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~~The~~ The True Character of the ~~Doctor~~ ^{Mystery Figure}, "Yoshio Kodama."

~~The~~

Career and Opinions Revealed for First Time

Interviewer: Yonosuke Miki

Yoshio
KODAMA
Yoshio
Dossier

- My Career -

Miki: Your background is hardly known (to the public). First, I'd like to ask you about your childhood.

Kodama: When I was a child, I was poor and went through tremendous hardships. However, today I feel that I was very fortunate to have been so. The reason is because thanks to this I am today able to feel compassion toward everybody.

My hometown is Nihonmatsu in Fukushima. My father's family name was Yamada. I was adopted and my name became Kodama. The house of Kodama was a family of physicians in waiting to the Lord of the Nihonmatsu Clan. Thus, my father also studied medicine. Later, however, he quit the profession and became the Secretary-General of the then Liberal Party and eventually became "Daifuku Sanji" of the prefecture---or what would correspond to the Vice-Governor of the prefecture today.

According to the stories of old-timers, my father was the first to own a camera in Fukushima Prefecture. He was also the first man to ride a bicycle in the prefecture. He seemed to have been quite a "hikara" (high collar) gentleman.

If things had continued as they were, it would have been fine.

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

- EXEMPTIONS Section 3(b)
- (2)(A) Privacy
- (2)(B) Methods/Sources
- (2)(G) Foreign Relations

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However, my mother died when I was seven. In order to marry my mother, ~~father~~ ^{my} father had divorced ~~his~~ ^{his} first wife, by whom he had a daughter. This daughter ~~married~~ ^{had} moved to Korea. The year after my mother died, my father took me to my ~~elder~~ ^{elder} sister's place in Korea.

My brother-in-law was a very strict person and gave me away to a family originally from Oita Prefecture, called Kono. Of course, there was nothing wrong with this because at that time I was a really bad youngster whom you couldn't ~~lay hands on~~ do anything with. My father returned to Fukushima from Korea, feeling relieved.

I was sent to school from the family that had adopted me. However, I didn't attend regularly, playing truant ~~and~~ all the time and I was in danger of failing my class. When I was in my fifth grade, my adopted family gave me the sack/and I returned to my sister's place.

My sister's family had their hands full, even without me, and so I was sent back to Japan. It was the 10th year of S Taisho (1921). I had been in Korea ~~threxyears~~ roughly three years. Then I entered a what you may call it ~~textxz~~ spinning factory in Kameido....

About this time, whenever motion pictures or a dramatic troupe came to town, the troupe members would walk around town publicizing their shows. On such occasions, if children followed the troupe members, waving red flags, they were given 10 s-n a free ticket to the show. Since I was the leader of the neighborhood kids, I joined ~~th~~ one of the parades with four or five others. One of the troupe squealed on me to my father and I got a

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a real bawling out from my father.

I was so chagrined that I couldn't bear it. So I tied two or three empty cans on the tail of a dog and hung a string of firecrackers on the dog's neck. Then, I lit the firecrackers and chased the dog on the stage. The play, of course, was ~~stuck~~ thrown into confusion and I felt much better. But, because of this, I couldn't go to school and it was uncomfortable remaining at home.

Then I, thus, decided to go to the dormitory attached to the spinning factory. But, when I got in I found we were forbidden to leave the premises for two years. Our pay was about two yen a month. If we ate two three-sen bowls of soba after late night work, we found that two yen didn't last very long, having as we did other expenses. I learnt through bitter experience just how pitiful the life of young mill workers was.

In the spring of the 12th year of Taisho, 1923, I ran away from the factory and ~~we~~ crossed over to Korea to my sister's place again. My sister found me a job as "shosei" (student house-boy) to a bone-setter doctor. I stayed ~~there~~ there till the 15th year, 1926, attending a commercial school at night. Eventually, I wanted to become an airplane pilot and I fluttered back to Japan. However, the job of an airplane pilot was far from my reach. In order to make out an existence, I entered ~~the~~ an iron mill called Fukunaga on Mikawa Island as a youth factoryhand. We were by then in the Showa Era.

It was about the time that ~~the~~ the labor movement was catching fire. On the other hand, the guys of the so-called capitalist class were having a wallopig good time each night in the restaurants and the "machiai" ~~of~~ (houses of assignation) in the Mukojima district. ~~Through~~ All the while, I was feeling to my very bones the contradiction of we laborers unable to make a living no matter how much we worked.

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In this way, I gradually became a discontented youth. However, I could not understand why we had to wave red flags in order to carry on a labor union movement or why we had to shout about the Soviet Union being our motherland.

After all weren't we Japanese---

DIRECT APPEAL TO EMPEROR IS DEBUT

Miki: Was it about that time you made a direct appeal to the Emperor on the question of unemployment relief?

Kodama: That was a little later---

About that time, Bin Akao, with the backing of Shinkichi Uesugi (now dead), formed an organization called the "Kenkoku Kai" (literally, national construction association). This, at that time, was the most progressive of right-wing organizations. It was 1928 when I entered the organization.

On top of the fact that I was young, I was fired with fervor. And, as worker, I had experienced with my own self the pitiful life of a worker. On the other hand, politicians were being involved in one scandal after another, while political parties were already showing signs of degeneration.

Just at that moment, His Majesty was to set out on November 3, 1929 for the vicinity of Akasaka Mitsuke. I thought that here was a good chance and with a direct appeal in my hands, I jumped on His Majesty's car. The appeal said: "Your Majesty, please save the 2,000,000 unemployed with your own hands."

Of course, I was arrested on the spot.

Ordinarily, I would have been sentenced to a reformatory by a juvenile court. I was sent before a district court.

In reply to the procurator who attacked me, saying: "You are the a really impious guy," I rebutted as follows:

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"From ancient times, it has been said that honor is as between the lord and retainer and compassion as between father and son. I am 18 years old. When I become 21 I shall be called to arms. And, on the strength of one red sheet (NB The color of the notice drafting a civilian into the army), I am called upon to die at any time. Who in the world would die, if he did not think of His Majesty as father.

"Today, there are 2,000,000 unemployed. What is wrong with my making an appeal ~~appealing~~ to my father at a time when the cabinet ministers, who are my elder brothers standing between me and my father, are administrating the country in ~~the~~ a mistaken way? That is why I don't think I ~~can~~ ~~ix~~ have been impious in any way."

There, I got a six-month sentence and was sent to the Maebashi Penitentiary. I really suffered because of the ~~the~~ extreme cold. However, I was able to read all kinds of books on ethics and I learned a lot.

It was 1930 when I came out of prison. As before, the streets were filled with unemployed and farming communities were in the extremities of poverty. But, the political parties showed no signs of self-reflection, grovelling about in the depth of corruption. It was about this time that the "Ketsumei Dan" ~~Izzt&shz&xoxn~~ (Blood Federation) Incident arose.

Then, such persons as Shumei Okawa Sensei and Ikki Kita Sensei began their activities with the idea of reforming Japan. Okawa ~~Sanz~~ Sensei organized the ~~S~~ Jimmu Kai. In this a revolutionary right-wing was born.

I, myself, left the Kenkoku Kai and joined the Kyushu Aikoku (Patriots') Kai, headed by Tatsuo Tsukui. The Kenkoku Kai was being financed by the financiers. I felt that this would not do and decided on joining the Kyushu Aikoku Kai. In short, this organization

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In short, ~~were~~ we were neither the catspaws of the financial clique nor the tools of the politicians. It was a party that had as its basic idea the February 26 thinking---let's bring about a revolution in the name of the Emperor.

In the spring of the following year, 1931, I sent to Junosuke Inouye ~~akker~~ a letter in which I listed ~~akknzrzxx~~ his various crimes and a dagger with the message: ~~akknzrzxx~~ "You dog of the financiers, ~~akknzrzxx~~ cut out your bowels bravely." This was adjudged as constituting the crime of intimidation and I was given another six-month sentence.

It was the beginning of 1932 when I came out of prison, and returned to the headquarters of the ~~&~~ Kyushu Aikoku Kai. That night Inouye was killed by Tadashi Konuma.

At that, I was escorted to the Metropolitan Police. I was subjected to a gruelling questioning on suspicion that I had something to do with Konuma's killing of Inouye. However, I had a firm alibi and I was released after two days.

With this and that, I found Japan too troublesome and in March, 1932, I fled from Japan to Manchuria.

LAND
I GET TO KNOW THE NEW ~~PARADISE~~ OF MANCHURIA

Miki: What were you doing in Manchuria? It doesn't seem that you stayed too long.

Kodama: I went to Manchuria with the intention of locking up a senior ~~comrade~~ comrade, Ryomei Kasagi, who was Chief of the Personnel Department of the South Manchurian Railway and who was a colleague of Okawa Sensei and Kita Sensei. But no sooner had I reached Manchuria when that May 15 Incident broke out. My senior, Kasagi, said: "Stick it out in Manchuria with the feeling you're going to bury your bones here. But, despite his encouragements, whenever I heard of

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my colleagues being dragged off by the police, I couldn't remain still. After repeated requests, Kasagi Sentei finally permitted me to return home to Japan. As soon as I got home, I took part in the plans with Hidezo Toyama (now dead) to launch a second May 15 Incident. This was the incident they called the Imperial Capital Blackout Incident, when it was later discovered prematurely.

The plan was to cut off the electric power transmissions to the Imperial Capital and throw the whole of Tokyo into darkness and confusion. If this took place, the military would without fail declare martial law. ~~The~~ After that, the plan was for the military to carry on from there. However, the military withdrew from the plot, claiming it was still too premature to undertake such a plot. As a result, two or three of our own group decided to go ahead on our own. His Majesty ~~Zhaxhupaxer~~ was to set out for a large-scale war maneuvers in November. We planned to ~~lay~~ lie in ambush and to kill three of the cabinet ministers who would be in the Imperial retinue.

At that time, I was staying on the second floor of a rooming house, called Seibun Kan, close to Toyama's place. There were hidden bombs and mortar shells for use in carrying out our plot.

However, one night, one of our group came to see me. He was ~~drak~~ drunk. He picked up one of the bombs and began handling it, saying: "I wonder just how effective this is." I tried to stop him, saying: "It's dangerous, better put it down." But, before I could stop him, he dropped the bomb and it started rolling down the stairs. It rolled into the street in front ~~and~~ of the house and there exploded with a tremendous noise.

Two or three of us managed to escape. But those who were slow on their feet were caught. As a result of the house search that followed, the mortar shells were also found. In the end, I

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myself was caught. I was thrown into prison for six months until 1938. It was my third prison term.

After bringing my release, I became friendly with Yoshio Miura and was introduced to Tomio Iwata. I became Iwata's guest and went to live with him.

That same year, in 1938, I gathered together those connected with Kita Sensei and formed the an organization called Nigastu Kai (February Club) and, on the other hand, established a Nippon Juku (a private boarding school).

It so happened that Kasagi Sensei had returned from Manchuria and I had him kindly look after the Juku. As lecturers, we invited such first-rate people as Genki Abe, Yutaro Nagai and Kenji Tomita. I became head of the Juku and strove to inspire the others with the ideas of Kita Sensei.

ACTIVE IN WANG CHING-WEI INCIDENT

Miki: What was the thing that led you to become active on the continent?

Kodama: It was through my association with Tatsuo Kawai. Following my release from prison in 1938, Mr. Kawai, who was Chief of the Information Bureau of the Foreign Office at that time, looked after me in many many ways. He often used to say: "Don't go around boasting about revolutions when you are still in Japan. You have to first study China." In the spring of 1939, Mr. Kawai said that he was going to Hankow and offered to take advantage of his trip to take me to Shanghai. In this way, I went with him to Shanghai on the same plane. And, he also wrote letters of introduction for me to the Japanese consulates in various parts of China.

At Shanghai, Vice Consul Iwai had gathered together the students of the Tungwen Institute (Common Script Institute) and had formed a Shanghai Special Survey Group. ~~At the~~ On the recommendation of Kawai-san, I came to work with the Survey Group. While engaged in this and that,

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the incident that broke out was the Wang Ching-wei Incident.

I was called back by the General Staff to Tokyo and asked to protect ~~Wang Ching-wei~~ Wang Ching-wei as his bodyguard. It was the Foreign Office that had recommended me to the General Staff and this was the start of my association with the military.

At this, I asked: "What am I supposed to do?"

"Take ten Japanese with you. On the surface make out that you are ~~employees~~ employees of the Oji Paper Manufacturing Company. We will place pistols and small carbines in the Foreign Office shipments to China. You use these weapons to guard Wang Ching-wei." This was the answer.

As a result, I got together 13 men under me. We trained by the General Staff in the use of small arms and in carrying out intelligence activities. Ten days later, we crossed over to Shanghai. In this way, we came to cooperate with the gendarmerie and I was engaged in this work until 1941. Of course, during this period I did not kill a single man and when I was imprisoned in Sugamo I was able to present a good testimony.

However, in August of 1941, I was called out by the General Staff in Tokyo and dismissed without a word of notice. The cause of this was the fact that I had served as a liaison man for Lt. General Ganji Ishiwara, who was running the East Asia League in China and this had displeased ~~Premier~~ Premier General Tojo. That was how bad the relations between the two men were. As a result, I completely came to hate the ~~military~~ army.

FORM KODAMA MISSION IN SHANGHAI

Miki: The so-called Kodama Mission was a development that took place after this, wasn't it?

Kodama: The Kodama Mission was an organization I formed after I

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went over to the Navy. At a time, as I just told you, when I was feeling rotten about the Army, ^{Yamagata,} Rear Admiral ~~Nishida~~, through an intermediary, proposed to me whether I would not like to go over to China to start/another job.

"No thank you," I said, "the military are all a bad type. They use you as much as they can and then throw you out."

"No. The Navy won't do such a thing, so you don't need to worry. Whatever the case, please go to China and please buy up as much materials for aircraft as you can," was the reply.

At this, I decided to take on the job and crossed once again to Shanghai. That was just one week before war broke out. In this way was the Kodama Mission born.

Our work was the purchase, as I just said, of aviation materials for aircraft, combined with intelligence work. We went purchasing materials from Manchuria in the north to Bangkok in the south, which we sent on in bulk to the Aircraft ~~Technical~~ Technical Depot at ~~Yok~~ Yokosuka. In the end, we even had the "jika tabi" (rubber soled tabi), which the workers at the depot wore, made in Szech Shanghai and shipped to Yokosuka. In many fields, Mitsui and Mitsubishi were my competitors, but we won through.

In the meantime, Rear-Admiral Yamagata was transferred from the Navy Aviation Headquarters to the front line and Rear-Admiral Takijiro Ohnishi took over his post. Admiral Ohnishi also was transferred to the Philippines in at the end of 1944. Later, just before the war ended, Admiral Ohnishi returned to Japan as Vice-Chief of Naval Operations. I also returned to Japan with him and until the end of the war when the Admiral committed harakiri, I was very close relations with him.

As a result of this, when Prince Higashikuni organized his cabinet, I became a cabinet minister. Soon after, I was thrown into Sugamo

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as a war ~~cost~~ criminal.

At the time I entered Sugano, the ~~Kozu~~ property of the Kodama Mission totalled close to ¥100,000,000 in cash (\$25,000,000 at the current rate of exchange) and over ~~¥30~~ ¥100,000,000 in materials, such as platinum and radium. There was that much material which the Kodama Mission had bought up but which it had not delivered to the Government.

Prior to this, immediately after the war ended, I took to the Minister of Navy of that time, Admiral Yonai, the Kodama Mission's bank books and inventory of materials. The Admiral said:

"There's no use in my accepting such money. Donate it to something that is worthwhile. As for the materials, I will give it to you as a award for your efforts."

Of the cash and the materials, a considerable amount was ~~be~~ handed over to Hatoyama-san and Karouk Tsuji. I did not put any strings on these gifts, except to ask that they form the Liberal Party and defend the Emperor system.

RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION OVER FIGHTER PLANE PROBLEM

Miki: The conversation jumps, but it is reported that you feel a tremendous righteous indignation over the recent question of the importation of fighter planes...

Kodama: There are a number of men who ^{erved} ~~were~~ under Rear-Admiral Ohnishi in the Defense Agency. At the beginning I had no ~~interest~~ interest whatever in airplanes. However, one day I had dinner with these men and they were expressing indignation at the political parties. They said a decision had been reached two years previously on the Lockheed as the choice of Japan's new plane, but that it had been changed all of sudden in favor of the Grumman. They were most indignant.

I spoke to Kono-san and Kawashima-san about this. Each said:

"That's not so. I don't know anything about airplanes.

However, Tsushima (who was Defense Minister) at that time) came and

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as asked next pleaded with me to agree to the Grumman. I said yes." This was what both told me. I then investigated and found that the top executives of the Defense Agency were engaged in most irresponsible activities.

At the beginning, there were four types of planes as candidates for Japan's next fighter, North American, Northrup, Lockheed and Grumman.

The choice was narrowed down to the Grumman and Lockheed and comparative performance data on both types were submitted to the Cabinet.

The Grumman plane was still in the experimental stage, without a single plane in actual existence. The performance data was all estimated figures. The Lockheed was already being produced, but the performance figures were for the old model, F104A. Further, the Grumman was more expensive than the Lockheed by ¥150,000,000 (including armaments). However, the argument was that the difference in cost was covered by the better performance and for this reason, the Defense Agency wanted to adopt the Grumman.

As stated, the comparative chart of performance data was as the argument went. However, as a matter of fact, the plane that the Lockheed Company was trying to sell to Japan was not the F104A but an improved model, the F104C. When it came to this plane, all the defects of the Lockheed aircraft, which the Defense Agency was finding fault with, had been removed.

If so, did the Defense Agency not know about the F104C? However, that was absolutely not so. ^{The} Nagamori (General) Survey Mission which had crossed to the United States last August had recognized the superiority of the new model and the performance data, which Lockheed had submitted to the U.S. Defense Department, had been relayed

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to ~~and was~~ ~~the~~ Defense Agency through a certain aircraft manufacturing company and had been in the Defense Agency's hands for some time.

Even before this, ^{when} Chief of the Air ~~Staggs~~ Staff Sanagi went to the United States ~~lga~~ in December of the previous year, he had heard a detailed explanation of this C type. Despite this fact, not only did Sanagi pretend he did not know, but after he went to the United States again in January of this year, he had swung over suddenly to the Grumman.

Whatever the case, the Defense Agency deliberately compared the performance data of the old Lockheed Model A and the estimated figures of the still uncompleted Grumman and tried to push through the Grumman that was ¥150 million more expensive per plane. ~~You can't~~ You can't but feel indignation.

My feeling on this subject, to put it most bluntly, is that in three years it will become the age of missiles and that manned aircraft will no longer become necessary. However, if we are to spend close ~~to one tenth of the national budget~~ the blood tax of a sum close to one ~~tenth~~ tenth of the nation's budget to import fighter planes, the problem should be handled with a strictly just attitude. The Defense Agency is looked ~~upon~~ askance in many ways by the people of Japan. I, who earnestly hoped for the Defense Agency to become trusted by the nation, cannot in any way condone such irresponsibility.