

The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East (26)

[\(Japanese Version\)](#)

[\(Arabic Version\)](#)

Chapter 3: The grace of Allah – Oil boom

3-4(26) Searching for wealth – Migrants rushing into Gulf countries



In the 1960s oil consumption was rapidly increased, resulting in oil rush in the Middle Eastern oil-producing countries. According to the OPEC data, oil production in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq during 1960s increased as follows: Saudi Arabia's production was increased 2.9times from 1.3 million B/D in 1960 to 3.8 million B/D in 1970, in Kuwait it was increased 1.8 times from 1.7 million B/D to 3 million B/D, and Iraq increased its production 1.8 times from 950,000 B/D to

1.55 million B/D respectively.

Increase of the production volume meant the increase of state revenues. The coffers of each country became abruptly enriched. The rulers of the countries put the money in their wallet and poured it into their families, but oil money was too much abundant to consume by themselves. The money has been used for the modernization of their countries including infrastructure development, education and medical improvement. Before the discovery of oil, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were extremely poor. It was a pre-modern society where education and medical care were not existed at all. But both countries began to be modernized.

Using money, it was not difficult to construct infrastructure such as buildings, roads, bridges, airports, harbors and the like. Governments of the Gulf countries asked the European consultant to design the building and ordered the construction works to the companies in Turkey and Egypt. They brought the cheap labor from India and Pakistan. The same was for schools and hospitals. The necessary teaching materials or medical equipment also imported from foreign countries paying by oil dollars.

Social capital was able to be prepared by money. The problem was human resources. Human resources like teachers and doctors were inevitable. In Saudi Arabia and Kuwait there were no reliable local teachers or doctors to work in schools and hospitals. Even in Iraq the absolute numbers of teachers and doctors were insufficient due to the rapid increase of demand.

It was essential that teachers and doctors should communicate with students or patients by Arabic language. Arabic speaking talents were required not only in the fields of education and healthcare, but

also in business where the boom also began along with economic development. Saudis and Kuwaitis, however, could not keep the books nor handle cash register. Manpower was supplied from Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan. There was huge demand on manpower in oil producing countries. And there were many job-seekers in non-oil producing countries. The demand and supply matched each other. The job-seekers rushed to the Gulf oil-producing countries like Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

As mentioned before, Palestinian refugee teacher Shatila moved to Kuwait in 1956 with his son Amin. The family of Zahra was escaped from Elat in Israel to the Jordanian town Aqaba in the same year. In 1963, Zahra was sent to Kuwait as apprentice when he was only 15 years old because the Zahra family was too poor to keep the life in Jordan. He was hired as an office boy of a tiny shop.

Kuwait accepted large numbers of Palestinians under the humanitarian policy for refugees. However, the Kuwaiti people had not sympathy to refugees at all. They treated Palestinians harshly as a cheap labor force. It was like a modern slavery. Kuwaiti people who moved to flourishing urban area from shabby tent in desert was illiterate and greedy. They looked down the migrant Palestinians who came to Kuwait in search for job. Zahra stood still and remitted most of his cheap salary to his family in Jordan. In the same year, Khatib, the son of merchant family in Amman, came to work in Iraq when he was 24 years old after acquiring the accounting knowledge during working with his family. He had similar experience as that of Zahra.

In those days a Japanese company which started to discover and develop the oil in the neutral zone between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia also required manpower. The company advertised for recruitment several times. Amin Shatila applied for the first recruitment in 1961, and then Zahra applied in 1968. Both were Palestinian refugees. But the nationality of Amin Shatila in the application documents remained as Palestine, and that of Zahra was changed to Jordanian. As Amin's father was proud of being a Palestinian, he did not change the nationality of his family. He dreamed one day to return to his home town Tulkarm and work as teacher again. Meanwhile, the Zahra's family realized that it was no longer possible to regain farmland in hometown. They changed their nationality to Jordanian to make it easy to get a job. They were called Palestinian Jordanian since then.

Khatib, Jordanian national, also applied to the Japanese company. The company was called Arabian Oil Company. Oil companies in the Middle East had good reputation. Its salaries and social status was better than any other companies. When Khatib sent a letter to the parents in Amman that he changed jobs to oil companies, they were very much appreciated. In the meantime, his father had felt uncomfortable a little bit because the said company was just started its business and it was not European nor American company. But his father took into consideration that both Arab and Japan had been trampled on by the Western countries after the World War II, and then Japan revived from the ruins like a phoenix. The parents felt sympathy to Japan and Japanese people.

Led by destiny three Arabs settled in a small town on the Persian Gulf Coast. They were one Palestinian

who believed in the reconstruction of homeland, one Palestinian Jordanian who changed the nationality for new life, and one Jordanian who had dream of a prosperous future. They worked together in the same department of a Japanese oil company.

(To be continued ----)

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