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OGATA Taketora

JAPAN

President of the Liberal Party

President of the Liberal Party and Deputy Prime Minister in the Yoshida Cabinet, Ogata Taketora is a strong and important political personality and was one of ex-Prime Minister YOSHIDA Shigeru's closest advisers. He is a former newspaper man with important connections with the Asahi Shimbun, one of the three largest newspapers in Japan. He has always received excellent treatment from the press and this has been particularly helpful in recent political campaigns. Ogata seems to have few political enemies though he is said to lack strong support within the Liberal Party. He is extremely popular with the people of his native Fukuoka prefecture and is looked upon as a possible future Prime Minister. He is strongly anti-Communist, and favors close ties with the western countries and those of Southeast Asia.

In 1952, Yoshida appointed Ogata Chief Cabinet Secretary and sent him on a mission to Southeast Asia as his special representative and envoy of good will. Later, he was charged with the responsibility for coordinating Japanese intelligence activities. Ogata served as Acting Prime Minister during Yoshida's visit to Europe and the United States in the autumn of 1954. When Yoshida resigned as Prime Minister and President of the Liberal Party in November 1954, Ogata was elected President of the Party.

Ogata was born in Fukuoka prefecture, in northern Kyushu, in January 1888 but spent most of his life in Tokyo. He graduated from the Tokyo Higher Commercial School and received a degree in Political Science from Waseda University. Ogata joined the Asahi staff in 1911 and remained with the newspaper for 33 years. He became successively editor, assistant manager, managing director and vice president, a position he resigned in 1944 when he became President of the Cabinet Information Board, the wartime agency for news control. During most of World War II, Ogata served as Counselor of the Japanese Newspaper Association and as press member of the Board of Directors of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA). In 1944 he became Vice President of the IRAA and a member of the House of Peers. He was an adviser to the Suzuki Cabinet in 1945, and in the Higashikuni post-surrender Cabinet Ogata was Minister without Portfolio and concurrently Chief Cabinet Secretary and President of the Cabinet Information Board.

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