

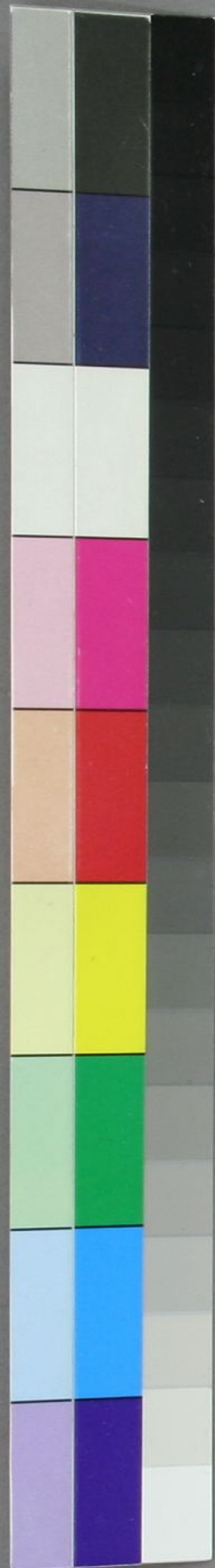
335

Hong Kong, Jan 1st, 1885.

My dear Mr Okuma:

I write this letter for the purpose of sending you good wishes for the New Year, and I cause it to be translated into Japanese, in order to save you trouble. The translation is made by a member of my own family, so it has at least the advantage of privacy, although it may not be in the most perfect style of language.

I think you have understood why I have not called upon you since the day when you kindly entertained me, nearly four years ago. The disease from which I had suffered for ten years became so severe in the summer of 1882 that I could no longer walk, and I have never again been able to use my legs at all. Of course it was impossible for me to go about, or to visit anybody. In August of last year, I started to go home to America, but my strength failed me on the way, and I was obliged



to stop here, at ²Hong Kong, where I have
been lying ill ever since. I hope to re-
sume my journey, however, at the end
of February, and to reach America in
the coming summer.

In all future times I shall watch
carefully for news from Japan, and you
will not be surprised when I say that
my chief interest will be connected with
your name, which I hope and expect
to see in the front rank of the highest
social distinction. Of many unfortunate
things I have seen, during my residence
in Japan, there is not one that has
seemed to me more unfortunate for the
welfare of the empire than the with-
drawal of your coöperation from the
Government service; and I never hear
of any changes in Japanese politics,
that I do not hope to learn, soon,
that you have consented to return to some
position of power and honor. I do not
believe it is possible that the name of
Okuma Shigenobu can long be kept from

3

the high respect and appreciation of the people, and I never doubt that a day will come when you will possess even a greater degree of strength than in the period when you rescued the finances of Japan from confusion, and built up the Treasury with a skill and an energy which others have since endeavored to imitate without having the ability to excel. It is mainly, and first of all, for the interest of Japan that I desire to witness your resumption of public duties; but I admit that I have a strong personal feeling in the matter, — for I do not cease to remember the consideration and the confidence which you were always kind enough to show me in past years. To labor in your behalf was always a gratifying privilege; and I regarded it as a real calamity, for me, that I did not, on my return to Japan in 1862, find you in a position where you might have derived some pleasure and perhaps some little benefit, from the work I had undertaken

4

in America and England. It was my sincere wish, when the news came that the Shimoda money was returned, that I could point to my own slight share in accomplishing that result, and could say that I had been entrusted with certain tasks by you. But, as matters stood in 1862, I could not feel sure that you would desire to have your name made public in any way. From all that I could learn, you wished to remain in complete retirement, and I therefore kept silence upon all subjects connected with my visit to Europe and the United States.

I shall probably remain in New York for some years, and if I could think of any way in which I could be of service to you there, it would give me great pleasure. If you should ever be in need of books which I could obtain for you, or if you should wish for information on any subject, which I could send you, I shall always be at your command. These things are often

1325
5
said in empty compliment, and are
intended only to touch the ear lightly,
and not to linger in the memory.
But I do not speak in that spirit.
The kindness you bestowed upon me, and
the confidence with which you honored me,
in other years, were such as to bind me
to you with feelings of deep regard and
gratitude; and although I may be able
to do but very little in return, you will
accept my assurance that nothing of
the past is forgotten, and that my
recollection of your numerous acts of
friendliness is genuine and will be
lasting.

With best wishes for this ^{year} and many
years to come, I am -

Yours sincerely,

E. H. House.

My address, until February 20th is
as follows:

Mr. E. H. House
Club Chambers,
Hong Kong.

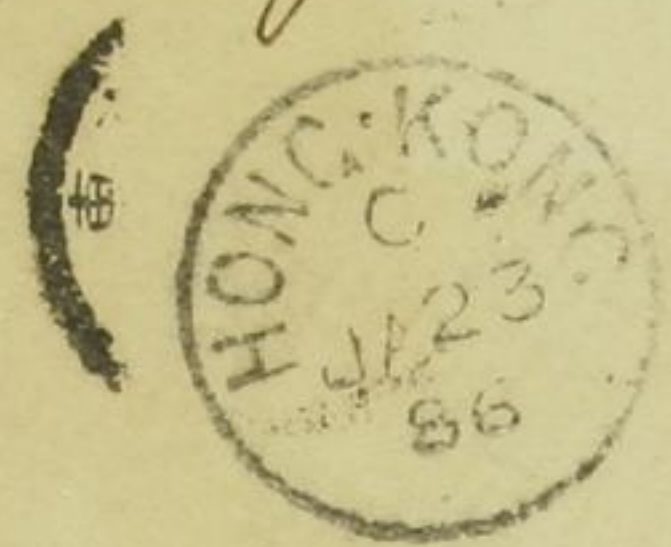
After February 20th

Mr. E. H. House
Franklin Bank Note Co.
New York City
U. S. America.

新年祝賀... 爲不事無上... 能從其年... 官報標... 亦新... 身... 志... 額... 一十首... 推... 年... 日... 中... 英...



S. S. "City of Peking"



Shigenobu Okuma, Esq.

Tokio
Japan.



大日本東京府下
大隈重信殿
橋子橋内

335



