

**February 14, 1957**  
**Report from Pyung Sik Son to the President**  
**(Syngman Rhee)**

**Citation:**

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<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120925>

**Summary:**

In Choi Duk Shin's absence, Pyung Sik Son reports on the discovery and capture of two Korean stowaways attempting to travel by Japanese vessel to North Korea.

**Credits:**

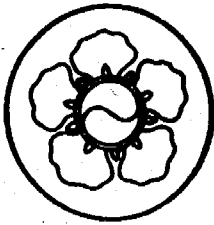
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**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan



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OF KOREA  
SAIGON

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N° KLS

OUR REFERENCE :

YOUR REFERENCE :

Saigon, February 14, 1957

N° KLS 0134-020/57

Your Excellency,

Due to the absence of Minister Choi at present in Seoul for consultation with the Government I have the honor to submit to Your Excellency the following report :

Upon receipt of February 12, 1957 of the cabled instructions of Your Excellency regarding the matter two Korean stowaways and reading as follows :

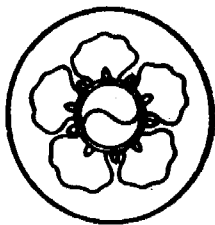
"ACCORDING TO TELEPHONE REPORT FROM KORCON TWO KOREAN RESIDENTS IN JAPAN DESIRING TO GO TO NORTH KOREA STOWED AWAY FROM JAPAN ABOARD JAPANESE FREIGHTER COLUMBIA WHICH IS NOW AT ANCHORAGE IN HONGKONG AND SCHEDULED TO ENTER PORT SAIGON ABOUT SIX AM FEBRUARY THIRTEEN PD PLEASE TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION IMMEDIATELY TO TAKE THOSE KOREANS OVER AND SEND THEM BACK TO HOK PD FORMIN"

immediate action was taken in order to comply with your instructions. Contact has been made with the Vietnamese Security authorities who have consented to assist this Legation carrying out this task. On February 13 upon arrival of the Japanese vessel at Cap St. Jacques the two stowaways were arrested and are now confined in the Vietnamese Harbour Prison.

A telegraphic report was sent to Your Excellency on the same day reading :

"TWO KOREAN STOWAWAYS WHO INTENDED TO ATTAIN NORTH KOREA ARRESTED THIRTEENTH ELEVEN AM AND CONFINED IN HARBOUR PRISON STOP PLEASE URGENTLY SEND SOMEONE TO OFFICIALLY TAKE OVER STOP DETAILS FOLLOW KOLISA"

The details of the seizure of the two stowaways follow:



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On February 12 upon receipt of cabled instructions from Your Excellency I called on the Commissar General of the Harbour Police Forces and informed him of the circumstances of the two Korean stowaways who were reported on board the M/S "Columbia Maru" and who intended to go to North Korea and requested his assistance in making the arrest of these two individuals. He immediately gave his consent and agreed to send two armed policemen and two inspectors to the actual place at Cap St. Jacques, 130 kilometers southeast of Saigon, where the Japanese freighter was expected to arrive on Wednesday 13th, at 11 a.m.

2. Information obtained from the Master of the M/S "Columbia Maru".

A radio wire from the Master of the M/S "Columbia Maru" of the Mitsubishi Shipping Co. was received giving the arrival time of the vessel at Cap St. Jacques on its way to Singapore as follows :

"ETA ST JACQUES 1100 THIRTEENTH. Master"

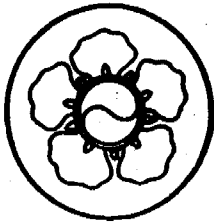
3. Trip to Cap St. Jacques with Vietnamese Security Authorities.

At seven a.m. on February 13 I left Saigon in the company of the Vietnamese Security authorities including the Commissar General himself, one inspector and another policeman. We reached Cap St. Jacques at 10.30 and waited the arrival of the M/S "Columbia Maru" which came into sight at eleven o'clock sharp. A launch took us to the freighter which could not enter the bay for reason of the shallowness of the water. We went aboard and commenced negotiations with the freighter's Captain to take over custody of the two Korea stowaways. Upon my request the two men were brought forther with their few pieces of belongings for a brief interrogation.

4. Examination of the luggage of the Stowaways.

The two stowaways are :

1. Park Ro Bum (朴魯範), native of Taegu, 26 years



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old, day laborer, having his address while in Japan at Nº 55.4-Chome Hakanobu, Shinagawa, Tokyo. He was a radio operator in ROK Navy when he deserted in 1955 and fled to Japan.

2. Park Yun Keun ( 朴 允 根 ), native of Toyung, Kyongsang-Namdo, 28 years old, immigrated to Japan when he was 13 years old, worker in plastics plant in Japan, living while in Japan at nº 105, Kamidori, Minamicho, Tsugara City.

In examination of their luggage besides their personal belongings were discovered the following :

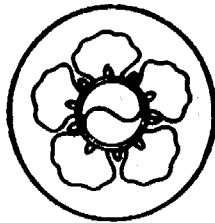
1. One Red Puppet Regime flag
2. Some name cards of the North Korean Puppet Regime politicians
3. Some photographs
4. Some directories on photographic techniques

A stowaways list, which I received from the master of the M/S "Columbia Maru", and which is herewith enclosed for the examination by Your Excellency.

5. Means and Motives of displacement of the stowaways.

The stowaways revealed that they desired to leave Japan because life in that country was becoming very difficult and their search for work had been unsuccessful. Therefore, they decided to leave for North Korea, they confessed.

On February 3 they slipped on board the M/S Columbia Maru when this freighter was at Kobe port. They thought that the ship was bound for Communist China. It was only when the freighter left Kobe port did they learn that she was instead bound for Singapore. When the freighter was anchored at Hong-Kong they attempted to leave the boat but were unsuccessful. They then planned to disembark in Singapore and attempt to proceed to North Korea via New Delhi and Peiping.



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0. Arrest and Confinement of the Stowaways.

Upon my demand, the freighter's Master agreed to let me take charge of the two stowaways. I signed in the name of our Government the formalities required and took the two men away. They were handcuffed upon my request by the Vietnamese police for reason of security. Their luggage was removed from the ship. We left the freighter at 12.30 p.m. Upon return to Saigon at 18.00 the two stowaways were placed into custody in the Harbour Prison and will be held there until the arrival of a government official from Korea who will take charge of them.

I would avail myself to ask Your Excellency to please send as soon as possible someone officially to Saigon in order to take the men back to Seoul. The Vietnamese Harbour Police Forces have advised me that they cannot keep them for any length of time. They are under close watch pending the arrival of security authorities from Seoul for investigation and final custody.

I have the honor to be,  
with the highest consideration,  
Your Excellency's obedient  
Servant,

Pyung Sik Son  
First Secretary  
Korean Legation in Saigon

Attachment : 1 Stowaway list

His Excellency  
Dr. Chung Wan Cho  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Republic of Korea

SEOUL

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