

December 2, 1957

**Letter No. 65 from Tai Ha Yiu [Yu Tae-ha] of the
Korean Mission in Japan to President Syngman Rhee**

Citation:

"Letter No. 65 from Tai Ha Yiu [Yu Tae-ha] of the Korean Mission in Japan to President Syngman Rhee", December 2, 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, B-323-016, The Korean Diplomatic Mission in Japan, Reports from the Korean Mission to the United Nations and Republic of Korea Embassies and Legations, Syngman Rhee Institute, Yonsei University. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/123582>

Summary:

Yu briefs President Rhee about a meeting with Yatsugi regarding preliminary talks on proposal for Korea and Japan.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Syngman Rhee Institute, Yonsei University

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

KOREAN MISSION IN JAPAN

December 2, 1957

No. 65TO : His Excellency
The President

FROM : Tai Ha Yiu

In order to achieve what I had set out to do, I have been meeting Yatsugi two or three times daily. As to the ambassador I am not aware of what he is doing.

According to Yatsugi on the evening of Nov. 29, he tried to impress on Fujiyama that there was no other method of reaching a satisfactory conclusion to our preliminary talks than that of accepting my proposal. Although Fujiyama trusts Yatsugi and is anxious to have the detainee issue settled as quickly as possible, he is afraid that having got what they wanted, the Korean side might make a public release of his note and ruin him politically. Also, with Ambassador Kim the head of the Mission, even if he were to exchange the note in secret with the minister, he (Fujiyama) would be placed in a very embarrassing position were any trouble to arise. Yatsugi said he was advised by Fujiyama not to repeat the above to me, but as a friend, he said he had to.

I told Yatsugi that since we had already decided to work it out we must succeed and when that is done I would report to the ambassador. However, if Fujiyama prefers Amb. Kim, I would welcome it. I repeated that I depend on him to achieve our purpose.

At 2:00 p.m. on the 30th I met him again. This time, Yatsugi stated that Fujiyama had asked to see him at 5:00 p.m. but that he would meet me at 7:00 p.m.

At the scheduled hour Yatsugi came but with a rather depressed countenance. He stated that Fujiyama would not and could not make up his mind and was afraid to commit himself. He told Yatsugi that if at the formal conference the two sides come to agreement and the issue is brought to settlement, then there would be nothing to fear. However, if the two sides should come to differences over the amount of the property claims and there is a big margin in the figures requested by the Korean side and that offered by the Japanese and the case is hopeless, the Korean side would bring up the note. Even if the Korean side were not to do so, it is something the Japanese side must always expect them to do. If that is done, the government as well as the Diet will question why the foreign minister had to sign a separate confidential memorandum after he had formally signed the agreements at the preliminary talks. Fujiyama told Yatsugi that he could not present such a note to me. Fujiyama cited another hindrance in effect that the person to whom he is to give the note has someone above him stating that even if Amb. Kim were to make such a request he would refuse. Fujiyama argued that the foreign minister does not enjoy the same freedom as the other cabinet members.

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I realized then that what we are trying to do is rather hopeless.

Yatsugi brought up another suggestion, that of having Ishii instead of Fujiyama give us the note, since the former is deputy prime minister and currently acting prime minister. Of course in doing so, Yatsugi said, Ishii would consult Fujiyama.

My reply was that Fujiyama is the foreign minister, ^{and} there is no absolute necessity that we must get it from Ishii.

Over the telephone on Dec. 1, I asked Mr. Park if Ishii would do. He replied that he would let me know later.

It is my impression that the Japs fear we might blast them in public. My only purpose was to present a favorable report to His Excellency, but I seem to have failed whether due to my lack of ability or strength I do not know. Whenever I seem on the verge of achievement something always comes up to block it. It is with deep feelings of guilt that I write this.

Yai-hu-jin