

Name: YOSHIDA, Shigeru 吉田 茂

Country: Japan

Region: Tôkyô-fu, Tôkyô. #17 Nagata-cho, 1-chome, Kojimachi-

Position: Inspector of Education. Former Ambassador to Great Britain.

Birth date & place: September 22, 1878. Tôkyô.

Nationality & Religion: Japanese

Family History: Son of Tezuka Takasuki, M.P., adopted by Kenzo Yoshida; married Fuhiko, daughter of Count Nobuaki Makino, late Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal. The entire Yoshida family were strongly anti-militaristic and with good reason. During the Army mutiny of Feb. 1936, Count Makino - then in his eighties - narrowly escaped death at the hands of the army assassins who followed him into the country to murder him. He was saved by the courage and resourcefulness of his granddaughter, Kanako Yoshida.

Aside from his political sympathies, Mr. Yoshida is bound to Americans by strong ties of gratitude. In 1930-30 when his wife was dying of cancer, the drugs and medicines necessary to alleviate her sufferings could no longer be bought in Japan. For over a year they were imported and supplied regularly by the wife of the American Ambassador.

Education: Graduate of Tôkyô Imperial University, 1906.

Work & Political History:

Entered diplomatic service upon graduation and served in Japanese Consulate at Peking and Mukden, 1907; London, 1908; 3rd Secretary in Bonn, 1909; Consul at Antung and Secretary to Korean Government, 1912-15; 2d Secretary, Washington, 1916-17; Japanese Foreign Office, Tokyo, 1918-19; London, 1920; Consul General, Pictou, 1922-25; Minister to Sweden, 1928; Ambassador to Italy, 1930-32; Minister to England and the United States, 1933; Ambassador to Great Britain, 1934-39; Inspector of Education in Japan, August 1944. Appointed Foreign Minister in Shidehara cabinet, Oct. 9, 1945.

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8645

- 2 -

Shigeru Yoshida
(continued)

Mr. Yoshida has devoted his career to promoting a more liberal form of government in Japan and to friendship with the two English-speaking nations. After the army mutiny in 1936, Koki Hirota was ordered to form a cabinet capable of preventing similar disturbances in future, and he appointed Shigeru Yoshida Minister of Foreign Affairs. But Yoshida was known to be both anti-military and stoutly against any policy which might cause a break with England and the United States; his father-in-law was the most influential liberal statesman in Japan, a counsellor to the Emperor. The War Minister, General Count Ierauchi refused to serve in the Cabinet if Yoshida's appointment was confirmed; other generals were asked to take his place, but none dared accept the appointment, so Yoshida was shelved and Hirota obliged to take over foreign affairs as well as the premiership.

That same year Yoshida was sent to England as Ambassador but was recalled in 1939 at the army's insistence that he was not pushing the case for the Shanhaihai - New Prosperity Sphere - with sufficient zeal. During the first years of the war he lived in retirement; more recently he was offered and refused positions in the army-sponsored war organizations; and in August 1944, he accepted the post of Inspector of Education under General Hasegawa, a one-time "liberal" whom the reactionary clique forced out of the army in 1934.

Through the seven months after Pearl Harbor, Mr. Yoshida was one of the very few prominent Japanese courageous enough to show any friendship for interned Americans. The following excerpt from his letter to the American Ambassador in December 1941, and sent at a grave risk as he was already under suspicion, is probably a sincere expression of his feelings:

"...It is so sad a thing that even our unfatigued efforts could not have saved the peace. But you can rest assured that many of us will never forget our American friends nor the friendship shown our country by yours...My wife...is fortunate not to have witnessed in her lifetime this tragic end to our good relations..."

Personal Traits: Shigeru Yoshida is a quiet, inconspicuous little man, with a dignified, reserved manner. He speaks formal but fluent English; is industrious and methodical rather than brilliant. He is outstanding among his countrymen, however, for his known habit of speaking the truth on principle.

Report covers time up to August 1944.

FU KHI

Interviewer's own information.

Source: 21,016

Morality: Excellent Judgment: Excellent Objectivity: Excellent
"Who's Who - 1941-42"; "FOU release"; "Ten Year's in Japan" by J.C.Grew.

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January 8, 1946