

Memo No. 11.

Peking, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1903.

An edict which appears in the Peking Gazette of yesterday informs us that leave of absence for ten days has been granted to Prince Kung. I infer from this that the Prince will not be present at the audience to be given to Messrs. Yamagewara and Shi today by the members of the Shung li Yamen, and that it is the intention of the Chinese Government to throw all possible obstacles in the way of bringing about an audience between the Emperor and the ambassador at an early date. In doing this they are actuated by their desire to gain time; still, it seems to me that China is equally anxious to avoid a rupture with Japan, and that, if they are pressed, they will, as they usually do, invoke the aid of Mr. Hart. This latter gentleman believes that it is to the interest of China that the Audience Question be settled as speedily as possible, and I should not be surprised if he were pleased to seize this opportunity of gaining a name for himself by adjusting this perplexing question through Japan. It is apparent to the mind of every one acquainted with Chinese policy that, with a view to defer coming to a crisis on this subject as long as possible, the members

of the Sung li' Yamen will Endeavor to  
Engage Messrs. Yamegawara and Shi'  
in an endless discussion if they see that  
those Gentlemen are in the least inclined for  
an argument.

With a view to counteract these tactics,  
I would advise these Gentlemen to state  
that they have been sent by the Ambassador  
to simply inquire as what time His Majesty  
will be pleased to receive His Excellency in  
solemn audience. If they show any disposition  
to shirk the question by bringing forward  
the subject of etiquette to be adopted on  
the occasion, these Gentlemen should state  
that they have no wish to give any  
advice in the matter, and that any Et-  
quette that will not be derogatory to the  
dignity of Japan and her ambassador, will  
be accepted; that the ancient customs of China  
which, it would appear, have fallen into disuse,  
would, in all probability, meet the requirements  
of the case; that when, in olden times, a  
Chinese General returned victorious, the Emperor  
would meet him at the Gate of the Imperial  
palace, and if such a distinction was  
conferred by His Majesty upon one of his  
own subjects, how much greater should be  
the compliments paid to a distinguished  
foreign guest; that the Government of China  
is well aware that delay in granting an  
audience to an ambassador implies no  
respect towards the sovereign by whom he is  
sent, and therefore they should be avoided;  
that the Ambassador of Japan is not at

liberty to give a reception to the  
diplomatic body until after he has been  
received by his Majesty, the Emperor;  
that until that audience has taken place  
he can pay them only unofficial calls,  
and as there should be no doubt that  
these calls are unofficial, he will be  
obliged to go on foot; and that, with  
a view to enable His Excellency to  
transact his business with them in a  
more convenient manner, and to give  
that mark of respect which they are  
entitled to by inviting them to a public  
reception, the audience should be granted  
without any delays.

Besides the foregoing, in my opinion  
not another word should be said by Messrs.  
Yamegawara and Shi' in their interviews  
with the members of the Sung li' Yamen,  
excepting, of course, the usual compliments  
made use of on such occasions.

I have it on good authority that the  
Russian Minister told the members of the  
Sung li' Yamen that it was to their  
interest to settle the Audience Question now  
that they have only Europeans to deal with,  
and he observed that the rules of etiquette  
which had been submitted to them by  
the diplomatic body would not be accepted  
by an Ambassador should such an officer  
come to China, and that he should not  
be surprised if such an officer were  
sent should there be any disposition  
shown on the part of the Sung li' Yamen

to trifle with the importance of the case,  
by unduly postponing the time of  
Audience. My impression is that,  
with a view to avoid complications,  
the Chinese Government will press  
Prince Kung to return to his post,  
especially if they are privately given  
to understand by Mr. The that the  
Japanese will not be so exacting  
as other nations might be, and  
that a speedy adjustment with them  
might be the means of aiding the  
Shungh' Yamen to come to a more  
satisfactory settlement with other nations.

Respectfully submitted

*can. us. le. guide*

His Excellency, Tanemichi Toyokuni,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador  
Extraordinary, etc. etc. etc. etc.

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