

AIR POUCH
CONFIDENTIAL
(Security Classification)

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

4.00/2-852
XR 299,943

FROM : USPCLAD, TOKYO

1133
DESP. NO.

XR 894,46

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

February 6, 1952
DATE

REF : Tokyo's Despatch no. 1063 of January 28, 1952 and no. 1088 of January 31, 1952.

58 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION FE	DEPT. I N D	DCR	OLI	E	UNA	DS	727706
DE	REC'D FEB 18	OTHER						

SUBJECT: Visit of Tsunezo WACHI to Iwo Jima

DESTROY AFTER USE

In the despatches under reference this Mission advised the Department of the great concern felt within Japan for the consolation and repatriation of Japanese war dead in the Pacific Islands and also described at some length the character and potentials of the individual currently most active in exploiting that concern. Since the date of those despatches, Tsunezo WACHI has made his projected trip to Iwo Jima and has achieved considerable publicity on that account. By inviting one representative of the Japanese press to accompany him on his journey and thereby posing the possibility of a press scoop, Wachi stirred up the competitive spirit among other Japanese newspapermen and precipitated a rather dramatic news race which involved the chartering of a special aircraft to fly representatives of the three principal Japanese newspapers to Iwo Jima. As a result of these circumstances, Japanese newspaper readers throughout the country have been treated to glaring headlines, sentimental stories and gruesome pictures about Iwo Jima and the substance of Wachi's trip.

The newsmen who made the airplane dash to the Island and return were among the better known by-line writers of the Japanese press. Their stories therefore were well written and designed to entice reader reaction. On the whole, they were restrained and played mostly upon the sentimental aspect of heroes who died in vain. The headlines, however, tended toward the sensational with such captions as "Iwo Jima - Island of Skeletons", and the pictures were inclined to emphasize skulls and bleached bones. These pictures were taken in caves and excavations on the island, but coupled with the headlines they indicated to the casual reader that the island was a shambles of unburied bones and untended accidental graves. This implication drew a quick reaction from Pearl Harbor, where Commander L.G. Findley, Island Governor Officer on Admiral Radford's staff, advised the press that all Japanese remains which had been discovered on the island had been properly buried and documented. Nevertheless, this statement and the restrained wording of the actual press stories probably made little impression on the average reader who glanced only at the headlines and saw the pictures. A survey of reader reactions is contained in Enclosure No. 1 to this despatch.

In consequence of these developments, this Mission in its capacity as the Diplomatic Section of General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, has once again initiated action to instigate a coordinated approach to this problem by United States and Japanese officials. The SCAP General Headquarters will undertake to make proposals on the general subject to the Department of Defense and it is assumed that the latter will consult with the Department

WHSullivan/ch

CONFIDENTIAL

SECURITY INFORMATION

INFORMATION COPY

Retain in divisional files or destroy in accordance with security regulations.

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2006

FOR COORDINATION WITH State

CONFIDENTIAL

7 Tavo 1133

(Classification)

SECURITY INFORMATION

of State. Similarly, political and emotional reaction among the Japanese public has stirred the Japanese Government to hasten its plans for the general consolation and repatriation of war dead.

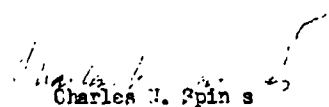
In the meantime, Wachi has achieved national prominence. He has been pictured in his priestly robes carrying a statuette of Kwanon, the Goddess of Mercy, in all principal Japanese newspapers. Photographs of him conducting services for the war dead and quotations from him have appeared throughout the country. There is little doubt that he will continue to exploit this prominence effectively upon his return to Japan.

The prominence has not, however, been an unmitigated blessing. While interest in Wachi and his White Lotus Society was at its peak, a scandal concerning his name broke in the Japanese press. The Department will recall from despatch no. 1098 that Wachi and his Society have been actively engaged in a used clothing business of questionable integrity, and that in his move to power within the White Lotus Society, Wachi over-rode the original president, Masumasa ONISHI, and took over distribution of used clothing which the latter had accumulated in the United States.

As a result of this deal, the president of a local cooperative association in Yokohama has brought suit for fraud against the White Lotus Society in the Tokyo Regional Procurator's Office. In the suit the plaintiff has named Onishi and two other lay members of the Society. However, in statements to the press, the plaintiff and his attorney have directly implicated Wachi. A translation of a news item appearing in the Mainichi on February 2, 1952 is enclosed with this despatch (Enclosure No. 2). The Tokyo Metropolitan Government is apparently also very much interested in the used clothing deals. An article from the Nippon Times of February 7, 1952 is also enclosed (Enclosure No. 3).

Wachi, who travelled to Iwo Jima on an LST loading scrap iron, has had to remain upon the island while the ship is loaded and has not, at the date of this despatch, returned to Japan. It is likely that he is not yet aware of the charges against him and his organization, and it will be interesting to observe the manner in which he will dispose of them.

For the Political Adviser:


Charles M. Spinks
First Secretary of Mission

3 Enclosures:

1. Copy news item - "Iwo Jima and Articles Stir Up Antimwar Sentiments".
2. Translation of Mainichi item dated February 2, 1952.
3. Copy of Nippon Times item dated February 7, 1952.

CONFIDENTIAL

SECURITY INFORMATION

UNCLASSIFIED
(Classification)

Enc No. to Despatch
No. 1133 from Tokyo, February
8, 1952.

IWO JIMA WAR DEAD ARTICLES
STIR UP ANTIWAR SENTIMENTS

The prominence given recently by the Japanese press to the Japanese expedition to Iwo Jima, stirred up anew antiwar feelings among 80 per cent of the 62 newspaper readers surveyed by the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association.

The survey was taken on the evening of Jan. 31 when morning papers gave big front page space to Iwo Jima stories and pictures. One picture showed a human skull lying in a cave.

Thirty of the 41 men interviewed said they felt disgusted with war after reading the articles recalling the tragic battle staged on the island during the last war.

Likewise, 18 of the 21 women in the survey felt similar disgust.

Of the rest, six men and three women said they still felt that war is inevitable, despite the tragic consequences depicted in the Iwo Jima stories. Two remaining men said they did not have any definite opinion on war.

Of the 41 men in the survey, 15 had experienced service with the military forces as soldiers or civilian employes.

All the 62 persons surveyed were tenants of Metropolitan Government-operated apartments, representing a variety of professions.

The survey said that 25 men or 61 per cent and 19 women (out of the 21) said they were deeply moved by the Iwo Jima stories.

Of the remainder, nine men or 22 per cent and one woman said they considered the articles and pictures were in "bad taste".

Seven men and a woman said they did not experience any particular feeling.

Samples of their reactions were: "I felt sorry for the war dead or their families;" "I pity them as victims of the military clique." "The pictures of skulls brought tears to my eyes." (especially women).

Criticizing the newspapers' way of handling the news were such opinions as "the articles were exaggerated to appeal to public sentiments" (by a 15-year-old girl student).

One person said, "The articles may serve as a brake on the trend towards rearmament."

Meanwhile some 20 persons gathered in downtown Tokyo today to discuss the

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

(Classification)

Page 2 of Enclosure No. 1 to
Des. No. 1133 from Tokyo,
February 8, 1952.

bringing back of the remains of Japanese war dead overseas.

Among them were Masazumi Ando, adviser to the Japan Religious Federation,
and Tadatsugu Shinazu, president of the Japan Red Cross.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED
(Classification)

Enclosure No. to Despatch No.
115, from Tokyo, February 8,
1952.

(Translation)

MAINICHI PRESS, 12TH EDITION, 3 FEBRUARY 1952

RYAKUO K-KA (The White Lotus Society) SUED FOR FRAUD

2,300,000 YEN FOR USED CLOTHES BEZZLED?

OKA A Sadayoshi, President of the Noge Cooperative Association, 1-150 Noge-machi, Nak-ku, Yokohama-shi, represented by attorney HASHIJO Yotoku of 2-326 Honmoku-cho, Naka-ku, Yokohama-shi, brought a suit for fraud before the Tokyo Regional Procurator's Office against: ONISHI Kaumasa, President of the Ryakuren-sha, a religious corporation of the Nishi Hongwanji, 3-1 Tsukiji, Chuo-ku, Tokyo-to; FUKUSHIMA Masamori (Former Asatu Sergeant), Department Chief of the said organization, 142 Kogai-cho, Aoba-ku, Tokyo-to; and FUJIMORI Reigaku, President of the Chushin-kai, 819 Madamoto-cho, Suginami-ku Tokyo-to.

According to the suit, the 3 accused, in collusion received from OKA A the sum of 2,300,000 yen on 18 January 1951, stating that they expected import of large amount of used clothes. The goods not being delivered, OKA A requested return of the money, but the 3 failed to do so.

Attorney HASHIJO:

Since it is said that ACHI Isunezo, now on Iwo Jima for religious service for the war deceased, holds the actual power in the Ryakuren-sha, I believe it proper that the responsibility lies with Mr. ACHI.

FUKUSHIMA Masamori:

In January last year, I peddled in the used clothing deal because the Ryakuren-sha was in need of funds for its enterprises and for the travel of ONISHI to the U.S. However, when the goods arrived, ACHI disposed of them. ONISHI payed back part of the advance-pay, 700,000 yen, to OKA A in June. ONISHI came out the loser in the struggle for power against ACHI.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

(Classification)

Reference No. 3 to Dispatch
No. 1133 from Tokyo, February
8, 1952.

PRINTED TO GOVERNMENT TO IWO JIMA
RELATIVES INVOLVED IN SCANDAL

Former navy captain Tsunero Wachi who is now on Iwo Jima "conoling the souls" of the Japanese war dead there cropped up in the news again on Wednesday this time in connection with a case involving fraud and misappropriation of funds.

The case according to the Yomiuri, involves Byakurensha, a Buddhist charity organization operated, among others, by the former commander of the Japanese garrisons on Iwo Jima who was converted into priesthood after the war.

The Byakurensha, according to the Yomiuri, in September, 1950, sponsored the sale of large quantities of imported used clothing but failed to make good its promise to donate 3,000,000 to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. The Metropolitan Government had authorized duty-free import of 300 tons of old clothing valued at ¥9,000,000 on condition that out of the ¥6,000,000 net profit expected to accrue from the transaction, the Byakurensha could use ¥2,000,000 for establishing its headquarters building, ¥1,000,000 for helping Buddhist students and donate the remainder to the Tokyo Government for use as funds for building a school for physically handicapped children.

On the strength of the promise, the Tokyo Government launched the construction project but the Byakurensha has so far contributed only ¥700,000. The school building project was suspended after the completion of only two classrooms.

Enraged, the Metropolitan Government launched investigations but it was too late as the Byakurensha had moved its headquarters to Maiko in Tochigi Prefecture in an attempt, so the Metropolitan officials suspect, to evade an investigation. The Tokyo Government has deep suspicions as to how the remainder of the money -- ¥7,300,000 -- has been disposed of.

Another manifestation of the alleged scandal concerns a Yokohama clothier, who on Jan. 18, last year, handed ¥3,000,000 to the Byakurensha as advance payment for a part of the imported clothing. Not a single item has been forwarded to the clothes shop proprietor so far. Nor has the Buddhist organization returned a portion of the advance payment.

The Nippon Times Wednesday learned from the Tokyo District Procurators Office that a complaint against Kazumasa Onishi, former head of the Byakurensha, and two other persons concerned had been filed with the office by the aggrieved clothier.

Of the ¥3,000,000, Mr. Onishi is said to have pocketed ¥1,700,000, and the Rev. Wachi ¥700,000. The rest is said to have been distributed to two persons who offered good offices for the deal. The Rev. Wachi is said to have returned the money, however.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

(Classification)

Page . of Enclosure No. 3
to Despatch No. 1133 from
Tokyo, February 8, 1952.

Meanwhile, the Byakurensa organization has been split in two groups,
one headed by its original head, Mr. Onishi and the other managed by a board
of governors including the Rev. Wachi.

UNCLASSIFIED