

**October 12, 1955**

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

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**Summary:**

On Kim's meeting with Justice Minister to discuss Omura Detainee case

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## REPUBLIC OF KOREA

KOREAN MISSION IN JAPAN

Tokyo, October 12, 1955

Excellency:

Subject: Omura Detainee Case-My Meeting with Justice Minister

In spite of repeated insistence by our side to the Japanese Government that all of the Korean detainees at Omura who entered Japan before 1945 should be released at once, the Japanese Government so far has not complied with our request.

I felt the strong necessity for an early settlement of the issue and, therefore, met the Japanese Minister of Justice, Hanamura, today. Hanamura is one of Prime Minister Hatoyama's close advisors and is a lawyer as career.

When I demanded that the Japanese Government release the pre-war category of Korean detainees from Omura at once, he began his account of the Omura case, saying that most of these Koreans were homeless and had record of previous criminal convictions and that they would disturb peace if they were released, and so on.

After telling me a story from his side, Hanamura asked me if the Korean side would release Japanese fishermen held in Korea who served their sentences already, numbering some 200 and, if so, Japan would release the equal number of the Korean detainees from Omura.

When he said that the treatment of the detainees at the Omura camp was up to international standards, I refuted his contention, pointing out the fact that eight of those Koreans had died while under detention. I told him if the treatment were really of international standards, such a thing would not have happened. I said clearly that the people in question were brought over here forcibly by the Japanese side as laborers during the last War and that

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His Excellency  
President Syngman Rhee

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according to international practise Japan had no right to deport these Koreans unilaterally. From humanitarian point of view also, such a long detention was unreasonable, I said.

In the course of bitter exchange I asked the Japanese Justice Minister how long Japan intended to detain those Koreans. Hanamura then explained to me on the Japanese Immigration Law which subject them to deportation, according to him. I refuted, saying that the problem concerning the status of the Korean residents was discussed at the Korea-Japan Conference, however, had not been settled because the talks were broken off. I continued, if his idea had been right, the problem would not have been on the agenda of the Conference at all.

In the end I strongly insisted that the only way to settle the whole issue would be for Japan to immediately release the pre-war Koreans from Omura. I emphasized that Korea would not accept unilateral deportation of the pre-war Koreans.

At this point Hanamura became a little conciliatory, asking me if Korea would accept the deportation of Koreans who entered Japan illegally after 1945. I replied in the affirmative, however, insisting that Japan should release all the pre-war Koreans immediately from Omura.

Hanamura finally told me that he would direct the officials concerned to check up on details of the Korean detainees and study the matter concerning the release of the pre-war Korean detainees.

I got the impression from the above meeting that the Japanese Government would study the release of the pre-war Koreans from Omura. I am now closely watching the development of this problem.

With sentiments of loyalty and esteem, I remain,

Most respectfully,

*Junyōsuke Kurita*