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"The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East"(54)

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Epilogue

7-1(54) Middle East meets Far East

Palestinian refugees who were involved in the war against Israel were expelled from the Palestinian territory of the West Bank of Jordan River and moved to the east of the border, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. But the life was not so easy in Jordan. In late 1960s, they again moved to the east of Jordan, Gulf states. They, however, did not try to make the Gulf state to the last settlement. Their host countries did not give them permanent residence, and they themselves did not like the Bedouin of oil producing countries who was arrogant and incompetent. People in the Gulf countries looked down on the poor Palestinians. Most of Palestinians had expected that Israel and Palestine could agree a peace treaty with a mediate effort of Arab colleague. They hoped to return to their home country when two-state coexistence policy would be realized.

But as there were frequent wars in the Middle East, the Palestinian's dream of independence has gone away. To make matters worse, Iraq invaded to Kuwait in 1990. The world criticized the violence of President Hussein of Iraq. Saudi Arabia, the monarch states in the Gulf, was afraid seriously that the next target after Kuwait was his country. But Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had different idea. They supported Hussein regime who claimed to overthrow Israel. As a result, after the Gulf War, both Saudi and Kuwaiti governments ordered Palestinian and Jordanian migrant workers to return to Jordan immediately.

Three Arabs, Khatib, Zahra and Shatila, working at a Japanese oil company that produced the oil in the offshore of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, were forced to be fired. Jordanian Khatib invited Palestinian Zahra to return together to Amman, Jordan. With the savings during the migration and retirement allowance, Khatib planned to be the landlord in Amman and Zahra planned to set up an automobile repair shop. Another Palestinian Shatila decided to immigrate to the United States where his younger brother had been working. Two Palestinians had to leave the Gulf. This time they moved from east to west.

One night, several Japanese colleagues held a farewell party for three Arabs. Guests were served food and beverage. Japanese colleague drunk alcohol drink. In Saudi Arabia alcohol was prohibited, but Japanese staff was assigned a company house where the authority overlooked Japanese drinking habit. All attendees indulged in memories. Shatila spent 30 years in Japanese company. Zahra had been working for 23 years, and Khatib 21 years respectively. It was at the noon of their life. Usually migrant workers did not work so long period for one company. In case of Kuwaiti or Saudi company, they had to be fired by the owner's caprice or they changed spontaneously their job unbearable of the tyrannical owner. But in the Japanese company they could work in peace. The work environment was comfortable. Concession agreement between government and the company was until 2000. They would like to continue to work until that time, if possible. But the Palestinians, who had been at the mercy of history, accepted their destinies calmly.

They sincerely appreciated that they had been able to work in a honest and generous atmosphere of Japanese company. Japan that was defeated by the World War II and burned to the ash achieved miraculous reconstruction. It was an amazing and praising fact that Japanese products such as automobiles, TVs, cassette recorders, refrigerators were overflowing in the daily life. Furthermore, they were so happy that Japanese staff treated them equally without racial discrimination. It was a special experience they never had until entering this company.

When they enjoyed the chat, suddenly they heard the crystal voice of unknown singer from the cassette recorder behind them. It looked like Chinese song. Shatila asked to Japanese colleague what the name of the song was. He answered that the singer was a famous Taiwanese lady and the song's name was "He ri jun zai lai (When will you come back again)". The song described that she missed farewell to a loved one and wished to be reunited someday.

好花不常開,
(Lovely flowers don't bloom very often)
好景不常在。
(Beautiful scenes aren't always here to stay)
愁堆解笑眉,
(Worries dissolve my smiles)
淚灑相思帶。
(Memories of love bring back tears)
今宵離別後,
(After you leave tonight)
何日君再來?
(When will you come back again?)

For Palestinians, "you" meant "Goddess of Peace". "Peace" always passed by them quickly. The sweet melancholic lyric and melody evoked nostalgia for them. It was a little bit different from Arabic

music. That night, the hearts of ordinary citizens of Middle East and Far East melted into one. It was a moment that Middle East met Far East.

Shatila's first journey was to the east of Palestine to Jordan and second journey was further to east of Jordan to Gulf countries. But now he turned to west and immigrated to the United States of the Western Hemisphere beyond Palestine. Although he could not be rich there, he spent a peaceful life. It was not easy for Muslims to live in the United States dominated by Christianity, but the United States was still the world's best place to live in peace and safe for everyone. Letters and calls were frequently exchanged between the US and Jordan. It was not sure whether Shatila could meet with his relatives and old friends in Jordan again. Nevertheless, Palestine solidarity was not fluctuated.



One day Shatila was informed by a letter from his father about Rania, a daughter of al-Yashin family, who had been a long-time neighbor. She graduated from university in Cairo and returned Jordan. She became a journalist and met the prince of Hashemite the royal family. They fell in love and married. Rania became a Cinderella. The blood of the Palestinians and the blood of the noble Hashemite families from Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam, came together. It was a sign of

new era.

(To be continued ----)