

October 23, 1959
**Record of Conversation between Vice Premier Chen
Yi and Matsumura Kenzo**

Citation:

"Record of Conversation between Vice Premier Chen Yi and Matsumura Kenzo", October 23, 1959, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 105-00667-03, 37-49. Obtained by Amy King and translated by Caixia Lu.

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Summary:

Matsumura Kenzo met with Chen Yi, the Vice Premier, and talked about the upcoming United Nations General Assembly and Sino-Japanese trade.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Henry Luce Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Record of Conversation from Vice Premier Chen Yi's Reception of Matsumura Kenzo

[Not Reviewed]

Date and Time: October 23, 1959, 10.30am to 1pm

Venue: Wuchengdian Hall

Attendees: Liao Chengzhi

Interpretation and Minutes: Liu Deyou

After exchanging pleasantries, the duo began talking about weiqi (Go). Vice Premier Chen Yi expressed approval to invite Japanese players such as Kensaku Segoe and Go Seigen to visit China this winter or next spring.

Chen: Which dan rank has Mr. Matsumura achieved in weiqi?

Matsumura: As I am a politician, my dan (rank) may be high but I am not too good.

Chen: We must not let the China-Japan game end up in stalemate and must keep it going. But Nobusuke [Kishi] has caused it to reach an impasse.

Matsumura: The fact that I brought up the weiqi issue first today is also because I wish to talk about what you wanted to say. Our countries may take different political positions but we share the same culture and are both Asian countries. We should work hand in hand for world peace and the Asia's prosperity. You mentioned Nobusuke earlier. I am not defending him but that was definitely not his original intention. He will definitely change his attitude toward the issue of Sino-Japanese relations. This time round, I have given the Chinese an impression that I am here to defend Nobusuke. This puts me in a very difficult position.

I can say on behalf of the Japanese people that they would like Japan and China to be on friendly and peaceful terms. In the past, the Japanese warlords have caused your country much loss in war. Now the Japanese people all hope to have peace and prosperity for the two countries.

The aim of my visit to China this time round is to get the Chinese to understand the Japanese people's feelings, eliminate the obstacles and misunderstanding between the two countries, enable the two countries to establish proper relations and bring about real rapprochement

Chen: I am willing to make our stand clear to Mr. Matsumura. We have no misunderstanding toward Japan. We know that the Japanese people in general, including the workers, peasants, intellectuals and some progressive capitalists are willing to see China and Japan on good terms, and they don't wish to see a world war or another war between China and Japan. The Chinese people understand what the broad masses in Japan are thinking. We have no misunderstanding. The facts must be stated here. We welcome our Japanese friends to visit China. We welcomed some friends from the Japanese Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Liberal Democratic Party, the unions and cultural groups to visit China. This shows that we are willing to be friendly. Otherwise we won't have welcomed them. I am sure Mr. Matsumura can see this very clearly. The Chinese people wish to have interactions with our Japanese friends and you are willing to come here on account of friendship. It won't work either if we invite you but you won't come. That is to say that both sides are willing to understand each other better and boost our friendship. We are optimistic about the future. Indeed we have some issues that are not completely resolved, in terms of bilateral relations and trade we have already [original unclear] Important historical issues [original unclear] have yet to be resolved but that is just a

temporary phenomenon. As long as both sides make an effort, this temporary phenomenon will be over very quickly. You are an important Japanese politician. I too have an important responsibility in China's foreign relations. Thus I hope that we can honestly exchange our views today. Of course, Premier Zhou Enlai will still talk to you in future and Mr. Liao Chengzhi will also have detailed discussions with you, and many other Chinese leaders will exchange their views with you.

Now let us discuss the first issue, which is that of Sino-American relations and Sino-Japanese relations. We agree that Japanese-American relations must be good and should be good and we aren't jealous about it. We don't want Japanese-American relations to fracture before we can establish Sino-Japanese relations. That's not our logic. The Sino-American relationship is another issue. In terms of Sino-American relations, the United States is still occupying our Taiwan, and it says that we are the invaders on the issue of North Korea. They interfere with our domestic politics on the issue of Tibet. In the United Nations, it mobilizes its majority to oppose China gaining its legitimate place in the United Nations. Although Sino-American relations are quite difficult, we maintain contact in Warsaw. Don't let the impasse in Sino-American relations get in the way of Sino-Japanese relations, and don't let good Japanese-American relations get in the way of good Sino-Japanese relations. There is no issue so long as Japan does not revive militarism together with the United States and make use of the latter's military bases in Japan to harm China. But if Japan colludes with the United States and makes use of the latter's military bases in Japan to harm Mainland China, ships nuclear weapons to Japan and revives militarism, in order to invade China again, then we can't talk about being friends.

Liao Chengzhi: That is the candid opinion of Vice-Premier Chen Yi.

Chen: The Chinese people are concerned about the United States rearming Japan to harm China. We don't oppose Japan and the United States maintaining friendly relations in general, and we shouldn't. I've met some Japanese friends in the past and they've always maintained that the Chinese friends didn't understand what is going on, that Japan would not collude with the United States to invade China and would not participate in a world war. China had misunderstood us and not even Nobusuke would do that. To that, I must explain that I have my own views. Facts must be stated here. We don't just slap an accusation on anyone. That is also unfair. We must state facts. At the Bandung Conference, Premier Zhou Enlai spoke to Mr. Takasaki Tatsunosuke, head of the Japanese delegation. I had also attended the Bandung Conference at the time.

Liao: Mr. Fujiyama Aiichiro was also present.

Chen: Mr. Takasaki said at the time, China will join the United Nations very soon. Premier Zhou Enlai said, China will join the United Nations later than Japan. Japan will do so earlier. Japan joined the United Nations one year later. This proved that Premier Zhou's estimation was correct. Up to now, China has yet to join the United Nations. Our Japanese friends should think about it, and we should also think about it. Japan has been following the lead of the United States the moment it joined the United Nations and voted to oppose China regaining its legitimate place in the United Nations. Of course, it is difficult in Japan's position to vote in our favor, but you could have just abstained from voting. Not only does it not hurt your relationship with the United States, you can also answer to China. But Japan stood on the side of the United States to oppose China. We can't help but think that Japan is colluding with the United States to give us a hard time. This cannot be justified. But many Asian and African countries have voted in our favor. Their situations are not as difficult as Japan's. But Japan votes in opposition every year. It has forgotten about China after it entered the United Nations and doesn't support us anymore. Who can guarantee that Japan won't gang up with the United States to invade China should war break out in the future? I am a soldier thus I am worried. If you abstain from voting, it is also a consolation for us. Of course it doesn't mean that China will regain its legitimate

position if Japan votes in our favor. That's not the case. One more or one less vote doesn't matter. The problem is that things were very unpleasant between China and Japan over the last four decades. The Japanese bullied the Chinese. Eight years of war caused China to suffer great losses. We have to make up for the hurt caused to the Chinese people. But Japan caused hurt to the Chinese people once again just as it gained its place. We felt that this is very regrettable. We don't care about that one vote but politically we can't rest easy. There were also some Asian and African countries, Latin American countries and western countries that had voted to oppose China regaining its legitimate position in the United Nations. But they had told us in advance. They said that they hoped China would understand their difficult circumstances. That is justifiable. Although voting against China is still an unfriendly gesture, but Japan didn't even warn us in advance and put on the airs of a great power. We can't tolerate that. Li Hongzhang can't tolerate that, Empress Dowager Cixi can't tolerate that and Chiang Kai-Shek can't tolerate that but at least I Chen Yi cannot. If you adopt such an attitude, it is empty talk even if you say you want China and Japan to be on friendly terms.

I must make it clear that we are not making it a condition that Japan must vote in our favor at the United Nations General Assembly next September and this is not a precondition for China and Japan to engage in talks. The measures that the Japanese government is taking will only hurt the feelings of the Chinese people, and does not benefit Sino-Japanese relations. Mr. Matsumura is my senior, I am younger than you are, but when the two of us become friends, I should understand your predicament and you should understand mine. It can't be one-sided, otherwise the friendship will fracture. At the Bandung Conference, Premier Zhou spoke to Takasaki Tatsunosuke. Thereafter, Japan boosted its standing and turned around to attack China. I can't find the right words to express how I feel. A minority among Japan's ruling class, with the exception of Mr. Ishibashi [Tanzan] and Mr. Matsumura and many other friends, only look to the United States and not China. I would like to say that I am mindful that there is the United States and I am aware of its existence and its power. But I am also mindful that there is China and China's power is growing. Japan is a strong and able nation. It won't be willing to acquiesce to American occupation. If Japan wishes to be free of American occupation and become a peaceful nation, then it has to regain its status as a world power. I suppose this must be on the minds of some among the Japanese leadership. [? Original unclear] and the idea of an independent Japan. The thought of 90 million Japanese people living under American occupation is unimaginable. We support the Japanese people's demands for America to withdraw their military bases and troops from Japan. By then, Japan and the United States become real friends. We hope that Japan and the United States can become real friends and we hope that China can become real friends with the United States and Japan. We don't want to see a world war. I would like to make it clear to Mr. Matsumura that there are many opposition politicians in the United States who would like to come to China, Adlai Stevenson, Averell Harriman and five other congressmen visited China [original unclear] and a huge group of journalists, about 40 people came to China. Now they are in Hong Kong requesting to [original unclear] now we neither [original unclear] nor [original unclear] but now is not the right time because the United States is adopting an unreasonable attitude toward us. In the past we had told our Japanese friends that Japan could make use of the impasse in Sino-American relations to get rid of the American military bases. It is foolish to stand on the side of the United State against China. There is no benefit to Japan. The more you obedient you are toward the Americans, the more arrogant they become. If you oppose them once or twice, then they will be respectful. At least Prime Minister Nobusuke was very unwise. That is the first issue. We aren't worried about the Japanese people and those who are enlightened, but we are worried about part of the Japanese leadership who have a policy of acquiescing to the Americans. American planes are in great demand all over the world but not in China. China's policy is beneficial to world peace because it prevents the United States from doing as it wishes. We won't attack the United States. We don't bomb the United States Seventh Fleet although we have some bases along our coast. They don't hit us and we don't hit them. We are friendly to the Americans. W.E.B. Du Bois, an African American scholar in his 90s, visited China with his wife for more than two months. We are also going to invite African American

singers to visit China. The United States is mobilizing a majority in the United Nations to interfere with China's domestic politics on the Tibet issue. The Americans are most upset about losing a market like Mainland China. China is now developing on a massive scale, but the United States doesn't get to be even a little part of it. This upsets it the most. At the same time, the United States does not want to see China and Japan improve their relations. We are willing to develop good relations with Japan. I think Nobusuke's way of dealing with the United States is not friendly to China.

The second issue is that of Sino-Japanese trade. In the past, during the times of the Katayama, Yoshida and Hatoyama cabinets, although we didn't do much, Sino-Japanese trade was still developing. That stopped with the Nobusuke cabinet. First, we reflected on this and felt that the fault did not lie with China, the Japanese Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Japanese people and the Liberal Democratic Party. The facts must also be stated in this case. Masanosuke Ikeda handled the fourth trade agreement and did a very good job. The agreement was signed and we could have embarked on trade cooperation on a big scale. At that time, both sides agreed that after we signed the deal and went back to our respective countries, Premier Zhou Enlai would make a speech or declaration in support of this agreement on China's end. On Japan's end, if it were inconvenient for Nobusuke to publicly say something in the newspapers, he could just make a statement in support of the agreement in the National Diet. China fulfilled its promise. Premier Zhou made a speech in agreement and support of Sino-Japanese trade, but Japan failed to keep its promise. Nobusuke did not indicate his stance and he did not say a thing. Not even a single sentence. That's how [original unclear] your Japanese Prime Minister is! He is again adopting the airs of the Japanese imperialists. Things developed to a stage where the Chinese flag was desecrated and he did not even punish the culprits, but only detained them for a few hours. This will of course affect Sino-Japanese trade. Japan is advanced in culture and science, and the Japanese people are able and have promising futures. We aren't changing our estimations of this. But isn't China also a great power? Doesn't it have a long history and rich culture? Can our country be insulted? We don't insult your country and flag. The world is so big, you can engage in trade with the United States and with Chiang Kai-Shek. Don't come to us. That's the situation for trade and naturally for the trade agreement. The world is big indeed, why must you come to China? If you can, by all means go make friends around the world. We have stated our attitude. China does not bully people and other countries. China believes in ruling by virtue, Marxism is the true way of ruling with virtue. If the United States bullies us, we won't take it lying down. Recently, the Indians wanted to bully us and we didn't take it lying down. If the Chinese were to bully others, that is also unreasonable. We are friendly to those who are friendly to us. Some American businessmen want to do business with us in Hong Kong. We didn't approve. It was entirely an attitude of self-defense. We are willing to listen to Mr. Matsumura's explanation of Nobusuke's actions. As for Nobusuke's and Aiichirō Fujiyama's verbal attacks of China, we shall not talk about them here. Mr. Liao will hand this document to you later and you can see if we could have tolerated them or not. We had also said some things to oppose Japan, but we were only saying things to oppose a particularly person, someone who is hostile to us, and we are opposed to the revival of Japanese militarism. We have not insulted your national flag nor opposed the Japanese people. If we did, please point it out. I can apologize and guarantee that it would not happen again. We think that you are not here to defend Nobusuke, but to be our friend. We are adopting a Confucian attitude in thinking that it is always a pleasure to welcome a friend from afar.

Damaging Japanese-American relations and Japan's relationship with Chiang Kai-Shek are not the preconditions for good Sino-Japanese relations, because Japan has its difficulties. We just ask that Japan don't say anything that discriminates against China, and don't obstruct the development of normal relations. We should make up for the hurt suffered by China and Japan for the past four decades and not make it worse (?) We should not cause more unhappiness. We are optimistic about the future of Sino-Japanese relations. We are grateful to the Japanese Communist Party, Socialist

Party, Mr. Ishibashi and Mr. Matsumura for visiting China. We can also send people to Japan but this will depend on Japan's initiative. As for who forms the Cabinet and who becomes the Prime Minister, that is the affair of the Japanese people. We can only ask the Japanese government to be friendly to China. Our government is one that is friendly to Japan. It is best to let everything be handled by the present government. The relations of all the countries in the world are the same. In the past, the non-government agreements and trade agreements that were signed were in fact all the work of the government. It is untrue to say that they have nothing to do with the government. Masanosuke Ikeda and Saburo Nango can't possibly have no ties to the government. They won't be here if the Japanese government did not permit them to. The problem is that the Japanese government is hostile to us, thus it can only be left to Japanese friends to do it. The Japanese government's policy mistake is totally responsible for this. It depends on Nobusuke not making any hostile statements about China. That is the crux of the issue. Second, the restoration of normal relations between the two countries should not be hindered. Third, there should be no talk of "two Chinas". Japanese-American relations and Japanese-Taiwanese relations can proceed as normal. But Japan is giving us a hard time in the United Nations, and rebukes us on the Tibetan issue. The Sino-Indian border issue was originally a small one, but the Japanese government also joined in to give us a hard time. The civil war in Laos was instigated by the United States but the Japanese government spokesperson said China was interfering in the domestic politics of Laos. Japan even sent observers to Laos to make a big fuss and even headed the United Nations survey mission. That makes us very uneasy toward Japan. I honestly say that there are more than a hundred countries including the United States, Soviet Union, Japan, China and India in the world and all of them should be recognized and should co-exist peacefully and not treat each other with hostility. There's an old saying in China that a close neighbor is more helpful than a distant relative. Japan and China are close neighbors separated by only a narrow strip of water. Others describe China as a rising sun, but the sun rose from your end, and the water flows toward you. No matter how good the United States is, it is occupying a piece of your territory and also occupying a piece of our territory. It is the distant relative and we are the close neighbors. I hope that you can convey these words to Mr. Nobusuke when you return to your country and hope that he can do some work to keep our relations friendly.

Matsumura: After listening to your very clear and candid views, I feel even more strongly that I have made the right decision to come to China. I too would like to share my frank views. On the whole, I am in complete agreement with what you said today about the two countries having friendly relations. After 50 years of going down the wrong road, particularly the wrong road that the Japanese authorities in charge embarked on, we should move things back on the right track and continue along this track henceforth.

Chen: Don't bring up the past. Don't bring up what happened in the past during the Sino-Japanese war. Just talk about what happened in the past decade, the decade after World War II ended and the decade after China's liberation. The bad things that happened for the past two years were all Nobusuke's doing. I hope you can make a breakthrough. The Japanese Communist Party, Socialist Party and Mr. Ishibashi are all working hard for this, thus we are also having hopes and are also very glad.

Matsumura: I will not defend Nobusuke, but I hope that you can understand Japan's position. Like you said, Japan is providing the United States with military bases, and that hinders the Sino-Japanese friendship. That is a fact. What led to this situation? That's because Japan lost a war. The United States and the Allies used force to sign a treaty with Japan and Nagasaki was occupied as well. Such a situation ran contrary to the wishes of the Japanese people. You said that Japan offered the United States military bases to revive militarism and harm China. That is incorrect. The Japanese people did not wish to provide military bases to the United States to harm China. As for Taiwan, there are many issues. To be honest, Japan took Taiwan to be its territory for fifty years. After Japan's loss in the war, it was unfortunately seized by the United

States. Thus Japan lost its right to speak and that resulted in today's situation. I hope you can understand. You say Japan wants to gradually militarize itself. That is not the will of the Japanese people. The current Japanese government has not considered such a move either. If Nobusuke thinks this way, the Japanese people would not follow him. Please be assured about this. No matter how powerful he is, Nobusuke cannot drag the Japanese people onto the path of militarism.

Chen: The things I've said earlier were mainly for Nobusuke's benefit and for the benefit of those who are organizing the Self Defense Forces. Nobusuke will fail for sure. I am not afraid of him. If he comes attacking, I will wipe him out.

Matsumura: Ishibashi and myself are both not in the mainstream in the Liberal Democratic Party. We are the opposition but it is inconceivable that Nobusuke is someone who wants to revive militarism and start a war with China.

Chen: Can we reach an agreement on this point? That Nobusuke wants to revive militarism but is prevented from doing so due to your opposition.

Matsumura: Saying so is too unfair to Nobusuke. He does not necessarily want to revive militarism.

Chen: Can we say that the United States wants to do so?

Matsumura: I can't guarantee.

Chen: I totally understand your position. You have choice but to say so. Our positions are different.

Matsumura: I propose to abolish the bases and avoid a war. The people of the two countries can work together to eliminate the horrors of war. That is my wish and it is what must be done.

Chen: You are friendly to the United States on the one hand and to us on the other. But Nobusuke is only friendly to the United States on the one hand and strikes us with his other hand.

Matsumura: Earlier you mentioned Li Hongzhang. Our Japanese people do not think of it this way. We hold great respect for China's new developments and are very amazed by its huge achievements. The fact that you mentioned Li Hongzhang from the Qing Dynasty shows that you don't understand the Japanese people's feelings. Nobusuke will not have such an idea either.

Chen: We will talk about our appraisal of Nobusuke later. Thank you for your praise of China. We do not oppose Nobusuke as an individual, we only oppose his policies that are hostile to China. We don't have hard feelings toward any single individual.

Matsumura: I am still doubtful that Nobusuke has a policy. Let me talk about another issue, one that we care most about and carry the most hopes for, mutual visits by Soviet and American leaders. We hope to make contributions to peace. Of course, there are still some problems between the Soviet Union and the United States. There are people in the Japanese government who say that there is nothing much to the joint declaration issued by Khrushchev and Eisenhower, but I think it is a big deal. Now the world is heading toward peace. I saw in the newspapers yesterday and the day before that the Chinese government expressed full agreement for peaceful development. I express my heartfelt gladness. I hope that we can have some results.

I think if we are impatient to resolve the issues quickly, it might spark a huge conflict or even lead to a war. I propose to resolve them over the long term. As long as we pursue the path of peace, we can definitely solve the problems. China is now embarking on large-scale development. When your country becomes a peaceful country with a great culture, all the problems will naturally be resolved, and peace in Asia can also be realized. From the bottom of my heart, I hope that this movement for peace will succeed.

I agree with your views. To have the United States abolish its military bases in Japan and to withdraw their troops from Japan requires long term planning. It will take several years and not days to make it happen. It is not something that will happen in a year or two or five years. But if you are friendly to China, it will aid your negotiations with the United States. We are also prepared to spend ten years, fifteen years, and twenty years on Taiwan. It doesn't matter if Chiang Kai-Shek has an embassy in your country.

Matsumura: Japan has two positions, and China has two positions as well. We are a member of the free country bloc. You are a powerful member of the Communist bloc. But we are also neighbors in Asia, and are both Asian nations. From this perspective, we share a common position. In terms of political systems, we are a free country and you are a Communist country, but we can look beyond political systems and acknowledge the differences in our systems. Should we join forces by focusing on what we have in common as Asian countries? That is my purpose for visiting China.

Chen: Let me add one more position. We are all part of mankind. The Americans, the Japanese and the Chinese are all part of mankind. That is what we have in common. Therefore we don't want to kill each other, be hostile to each other, we don't want war and we want peace. That is our common stand.

Matsumura: I concede defeat.

Lastly, I want to talk about one more point. You said you welcome our government leaders to China. I think if we don't hold preparatory meetings, it is hard to say what would be the outcome. Thus we need to have politicians like myself to come here to discuss things first, to create opportunities for government leaders to engage in talks. We should have discussions on the fundamental issues that our two countries face.

Liao: The candid exchange between you and Vice Premier Chen today is very valuable. I suggest that both sides should not publicize what has been discussed to the media. We are prepared to issue a statement just to say that we had cordial talks.

Matsumura: Fine. Let's do it this way.