

AMEMBASSY Tokyo No. 2217  
Weekly Political Notes from Japan  
23-30 April 1953

Among the unsuccessful candidates for seats in the House of Councillors was the Reverend Joshuan KOAMI, Buddhist priest and former Naval Intelligence officer who, under the name of Captain WACHI, served as onetime assistant naval attache in Washington and, more recently, as commander of the Japanese naval garrison on Iwo Jima prior to the invasion in 1944. It may be recalled that after the surrender Capt. WACHI took the robes of Buddhism in order to dedicate his life to the souls of his deceased comrades and to assist and console the surviving families. WACHI ran on the Progressive Party ticket with a platform advocating full rearmament for defensive purposes, increased pensions for veterans and bereaved families, return of the Ryukyu and Bonin Islands and release of war criminals. Entered in the national constituency, WACHI garnered some 18,000 votes as compared with totals of well over 100,000 obtained by the successful candidates.

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DATE 2006

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WACHI Tsunezo

Capt., IJN. Member of the naval General Staff, General Staff officer and member of the Naval Communications Dept., IGHQ, as of June 1943. Passed through the U.S. in December 1940 enroute to his post as Asst Naval Attache in Mexico City where he stayed until ~~March~~ early 1942, when he was repatriated from the U.S. to Japan in June of that year. (Notes on individuals of Counter-Intelligence Interest).

The White Lotus Society is now under the dominance of ex-naval officer WACHI Tsunezo. Its original activities are channeled into 1) the solace of souls of those Japanese soldiers who died defending Iwo Jima and 2) spiritual guidance of war criminals imprisoned at Sugamo Prison. WACHI received authorization from SCAP for dispatch of official mission to Iwo Jima to hold services for war dead and to repatriate remains. He graduated in 1922 from the Japanese Naval Academy and spent half of his career in the Japanese Navy in intelligence and cryptographic work. Allegedly assigned responsibility for breaking American and British diplomatic codes. 1940, Asst N.A. in Mexico, duties: monitoring operational messages of U.S. Naval forces in the Atlantic. Interned in the U.S., repatriated to Japan, assigned to the office of Naval Intelligence, appointed in 1944 as commander of Japanese naval garrison on Iwo Jima. Detained in Sugamo prison after Jap surrender, not tried as war criminal. Purged and retired to Kyoto to enter Buddhist priesthood. Recently depurged. Speaks good English, is a large man for a Japanese and is in extremely vigorous health. Has characteristics of a forceful leader. (USPOLAD, Tokyo, No. 1088, 31 Jan 52, GC File B - 10.20).

A non-partisan candidate for the Upper House election of April 1953. (FBIS 2 Apr 53, FFF-5, Nippon Times 2 Apr 53)