

Japan and Korea Show Promise of Ending Long Feud

(Editor's note: Japan and Korea are separated by little more than 100 miles to open sea, but they have hated one another for centuries. Now, they appear to be close to settling their differences. In the following dispatch, a UPI correspondent who has lived for several years in both Korea and Japan, reviews the past and forecasts the future of these two neighboring Asian nations.)



100 MILES APART—After 36 years of Japanese colonial rule in Korea and 17 years of postwar diplomatic estrangement, Japan and South Korea, separated by 100 miles of open sea, are close to settling most of their differences. They are so close that Communist China, the USSR and North Korea have been pushing an intense propaganda campaign against an ROK-Japan settlement.

By CHARLES R. SMITH
United Press International
Tokyo — Getting the Japanese and Koreans to sit down and talk reasonably is about as difficult as getting the Hatfields and McCoys to have a quiet dinner together. Like a mountain parson playing go-between, Uncle Sam has been trying to keep them talking instead of fighting for more than a decade. They have sat down to talk many times, but have seldom talked reasonably. The talks usually broke off with bitter words and nothing accomplished. Sometimes they were farther apart after a face-to-face meeting than they were before.

Today, however, it appears that the patient and prudent prodding of the United States is paying off. Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) are on the verge of wiping out a heritage of hatred and restoring normal relations for the first time in more than half a century.

U.S. Deserving
The leaders of the two neighboring nations can congratulate themselves if they really do succeed in settling their differences after 36 years of Japanese colonial rule and 17 years of postwar diplomatic estrangement.

But the United States deserves a pat on the back, too. After a series of six conferences dating back to the days of the Allied occupation of Japan after World War II, the Koreans and Japanese finally have reached agreement on one major issue — Korea's claims against the Japanese.

They still face other thorny problems rooted in the long Japanese colonial rule, and a side dispute over a pile of useless rocks in the Japan sea.

The other issues involved the question of fishing waters and the so-called "Rhee Line" (the Korean call it the peace line); the status of about 600,000 Korean residents in Japan and their descendants, and the establishment of a Japanese diplomatic mission to Korea.

Side Dispute
The side dispute — not involved in the formal talks but likely to trouble them — is over tiny Takushima Island (the Koreans call it Tokto), an almost uninhabitable pile of rocks. The Koreans control the island by virtue of about two dozen troops they keep stationed there.

Of the issues remaining, the most troublesome concerns fisheries and the Rhee line. In a way, the United States bears some responsibility for the Rhee line. It grew out of the so-called "MacArthur line," which marked the limits of Japanese fishing activities during the post-World War II occupation. When the peace treaty with Japan went into force, the MacArthur line went out of existence.

But the President of Korea at that time, the Japanese

hating Syngman Rhee, had already established his line. Rhee's proclamation of his "peace line," which extends as far as 160 miles off Korea's coast in some places, came just before Korean and Japanese negotiators sat down in Tokyo for their first formal conference.

Peace Line Dooms
The announcement of Rhee's "peace line" doomed the first conference before it

began and set the tone for most of the future talks.

The Rhee line was based on the continental shelf around Korea. It initially was designed primarily to protect fishing waters for Korean fishing fleets.

It was the Americans who helped give the Koreans perhaps more valid reason for maintaining the restricted zone.

On Sept. 27, 1952, Gen.

Mark Clark, then commander-in-chief of the United Nations command, proclaimed the sea defense zone around the coastal waters of Korea. Clark made it clear the UNC line was purely for military purposes and had no relationship to the Rhee line. Nevertheless, it strengthened the Korean hand.

When the UNC line was abolished the day after the Korean armistice, the South Koreans indicated it would be necessary to continue the Rhee line, not only to protect fishing waters, but also to protect their long coastline from communist infiltration.

Japan Ignores Line
Japan ignored the line over the years and her fishermen have paid the price. Hundreds of Japanese fishermen have been captured and imprisoned. Fishermen and their vessels have been returned to Japan periodically by the Koreans, but the seizing of vessels violating the Rhee line has not ceased. Nor will it, the Koreans say, until an agreement is reached.

Japan refuses to recognize the unilateral line. To avoid unnecessary friction, however, fishermen are advised nowadays to stay clear of it.

The Korean says their fishing fleet cannot compete with the more modernized Japanese and needs protection. They say Japan suppressed the Korean fishing trade during the colonial rule and should not now begrudge the Korean industry some special privileges.

Issue Difficult
Compromise of the fishery and Rhee line issue is difficult. It has become a highly emotional issue and both countries have large fishing industries involving thousands of persons. The Japanese feel they have made concessions on the claims issue and it is up to the Korean to give a little.

The Koreans are in a better position to give because the present military rulers in Seoul are not so worried about, or guided by, public opinion. Chances are the major concessions will come from Seoul.

Perhaps the least troublesome of the remaining issues is the legal status of Korean residents in Japan.

This is a legacy of history for which the Japanese are sorry in many ways.

At the end of the second World War there were about two million Koreans in Japan, many of them brought here as forced laborers or military draftees. During the Allied occupation, many of them returned to Korea, but about 600,000 still remain here.

Want Residence
Korea wants Japan to give these Koreans permanent residence, with full and equal opportunities. They also should be given special safeguards against deportation and their descendants given full citizenship status, Korea contends.

The Japanese are in general agreement on most of these points, but do not want to go quite that far.

The claims issue, though now settled, was the most complex and most controversial. It involved Koreans demands for the return of art objects and compensation for a wide range of items from gold and silver bullion and complicated bank transactions for unpaid wages for forced labor.

The Koreans also wanted the Japanese to give some evidence of remorse in making a settlement.

These issues were so complicated and controversial that it was decided last year to scrap working-level talks and try to reach a "political settlement."

Reach Formula
This worked, and late last year Japanese Foreign Minister Masayoshi Ohira and Col. Kim Chong Pil, chief of the South Korean Central Intelligence Agency, reached a payment "formula" acceptable to both sides.

The final settlement provides for Korea to receive a

\$300 million grant, \$200 million in government loans and another \$100 million in government-guaranteed civilian loans.

The United States sees the restoration of normal ROK-Japan relations as another link in the chain that contains communism in Asia. The communists apparently see it the same way.

They have charged repeatedly that it will lay the foundation for formation of a new military alliance — the Northeast Asia Treaty Organization (NEATO), they call it.

Communist China, the Soviet Union and North Korea shove aside their ideological differences to push an intense propaganda campaign against a ROK-Japan settlement.

Want Unification
The North Koreans went so far as to propose tripartite talks between Japan and the two Koreas. They reminded the Japanese that no final settlement could be reached without their participation or until the unification of Korea is accomplished.

The Japan Socialist party, major parliamentary opposition group and leader of the movement against a settlement, is using this as one of its main arguments. The Socialists contend that a settlement with South Korea alone will only help perpetuate the division of Korea. Partly out of deference to the Socialists but more with an eye to the future, the Japanese are certain to keep the door open for some negotiations with North Korea in any final settlement with South Korea.

The other main Socialist argument against a settlement is that it would merely be an extension of the Japan-U.S. security treaty.

The Socialists are planning to whip up a campaign against the ROK-Japan talks on a scale comparable to the bloody riots against the security treaty in 1960.

The Socialists may succeed in creating disturbances. But come summer it is a better bet than ever that a new era will begin in Japanese-Korean relations and Uncle Sam will be relieved of one of his

toughest behind-the-scenes roles.

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FICTITIOUS STORY — Green-eyed Linda Light, 19, Miss Kansas in the 1962 Miss Universe contest, tearfully admitted to police at Topeka, Kan., that her story of being held captive was fictitious. The pretty blonde Washington University sophomore had originally said that a prowler had terrorized her in her home. Police said Miss Light told them she had slashed herself. (UPI)

They'll Do It Every Time By Jimmy Hatlo
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