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Matsumura Kenzo's Remarks on his Visit to China and the Peoples' Responses

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Summary:

Ishibashi Tanzan, the former Japanese Prime Minister, made a comment on his visit to China, saying "I believe that we need not rush Sino-Japanese relations."

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Part One: Matsumura talking about the purpose of his visit to China

On August 28, after his meeting with Ikeda Hayato on the question of visiting China, he [Matsumura] said: "To visit Communist China has nothing to do with revising the [U.S.-Japan] security treaty and inner-party affairs."

On August 29, after his meeting with Ishibashi, he said: "Maximum efforts are to be made to create a friendly atmosphere between the two countries and bring the relations between the two countries one step further. As for the question of resuming trade, no actual achievement can be expected." (August 29, the Mainichi Shimbun)

On August 29, Tokyo news reported: Ishibashi is scheduled to set off in early September, but Matsumura suggested visiting China after the National Day in mid-October. There are subtle divisions between the two. The reasons for Matsumura not going with Ishibashi are said to be: 1) The Chinese side will be busy before the National Day, so talks and visits with Chinese heads of states may not be conducted thoroughly; 2) To wait for the results of Ike [Dwight Eisenhower] and [Nikita] Khrushchev's mutual visits and then start working on the question of Chinese Communist Party; 3) He was not officially invited.

On September 4, Matsumura told the media: "I will visit China as an individual, and exchange views with Chinese leaders. This visit is not out of the expectation for some certain results, but if my visit could to some extent eliminate the existing misunderstandings between our two countries and sow the seeds of friendship, it would be extremely fortunate...During this visit to China, I am going to discuss the question of 'peace and friendship' with the Chinese heads of state. Besides, I would like to see the recent construction work of a fast developing China and have direct contact with the Chinese culture which I've long been interested in." (Kyodo News, Tokyo, September 4)

On September 26, he said in Kanazawa: "I've been longing to visit Communist China since four or five years ago, now the time has finally come, and I am set to leave on October 18. I would like to closely examine the current situation of Communist China, meet with people holding high positions, and have a frank exchange of views. But I have no plan for a joint communique; therefore, I am not expecting any achievements. But I assume my visit might be beneficial for the future." (Kyodo News, Tokyo, September 26)

On September 29, Matsumura said after visiting Ishibashi: "It seems that Ishibashi has made great efforts on issues which he should have persisted in. Therefore, during my visit, I would like to avoid some certain tricky issues, and take the time to thoroughly visit the construction sites there. I think that this kind of act is friendly and understanding and might serve as a method." (Asahi Shimbun, September 29,)

On October 3, he said while meeting with reporters: "As for the question of breaking the deadlock between China and Japan, Mr. Ishibashi has discussed the principles, thus I believe it is not necessary to repeat that. I know many people in China, so I am

going to exchange opinions with them frankly and honestly, and it would be great if some agreement could be reached.” (NHK Radio, October 4)

On October 4 after meeting with persons in the financial circles in Osaka, he said: “I am planning to conduct my talks with Chinese leaders based on the principles decided by Ishibashi, and work hard to break the deadlock between China and Japan.” (Asahi Shimbun Radio, October 4)

Part Two: Matsumura’s remarks on Sino-Japanese relations and “the inseparability of politics and the economy”

On September 26 he said in Kanazawa: “As for the question of the inseparability of politics and the economy, I don’t know to what extent we shall separate them. Japan ought to take its responsibility as a liberal country, and Communist China has its own stance as a strong member of the communist countries. But both China and Japan are Asian countries; therefore, a common goal must be found.” (Kyodo News, Tokyo, September 26)

On September 29, after his visiting to Ishibashi: “Ishibashi agreed that the true meaning of not separating politics and economy is for the prosperity of Asia, and the cooperation between two countries is must from this perspective. It seems that it should not be a problem within reason. ”

On October 3, when taking interviews in Osaka, he said: “I believe that we need not rush Sino-Japanese relations. We need to start from the stance that we are both Asian, eliminate misunderstandings, and then conduct economic and cultural exchanges. Furthermore, the question of not separating politics and the economy, raised in the Ishibashi-Zhou Joint Communique, has triggered discussions within the LDP and people have different opinions. If by politics they mean promoting Sino-Japanese economic and cultural exchanges, then I have no opposition. As for the question of revising the Japanese-American security treaty, I think that we should treat it as a separate matter.” (NHK Radio, October 4)

(Same as above) “If politics refers to the prosperity of Asia and world peace...then, it is a matter of fact that politics and the economy should not be separated. However, the security treaty issue is a different case; to combine them as one is not proper.” (Asahi Shimbun, October 3)

Part Three: Matsumura’s attitude towards results produced by Ishibashi’s visit to China and the “Zhou-Ishibashi Communique”.

When Ishibashi was in Beijing, Matsumura said that “it would be better for him to return on time. If he lingered for too long, he might be trapped by the Chinese side.” (“Foreign Affairs Brief”, Issue 440, September 16)

After reading the Communique, he repeatedly praised Ishibashi’s achievements. He said: “Whatever the Communique is like is not important; what matters is the fact of having talked and what has been talked about.”

Matsumura was very careful about his words; he said that since he is going to visit Beijing soon, he refuses to make any comment on it. But he said: “I believe that Ishibashi has left some room for me to take progressive methods to improve the relations between the two countries.” (Central News Agency, September 20; original text was in English)

Part Four: Personages of all circles’ response to Matsumura’s visit to China

(Economist, August 18) He (Matsumura) had the same ideal of "Pan-Asianism" in his heart as Okakura Tenshin [Okakura Kakuzō]. He started to show interest in the Asian continent when he was still in school, and was very enthusiastic about the question of China during the pre-war era of constitutional democratic parties. Therefore he opposed to Japan's "leaning-to-one-side" policy with the United States. It is said that although he is very cautious about his words and behaviors, he secretly opposed revising the security treaty. Therefore, he put great emphasis on national emotions and the masses. He believed that according to the situation of both inside and outside the party, it would not be easy to revise the treaty and get it signed and approved. It is said that he is planning to visit China. For this purpose, he is trying to find out in secret what China's intentions are.

(Political Journal, September 2) Matsumura would take a parliament member who belongs to the Ikeda faction with him to visit China. It is sufficient to see that Matsumura is taking a rather nuanced method when dealing with the question of the CCP and the future political situation. Matsumura's intention would be better viewed as approaching the CCP through a back door rather than contacting CCP leaders from the front one, so they might receive different effects from those of Ishibashi. Therefore, aside from Takeyama, he also hoped that Kosaka Zentarō, who is known to be a so-called intellectual within the Ikeda faction, will go with him. The other biggest reason for Matsumura to set his eyes on the Ikeda faction is his consideration that he has to cooperate with them in his future career.

The two factions within the party diverged on whether or not Kosaka should go as well, so it has not been decided yet.