

A Book That Tells Us about Jewish Spirit and Japanese Spirit **Nishimura Shingo, Member of the House of the Representatives**

The more we look at the Russo-Japanese War, the more profoundly we feel the crossing of the apocalyptic fates of the Japanese people and the Jewish people.

The Russo-Japanese War was not a mere incident during the imperialistic era of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in which Japan, a Far Eastern country with only thirty-some years of experience in modernization, defeated an Imperialist Russia ambitiously advancing towards both Manchuria at the eastern end of the Eurasian Continent and towards the Korean Peninsula.

Nor was it merely a seismic shift in world history which marked the beginning of the end of a five-hundred-year long rule over the colored Asian and African peoples by the European whites, ever since Vasco da Gama sailed the route from Europe to India, rounding the Cape of Good Hope in 1498.

The Russo-Japanese War was fought with a sense of desperation by the Japanese people, holding the mythically eternal lineage of the Emperor, against Russia, which boasted the world's largest army. Japan won this deadly contest, risking her national existence, which led to an attempt by the Jewish people to build a nation in Palestine, backed by a spiritual power that was also derived from myths, two thousand years after their homeland was destroyed by the ancient Roman Empire.

And today, 108 years after the Russo-Japanese War, Far Eastern Japan and Middle Eastern Israel stand as nations of people who recognize their mythical origin and derive power from it.

During the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 and 1905, within the Russian Army, fighting on the Manchurian battlefield against the Japanese Army, there were two military men who were determined to risk their lives to build a nation. One was a Finn named Gustaf Mannerheim, a Russian Army officer, who fought in the yellow-dusted wilderness of Mukden, and the other was Joseph Trumpeldor, a Jewish Russian Army officer, fighting against the Japanese Army, who was besieged in the fortress at Port Arthur on the Liaodong Peninsula.

Gustaf Mannerheim felt certain, throughout the battle against the Japanese Army, that even a small country, if firmly united, could defeat a great power; he later became a hero who fought for the independence of Finland. He later fought against Russia for Finnish independence, wearing a white mantle. That is why he is called the "White General" in Finland today.

Joseph Trumpeldor fought against the Third Army, led by General Nogi Maresuke, of the Japanese Army, which besieged the fortress at Port Arthur. Trumpeldor is a founding father of Israel, who fortified his will to construct a state for the Jewish people while living as a P.O.W. at Camp Hamadera, a Russian Prisoners of War camp, which was established at Takaishi and Sakai, Osaka Prefecture in 1905, which, incidentally is my hometown.

He lost his left arm due to cannon fire from the Japanese Army during the fierce fighting over the capture of the fortress at Port Arthur. He left the hospital after three months, was discharged from military and allowed to return home. However, he wished to return to the front and the Russian Army appointed him to a low officer rank and permitted him to fight with a saber and a revolver. One cannot handle a small gun single-handedly. A Jewish officer was very rare in the Russian Army, but the Russian Army recognized his valor and made him an officer such that he could be armed with a pistol and a saber. Later, Joseph Trumpeldor became a founding hero of Israel, and the Israelis, out of love and awe, call him the "One-armed Hero".

Recently, Mr. Eli-Eliyahu Cohen, the former Israeli Ambassador to Japan, has written this book, and I am very much honored to write this Preface with love toward my home country, Japan, and his, Israel. Ambassador Cohen himself writes in this book, "It is my greatest joy to convey how Joseph Trumpeldor lived, contributing his entire life to the cause of preserving his homeland, to those trouble-ridden Japanese people and especially to young Japanese who are to lead the next generation." And this is precisely what I feel in writing this Preface.

To know how Israel was founded and how her founding hero Joseph Trumpeldor lived a devoted life is exactly the same as to know the spirit of the Meiji-period Japanese people, who fought against Russia, regarding it a joy to die for their homeland Japan, which in turn ignited a fire of passion in Joseph Trumpeldor's heart, urging him to create Israel as the homeland for the Jewish people, who had been robbed of their homeland for as long as two thousand years.

Japanese soldiers whom Trumpeldor encountered as the enemy at Port Arthur were simply amazing and were admired by all military attachés and observers from various countries. Ten years later, European countries, including Great Britain, were engaged in World War I, and fought in the manner that the Japanese Army did during the Russo-Japanese War.

The Japanese soldiers who amazed European observers were all killed in action, as General Nogi Maresuke, Commander of the Third Army, reported the following to the Emperor Meiji:

"All the while, our officers and soldiers fought against the powerful enemy valiantly, faithfully, loyally and fiercely, to the death, which was the inevitable result, some falling under gunfire and others under blades. All of them jubilantly hailed to your Excellency and gladly died."

And, as this book describes, Trumpeldor himself fought, disregarding death and died smiling, after the model of the Japanese soldier.

It is Great to Die for the Country, the title of this book, is what Trumpeldor inscribed in his heart while spending time as a P.O.W. at Hamadera Russian Prisoners of War Camp in Osaka (1905), what he told his comrades just before his death (1920) and what now reads, inscribed on the stone statue of a lion standing in front of his epitaph in Tel Hai in the northern part of Israel, where he fell in battle.

Incidentally, author Eli-Eliyahu Cohen, former Ambassador to Japan, visited the Cities of Sakai and Takaishi, my hometown, in 2007, the last year of his ambassadorial term, and stayed at a hotel in Sakai. On that occasion, I was introduced to Ambassador Cohen by Shindo Akira of the Japan Israel Friendship Association, and had the honor to dine with him.

The purposes of Ambassador Cohen's visits to Sakai and Takaishi were to visit the site of the Hamadera Russian P.O.W. Camp to which can be attributed the origin of the dream of building a nation conceived by Israeli founding hero Trumpeldor, to look at the collection of material concerning Trumpeldor exhibited at the Takaishi City Office and to visit the graves at the temple in Izumi Otsu where 89 Russian soldiers, including 9 Jewish soldiers, who had died of illness or other causes while at the P.O.W. Camp, are buried.

During the dinner, Ambassador Cohen and I spoke much about Trumpeldor as this book well documents. Here, I will refer to some other things I found very impressive in our dinner-time conversation.

Before arriving at the hotel, Ambassador Cohen went to visit the Mausoleum of the 16th Emperor Nintoku, the world's largest front-squared, rear-rounded mounded tomb, located some three kilometers north of Russian P.O.W. Camp Hamadera. Describing this occasion, the Ambassador said, "I felt something spiritual there."

I wondered, "How do you, a Jew, who believes in monotheism, feel something spiritual in front of the Mausoleum?" He answered, "Monotheism and belief in countless deities are the same." He continued to explain, "One is all and this is monotheism, while one is in all, and that is belief in countless deities." He was born into a family of Jewish religious leaders (*Cohen*) who date back as far as three thousand years. I was told that he had learned Japanese martial arts and dedicated *Iaido*, Japanese sword-play performance, to the Yasukuni Shrine.

Regarding the Mausoleum of Emperor Nintoku, which Ambassador Cohen visited, allow me elaborate. The Russian prisoners of war at Camp Hamadera were paid a monthly salary and permitted to go out. Officers were particularly well-treated. Some officers were warmly invited to civilian homes in the neighborhood. It is easy to imagine that, fully curious about Japan, Trumpeldor was interested enough in the gigantic Emperor's Mausoleum nearby to visit himself.

Before leaving, I asked Ambassador Cohen, "I presume Israel possesses atomic bombs. What do you say to that?" His answer was, "Whether Israel possesses atomic bombs or not, the power of nuclear ambiguity is its deterrent effect."

To return to Hamadera, which Ambassador Cohen visited, the western part is presently land that has been reclaimed from the sea and has become a coastal industrial section. The landscape at the time Trumpeldor stayed at Hamadera is completely different from that of today. To the west, beautiful beaches with white sands and green pine trees stretched endless along

Osaka Bay. To the east, fishing villages were scattered here and there and far away mountains could be seen, among which is Mt. Kongo, standing majestically, famous for being related to Kusunoki Masashige, the 14th century samurai leader who fought valiantly for the Emperor. Trumpeldor must have seen all of this and that was exactly the scenery I myself enjoyed as a little boy.

Trumpeldor wrote, “I grew up, looking up at the overwhelmingly majestic Caucasus Mountains.” Indeed, he grew up looking up at the great Caucasus mountains and at Hamadera, he saw the sea, white-sanded beaches with green pine trees to the west and Mt. Kongo to the east, fermenting the will to found the nation of Israel someday. And finally he launched the reclamation of the wilderness, of *Eretz Yisrael Shelanu* (Our Land of Israel).

On April 18, 2010, three years after I had dinner with Ambassador Cohen in Sakai, I visited the Ambassador’s private home at Maare Adomemu in Jerusalem and saw him again.

On the previous day, I visited Trumpeldor’s grave at Tel Hai and on the next day, April 19, the Day of Remembrance for the Fallen Soldiers of Israel, I was in Jerusalem and attended the 62nd Commemoration of Israel’s Independence.

On May 14, 1948, the first Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion (meaning “lion”) declared independence in Tel Aviv. The Declaration of Independence began with the following passage, clearly stating the inseparability of the identity of the Jewish people from the land:

“Eretz Yisrael Shelanu was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and national identity was formed.” As soon as this Declaration of Independence was announced, the Union Flags symbolizing the British trusteeship were removed from the land of Israel. Simultaneously, neighboring Arab countries began invading and attacking Israel and thus ensued the first Middle East Conflict. Since then, there have been four large-scale conflicts and so far, Israel has successfully emerged victorious. The spirit to valiantly fight for one’s homeland that the Meiji-Era Japanese had demonstrated to Trumpeldor, founding hero of Israel, has survived in Israel and has helped Israel defend herself.

Therefore, one European commented, “The 20th century saw the valiant Japanese warriors turn into mean merchants and mean Jewish merchants into valiant warriors.” The turning points for both Japanese and Jewish peoples came respectively as the defeat of Japan in 1945 and as the foundation of Israel in 1948. These occurred almost simultaneously.

Historically, it is high time for Japan to get out of post-war peace and decidedly endeavor to preserve her national existence once again amid the tough and rigorous international environment. Accordingly, the time has come when in order to become valiant warriors again, we must learn from Trumpeldor and the founding spirit of Israel as this book superbly indicates. In this sense, former Ambassador Eli-Eliyahu Cohen’s book is truly valuable to Japan and we must be grateful to him for his great work.

Now, let me introduce one more person, an Englishman, who refers to the mysterious relationship that exists between Japan and Trumpeldor/Israel. He was a military man named Sir Ian Hamilton. He participated in the Russo-Japanese War as a military attaché and observer and ten years later, he fought in the World War I as the general who led the British Army's Dardanelles Operation. He admired the Japanese Army in the Russo-Japanese War and in the Dardanelles Operation he admired the remarkable frontline performance of the "Zion Mule Corps" transportation unit created by Trumpeldor, two thousand years after Rome destroyed Zion.

After observing the Japanese Army in the Russo-Japanese War, General Sir Ian Hamilton pointed out that what should be learned from Japan is the soldiers' loyalty, saying, "We must teach our children and infuse the military ideal into their minds. In order to deeply impress high respect and admiration toward our ancestors' patriotism on them, we must resort to every possible means of influence such as love, loyalty, tradition and education, and work on the next-generation of boys and girls." (*World History Changed by the Russo-Japanese War* by Hiram Yoichi.)

And ten years later, Sir Ian Hamilton, General of the Dardanelles Operation, wrote about the Zion Mule Corps under his command and led by Trumpeldor. "They had incomparable courage. It was very clearly seen, considering the circumstance of soldiers in the trenches. For soldiers in the trenches, they managed to suppress fear of approaching danger by solely concentrating on the combat. However, men of the Zion Mule Corps had to not only hold themselves up amid exploding cannonball fire, but also had to pull out mules too scared at cannonade to move. And this was not at all easy." (p.134 of this book)

The high regard for the Jewish corps by General Sir Ian Hamilton must have been enormously encouraging and pleasing to Trumpeldor, who firmly believed that making the Jewish corps during World War I that could develop into a prospective Jewish Legion, which would certainly lay the foundation for establishing a Jewish nation in the future.

Greatly influenced by the way Japanese soldiers fought during the Russo-Japanese War, General Hamilton set on educational reform in Great Britain. The result manifested itself ten years later. The casualty rate of British public school students in World War I reached exceedingly high figure. They shot out of their trenches, kicking rugby balls, and charged at enemy trenches.

General Sir Ian Hamilton became President Emeritus of Edinburgh University after he retired from military. And in 1920, amid criticism over the reckless charges that resulted in heavy casualties, the British Defense Committee edited the official history of the Russo-Japanese War, writing, "The battle at Port Arthur will forever be referred to as an example of heroic devotion and excellent courage."

Now, let me ask a question. In post-war Japan, at present, are our society and education duly admiring, appreciating and mourning the courage and patriotic love of the white-sashed legion of three thousand officers and soldiers who died for honor, charging with drawn swords towards the concrete Port Arthur fortress during the Russo-Japanese War or of young men of the special attack unit who charged at enemy warships, who armed themselves with bombs, during the Greater East Asia War?

In Israel, they certainly admire and mourn their brave martyrs. On the front of Trumpeldor's grave in Tel Hai, are inscribed the words "It is Great to Die for our Country."

During my stay in Israel, on April 19, Day of Remembrance for the Fallen Soldiers of Israel, for two days and nights, the names of all of the deceased in battle were cited on and on over the radio. And on the afternoon of the Day of Remembrance, sirens sounded all over Israel, putting the entire nation in silent prayer. I also saw the driver of the bus I was riding stop the bus at the traffic signal, get out of the driver's seat and stand up in silence. On the highway, I was told, people stopped and parked their cars on the roadside, got out of their cars and prayed in silence.

Furthermore, they do not exclusively mourn the deceased of the 20th century alone. Israel still remembers and admires the one thousand Jews who died for honor in 73 A.D. after fighting for three years against the Roman Army, besieged at the Fortification of Masada, east of the Dead Sea.

The Israeli Army's enlistment ceremony is held at the Fortification of Masada, the place where Jewish soldiers died for honor nearly two thousand years ago. The newly-enlisted hold an automatic rifle in their right hand and the Old Testament in their left hand and swear, "Masada shall not fall again." This is the reason Israel has emerged through over sixty-five years of Middle East Conflicts. Without this, Israel would not exist today.

Again, I ask whether Japan mourns and remembers the great souls of the deceased in battle. Why can't Japan's Prime Minister visit Yasukuni Shrine to pay his respects? Consequently, can Japan continue to exist as a state?

I want readers to understand how urgent it is that Ambassador Eli-Eliyahu Cohen presents Trumpeldor to Japanese readers in this book.

Let me emphasize the point again. If Japan continues to lazily dwell in a state of post-war inertia, there will be no future for Japan.

So, now is the time for us to learn from Israel and Trumpeldor. This is, in other words, to return to Japan during the Meiji Period. Remember our ancestors' devoted and passionate efforts and honor and mourn them.

Israel and Japan are deeply united by a bond inscrutable to human understanding. This bond can be seen, only if we Japanese pick up the link between what we were before the War and what we are after the War. To resume this linkage is to resume our history and to recover

ourselves.

Lastly, let me discuss a Jewish couple I met in Jerusalem. The wife told me about the hidden bond between Japan and Israel, as a living and breathing eyewitness, and the husband suggested to me what I should learn from Israel.

Three years ago, in Jerusalem, I met Mr. Nahum Admoni, former Director of Mossad (the Israeli Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations) and his wife, Nina.

Nina told me, knowing that I am Japanese, “Seventy years ago, when I was seven, fleeing from Nazis, I escaped Europe with my parents, crossed Siberia and boarded a boat, arriving at Tsuruga, Japan. Then, we stayed in Kobe for a while. I never forget how kind Japanese people were to us Jews then.” As she was telling me her story, Nina’s beautiful blue eyes were filled with tears.

It was Lieutenant General Tojo Hideki, Chief of Staff of the Guandong Army that saved many Jewish people who fled from Nazi-controlled Europe, traveled through Siberia and arrived at Manchu-li. Ignoring protests from Nazi Germany, Lieutenant General Tojo prepared a special train to carry the Jews and sent them from Manchu-li to Tsuruga of Japan Proper. And among these Jews was seven-year-old Nina. At seven, Nina clearly remembered how kind Japanese people were in Tsuruga and in Kobe.

It is widely known that diplomat Sugihara Chiune at the Japanese Consulate in Lithuania issued 2000 visas to Jewish refugees from Poland and saved 6000 of their lives. Sugihara was not the only one. Besides Lieutenant General Tojo Hideki, Chief of special service of the Japanese Guandong Army, Major General Higuchi Kiichiro, ordered his men to help twenty thousand Jews continuously fleeing Siberia safely pass through Manchuria and saved their lives. These examples show that the Japanese Army systematically saved Jewish people.

Our country traditionally makes much of the sympathetic sentiment of warriors represented in the Japanese *Bushi-do* chivalry and upheld the ideals of peaceful cooperation among the five ethnics that comprised Manchuria, and of abolishing racial discrimination and of co-prosperity of various ethnics in the Joint Declaration of the Greater East Asia Conference held in 1943. These were not mere words, but Japan actually carried them out.

However, after the War, this courageous humanitarian practice on the part of Japan was intentionally suppressed. To some (but not a few) Japanese people who received benefits from Japan’s defeat in the War, Japan before the War had to be “militarist”, otherwise, it would be very inconvenient to them.

What Japan actually accomplished before the War was told to me by Nina, who lives far away in Jerusalem, Israel.

Nina’s husband, Mr. Nahum Admoni, former Director of Mossad, said to me, “What is the Japanese Government doing to bring back the kidnapped Japanese citizens from North Korea?”

I was at a loss for words. I could not answer his question.

Israel chases after perpetrators of terrorism on the Jewish people to the ends of the earth and never fails in extracting revenge. Consequently, no terrorist dares to abduct Israelis.

He said, seeing me unable to answer, “Exchange is one option. In the past, during the war, we caught a piece of intelligence that Syrian generals were going to inspect the front. So, we ambushed and caught them, and managed to exchange them for many Israeli soldiers held as prisoner of war.”

Hearing him, I remembered the Japanese Government and particularly, the face of the then Foreign Minister. Some time ago, North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il’s son, Kim Jong Nam was caught trying to enter Japan using a fake passport and the Japanese Government and the Foreign Minister at that time wasted no time in sending the man back to North Korea, aboard an airplane, first-class. When my comrades and I began action to urge the Japanese Government to exchange the dictator’s son for Japanese who were kidnapped, the very son was on his way home, aboard an airplane. But I was too ashamed to tell this incident to the former Director of Mossad.

In September 1972, eleven Israeli athletes and coaches participating in the Olympic Games in Munich were held hostages by members of a terrorist group called Black September and all of the hostages were eventually killed. Against this terrorism, then Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, then in her late seventies and a brave fighting woman, immediately ordered the “Operation Wrath of God.” The operation’s goals were to bomb the radicals’ basecamp in Palestine and to kill all members of Black September, the perpetrators.

Air attacks instantly began and two hundred members of the Palestine Liberation Organization were killed. Still, the vengeful pursuit of Black September by Mossad patiently continued over several years until finally they killed the chief terrorist. No terrorist incident of this kind has ever reoccurred since then.

In January, this year (2013), when ten Japanese engineers were killed by terrorists at In Amenas, Algeria, I remembered former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir. What would she have decided to do?

And I paid special attention to Prime Minister Abe’s address on his conviction and policy, that was scheduled several days later. Prime Minister Abe did not mention anything about retaliatory measures against this tragic incident, unlike Golda Meir.

How did the terrorists take the Japanese Prime Minister’s address? Certainly, they thought that the Japanese were easy terrorist targets, without any risk of retaliation. Consequently, the Japanese will likely continue to be targets of terrorism.

So, what Japan should learn from Israel is that it takes severe firmness to maintain the state and defend her people and land. Whether or not we understand this firmness decides, for example, whether Japanese people in In Amenas can safely go about their business, or whether

kidnapped Japanese will ever be released, or whether the Senkaku Islands are secured or whether our country remains as Japan.

I give my most sincere and heart-felt gratitude to Mr. Eli-Eliyahu Kohen, former Israeli Ambassador to Japan and expert in Japanese martial arts, who, through this great book, vividly introduces to us Joseph Trumpeldor, a founding hero of Israel, from whom we have much to learn and who fought valiantly against the Japanese Army, losing his arm, and a one-armed hero who later spent time at the Russian Prisoners of War Camp Hamadera in Osaka.