

September 25, 1957
Letter No. 55 from Tai Ha Yiu to President (Syngman Rhee)

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Summary:

Yu briefs President Rhee on a meeting with Itagaki regarding the conflict over Korea's amendment proposal between Korea and Japan.

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REPUBLIC OF KOREA

KOREAN MISSION IN JAPAN

September 25, 1957

No. 55

TO : His Excellency
The President

FROM : Tai Ha Yiu

SUBJECT : Korea-Japan Problems.

At 10:30 a.m. on the 20th, I met Itagaki, the Asian Affairs Bureau chief of the Jap Foreign Ministry. I insisted that our amendment proposal should be inserted at least in the agreed minutes and that the problem should not be allowed to drag on for any length of time. Itagaki's reply was that he had made every effort to settle the problem but the Finance Ministry and the Economic Planning Board as well as the influential groups in the party were so opposed that it had not been possible for the Foreign Ministry to override such opposition. This being the case, there was no alternative but for the Korean side to accept his proposal made on September 6. Since the problem concerns Japan's sincerity, the Korean side could test it at the formal talks, he said. He asked that I urge the government to accept his proposal.

I told Itagaki that we could not accept his proposal and that I could only interpret the Japanese attitude as aimed at breaking off the talks. Thus on the 20th, we made no progress.

On the 21st which was Saturday, I met the Japs again. They were Itagaki, Miyake and Yatsugi. On this day, the Japs presented a new proposal. (Contents have been reported to the government by cable) Itagaki and Miyake explained that the new proposal, as compared to what the Japanese side had previously proposed, was a much weakened version although not as strong as the term "does not affect Korean claims, etc....." If the Korean side accepts it, they would agree to deleting reference to the U.S. Memorandum in the joint communique.

My reply was that it was not enough to get the understanding of our government. Heated discussion took place for many hours. This meeting too, failed to reach anything definite. I merely brought their proposal to the office for our reference.

September 23 was a Japanese national holiday.

On the 24th, another meeting was held from 6 p.m. Present were Itagaki, Miyake, Yatsugi and Tanaka. The deputy chief cabinet secretary had just returned from Yamaguchi.

As on the 21st, the Japs brought up their proposal made on that day stating that if the Korean side accepts it, the Japanese side would delete reference to the U.S. memorandum in the note verbale, although it would be difficult, however in order to settle the problem, they would do it. But it must be left intact in the joint communique. I again refused.



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The Japs were at their wits' end saying that if the Korean side was really desirous of settling the problems, it would accept their proposal without question.

I replied that since their attitude was such, I would make a personal suggestion, that of deleting the U.S. memorandum also from the joint communique, although I was not sure the government would approve it. This, the Japs refused, saying that it would mean outright acceptance of our amendment proposal.

I am awaiting instructions, if any.

Taikayin