

August 13, 1957

**Letter No. 41 from Tai Ha Yiu [Yu Tae-ha] of the
Korean Mission in Japan to President Syngman Rhee**

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Summary:

Yu briefs Syngman Rhee on a dinner given by Tanaka, where Itagaki expressed Japan's refusal to accept the Korean amendment proposal on the US. memorandum.

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REPUBLIC OF KOREA

KOREAN MISSION IN JAPAN

Tokyo, August 13, 1957

No. 41

TO : His Excellency
The President

FROM : Tai Ha Yiu

I attended the dinner given by Tanaka Tatsuo, deputy chief cabinet secretary together with Ambassador Kim. Itagaki and Yatsugi were also there.

During the course of the dinner, Itagaki addressed Ambassador Kim stating that although the ambassador must have heard the details of his meeting with me, he would like to repeat that it was impossible for Japan to accept the Korean amendment proposal on the U.S. memorandum. He stated that in order to draw up a counterproposal he had contacted the finance authorities, but failed to get their backing. Itagaki's request, therefore, was that the issue be referred to the overall talks. Another thing he asked was that we place full confidence in the sincerity of Prime Minister Kishi when he promised that Japan would not utilize the U.S. memorandum to bargain with Korea on the latter's property claims. His third request was that the Korean side present a modified and more flexible proposal on the property claims. Finally, he stated that if the Korean side concedes on the U.S. memorandum, he would with responsibility see to it that the Justice Ministry agree to accept the Korean proposal on the deportation issue.

Tanaka backed Itagaki on this, stating that since the talks had reached this stage and since the Japanese side showed every sincerity, the Korean side should reciprocate with some flexibility.

Admitting that he had not been long in the Foreign Ministry to be thoroughly familiar with Korea-Japan problems, Itagaki referred to the agreements previously made between Kim and Nakagawa on the U.S. memorandum and other problems, stating that although the Japanese side was not inclined to make an issue of them, he was merely mentioning them for reference.

I told the Japs that the Kim-Nakagawa talks never reached any agreement, therefore they should not bring up the matter again. As to the Korean amendment proposal on the property claims, there would not be another one and that the current one was final.

Referring to the articles in the Asahi Shimbun and the editorial which appeared in the Asahi Evening News of last evening, I pointed out that the occupation policy of Japan in Korea was not to be compared with that of Italy. In Korea, all Japanese property, public and private, were vested in USAMGIK under its ordinance 33 and transferred to the Korean government through the Initial Financial and Property Settlement between the U.S. and Korea. In the San Francisco Peace Treaty itself it was clearly stipulated that Japan recognize the validity of disposition of property of Japan and Japanese nationals made by or pursuant to

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directives of the U.S. Military Government in Korea.

The Cairo Declaration described the state of the Korean people as enslavement and the USAMGIK deported all Japanese to Japan. All the declarations and treaties, I said to the Japs, show that the allied nations confirmed the state of enslavement of the Korean people. During the occupation of Korea by Japan, the Japanese government tried to deprive the Korean people of their basic human rights, forcing them to change their names and went so far as to forbid the use of their language in schools and even in their own homes. In fact, Japan tried to wipe off the whole Korean race. The Japanese government did more than enslave the Korean people during their long years of occupation. The Italians did no such thing. Therefore, there can be no comparison with the Italian peace treaty, for the occupation policies of the two countries were entirely different.

I spoke for half an hour to the silent and astounded Japs amidst a very tense atmosphere.

In answer to my blast, Yatsugi expressed full understanding of our attitude. However, it would be most regrettable if the talks which have come to such a stage should be broken off. He spoke of his difficult position and of the criticism he was receiving for being pro-Korean.

I told Yatsugi that I had the deepest respect for him and my other friends and that those Japanese who criticize him do so without realizing that his efforts are for the good of his country and not for Korea. I further stated that because of my friendship with them, I find myself unable to say and do as I want.

My concluding remarks were that the Japanese side by their utterances made at the dinner plainly showed what they had in mind leading me to believe that it would be very difficult to settle our problems. Therefore, with the weather so warm and the situation so discouraging, instead of going back and forth and gaining nothing except derogatory articles in the Japanese press, the ambassador and I, at an opportune time, would have to report to our government the hopelessness of the situation and even the wisdom of our continued presence in Japan by wasting time and money.

Apparently disturbed at this remark, the Japs begged me not to be so agitated; that they would do everything in their power to bring the problems to settlement. However, as previously stated, Japan cannot accept the Korean amendment proposal on the U.S. Memorandum.

My conclusion is that the Japs will not accept our amendment draft on the U.S. Memorandum as evident from their statements.