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Seed of Dragons



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Kageyama. For the master, no hara-kiri. (SEE: Seed of Dragons)

Japan has its nationalists, too. From Tokyo last week came this story by PATHFINDER correspondent Ray Falk:

August 14, 1945, was a black day for Masaharu Kageyama, as it was for Imperial Japan. With 14 friends, all ardent nationalists like himself, Kageyama huddled in front of a radio and heard Emperor Hirohito announce Nippon's surrender.

Kageyama's 14 friends, convinced that the grand dream of Japanese nationalists for a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere was forever smashed, promptly put themselves out of this dreary world by hara-kiri. Kageyama decided to live and fight another day.

Last week in Tokyo, operating under a front as the Fuji Publishing Co., Kageyama was a spearhead of Japan's revived ultra-nationalist movement. He and his fellow nationalists were plugging the same old pre-war lines: "Japan for the Japanese" and "racial independence," Nipponese double-talk for anti-Americanism.

Kageyama, who is shabby in dress and sloppy in personal habits, works in an office to match. It is dominated by a Shinto altar with 17 urns containing funeral ashes.

Feudalist. He keeps a staff of rough-looking, barefooted young men, who wear long, old-fashioned Japanese skirts. They are his kobuns (serfs) and he is their gyabun (master), in a sort of relation-

ship that is a throw-back to the days of feudal Japan.

Kageyama poses as a poet and mystic who spends his day in prayer and writing verses. But police know him as an active organizer, who in the last three years has traveled about Japan knitting 3,000 followers into a tight organization.

Although Hirohito has renounced all claim to divinity, Kageyama still regards him as divine. He holds that anything, even violence, is justifiable in the Emperor's name.

New Dark Age? Kageyama's nebulous plans call for a sort of Fascist state in which the government decrees what is best for each class. As a step in this direction Kageyama and his nationalist colleagues want to gain control of the labor movement. They are working through the Japan Labor party, which in turn seeks to infiltrate the Communist party in order to sabotage it and to learn its methods to further ultra-nationalist aims.

Just as wartime nationalists made a tool of Premier Hideki Tojo, who was executed in December 1948 as a war criminal, the Kageyama clique hopes to use Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida's conservative Democratic Liberal party. Yoshida is extremely touchy on this point and has tongue-lashed correspondents for calling him an "extreme rightist."

Japan has more than 500 ultra-nationalist parties. Most of them are extremely small; some are no more than one-man parties, the brainchildren of pseudo-intellectuals. Exceptions are the "Japan Revolution Chrysanthemum Flag Comrades Association," with 6,000 members; the "Encouraging Spirit Society," made up of 70,000 repatriates from Manchuria, and Kageyama's own outfit.

Sheep's Clothing. So-called friendship clubs, numbering more than 100, and made up of former Japanese officers and non-commissioned men, operate secretly. These clubs seek general headquarters permission to take an active, strong-arm role against communism.

For a while these parties supported themselves through black marketing, farming and the sale of billions of yen worth of Japanese army and navy goods buried at the end of the war. But black marketing and farming are no longer profitable and the buried military goods seem to have run out.

The public follows the nationalist line unconsciously. Interest is again growing in the traditional Japanese Shinto festivals, and in holidays dedicated to the boys and girls of Japan. Innocent and fun-loving as these holidays may seem, they have often, in the past, been twisted to extol the virtue of the Emperor and "All-powerful Japan."

American intelligence is keeping a sharp eye on all their activities. Some officers in general headquarters have gone so far as to warn that the long-range danger in Japan is not from the Communists but from the ultra-nationalists.