

June 25, 1959

**The Former Japanese Prime Minister Ishibashi
Tanzan Hopes to Visit China to Discuss
Sino-Japanese Relations**

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Summary:

Ishibashi Tanzan, the former Japanese Prime Minister, gave a letter to Zhou Enlai, claiming that "the two countries have mutual respect for each other's existing relations with the Soviet Union, the United States, and other countries and do not expect immediate changes."

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The former Japanese Prime Minister, Ishibashi Tanzan, gave a letter to the Premier [Zhou Enlai] on June 4 [1959], which put forth the following:

(1) The People's Republic of China and Japan (below referred to as the two countries) are to be untied as if they are one country [in order] to keep peace in Far East and promote world peace, and will base every policy on this principle.

(2) To achieve the above-mentioned goals, efforts should be made in the spheres of economy, politics, and culture to remove the barriers imposed by national boundaries and to freely communicate with one another. In regards to the specific methods, the two countries will decide through consultations based on [the existing] situation.

(3) The two countries have mutual respect for each other's existing relations with the Soviet Union, the United States, and other countries and do not expect immediate changes [to these relationships]. However, both countries should make efforts to make these relations favorable to the realization of the above-mentioned goals. The specific methods are to be found through sincere discussions.

Ishibashi said that [in order] to discuss the specific methods related to the above-mentioned matters, he was ready to pay a visit to Premier Zhou [Enlai] at any time. This is the first time that the head of Japan's ruling party has sent a letter to us proposing a visit to China.

Ishibashi is the representative of the branch of Japan's monopoly/capitalist clique which has gained less from the United States, as well as a figure representing the interests of the middle bourgeoisie. Within the Liberal Democratic Party, he belongs to the faction that is against Kishi Nobusuke.

Although Ishibashi attempted in his letter to [to say] that acknowledging the status quo [in relations between China and Japan] is the basis for further discussion, he also advocated that this type of relationship should be gradually changed.

At present, the Kishi Nobusuke administration is becoming increasingly reactionary and the internal factional conflicts are growing more acute. If Ishibashi is able to come [to China], it would have positive effects in terms of alienating Japan's ruling clique and uniting the anti-Kishi forces together. Meanwhile, if he could come to China and uphold [his] anti-Kishi stand, it would be beneficial in winning over and influencing the masses at the center [zhongjian qunzhong]. Therefore, China [wo] has decided in principle to approve the visit of Ishibashi and has delivered a reply to him through Comrade Liao Chengzhi, informing him that the invitation which Liao made in Tokyo in 1957 is still valid, that his visit would be very welcome, and asking him to decide the date of his visit.

(First Asia Department [of the Chinese Foreign Ministry])