

**Major General Higuchi who saved the lives of 20,000 Jewish
Chapter One**

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1. Major General Higuchi, a Great Humanitarian

A golden monument shaped as an opened book of three-meter-high and one-meter-thick stands on a hill of Jerusalem. It was made by casting gold coins and medals sent from Jewish people all over the world in order to praise the people who helped Jewish nation create happiness. Amongst the prominent Jewish greats such as Moses, Mendelssohn, Einstein, the fourth name from the top is:

General Higuchi, a Great Humanitarian

which followed by his subordinate, Colonel Norihiro Yasue.

General Higuchi is indispensable when we depict the substantial relationship between Japanese and Jewish people along with Diplomat Chiune Sugihara, who saved six thousand Jewish people and received "Righteous among the Nations" Award by Israel's Holocaust Memorial, Yad.

2. The Expulsion of Jews is inconsistent with racial equality

A substantial number of Jewish refugees were produced after the emergence of Nazis government. However, there were only a few countries that accepted the refugees, and even the U.S. and the Britain which had been sympathetic for them restricted their entry to the countries. In 1939 when the refugee's escape from Germany saw its peak, the vessel Saint Louis which carried 930 refugees was rejected to land in the U.S. And the Britain by their armed coast guards and resulted in being sent to the concentration camp in Germany. Meanwhile, the Japanese government was forced to clarify their policy toward the Jewish refugees and resolved upon the Outline of Countermeasure for Jewish as the

result of Five Minister Meetings (Prime, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Army and Navy). The Outline insisted that the expulsion of Jews is inconsistent with the spirit of racial equality that Japan had been insisting over the years and stipulated three principles as follows:

- The Jewish people currently reside in Japan will not be expelled and treated fairly as same as other foreign nationals
- The Jewish people who are coming to Japan will be treated fairly in accordance with the Immigration Law.
- Japan will not aggressively support the immigration of Jewish people with the exception of persons who will be beneficial to Japan such as capitalists and engineers(namely their introduction is allowed).

As Japan proposed the inclusion of anti-racial discrimination principle at the foundation of the League of Nations in 1919, the then Japan appealed the equality of all races as the leader of colored races. From that standpoint, it was natural that Japan opposed to the expulsion of Jewish people.

3. Japan secured the evacuation route for Jewish

The principle was applied in reality. Shanghai, which was under the occupation by the Japanese Army, was the only city in the world where overseas passengers were accepted without visas. The Jewish refugees took the route either inland through Harbin in Manchuria by Siberia railways to Shanghai or seaway from Vladivostok through Tsuruga and Kobe to Shanghai after obtaining transit visa of Japan. The six thousand refugees took the latter route, to whom Mr. Chiune Sugihara issued transit visas at the risk of his life. It was Major General Kiichiro Higuchi, the hero of this chapter, who saved three thousand Jewish refugees who took the former route. Incidentally, over twenty seven thousand Jewish refugees resided in Shanghai at that time. In 1942, the Gestapo (the secret security police) official of German Embassy in Tokyo visited Shanghai three times. Doctor Heinz Maul of Bonn University in Germany analyses that they aimed at founding a Jewish concentration camp in Shanghai like the ones in Germany. However, Japanese side put the Jewish habitation under the surveillance and allowed the comings and goings of people upon the presentation of their IDs and most of Jewish people immigrated to Israel or the U.S. safely surviving the war.

The Outline of Countermeasure for Jewish was done way with after the

outbreak of Japan- the U.S. War and a new outline stipulating the ban on accepting refugees was founded. However, the principle insisted that the whole expulsion of Jewish people was against Hakkouichiu, the national creed that illustrates the racial integration. Major General Kiichiro Higuchi epitomized the Japanese spirit.

4. The request of anti-Nazis sect, Doctor Kauffman

“I’m sorry to bother you with my sudden visit at night.” Doctor Kauffman said in fluent Japanese as he took off his coat. On one night in December 1937, there was a blizzard and the temperature was about minus thirty degrees Celsius in Harbin of Manchuria. The Doctor was just over fifty years old, running a general hospital in the city of Harbin and had a good reputation among Japanese as a physician. He was a pro-Japanese a great deal and a militant of anti-Nazis sect. It was Major General Kiichiro Higuchi, who had just come in August as a new chief of special mission department of Harbin, who he visited. The General addressed to his men at his inauguration that Manchuria was not a dependent country of Japan and everyone must respect the sovereign of Manchuria and its people and hoped them to do utmost care of them without intervention of the country. He also ordered them to expose unscrupulous Japanese severely. Doctor Kauffman visited him with a serious request which was to allow him to hold the Fareast Jewish Convention. He wanted to appeal the outrage of Nazis-Germany’s persecution of Jews to the world’s good sense. Having resided in Germany and traveled through Russia, General Higuchi had known the cruel fate of Jews thoroughly. He accepted the doctor’s request instantly and cheered him up.

5. Provide Jewish people with a place to settle down

On January 15th of the following year, 1938, the first Fareast Jewish Convention was held at Harbin Commerce Club and about two thousand Jewish people gathered from Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong. General Higuchi was invited as a guest, but his men recommended that he not to attend it worrying about his safety. As Harbin at that time had seen a deep conflict between white Russian and Jews, the attendance of the chief of special mission department, who was the boss of public safety, to the Jewish convention, a scandal might have occurred by stimulating the radical Russian militant. However, the General

Higuchi dared to attend it and addressed as a guest as Doctor Kauffman hoped. "One nation is Europe has regarded Jewish people as unlikable group and expressed their expulsion even they are legitimately fellow citizen. Where in the world are they trying to send them? If they want to expel people, they must prepare the place to settle the people down and clarify it. I can't deny that it is equal to a massacre if they expel the people without taking necessary measures. As an individual, I can't help hating this idea. Provide the place to live. Provide them with the land to settle down! They must give Jewish their homeland! After his address, a round of applause stormed the convention and a moved young man came up to the stage and started crying down on his knees. Other officials of the convention were deeply impressed and asked for handshake with him one after another.

6. Jewish issue is separate from Japan-Germany Relationship

After the convention finished, foreign correspondents and journalists surrounded General Higuchi. A British related journalist asked him a core question. "Your address apparently infringes upon the Tripartite Pact by Japan, Germany and Italy. Did you make the address with the view to causing the upcoming result?" Higuchi said to more than ten journalists and photographers with a gentle smile. "Japan-Germany relationship lies upon the war against the Comintern. Therefore, it should be dealt separately from Jewish issues. Japan is sympathetic for Jewish nation because we have a long history of helping the weak by justice. Germany claims their pureblood movement. However, we cannot approve their hatred toward Jewish people and their expulsion. Unless the advanced countries in the world seriously pursue the happiness of Jewish people who do not possess their homeland, this problem will not be solved." Higuchi's comment was released in many languages through newspapers. There was a criticism from the Kanto Military Headquarters, but it did not develop into his reprimand. It seemed that they understood his comment arose following the national vision that Jewish expulsion was against the nation's creed, racial equality.