

**October 21, 1959**  
**Record of Conversation between Comrade Liao  
Chengzhi and Matsumura Kenzo**

**Citation:**

"Record of Conversation between Comrade Liao Chengzhi and Matsumura Kenzo",  
October 21, 1959, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 105-00667-03, 31-36.  
Obtained by Amy King and translated by Liu Meihan.  
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/134179>

**Summary:**

After the joint declaration, Matsumura Kenzo questioned Liao Chengzhi about "the inseparability of politics and the economy."

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Henry Luce Foundation

**Original Language:**

Chinese

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Record of Conversation between Comrade Liao Chengzhi and Matsumura Kenzo  
(Not yet approved by Chairman Liao)

□ □

□□□ □□□

Time: □□□ □□□ □□□

21 October 1959, 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. □□□ □□

□□□ □□□

Location: □□□ □□□ □□□

Beijing Hotel □□□ □□

□□□ □□□

Translator: □□□ □□□ □□□

Liu Deyou □□□ □□

□□□ □□□

Note-taker: □□□ □□□ □□□

Liu Deyou □□□ □□

Matsumura

When Mr. Ishibashi visited China last time, he was indebted to you for your great kindness. You might have known the situation after he returned to Japan through newspapers.

Generally speaking, Mr. Ishibashi's visit to China carved out a path between our two countries—although it is a narrow one. This is what ordinary people think.

Regarding the joint declaration published by Mr. Ishibashi, it has provoked some questions within Japan. The biggest of which was the inseparability of politics and the economy. An increasing number of people are gradually becoming aware of this point.

Liao:

What's your opinion?

Matsumura:

This is what I told everybody: politics and the economy are inseparable for sure. It is impossible to imagine that two countries at war are at the same time doing business with each other. The question is that what is called "politics"? I believe that it would be unwise to give up dealing with Japan only because it cannot become neutral [zhongli] immediately. We should hold hands for the sake of Asia. If we are to understand the inseparability of politics and the economy from this perspective, then Japanese people would not hold varying opinions on this point. One word, we should hold hands for Asia. According to Mr. Ishibashi, Premier Zhou [Enlai] also mentioned this point.

Liao:

Premier Zhou and Mr. Ishibashi have discussed this issue thoroughly. Premier Zhou talked about the inseparability of politics and the economy from a broader and realistic sense. I think when you meet the Premier, you will also talk about these issues. As according to Premier Zhou, when we talk about politics, it does not necessarily mean that the normalization of relations shall become a prerequisite. The tricky thing is how to consider this question from a realistic perspective as well as one which complies with our principles. This issue influences everything. It involves principles. It's also subtle.

Matsumura:

This question is key. But can we view from it a long-term perspective? Now there are peace movements in the world, as an old saying goes: "By juggling with deceit we have ended in a solid truth." This movement will reach a certain level. Of course, there will be compromises during its progress, but it is a relief that all of the nations around the world are talking excessively about arms reduction and peace. Otherwise, we would live in fear everyday that a bomb may be dropped on our heads. Now, the people of Russia and the people of the United States all hope that this would not be the case. This tendency has become unstoppable; it has become the trend around the world. I think that people of your country may also agree that this is the general trend, and this can be seen from the newspapers of your country during [Nikita] Khrushchev's visit.

Liao:

We fully endorse Khrushchev and [Dwight] Eisenhower's joint statement, and completely agree with Khrushchev's suggestion for comprehensive arms reduction.

Matsumura

If only we could strengthen our communications, then the neutrality of Japan—which could not be realized instantly—would naturally be achieved. Otherwise, even if we've talked a lot here, we would lose momentum upon returning to Japan. Although we could attract publicity, that would not turn into strength.

We should achieve real communication between China and Japan. Trade, as always, is a rather minor issue.

Meeting with you does not feel like meeting with a foreigner at all. We could have conversations in a frank manner, and hope our two countries could do so too. We do not necessarily need the form of a "declaration" to pull Japanese people forward.

The people of Japan all want to establish a regular exchange with China. There are a lot of moving stories about this. When the Japanese people heard the news that I am going to visit China, many people who are not acquaintances of mine wrote to me. Some of them were women who lost their loved ones during the war. They asked for me to improve Sino-Japanese relations. Before my flight took off from Haneda Airport the evening of the day before yesterday, so many strangers came to see me off. Last time before Mr. Ishibashi set off, some rightists at the airport were handing out leaflets to protest against him. But this time, this did not happen to me.

Liao:

That is because you have a good reputation...

Matsumura:

I hope that détente [qinshan] can be achieved between us rather easily.

Liao:

It was Kishi Nobusuke who separated politics from economy.

Matsumura:

The Kishi Administration is just for a bit, it will not last. [I] hope you can take what the people of Japan think into consideration and put emphasize that.

Mr. Iketa Hayato believed that I should go to China. Besides him, Kanno Wataro, the Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy, shares my thoughts.

Before I came, I talked with Mr. Fujiyama Aichiro. Although he was enthusiastic about revising the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan, he has other intentions. He said that after the revision of the treaty is done, he would like to visit China.

Liao:

Premier Zhou met him at the Asian-African Conference [in Bandung] in 1955.

Matsumura:

It seems that in Kishi's Cabinet, everyone besides Kishi himself does not necessarily share his views. Iketa saw me off at the airport when I came to China. Please trust me, my judgement of Japanese public opinion cannot be wrong. I also had a meeting with Kishi before I came. I told him that I am going to China to negotiate as a politician. I am in no hurry to make decisions, and knowing the other side's feelings would be enough. If we can reach conclusions on some questions, it is worth trying. I told him not to adopt a pathetic wait-and-see policy, and we should focus on the general situation of Asia. What we should grasp should be grasped. It is certain that there will not be a war, but even an inharmonious relationship is no good. Kishi said that he understood this. He would not do anything that harms the peace with China, and we also would not let him do such a thing.

Frankly speaking, the fundamental purpose of revising the security treaty [with the United States] is to turn an unequal treaty into an equal one. But revising it now will cause useless sacrifice. It will spark off quarrels domestically, and cause unnecessary worries and misunderstandings in other countries (such as China).

Liao:

What does Kishi think?

Matsumura:

(Mumbling for a while) Whether the result is moving to the right or to the left, I cannot give you any inside information. But please rest assured that what may worry you will never happen. The Sino-Soviet Treaty [of 1950] is targeted at Japan, but no actions have been taken. Therefore, the people of Japan do not give much thought to it, and we hope that regarding this treaty [between Japan and the United States], China could share our feelings. A further discussion on this issue will be regarded as an intrusion into your domestic politics, thus I just stop here.

Liao:

The key point of this question is the United States. The US has not yet withdrawn their forces from Taiwan. Also, Kishi made such remarks during his visit there. We do not know his intentions. Do you?

Matsumura:

[I] hope you could analyze his personality. He is a flatterer who enjoys paying lip service.

Liao:

I agree with much of what you said. But Kishi has always had a clear cut attitude against China. It was so, it is now, and he said that it will be the same in the future.

Matsumura:

That is not his true intention. As the Prime Minister he sometimes talks nonsense.

Liao:

When you meet with Mr. Zhou, please discuss these questions with him freely and without restraint.

Matsumura:

Please arrange a meeting with Mr. Zhou for me.

Liao:

Mr. Zhou invited you here for this very purpose.

Matsumura:

I have a request to meet Chairman Mao [Zedong] as well. If he is not in Beijing, I would like to visit him wherever he is.

Liao:

I will make some contacts for you first, and I've contacted Mr. Liu already.

I will see come to see you again.

Matsumura:

You are welcome to come any time.