

**September 28, 1972**  
**Telegram 10353 from the American Embassy in  
Tokyo, 'Mao-Tanaka Meeting'**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Mao had a conversation with Tanaka, carrying numerous stories from food to his childhood.

**Credits:**

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**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan  
Transcript - English



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TELEGRAM

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SUBJ: MAO-TANAKA MEETING

1. JAPANESE PRESS HAS CARRIED NUMEROUS STORIES ON MAO-TANAKA MEETING BASED UPON BRIEFING GIVEN BY CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY NIKAIDO WHO WAS PRESENT. EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF MOST DETAILED ACCOUNT (CARRIED IN SEPT 28 TOKYO SHIMBUN) OF GIVE AND TAKE BETWEEN MAO AND TANAKA FOLLOWS. OF COURSE, THIS IS ONLY NEWS REPORT OF ONE PARTICIPANT'S ORAL AND INCOMPLETE COMMENTS ON MEETING.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

MAO (TO PREMIER CHOU AND PRIMIN TANAKA) - HAVE YOU FINISHED YOUR QUARRELS? IT IS NOT GOOD IF YOU DO NOT QUARREL.

TANAKA - NO, WE ARE HAVING TALKS AMICABLY WITH PREMIER CHOU.

MAO - ONLY AFTER QUARRELLING DO YOU BECOME GOOD FRIENDS WITH EACH OTHER FOR THE FIRST TIME.

TANAKA - THAT IS QUITE TRUE.

MAO - MR. LIAO CHENG-CHIH WAS BORN IN JAPAN. MR. TANAKA, WILL YOU PLEASE HAVE HIM ACCOMPANY YOU BACK?

TANAKA - MR. LIAO CHENG-CHIH IS VERY FAMOUS IN JAPAN, TOO. IF HE WERE TO RUN IN AN UPPER HOUSE ELECTION, HE WILL BE SUCCESSFULLY

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ELECTED, WITHOUT FAIL. (MAO LAUGHS)

MAO - I HEARD THAT DR. TANAKA SAID IN HAWAII, THAT QTE I DISLIKE ALL WESTERN STYLE FOOD. I AM GOING TO STICK STRICTLY TO JAPANESE STYLE FOOD UNQTE. HOW DO YOU FIND THE FOOD IN PEKING?

TANAKA - I AM BEING TREATED TO MAGNIFICENT DINNERS. THE COOKING IS WONDERFUL. I AM ENJOYING FULLY BOTH THE MAOTAI WINE AND CHINESE TEA.

MAO - IT IS NOT GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH TO DRINK MAOTAI WINE TOO MUCH.

TANAKA - I AM TOLD THAT THE ALCOHOLIC CONTENTS OF MAOTAI WINE IS 65 PERCENT. AT ANY RATE, I AM ENJOYING IT.

MAO - IT IS NOT 65 PERCENT. IT IS 70 PERCENT. WHO GAVE YOU SUCH MISINFORMATION?

IN CHINA, THERE ARE TOO MANY OLD THINGS, AND THIS IS A PROBLEM. IT IS NOT A GOOD THING TO BE BOUND TOO MUCH BY OLD THINGS. WHEN I WAS SMALL, MY FATHER TREATED ME HARSHLY, AND I USED TO REBEL. I REBELLED, ASKING WHY HE TREATED ME UNKINDLY, WHEN IT WAS WRITTEN EVEN IN THE FOUR BOOKS AND FIVE CLASSICS OF CONFUCIANISM THAT QTE UNLESS THE PARENTS ARE AFFECTIONATE TOWARD THEIR CHILDREN, THE CHILDREN WILL NOT SHOW FILIAL OBEDIENCE TO THEIR PARENTS UNQTE. BY THE WAY, IT MUST BE TROUBLESOME THAT THERE ARE ELECTIONS IN JAPAN.

TANAKA - SO FAR, I HAVE EXPERIENCED ELEVEN GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE PAST 25 YEARS. I HAVE ALSO MADE A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF ROAD-SIDE CAMPAIGN SPEECHES.

MAO - PLEASE TAKE CARE BECAUSE MAKING ROAD-SIDE SPEECHES IS NOT GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH.

TANAKA - IN JAPAN, THE PEOPLE WILL NOT BE SATISFIED UNLESS YOU MAKE ROAD-SIDE SPEECHES. IT IS ALSO SO ARRANGED THAT IF YOU DO NOT MAKE SUCH SPEECHES, YOU WILL NOT BE ELECTED.

MAO - WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN THE DIET?

TANAKA - THIS, TOO, IS VERY TROUBLESOME.

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MAO - IT MUST BE QUOTE COMPLICATED IN JAPAN. IT IS NO SIMPLE MATTER IF YOU HAVE TO GIVE CAMPAIGN SPEECH ON THE STREETS.

TANAKA - I PRAY FOR YOUR CONTINUED GOOD HEALTH.

MAO - I AM TROUBLED BY RHEUMATISM JUST NOW, AND MY LEGS HAVE BECOME SOMEWHAT WEAK.

(AFTER THIS, WITTY CONVERSATION CONTINUED, AND THE SUBJECT OF THE TALK SHIFTED TO THE BOOKS IN CHAIRMAN MAO'S STUDY. CHAIRMAN MAO CHOSE SIX VOLUMES AND PRESENTED THEM TO TANAKA.)

TANAKA - CHAIRMAN MAO, YOU ARE STUDYING A GREAT DEAL. I SHOULD ALSO STUDY MUCH HARDER, SHOULD I NOT?

MAO - I LIKE TO READ. I KNOW THAT IT IS NOT GOOD FOR MY HEALTH, BUT I CANNOT GO TO SLEEP UNLESS I READ.  
END TEXT  
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Subj: Mao-Tanaka Meeting

1. Japanese press has carried numerous stories on Mao-Tanaka meeting based upon briefing given by Chief Cabinet Secretary Nikaido who was present. Embassy translation of most detailed account (carried in Sept 28 Tokyo Shimbun) of give and take between Mao and Tanaka follows. Of course, this is only news report of one participant's oral and incomplete comments on meeting.

2. Begin text:

Mao (to Premier Chou [Zhou] and Primin Tanaka) – Have you finished your quarrels? It is not good if you do not quarrel.

Tanaka – No, we are having talks amicably with Premier Chou.

Mao – Only after quarrelling do you become good friends with each other for the first time.

Tanaka – That is quite true.

Mao. Mr. Liao Cheng-chih [Liao Chengzhi] was born in Japan. Mr. Tanaka, will you please have him accompany you back?

Tanaka – Mr. Liao Cheng-chih is very famous in Japan, too. If he were to run in an Upper House election, he will be successfully elected, without fail. (Mao laughs)

Mao – I heard that Dr. Tanaka said in Hawaii, that QTE I dislike all western style food. I am going to stick strictly to Japanese style food UNQTE. How do you find the food in Peking?

Tanaka – I am being treated to magnificent dinners. The cooking is wonderful. I am enjoying fully both the Maotai wine and Chinese tea.

Mao – It is not good for your health to drink Maotai wine too much.

Tanaka – I am told that the alcoholic contents of Maotai wine is 65 percent. At any rate, I am enjoying it.

Mao – It is not 65 percent. It is 70 percent. Who gave you such misinformation?

In China, there are too many old things, and this is a problem. It is not a good thing to be bound too much by old things. When I was small, my father treated me harshly, and I used to rebel. I rebelled, asking why he treated me unkindly, when it was written even in the Four Books and Five Classics of Confucianism that QTE unless the parents are affectionate toward their children, the children will not show filial obedience to their parents UNQTE. By the way, it must be troublesome that there are elections in Japan.

Tanaka – So far, I have experienced eleven general elections in the past 25 years. I have also made a considerable number of road-side campaign speeches.

Mao – Please take care because making road-side speeky [sic; speeches] is not good for your health.

Tanaka – In japan, the people will not be satisfied unless you make road-side speeches. It is also so arranged that if you do not make such speeches, you will not be elected.

Mao – What is the situation in the Diet?

Tanaka – This, too, is very troublesome.

Mao – It must be quote complicated in Japan. It is no simple matter if you have to give campaign speeky [sic] on the streets.

Tanaka – I pray for your continued good health.

Mao – I am troubled by rheumatism just now, and my legs have become somewhat weak.

(After this, witty conversation continued, and the subject of the talk shifted to the books in Chairman Mao's study. Chairman Mao chose six volumes and presented them to Tanaka.)

Tanaka – Chairman Mao, you are studying a great deal. I should also study much harder, should I not?

Mao – I like to read. I know that it is not good for my health, but I cannot go to sleep unless I read.

End text.

[Robert S.] Ingersoll