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## KODAMA YOSHIO

a. Covert Rightist Activities: Kodama Yoshio, noted ultra-nationalist and pan-Asianist who is still purged from public office, was born in Fukushima Prefecture, Japan, on 18 Feb 11, the son of "samurai" ranking Kodama Torishiro. Although his formal education consisted of completing only primary school and second-year evening sessions at Zenrin Commercial School, Ryuzan, Korca, he has become a learned man through private study, mainly in social ideologies. Nationalist teachers Okawa Shumei, Imaizumi Teisuke, and Kasaki Ryomei, together with ambitious opportunism, doubtlessly contributed to his fanatical nationalistic proclivities.

Still a comparatively young man, of high intelligence and strong personal magnetism, he poses a subversive potential which cannot be ignored. Since his release in Dec 48 from Sugamo Prison to which he was sentenced as a Class "A" war criminal, Kodama has been forced to conduct his possibly illegal and dangerous activities covertly. Reports of his influential leadership in the revival of nationalist organizations and in shady black-market transactions are both insistent and widespread.

b. Youthful Desire For Power: Kodama, following the death of his mother when he was eight years old, was taken by his father to live with a sister in Seoul; Korea. A disagreement with his sister and yearning for his native village brought him back to Japan the following year. He returned to Seoul two years later, finished primary school, and attended night commercial school after the day's work in a factory. Back in Tokyo at the age of 15, with, in his own words, "the ambition of becoming a powerful individual," he worked in factories under exhausting child labor conditions, yet managed to attend night school spasmodically, where he studied social, ideological and political issues.

In Feb 29 he joined the anti-Communist National Construction Society (Kenko Kai) "because it advocated organization of anti-Communist labor unions, and aimed at the overthrow of financial cliques and plutocratic government." One member of the society with whom Kodama is reported to have kept up close relations to this date, is the rightist critic Tsukui Tatsuo, presently believed active in nationalistic circles. The first of a series of arrests and imprisonments followed Kodama's presentation in Nov 29 of a petition to the Emperor in the name of the National Construction Society calling for unemployment relief and protesting the formation of a leftist party. For this violation of the Petition Law, he was sent to prison in Nov 29 where he made a serious study of ideological movements until his release in Sep 30. After returning briefly to the National Construction Society, he withdrew because of the Society's lack of direct action. Kodama then spent several months studying at the Imperial Government Society (Kosei Kai) led by the well-known nationalist leader Imaizumi Teisuke. There he became acquainted with "the national character of Japan and the 'Imperial Way' (Kodo) school of thought." Imaizumi taught that the proper direct contact which ought to exist between the Emperor and his subjects was being obstructed by a minority privileged class. Kodama was fired with the idea of removing this minority group. In his own words: "I sincerely believed that direct action against corrupt statemen was a patriotic action which all youths should take. I allowed passion rather than reason to become the master of my mind."

c. Begins Organizational Activities: In Mar 31, he became a leading member of the Radical Patriotic Laborers' Federation (Kyushin Aikoku Rodosha So Remei), an amalgamation of Tsukui Tatsuo's rightist Radical Patriotic Party (Kyushin Aikoku To) and labor elements formerly in the National Construction Society. During the same month he joined the All Japan Patriots Joint Struggle Council (Zen Nippon Aikokusha Kyodo Toso Kyogikai), an attempted merger by Okawa Shumei of all rightist groups in Japan. At this time Okawa was working hand-in-glove with Army "reformists." Other nationalists, including Tsukui Tatsuo, Suzuki Zenichi and Akeo Bin, were members of the

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Council also. For scattering anti-government handbills in the Diet building, he was arrested the second time, and confined for one month in a police detention cell.

In Apr 31 he participated in the formation of the Japan Joint Struggle Vanguard (Nikkyo Zenei Tai), a group of selected youths organized by Okawa Shumei, from whose ranks came the majority of those later active in the Ketsumeidan, 5.15, and Shimpeitai assassination plots. A few days later he was arrested while at headquarters of the Radical Patriotic Party for having sent a dagger in a letter to Finance Minister Inoue Junnosuke, along with a suggestion that Inoue use it to commit suicide. He was detained in a police cell, at Ichigaya Prison, and ultimately sentenced to four months in Sugamo Prison. Following his release in Feb 32 he was arrested again in the same month during a police round-up of rightists suspected of implication in the assassination of Inoue Junnosuke, a part of the notorious Ketsumeidan Incident. Kodama then became a member of the Great Japan Production Party (Dai Nippon Seisan To), an amalgamation of rightist groups under Uchida Ryohei, which gave vigorous support for nearly 12 years to every sort of ultranationalistic activity, including violence. Tsukui Tatsuo and Suzuki Zenichi were included in the membership.

d. Visits Manchuria and North China: In May 32, representing the Great Japan Production Party, Kodama made a trip to Manchuria where he studied under Kasaki Ryomei, one of the principal architects of Japanese expansion in Manchuria, and chief of the Army's Self-Government Training Department (Jichi Shidobu). Kodama claims that Kasaki was an idealist whose goal of a representative civilian administration in Manchuria caused him to be driven out of the country by the corrupt Kwantung Army. Under the influence of Kasaki's teaching, he returned to Japan in August of the same year to found the Independent Youths Society (Dokuritsu Seinen Sha).

While Kodama and his Independent Youths Society colleagues were engaged in plans to assassinate the "Genro" (elder statesmen) surrounding the Emperor, a pistol exploded accidentally at their headquarters, and their plot was discovered by the police. Kodama, again arrested, failed in an attempt to commit suicide during the trial. He was imprisoned for almost five years. During a three-months parole from prison to convalesce from illness, he met and married his first wife (whom he later divorced; he married Homma Sayoko in 1940). After his permanent release from prison in Apr 37, he resumed his activities, becoming a leading member in the Japan Institute (Nippon Juku), a group of Imazumi's disciples engaged in disseminating the writings of rightist philosopher Takematsu Toshio, and also a member of the Great Asia Establishment Society (Dai Ajia Kensetsu Kai), founded by Kodama's former teacher Kasaki Ryomei.

e. Urges Stronger China Policy: As a special staff official of the Foreign Office Information Bureau he made a brief trip to North China in Oct 37. His inspection trip included an investigation of Mohammedanism in that area. Two months later Kodama returned to Japan to form the China Problems Settlement National League (Taishi Mondai Kaiketsu Kokumin Domei) with semi-official backing from some of his connections in the Foreign Office. The purpose of this League was to publicize Japan's possibilities in China. Further interest in Japanese policy in China was indicated by Kodama's activities as manager of the Imperial Youths Roundtable Society (Kokoku Seinen Konden Kai). In this capacity he visited both Army and Navy Ministries to explain the purpose of stronger China policy. To this end, he founded the February Society (Nigatsu Kai), actually the China Problems Settlement National League under a less nationalistic-sounding name. The February Society, in addition to its interest in Japanese policy in China, took a hand in national politics, giving support to the National Mobilization Bill and the Electric Power Control Bill. Backed by the Great Asia Establishment Society, and the Foreign Office, Kodama made a four-month trip to North China and Inner Mongolia.

f. More Trips to China: Ostensibly sponsored by the Japan Youth Movement, but actually with Foreign Office backing, Kodama made another trip to Central China for three months. Immediately following his return to Tokyo, he was sent back to China at the request of the Army General Staff and the Foreign Office, as a non-official member of the General Staff with the responsibility of guarding Wang Ching-wei, head of the Japanese-sponsored Chinese puppet government, from Hongkong to Shanghai. Under cover of being an employee of the Oji Paper Company, he made plans to escort Wang but when the itinerary was changed, Kodama returned to Japan. Again in May 39 the Foreign Office sent him to Shanghai as a non-official staff member of the Japanese Consulate there. During the rest of the year he made frequent trips back and forth between Japan and China for both the Army and the Foreign Office.

g. Praises Japanese Army in China: With the intention of broadening his Japan Youth Movement to include youths of Manchuria and China, Kodama renamed it the Rise Asia Youth Movement (Koa Seinen Undo), and published the magazine "Justice" (Taigi) "to paint the true picture of the situation in China." Because the magazine was critical of Japanese official policies in China, according to Kodama, almost every issue was suppressed. A subordinate group within the Rise Asia Youth Movement was called the Asia Youth Society (Aiji Seinen Sha).

Following a lecture tour of Western Japan, speaking on "The Solution of the China Incident," Kodama conferred with Lt Gen Ishihara Kanji, noted leader of Japanese expansionist philosophy, and received from him a letter of introduction to Col Tsuji Masanobu, in charge of the Army's "thought" activities in Shanghai. During a visit to Shanghai in Apr 40, Kodama met Col Tsuji who requested him to cooperate in ideological operations as an unofficial employee of the General Headquarters, Japanese Expeditionary Forces in China. During the rest of 1940 he made frequent trips between Japan and China, particularly Shanghai, partly as a representative of Gen Ishihara's East Asia League (Toa Renmei), and as Kodama later claimed, to help Col Tsuji "purge" the Japanese Army in China.

Kodama's former mentor, Sasaki R.omei, who had run afoul of the Kwantung Army, accused Kodama of becoming a tool of the militarists. Kodama states: "My youthful blood would not allow me to lose interest in the activities of the Army, or to remove myself from social activity, just because the Army happened to be chauvinistic." Kodama claims that Tsuji "fought courageously against all the evil forces within the Japanese field army." Press and CIC reports mentioned frequently that since Kodama's release from Sugamo he has had close contact with Tsuji, whose reputation in general is that of an adventurer, and who in the last years is reported involved in recruiting Japanese soldiers and weapons for Chinese Nationalist forces, as well as an important figure in behind-the-scenes rightist intelligence activity.

h. Intensifies Nationalistic Ideology: In Feb 41, Kodama became Chief of the Far Eastern Section of Sasagawa Ryoichi's National Essence Party (Kokusui Taishu To). Under the auspices of this group and of his own Rise Asia Youth Movement, he made speeches on the general China situation during the spring. During the same year, Kodama became manager of the Japanism Youth Council (Nipponshugi Seinen Kaigi), which attempted a merger of nationalistic organizations to propagate Japanism throughout the world. This group was loudly anti-American during the year before the war. Sixty-one societies concerned with Japanese activities overseas amalgamated in May 41 under the name of Great Japan Rise Asia League (Dai Nippon Koa Domei). Kodama, representing his Rise Asia Youth Movement, was made a director of the League through the recommendation of Nagai Ryutaro, former Communications Minister in the first Konoye Cabinet. Earlier, in 1937, Nagai backed Kodama's China Problems Settlement National League. Another organization in which Kodama figured prominently during 1941 was the August Society (Hachigatsu Kai). Its members were leaders of various nationalistic societies

desirous of intensifying Japan's nationalistic ideology in the face of threatening war. The Society disbanded when Baron Hiranuma was shot at with a pistol formerly owned by Kodama. Kodama was briefly grilled by the police.

Four months later, he accepted the job of organizing a purchasing agency in Shanghai for the Japanese Naval Air Forces. From this time on, Kodama shuttled back and forth between Japan and China, conducting a procurement campaign under the very difficult circumstances of private industrial competition, intra-service rivalries and depletion of stockpiles. Concurrently with the procurement job, he was a reporter on naval conditions in Shanghai for the East Asia Bureau of the Foreign Office.

i. Varied Activities Continue During War Years: Kodama's procurement organization (Kodama Kikan) operations involved the spending of vast sums for the Naval Air Forces, and later for other services. Much of his purchasing was done on the blackmarket; widespread rumors emanating from Shanghai credit Kodama with having amassed an enormous personal fortune. During World War II years, Kodama's activities were varied. He managed the rightist newspaper "Yamato Shimbun," directed at least four mines producing tungsten, molybdenum and other rare minerals, assumed presidency of the Japan Southern Mining Co. Ltd., at the request of the Navy, and performed many official chores in the Navy's last-minute attempts to repair airfields, salvage scrap, electrolyze salt, etc. He was also a non-official member of the Police Affairs Bureau and a member of the Cabinet Advisory Council in Prince Higashikuni's Cabinet, a post obtained through high influential connections, including Gen Ishihara.

In Dec 45, he was apprehended as a Class "A" war crimes suspect, interned in Sugamo Prison until Dec 48 when he was released without being indicted. It is reported that he turned over to Occupation authorities a quantity of radium valued between \$250,000 and \$400,000, which was given to him at the end of the war by Tada Takeo, Navy Vice Minister, in lieu of ¥2,500,000 owed to him by the Navy.

j. Career As a Purgee: In a postscript to his autobiography, "I Was Defeated," dated Dec 51, Kodama has this to say of his life since his release from Sugamo: "I was only out of prison for a few hours when I realized that I was now in a second prison — the prison of a Class "A" purgee! Three years have passed...Now, in this second, barless, prison, I have spent my days of inactivity, yawning with boredom...I have become a fisherman — an angler! A perfectly good machine just sitting out in the rain."

The degree of reliability of Kodama's estimate of his activities may perhaps be gauged by the interpretation he presents of his past career in the same autobiography. In it, he portrays the violent ultranationalistic activities of his youth as the result of an honest and enthusiastic desire to reform governmental corruption and pitiful labor conditions; states that he underwent a spiritual regeneration during his long imprisonment in the thirties; interprets his assiduous activities in Japanese expansionist fields after his release from prison as an effort to understand and cooperate with the Chinese; and explains his long and close association with the military, whose aims and methods he continually disparages, as an attempt on his part to clean up military corruption and promote Japanese ideals.

Though his purge status prevents him from taking open part in political or policy-making industrial activity, there is nothing to prevent his much-reported sub rosa association with former colleagues. Among these are many who are actively preparing for a come-back into national affairs in the post-Occupation period: ultranationalists, militarists, industrialists, government bureaucrats, Chinese connections from Naval procurement days — many excluded from overt assumption of important posts — but most still capable, influential, and ambitious.

Kodama's personal prestige is undoubtedly great among the large number of prewar youths who came under the spell of his unquestioned magnetism

during the period when he was putting the accent on youth in his Japanese expansionist adventures. These factors tend to give more than gossip-value to the persistent rumors and reports of Kodama's post-Sugamo activities. Also, much is reported from sources whose credibility and reliability prevent classification of the information as special bias or simple rumormongering. A cross-section of Kodama's activities as frequently rumored or reported is given below:

(1) Disposition of His Naval Procurement Assets: Kodama is widely believed to have amassed a vast personal fortune through his procurement activities for the Naval Air Forces. Numerous reports credit him with having disposed of these assets at the close of the war among his colleagues and other rightist associates, not without an eye to retaining a proprietary interest in the ventures which these assets might serve to finance. It is often alleged that Kodama has much of his fortune left untouched, cached away until the day when it may be more openly used. Kodama himself says that such profits as he acquired he has spent, largely in philanthropic efforts.

(2) Political Influence: Kodama is rumored to have acquired his advisory post in the Higashikuni Cabinet in 1945 through the good offices of influential military and rightist colleagues, and perhaps also through the judicious use of funds. He is reported to have succeeded, during a brief tenure in the Cabinet, in having the rights to cultivate airfields and parade grounds formerly under Army control allotted to Mikami Taku. (Mikami, former navy lieutenant, was one of the leading actors in the 5.15 assassination incident in 1932, and is now said to be indoctrinating along nationalistic lines the young ex-servicemen farming the former airfields.) Kodama also is frequently mentioned as having personal access to such political figures as Hatoyama Ichiro, and high level figures in the present Japanese Government, through his former political contacts. As of 1951 and 1952, Kodama is reported closely associated with Sasagawa R. oichi, former head of the ultranationalist National Essence Party.

Kodama is reported to be backing a group of rightist critics headed by Tsukui Tatsuo, with whom he has had a long association in nationalist circles. (Tsukui is considered the right-hand man of Akeo Bin, another long-time associate of Kodama. Akeo Bin, since his depurge, has been organizing a new rightist party named The Great Japan Patriotic Party (Dai Nippon Aikoku To), and running under its ticket for a by-election to the Diet.) Toward the end of 1951, Kodama was reported to have raised some £10 million in support of a new rightist organization in Kyushu, the West Japan National Construction League (Nippon Kensetsu Kokumin Renmei.) Among the League's backers is Ogata Taketora, long-time nationalist and bureaucrat with present-day political ambitions, and such reformed Communists as Asahara Kenzo and Sano Manabu. Kodama is said to have procured the money from industrialists whom he staked from his Navy procurement assets at the close of the war.

(3) Connections With Chinese: Kodama is frequently rumored to be keeping up contacts with Chinese closely associated with him since the late 1930's. In 1949, he was persistently mentioned in blackmarket and smuggling operations, allegedly to raise funds for procurement of weapons and recruitment of Japanese personnel for Chinese Nationalist forces in Formosa. In this connection, Kodama's name is linked with that of former Lt Gen Nemoto Hiroshi, and with the notorious Hai Lieh smuggling case.

(4) Information Brokerage Activities: Kodama is reportedly connected with the Far Eastern Affairs Research Society (Kyokuto Jiho Kenkyu Kai), and, under its auspices, operating an information network for anti-Communist industrial circles. He is reliably reported as wishing to offer his anti-Communist information gathering facilities to Occupation authorities. In information gathering and disseminating activities, he is reported closely associated with Nabeyama Sadachika and ex-Col Tsuji Masanobu.