

December 22, 1955

**Letter, Kim Yong-shik of the Korean Mission in Japan
to President Syngman Rhee**

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Summary:

Summary of press report on Japanese view on Japan-Korea relationship

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REPUBLIC OF KOREA

KOREAN MISSION IN JAPAN

Tokyo, December 22, 1955

Excellency:

As I reported by cable already, Your Excellency's letter addressed to Dr. Kagawa has already been delivered to him in person. At the same time I quietly informed Rene-George Inagaki, a staff writer for the English Mainichi, intimating that such letter was sent from Your Excellency. Evidently he interviewed Dr. Kagawa immediately after the latter received the said letter Tuesday morning (Dec. 20).

The following morning both the English and vernacular editions of the Mainichi News reported on this story, attaching major significance. The article which carried the full text of the letter bore the headline and introductory passages such as: for the interest of friendly Korea-Japan relations magnanimity is the very way to the peace; Japan's property claims preposterous; Japanese missions to the Communist bloc cannot be overlooked, etc.

The article created an atmosphere favorable to us, because the Japanese public, after reading it, started reviewing their understanding of the Korea-Japan problems. According to confidential information reaching this office Foreign Office sources here are not happy about the publication of Your Excellency's letter by Dr. Kagawa, since the Mainichi favorably reported our view.

Again this morning (Dec. 22) the Mainichi News reported on various aspects of reactions caused in Japan by the letter. It opined that "the fact that President Rhee replied in such length to Dr. Kagawa is watched with keen interest, as it might have favorable effects on the settlement of the problems pending between the two

countries./

His Excellency
President Syngman Rhee

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countries."

The Foreign Office is reported to be taking a cautious attitude in connection with the publication of the letter and apparently Foreign Minister Shigemitsu thought it better not to make any official comment. However, through leak-out it expressed its views as follows:

- a. Japan cannot recognize the Peace Line.
- b. Japan cannot agree with Korea on the latter's insistence that the so-called Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty was null and void ab initio.
- c. Japan is trying to find various ways of retracting the Kubota statement and wants Korea to talk with her in a spirit of mutual-concession, etc.

According to the Mainichi report Dr. Kagawa told the interviewing newsman after the receipt of the letter as follows:

"President Rhee's letter makes me very happy. From this letter I learnt that there is a great distance between the two sides' views. It is mutually disadvantageous to fight each other. President Rhee says that Japan's attitude, when he visited here, was cold. I think Japan should make concession, when it is necessary. Unless such a spirit pervade government as well as civilian circles, there will be no eternal peace between the two countries. More specifically, Japan should renounce her property claims to Korea. She should show magnanimity by cooperating with Korea's independence. Both Japanese Government and people should get rid of the idea of superiority toward the Koreans from higher standpoint. If I go to Korea to talk, no success can be attained, unless I take with me a hem of such spirit."

With sentiments of loyalty and esteem, I remain,

Most respectfully,



Enclosure: News clipping