

**September 4, 1957**

**Letter No. 46 from Tai Ha Yiu [Yu Tae-ha] of the  
Korean Mission in Japan to President Syngman Rhee**

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**Summary:**

Tai Ha Yiu briefs Syngman Rhee on a meeting with Itagaki regarding a Korea-Japanese cultural association helping Korean detainees at the Omura camp.

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## REPUBLIC OF KOREA

KOREAN MISSION IN JAPAN

Tokyo, September 4, 1957

No.46

TO : His Excellency  
The President

FROM : Tai Ha Yiu

SUBJECT : The XVIII Preliminary Session

At 10:30 a.m. this morning I met Itagaki at the Japanese Foreign Ministry. This meeting was requested on my part after I read in the Korean press issued in Japan that a so-called Korean-Japanese cultural association was being contemplated with the aim of guiding and helping the Korean students in Japan as well as helping the Korean detainees at the Omura camp after their release. The members of this organization were some Japanese who are little or completely unknown and Koreans such as Chung In Suk and a few others with Park Choon Keum, Chung Chan Chin and some Mindan members as advisors. I was aware of such a movement from rumors that were prevalent some time ago, but investigation showed that nothing positive had developed. I had not given much thought to it until this article appeared in the press. After discussing this matter with Ambassador Kim I decided to call on Itagaki as the article also stated that the association would operate under the guidance of the Minister of Justice. We were afraid the Japs would collaborate with these undesirable Koreans and release the detainees unilaterally.

I brought this matter up to Itagaki and told him to explain what it was all about.

Itagaki: "I am not so familiar with the whole business but I can say with responsibility that if the detainee issue is settled and the Korean detainees at the Omura camp are released and the question of their welfare arises the Japanese government will secure means of livelihood for them. During the Kim-Nakagawa talks on the detainee issue this matter was taken up. At that time Minister Kim requested that such an undertaking should be done jointly by the Japanese government and the Koreans in Japan. We were of the impression at that time that Minister Kim felt we could not be trusted and therefore asked that Koreans be represented. Some time ago, the Minister of Justice informed me of his plans for the undertaking but I have not received any word that such a plan had materialized. The Koreans of course bear no financial responsibilities."

Yiu: "From the attitude the Japanese government is taking, I am not too sure whether the detainee issue can be settled. But if we do come to agreement on it, the release of the Koreans as well as the method of providing for their livelihood must be discussed solely between the Japanese Foreign Ministry and the Mission here and not by the Ministry of Justice with the Korean groups in Japan. We will never recognize it."

Itagaki: "I understand. If we come to agreement on the detainees issue we will most certainly discuss such matters beforehand with the Mission and make arrangements."

"Have you any word from your government regarding the proposals I made at our last meeting?"

Yiu: "I told you that very day that we could not accept them although I did relay your suggestions to the government."

Itagaki: "What do you propose to do then?"

Yiu: "We have already placed before you our amendment proposals. However, as I have personally opined our government might agree to have the amendments omitted in the note verbale and the joint communique except in the agreed minutes."

Itagaki: "If your attitude is such it will lead to the breakup of the talks. What then do you intend to do?"

Yiu: "I don't know if anything can be done. What do you propose that we do when the Japanese side seems to be bent on breaking off the talks."

Itagaki: "Does it mean that the Korean side will not accept the U.S. Memorandum?"

Yiu: "You have our amendment proposal on the U.S. memorandum before you. If you read it carefully you will be able to get the answer."

Itagaki: "I beg of you to put out a new proposal that will be acceptable to us. The term "does not affect Korea's property claims" simply cannot be accepted."

Yiu: "I would like to say once and for all that there will be no further proposals on our side."

Itagaki: "I shall bring this matter up to the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister and do my best to see that a new proposal is made by our side. If it is presented to you I hope your side will take it into special consideration."

Yiu: "We will have to see it first to say anything, but if it is against our principle we will not accept it, of course."

This is another matter. Some 40,000 Koreans still remain in Karafudo. I would like to know what has been done about their repatriation. The Japanese government got most of its people repatriated from Moscow but did nothing about the Koreans whom they forced into that part of the world."

Itagaki: "We are in receipt of a note verbale from your Mission regarding the matter. We are at the present time negotiating with the Russians through Ambassador Kadowaki. According to information there are two kinds of Koreans in Karafudo (Sakhalin)--one-- those who were brought to Karafudo by the Japanese military and -two- those who went there of their own accord from Manchuria and north Korea. We are investigating this which I believe will take time. Also, most of the Koreans in that part are communists. Will the Korean government accept them without question? This is something we are primarily anxious to know."

*Handwritten note:*  
I don't know if anything can be done. What do you propose that we do when the Japanese side seems to be bent on breaking off the talks.

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✓ Yiu: "I am not concerned as to how they came to be in Karafudo, but there are some 40,000 of them there and it is the responsibility of the Japanese government to have them repatriated to Japan. As to whether they are communists, it is not for us to know. We can discuss that after they are back here. The immediate problem is to get them back."

Itagaki: "We are having trouble with our own communists and with the addition of the Koreans the situation would become worse. With the Korean government refusing to accept even the Koreans at the Omura camp, it is unlikely it will accept those from Russia."

Yiu: "Since you forced those people to go there, it is your responsibility to see that they are returned to Japan. Negotiations will not be difficult for you as you have already established diplomatic relations with Russia."

The meeting broke up after a talk of an hour and half.

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