

September 14, 1959

**Record of the Third Conversation between Comrade
Liao Chengzhi and Ishibashi Tanzan**

Citation:

"Record of the Third Conversation between Comrade Liao Chengzhi and Ishibashi Tanzan", September 14, 1959, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 105-00669-02, 32-37. Obtained by Amy King and translated by Liu Meihan.
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/134184>

Summary:

During a conversation with Liao Chengzhi, Ishibashi Tanzan asked him to "for a friendly Sino-Japanese relationship based on the acknowledgment of the established Japanese-American relations."

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Henry Luce Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

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Record of the Third Conversation between Comrade Liao Chengzhi and Ishibashi
Tanzan

(Not yet approved by Chairman Liao)

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Time: □□□ □□□ □□□

14 September 1959, 9:00 a.m. □□□ □□

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Translator: □□□ □□□ □□□

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Lin Liyun □□□ □□

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Note-taker: □□□ □□

Liao: Premier Zhou [Enlai] sends you his greetings, and would like to know whether you have other opinions.

Ishibashi: Japan cannot cut its ties with the United States right now. Therefore, it would be impossible to enter into further negotiations if the third point listed in my letter to Premier Zhou is not given careful consideration.

Liao: If the prerequisite for further negotiations is to accept the numerous American military bases in Japan, then it is indeed impossible to talk.

Ishibashi: We are trying to establish good relations with China, but we cannot sever all our links with the United States and Taiwan immediately. If Japan cuts its relations with the United States, we would lose the military aid we are receiving from the Americans. Japan would have nothing left. The Japanese people are worried about such a situation. Japan is receiving military aid from the United States, while China is receiving military aid from the Soviet Union. So can we form a friendly Sino-Japanese relationship based on the acknowledgement of the established Japanese-American relations?

Liao: This would be extremely difficult. Two questions need to be differentiated here. China and the Soviet Union are on friendly terms. The Soviet Union assists China's construction, and China repays their assistance in another way. This is another question; so are the general relations between United States and Japan, such as economic relations. However, the most important thing is that there are numerous American military bases in Japan, but there isn't a Soviet military base in China. Expecting us to acknowledge the American military bases in Japan as legalized would be in vain.

Ishibashi: Terms like "legalized" are unnecessary. Japan cannot remove all the military bases at once.

Liao: We are not saying that Japan has to cut all of its general relations or economic relations with the United States before establishing relations with us. The most important question here is the Security Treaty between Japan and the United States. We see it as an attempt made by the Kishi Administration to form a military alliance targeted at us, rather than a matter of revising the treaty. This is what we cannot tolerate. Recently, a cabinet member of Kishi's said that the revision of the security

treaty is the Cabinet's concern. But we believe this is an American-Japanese military alliance against us in the making, thus we have to show great concern.

Ishibashi: You think so?

Liao: We have solid proof for that. In terms of the military, we said four or five years ago that we do not oppose Japan becoming a truly independent country with its own self-defense army; that is Japan's own business. However, the Japanese-American Security Treaty will bind Japan's self-defense forces with the United States. We cannot help but object. The Japanese-American military alliance is targeted at China, thus we have concerns about that.

Ishibashi: That is also true. But the United States also said that they have concerns about the communist bloc. It would do us no good if we are endlessly suspicious of each other.

Liao: It is the United States that is saying it cannot acknowledge China because it is a communist country, and would not allow China to enter the United Nations. That is how they are interfering with our ideology.

Ishibashi: Nothing can be done if mutual suspicion persists. It is a bad thing.

Liao: We paid for our lessons in blood. Millions of Chinese people died.

Ishibashi: That is also true.

Liao: The United States attempted to make China its 50th state, but this could never be achieved.

Ishibashi: Is that true?

Liao: Let me give you an example. In 1948, when it became apparent to all that Chiang Kai-shek's [Jiang Jieshi's] regime was beyond saving, the US Government asked John Leighton Stuart (he did not contact us directly but through a third party) to inform us that the United States was willing to provide us an aid in the amount of six billion dollars on the condition that we consider their political conditions. We turned them down immediately and said that we would rather "tighten our belt, eating two meals a day instead of three than accept one cent from the Americans." We believe that to struggle against the United States is China's natural duty for the world.

Ishibashi: Japan cannot sever all of its relations with the United States immediately. To acknowledge the status quo would make further improvements possible.

Liao: We are by no means going to acknowledge the status quo of Japan and Taiwan.

Ishibashi: We are not hoping for a public announcement of an acknowledgement from you, but that you could leave this issue aside. Can we find a method under such circumstances to open Sino-Japanese relations?

Liao: Is Kishi going to enforce the three principles proposed by us?

Ishibashi: In principle, that is not feasible. Regarding the first one, he said he is not

being hostile to China. Regarding the second one, he said he is not involved in the plotting of the two Chinas policy against China. As for the third one, it is certain that it would not harm the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations.

Liao: But what Kishi said at the Congress is quite contrary to what you just said. We would not believe that Kishi would change his China policy without any proof.

Ishibashi: Please take no notice of him.

Liao: Kishi stressed emphatically that "China is a communist country, thus it cannot be acknowledged. We promised Taiwan that we would not do that," etc. Therefore we cannot help but feel worried. We are not prepared to compromise on our three principles.

Ishibashi: Kishi will step down, so you do not need to notice of him. According to the principles of democracy, if Kishi indeed said the words and did the acts you just described, if he indeed made mistakes, people would definitely ask him to step down.

Liao: We cannot accept Japan's current policy towards China.

Ishibashi: I know that already. If Kishi resigns and I become the new Prime Minister, I would have to make up my mind to break off with the United States when it's time to sign a peace treaty with China...

Liao: You do not necessarily have to sever all links; brushing aside their protests would be enough.

Ishibashi: No. We have to take the possible scenario of the United States suspending its military aid to Japan into consideration.

Liao: China and Japan can live at peace with each other forever.

Ishibashi: Japan can live at peace with China, but what about the Soviet Union? It refuses to return the territories it has occupied from Japan, and it also has troops stationed at their overseas military bases in Japan. Countries without power are pitiful and have to rely on big countries for protection. If Japan cannot receive military aid from the United States, the people of Japan would feel disturbed.

Liao: But relying on the United States will bring Japan great disasters.

Ishibashi: How are we going to deal with the Soviet Union if Japan has nothing? People have concerns about that.

Liao: The Soviet Union is not such kind of country. Most importantly, in a spirit of peaceful coexistence, the biggest obstacle to settling the unsettled case between China and Japan is the United States. China is working on its own construction with as much energy as possible to meet the needs of our people, and this construction requires at least 50 years. China wants no wars and to be on good terms with Japan, but we are worried about your military bases. Nowadays, the American military bases in Japan are no longer the ones for B-29 Superfortress like they were during World War II, but have gradually become rocket bases specifically targeting us.

Ishibashi: They are targeted at the Soviet Union. The USSR still occupies Japanese

territories, and the military situation is quite complicated. I hope that China and Japan can cooperate in preventing the Soviet Union and the United States from starting a war. It is not good for big countries to always harbor suspicion against each other, and one day they will eventually engage themselves in a fight.

Liao: China once suggested that a collective security system in the Pacific area should be built by countries including the Soviet Union, China, the United States, and Japan to dispel war threats. But it's a long-term goal. Therefore, before that, the United States should stop its behavior of using the land of Japan to intimidate China.

Ishibashi: The root of the problem is that people always treat each other with suspicion in their hearts.

Liao: The United States had a strong desire to defeat China [in the past], but it was not realized, and they regret this. China has to consider it very careful, as it is a matter of life and death for China.

Ishibashi: For Japan, it is also a matter of life and death. To some extent, Japan was forced to accept American military aid.

Liao: This is very dangerous. If the United States starts a war, can Japan take a completely neutral stance? I am afraid the answer is no, since there are so many American military bases in Japan, and Japan would have no choice but to be involved.

Ishibashi: We can't help that.

Liao: It is very unfortunate for both China and Japan. To avoid such kind of misfortune, the military bases should be removed. Though it cannot be all done overnight, those bases should still be gradually removed. We hope that Japan can publicly express its willingness to move towards this direction.

Ishibashi: Even though we believe so, it is difficult for us to state it publicly by all means.

Liao: Excuse me, may I ask how many people in the LDP share the same opinion?

Ishibashi: The majority of them.

Liao: What about Mr. Ishii [Mitsujiro] and Mr. Sato [Eisaku]?

Ishibashi: I don't know then. But don't pay too much attention to the opinions of one or two individual politicians. In short, I hope that the thaw of the "Cold War iceberg" can be promoted from both sides, China and Japan.

Liao: But we cannot trust Kishi. Chairman Mao [Zedong] once said that "China's Japan policy will not be like this forever. The issue is, we have to adopt a current policy based on current circumstances." From my perspective, this is referring to Kishi.

Ishibashi: (Expressing consent)

Liao: I am going to report all you said today to the Premier [Zhou Enlai]. Do you have other suggestions to make?

Ishibashi: None.

Liao: If the Premier decides to meet you, I will come and pick you up.

Ishibashi: Does it appear to you that it is hard to reach an agreement?

Liao: Some questions appear to be difficult, but not truly so after analysis; some others appear to be easy, but are actually rather tricky.

Ishibashi: Before I came, I believed the question to be rather easy. But now I am here, I find it very difficult.

Liao: We have penetrating insights into the United States.

Ishibashi: They are indeed penetrating. I understand your thoughts. Maybe they are so penetrating that they harm global peace.

Liao: We believe that our struggle with the United States is a contribution to global peace.

Ishibashi: Maybe you should do that from the perspective of strategy.

Liao: Let's call it a day. You are still going to meet the Premier alone, and the content of our conversation is not going to be released to the press.