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Japan denies Lee a visa

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The Japanese government will not issue a visa to former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) until the December legislative are concluded, according to a Japanese newspaper.

On Saturday, Japan's *Sankei Shimbun* daily cited an anonymous government official who said that Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs will not issue a tourist visa to Lee until December because the six party talks on the North Korean issue will take place in Beijing later this month and they do not want to anger Beijing.

Another reason for the visa denial is that Japan is worried that Lee will use the trip to Japan to boost the Taiwan Solidarity Union's campaign for the year-end legislative elections, according to the report.

The report also said that Beijing is highly concerned about Lee's influence on the legislative elections, which will determine whether Taiwan's pro-independence parties will seize a majority in the legislature. But the unnamed official also pointed out that if Lee wishes to visit Japan after the Dec. 11 elections, the Japanese government will allow Lee to visit "unconditionally," the report said.

Meanwhile, Association of East Asian Relations (AEAR) Chairman Lo Fu-chuan (羅福全) said in a speech in Japan on Saturday that Lee's desire to visit Japan is not political and the issue should not become a tool of diplomacy.

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