

November 21, 1957

**Letter No. 61 from Tai Ha Yiu [Yu Tae-ha] of the
Korean Mission in Japan to President Syngman Rhee**

Citation:

"Letter No. 61 from Tai Ha Yiu [Yu Tae-ha] of the Korean Mission in Japan to President Syngman Rhee", November 21, 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, B-323-028, The Korean Diplomatic Mission in Japan, Reports from the Korean Mission to the United Nations and Republic of Korea Embassies and Legations, Syngman Rhee Institute, Yonsei University. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/123590>

Summary:

Yu briefs President Rhee on a meeting with Itagi, chief of the Asian Affairs Bureau of Japan, regarding the Korean proposal on property claims.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Syngman Rhee Institute, Yonsei University

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

KOREAN MISSION IN JAPAN

November 21, 1957

No. 61

TO : His Excellency
The President

FROM : Tai Ha Yiu

At the request of Itagaki, chief of the Asian Affairs Bureau I met him at 10:30 a.m on the 19th at the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

Itagaki: "The Korean proposal on property claims which you presented through Yatsugi and which contains the term "and it does not substantially impair Korean claims" is strongly opposed to by certain officials of the Foreign Ministry and the Finance Ministry, and it is rather difficult for us to accept it.

"On the morning of the 15th, Ambassador Kim called on Deputy Prime Minister Ishii and told the latter that the Korean side is willing to settle the problem of property claims along the lines very near to those in the draft agreed minutes drawn up last June by disregarding all the terms which had been the cause of disagreement between the two sides, but that the Korean proposals on the detainee and other issues must be accepted by the Japanese side. Although Ambassador Kim did not present any definite plan, it was entirely different from the one you presented through Yatsugi and Tanaka. In order that we do not delay any further, how about the Korean side presenting a new plan?"

Yiu: "If you go to that again, I have nothing to say to you because the one that I proposed through Yatsugi is our final one."

Itagaki: "This is all very complicated. I have arranged a meeting for you with Foreign Minister Fujiyama tomorrow morning. Let us discuss the matter at that time.

This meeting ended without any results.

The next morning (20th) Ambassador Kim and I went to the Foreign Minister's residence and met Fujiyama together with Itagaki.

Fujiyama: "I have been instructed by the Prime Minister before his departure to come to agreement with the Korean side on our problems and I am ready and willing to do so. Frankly speaking, however, the term "...and it does not substantially impair Korean claims" as stated in your latest proposal with respect to article 4 of the draft agreed minutes, although we want to accept it, we are unable to do so because of stiff opposition from various quarters. Could we not, therefore, discuss the problem with a more flexible plan? If so, we will willingly accept your proposals on the other issues."

-2-

Amb. Kim: "Our proposal recently presented to Mr. Kishi is our final one."

Fujiyama: "Please see to it that a new plan is presented which will be acceptable to us. Let us find a way to settle our problems. We would not mind the Korean side adding a few more terms but they must be something which both sides can accept. I hope the Korean side will keep in close touch with the administrative level to find ways of settling our problems."

Ambassador Kim gave no definite answer to this and we returned to the Mission.

On returning to the office we decided that the first move was to find out what brought about the sudden change in the Jap attitude when at the Prince Hotel on the 15th Tanaka, Yatsugi and I even exchanged notes that the Japanese side would accept our proposal. Ambassador Kim opined that the Japs must have been informed of the new instructions which the Foreign Ministry recently sent to us because when the Vice Foreign Minister called him on the 14th or 15th, the exact date he could not remember, he was told by vice minister Kim that the American Embassy in Seoul had already been advised of the new instructions and of the fact that such instructions had been issued to the Mission in Tokyo. Since the two embassies keep in close touch with each other on matters relating to Korea and Japan, there is no doubt that word has already reached Japanese ears of the new proposal. Thus, the sudden change in the Jap attitude. I asked the ambassador if he made any mention of the new instruction to Ishii when he met the latter on the 15th. The ambassador replied that he had not except that there would be some changes in our proposal.

Since we had to confirm whether the Japs had heard of the new instructions or not, I suggested to the ambassador that we meet Yatsugi and Tanaka and hear what they had to say. The ambassador readily agreed.

We met Yatsugi but Tanaka was unable to come.

I recounted to Yatsugi our meeting with Fujiyama and Itagaki and repeated what he and Tanaka said and did at our meeting on the 15th. Ambassador Kim inquired of Yatsugi whether they acted on their own initiative when they exchanged notes with me that day. Yatsugi was angrily vehement in his denial saying that Tanaka acted on special orders from Prime Minister Kishi and that in his position as deputy chief cabinet secretary Tanaka would never undertake anything on his own.

When he was asked as to the cause of the sudden change in the Japanese attitude, Yatsugi's reply was that opposition from various quarters is still very strong but that he would reserve telling us the details as the present was not the occasion to do so and that we would know in due time what brought about the change and who was responsible for it. He added that he and Tanaka had been advised by Itagaki to keep their hands out of Korea-Japan problems for the time being. Yatsugi had something to tell us but would not divulge it, except to state that with matters arrived at this stage further careful study should be made. When I told him that the Japanese could not be trusted even after notes had been exchanged, he made the same reply--that we would know why in due time.

The only conclusion we could come to was that there is no doubt the Japs know of the new instructions.

-3-

At 11:30 a.m. this morning (21st) Ambassador Kim informed me that when Vice Foreign Minister Kim called a while ago, he (amb.) asked the Vice Minister if the American Embassy in Seoul knew of the new proposal issued to us on the 13th. The vice minister's answer was that a copy of it had been given to Dowling. Ambassador Kim said he told the vice minister that we would have difficulties in negotiating with the Japs on our alternative proposal if the American side has a copy of the new one. The vice minister said, according to the ambassador, that the alternative plan would be disadvantageous to us at the formal conference and that if we can get the Japs to accept the new proposal, the agreements could be signed even tomorrow.

If what Vice Minister Kim says is true, what I would like to ask is why we did not accept the draft agreements at the time they were drawn up last June, for had we signed them, we would have done Kishi a big favor and could have made use of him at the formal conference with regard to our property claims and other problems. To present a new plan at this stage which is no better than the original draft is something that perplexes and angers me beyond words, and I would like to know why we are doing it. If we conduct negotiations with the Japs on the basis of the new plan, the Japs will not regard it as concession on our part but that we had given in to U.S. pressure. No Jap will be a fool as to believe that we made concessions.

If the Foreign Ministry were to give in so easily, why has this office been made to fight the Japs for more than a year? I would like the Foreign Ministry answer this question. Are we obligated to show everyone of our secret memorandums to the Americans? Has the American side guaranteed that it will get us \$400 million or \$500 million from the Japs? If they did so, I would not mind, but what are we going to do if the Americans ask us to be content with \$100 million? Will we accept it? If we are ready to accept even that amount, then we can go ahead with the negotiations on such a basis. But can we resume negotiations again after we break them off by refusing to accept the \$100 million?

When I met Kitazawa the other day, he told me that the dissolution of the Japanese Diet depends on the outcome of the Korea-Japan talks.

I talked to Vice Foreign Minister Kim over the phone this afternoon at 3:00 p.m. and asked him why the Foreign Ministry issued such instructions. He replied that Ambassador Kim had sent reports to the Foreign Ministry stating the hopelessness of getting the Japs to accept our previous proposals, and since the Americans were also pressuring the Ministry, the new instructions were issued. However, he said he was not asking us to negotiate with the new plan at the present time but to do so if we fail to get the Japs to accept the latest one. He said he called the ambassador because I was in the hospital but I was not on my deathbed and could be reached. Also the situation was not so urgent that he could not have waited a day or two. I asked him if he had already discussed the new proposal with the American side. His reply was that the new plan was decided on in the presence of the Foreign Minister and Amb. Dowling. I was too angry to say anything except that I would not negotiate with the Japs with such a plan.

Jun'hyun