

3 Dec 70

Dear Harold (What do you prefer? Harold comes naturally to us, from Haroldweisberg):

Had an opportunity to go to Lili's this afternoon and did, and a good thing too, since we're wiping everything off the board and starting over. The first time we went was in the evening, when there was only one sales girl there, very young, and with very little idea of what she was selling. Today we dealt with Lili HERSELF, and this is the situation (a better one, really, we think).

Contrary to the misinformation I relayed in my first letter, there are no silk brocade jackets, only a few - and without pants to go with them - in Thai silk, large block plaid in various colors, 3/4 length. Attractive on the hanger but not attractive enough to buy at (brace yourself) \$45 for the jacket alone. In any case, there were none in the right size.

If you're going to be sticky about this and insist on silk, it can be custom made - in silk brocade - but at a comparable price; the material itself is six-something a yard. Not worth it. Even Lili HERSELF (a formidable and extremely vocal Chinese lady with very definite opinions) says, Don't do it. Even if you wanted it, SHE would be difficult to persuade.

Well, that's out of the way.

Now then, our choices are:

A) Rayon brocade. Jacket very loosely fitted, hanging straight down from the shoulder; measured on the hanger, hem is 33" from shoulder (at point where collar is attached). Sleeves are 3/4 length with turned-up cuffs between 4" and 5" wide, but can be turned up wherever you wish at a lower point (higher would make the cuff too wide, unless of course you folded it over twice, which would probably be too bulky). Black pants.

The jacket to these sets is really very nice, and would be comfortable and easy to wear. Were not shown these the first time; those we did see then of about the same length are fitted. SHE says no to the fitted jacket, absolutely not, if you're choosing this for someone you haven't met. SHE wants the body in the store to be fitted.

To get back on the track, the sets we're talking about are on sale at \$19.95, regular price \$30. Since they're on sale there are only four left in size 16: a clear bright green, a softened medium blue, a pale greyed beige with a rather sophisticated glow to it. I believe the brocade design in these three is the same, a delicate butterfly in gold thread nicely spaced over the material.* The fourth color SHE called avocado but I'd describe it as a medium mossy green; the pattern is a chrysanthemum.

SHE's putting aside the blue (as coming closest to your third choice, aqua) until we hear from you, but if this should be fairly soon the others probably still will be there, if you'd prefer one of them. I should relay HER message to Lil: these are dressy enough to be worn to a party, no one would ever consider wearing the shorter jacket anywhere but at home! (((((This is in a whisper: I don't see that much difference myself, except that the colors in the longer jacket seem a little more subtle,))))))

If you decide on one of these, it might be helpful in determining size to have Lil's measurement from one shoulder tip to the other; these size 16's seemed wide to me, but of course they're meant to hang very loosely. Perhaps we should have her approximate height, too. In any case SHE says that if whatever you order isn't the right size it can be exchanged without any fuss.

That brings us to the end of A). We have, however, another possibility, to wit, B).

B) Rayon brocade. Similar to A) in style except that the jacket is 26" long, and the material is in an all-over design of small figures reminiscent of willow pattern plates. There are many more of these in various colors including your first choice of red. Black pants. Prices range from \$10.95 to \$15.95.

All we'll have to do when we hear from you is to call HER and SHE'll mail whatever you decide on. SHE says to figure up to \$2 for mailing - and insurance (SHE most emphatically does not trust the U.S. Mail).

No money has changed hands, SHE trusting us to pay later. (That's not clear. I mean to say SHE waved aside the deposit we were perfectly willing to make to hold the blue thing.) So why don't we all wait until you decide and we find out just how much is involved, postage and everything, and you send us a check later?

Please don't feel this has been any trouble at all. You know how it is when you have guests from out of town and you finally get to see the local points of interest? All the years we've been here we've never once investigated these Chinese clothes. Anyway, we've enjoyed doing it - ^{especially} ~~especially~~ meeting HER!

4 Dec - Held this over to call and check something with HER. Will mail tomorrow.

*Checking my notes before I tear them up, I see they say quite clearly "beige with blue butterfly." That's what comes of writing letters at 3 a.m. Actually what I describe as beige probably would be described in Vogue-ish circles as "champaigne."