

ass the civil service examination or write in such a way as to distinguish myself among the literati, I am more than familiar with the works of our ancient sages, the art of good government, and the principle whereby the livelihood of our people can be improved. Besides, I have studied Western subjects and have been more than proficient in one particular discipline [medicine]. Knowing that Your Excellency is interested in the cultivation of talent and the employment of talent whenever one is found, I would like to enlist myself as one of the candidates, at a time when all men of conscience must rise to meet the urgent challenge of our time....

10.2 LI HONGZHANG NEGOTIATES WITH JAPAN, 1895

Li Hongzhang was dismissed from office and deprived of marks of imperial favor after the collapse of China's armies in Korea in 1894. When the Japanese rejected the Chinese embassy for peace and insisted on negotiating with higher ranking Chinese officials, Li Hongzhang was selected as China's plenipotentiary in the peace negotiations and was given full responsibility to cede Chinese territory to the Japanese. He arrived at Shimonoseki on March 20, 1895, and after exchanging credentials with Ito Hirobumi and Prince Mutsu, began talks the same day. Four days later Li Hongzhang was shot and slightly wounded by an ultranationalist fanatic. The public outcry aroused by the assassination attempt caused the Japanese to temper their demands and agree to a temporary armistice. Li Hongzhang returned to the bargaining table and the Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed on April 17, 1895. The unique transcript of Li and Ito's discussions at Shimonoseki that follows shows clearly that the Japanese were negotiating from a position of towering strength. The clipped exchanges between the two representatives were polite but in the end Li Hongzhang was dictated to with chilly imperiousness by Ito Hirobumi.

Japan's demands at Shimonoseki were enormous. Ito Hirobumi called for the independence of Korea; cession of Taiwan (here termed Formosa) and Pescadores; a two hundred million tael indemnity; the opening of new treaty ports; navigation rights on the Yangzi River; and the cession of part of Fengtian province. Foreign intervention (the so-called Triple Intervention of France, Germany, and Russia) caused these terms to be modified but the end result of Li and Ito's unequal discussions—the Treaty of Shimonoseki—was, by any standard, a humiliating treaty agreement that stripped away enormous tracts of Chinese territory, further opened China to Japanese economic and military penetration, and set the stage for the ferocious Sino-Japanese conflicts of the twentieth century.

Verbal Discussions During Peace Negotiations,

BETWEEN THE CHINESE PLENIPO TENTIARY VICEROY LI HUNG-CHANG AND THE JAPANESE PLENIPO TENTIARIES COUNT ITO AND VISCOUNT MUTSU, AT SHIMONOSEKI, JAPAN, MARCH-APRIL, 1895

FIRST INTERVIEW MARCH 20, 1895

H(18). E(XCELLENCY) LI. Your Excellencies may be assured that if my Government had not been actuated by a sincere desire to restore peace, I would not have been sent here; and if I had not been of like mind I would not have come.

H.E. ITO. Yours is a heavy responsibility and the issue at stake—the termination of the present war and restoring cordial relations between our countries—is of paramount importance. As Your Excellency is wise and experienced we may hope that our negotiations will end happily in a Treaty of lasting peace alike beneficial to both countries.

H.E. LI. On the Asiatic continent China and Japan are close neighbors and the written language of the two nations is the same. Is it well that we should live at enmity? The conclusion of our present differences in a lasting peace should be our great concern, for prolonging hostilities will but injure China without benefiting Japan. The European Powers which maintain vast armaments nevertheless take the greatest care not to provoke war. And we, representing the principal countries of the East, should follow this example of Europe. If Your Excellency and myself thoroughly appreciate this we cannot but conclude that the last policy which should rule the Asiatic continent, is that we should establish an enduring peace in order to prevent the yellow race of Asia from succumbing to the white race of Europe.

H.E. ITO. I endorse Your Excellency's views with all my heart. While at Tientsin ten years ago I discussed with Your Excellency upon [sic] reforms in China, but I deeply regret to see that nothing whatever has been done in this direction.

H.E. LI. I very much appreciated what Your Excellency said then, and have since admired your energy in carrying out reforms in Japan; China, however, is hampered by antiquated customs which prevent desirable reforms. I remember Your Excellency advising that, in view of the vast area and population of China, administrative reforms should be effected gradually; yet, shame to say, ten years have wrought no changes—a proof of our incapacity; while Japan has organized an efficient army after Western models and is constantly perfecting the organization of her government.

When in Peking before starting on this mission I talked over these matters

with our Ministers of State, and some of them fully realized that China must reform if she would hold her own.

I.T.O. Heaven is impartial and speeds the right. If China will but make effort help will come from on High. Let there be the will and Heaven, who cares alike for us all, will not forsake you; thus a nation may control its own destiny.

I.T.O. The Japanese are not so easy to govern as the Chinese. Then, we have a Parliament to reckon with—a veritable thorn in the flesh for our Government.

L.I. Your Parliament is like our Censorate.

I.T.O. Ten years ago I ventured to advise you to abolish the Censorate, and Your Excellency replied that it would be difficult because the institution dates from the Han dynasty (B.C. 206); I replied that as most of your Censors are ignorant of the needs of the times they are mere stumbling-blocks to the administration. Your Government should appoint to its important offices men of the new school, possessed of Western knowledge, and of suitable age and vigor; You must put away what is obsolete in your system of Government and you would prosper.

L.I. China is not without men in all stations who know the needs of the times; but the Empire is divided into so many provinces and jurisdictions—like Japan in feudal times—that this is a great obstacle to uniform and centralized Government.

I.T.O. Though there are so many conflicting jurisdictions you should have one responsible head to your Zongli Yamen, as Viscount Mutsu is in charge of the Japanese Foreign Office.

L.I. We have, it is true; many Ministers in our Zongli Yamen, yet they are a responsible chief.

I.T.O. Who is he now?

L.I. Prince Kung. What offices do Their Excellencies Enomoto and Otori hold at present?

I.T.O. Enomoto is Minister for Agriculture and Trade; Otori is President of the Shi Privy Council. May I ask what has become of Yuan Shikai, our late Minister to Korea?

L.I. He has returned to his home in Henan.

I.T.O. Does he still hold office of Military Secretary?

L.I. He holds an unimportant office. . . .

SECOND INTERVIEW

MARCH 21, 1895

I.T.O. War is evil, though sometimes unavoidable.

L.I. Far better avoided. When General Grant, Ex-President of the

United States, visited Tientsin and we became friends, he said to me: "The loss of life in the Rebellion in my country was so terrible that after I became President I was always anxious to avert war and have ever since advised others to do so. Your Excellency won fame in suppressing the Taiping Rebellion, yet I urge you to beware of entrance to a quarrel which might lead to war." I have always tried to follow this excellent advice; Your Excellency well knows that I was opposed to this war.

H.E. I.T.O. War is a cruel and bloody business; yet there are times and conditions in the intercourse of States when there is no help for it.

H.E. L.I. It is barbarous, and the perfection of modern weapons adds to the slaughter. I am too old to relish such things. Your Excellency is in the prime of life and feels the impulse of martial ardor.

H.E. I.T.O. How easily peace might have been made at the beginning!

H.E. L.I. I was for peace then, but the opposition was too much for me and the opportunity was lost.

H.E. I.T.O. A very little yielding would have sufficed then, what a pity it was refused! We were like travellers a few miles apart; now we are separated by hundreds of miles and it is hard to turn back.

H.E. L.I. Yet it must be done. It is easy for you as Premier.

H.E. I.T.O. Hundreds of miles apart and all to be retraced!

H.E. L.I. Then why not halt now? Though you should go thousands of miles further surely you cannot expect to exterminate my nation!

H.E. I.T.O. We have never had such an intention. War aims at the destruction of the enemy's power—his fleets, armies, forts and war material, and so to render him helpless; it is not waged against peaceable people.

H.E. L.I. As we are willing to make peace we should stop the war.

H.E. I.T.O. The Chinese population of Jinzhou and other places occupied by Japanese forces are more tractable than Koreans and are hard workers; Chinese are very easy to govern.

H.E. L.I. The Koreans were always an indolent people.

H.E. I.T.O. We can't get them to work for us. We are about to attack Formosa; what are the people there like?

H.E. L.I. They are emigrants from Swatow and Zhangquan (?) on the mainland—(they are) bold and hardy.

H.E. I.T.O. There are aborigines too.

H.E. L.I. Yes, six-tenths are savages, the rest colonists. Your Excellency said that Japan will attack Formosa. This explains your objection to the Armistice. England will hardly approve of this move. You have furnished a case to point the moral of my argument about prejudice to the interests of other countries. H.E. I.T.O. England will observe neutrality.

H.E. L.I. But if not?

H.E. I.T.O. China is affected—not necessarily England.

H.E. L.I. Hardly that, for you will be near the British colony of Hongkong.