I have learned how to dress

the tools well enough to set by the Sino-Swedish labour force by this means we do not have to depend upon the local blacksmith. The girls helped very willingly in such ways as they could, but the greatest bulk of the work is far too heavy for any woman. Yet they did do more on the trail than I thought possible. Of course they handle most of the camp end except the part for which a man is necessary. Still man-work is required for opening and breaking camp and the keeping up of the supply of wood. Also there is the work of bringing in supplies from town once a week. There is, in fact, a lot of dead work that is imperative before and during active advance in construction.

I have not yet secured a tractor and unless both you and Mr. Meyer or Mr. Susek come this summer we will hardly be ready for it this season. But if two of you or, better, all three could come that would make a different story. If you do come this season, and early as you suggest, I would like to use your help in the selection of a tractor and other equipment. The derrick you suggest will be necessary for handling the larger rocks, but might it not be better economy to locate one here and avoid shipping expense? Of course, you might be able to buy and select enough better where you are to off-set the shipping cost. I cannot say.

Now, you see the whole problem. I do not feel disposed to urge you to risk loss of work, particularly when we are not more ready for construction than we now are. On the other hand, there is much more building here than there was in 1931. The hour rates are not as high as with you but it appears that the amount of work is sufficiently larger so that a greater per year income might result. Yet you would have to figure some time to find yourself and break-in to the opportunities. Building here is much less seasonal than with you in the East. We can promise nothing, yet as I have watched the students I have found that faith does work. But you will have to make the decision.

We are very anxious to establish the permanent structure. We have already been delayed too long. Yet we are limited by what is practical. If we cannot have the help this year that would make some construction work possible then our work this summer will be of the same character as it was last. I would not suggest that you make a sacrifice for this, since you have your family, if Carmen would come as he has heretofore. We need you most imperatively for the construction problems when we are ready for them. Of course, it would be very fine indeed if we could have both of you, but I know that we have to content ourselves with what is practical.

Thanking you for your past help and devotedness to the Work, I remain

Yours most sincerely,