

ペテルスブルクの海軍武官・広瀬武夫

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(出版者 / Publisher)

法政大学社会学部学会

(雑誌名 / Journal or Publication Title)

Hosei journal of sociology and social sciences / 社会志林

(巻 / Volume)

69

(号 / Number)

4

(開始ページ / Start Page)

1

(終了ページ / End Page)

100

(発行年 / Year)

2023-03

(URL)

<https://doi.org/10.15002/00026525>

Takeo Hirose, Naval attaché to the Japanese

Legation in St. Petersburg, Russia

Abstract in English by Prof. *emeritus* Takashi Miyanaga, Hosei Univ, Tokyo, Japan

Since we have become used to peace, we don't know true value of it. Happily we Japanese are not faced with the choice between war and peace, however, we *do* have many issues which threaten our peace. We must make efforts to promote world peace by setting matters amicably. Looking back upon the end of the 19th century, there was a time when Japan was tainted by imperialism of the European Powers. She wanted to wield power for example, by possessing a weaker nation, such as Korea.

After the Meiji Restoration, Japan formulated the national policies for building up 'a rich country with a strong army' as well as 'increasing production' following examples of the Great Powers. The World Powers were bad examples of imperialism to imitate. The word, imperialism, stands (symbolizes) aggressive tendencies to wield power and expand territories as well. Japan was also on the side of imperialism. Japan defeated the Empire of China in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5) against general expectations. The victory not only enticed her to be a first-class power in the East but also incited her military ambition.

The great victory against China, one of the Powers in the World, aroused intense patriotic sentiment among the Japanese. People became patriotic after the Sino-Japanese War.

The *Samurai* (i.e. warrior) class built a peculiar morals (i.e. the Bushido, Japanese Knighthood) learning sinology for 270 years during the Edo period. The Japanese Chivalry consisted of the following: 1) loyalty and patriotism to one's master or the Emperor 2) thrift, diligence and militarism 3) temperance and good manners. The *Bushido* ideas based on the teaching of Confucism lasted until mid-thirty of the Meiji (i.e. 1897~1906). Takeo Hirose (1868 ~ 1904) was the type of a man with the *Bushido* spirit.

He was a native of Bungo (i.e. Ōita Prefecture). He was the second son of Shigetake Hirose, former samurai, who was a judge. Takeo was first educated at a private school and primary school. Later he studied at the Kogyokusha, a kind of prep school for the *Naval College*, in Tokyo. After finishing the school he was admitted to enter the *Naval College* on his second attempt in 1885. Some years after graduating from the school, he was appointed a naval cadet. In the Sino-Japanese War,

he worked for supply bases.

In 1897 he was ordered to serve on the Naval General Staff (軍令部) and soon after that he was appointed as naval attaché to the Japanese Legation in St. Petersburg, Russia. During his four and a half years there, he took lessons in Russian and French without remarkable progress. As a naval attaché, his duties were to obtain information on the Russian Navy which was a strict secrecy. He supplied his home office with information that he collected from a newspaper named, 'Novoye Vremya' (The New Time) or using literature on the Russian Navy as materials.

While in St. Petersburg, he toured the Caspian Sea, and the Black Sea and visited naval establishments in England, France, Germany, and the Baltic States. He was ordered to return home in Jan., 1902. On his way back to Japan, he went to Irkutsk by train and then he crossed Siberia using three sleds and went to Port Arthur (旅順), in Manchuria, by train, investigating the geographical features along his route. From Port Arthur to Nagasaki, he used a steamer. He was a great traveler. He returned to Tokyo in March, 1903 and was soon ordered to board the battleship, 'Asahi', as a divisional officer for torpedoes.

The war in Manchuria was becoming imminent. Japan declared war against Russia in Feb., 1904. Prior to the declaration, a Japanese squadron under Rear-Admiral Uryu attacked two Russian vessels, outside the port of Chemulpo (仁川), The *Varyag*, a protected cruiser of 6500 tons displacement and the *Koreets*, a gunboat of 1,213 tons.

The *Varyag*, sustaining heavy fire, went down. The *Koreets* sank in the sea, after a suicidal explosion.

At the outbreak of war, Hirose was engaged in the campaign to block the mouth of Port Arthur on 24, Feb., 1904, commanding the *HokokuMaru* (報国丸). But the ship missed the designated target, so Hirose and his men escaped from the ship after explosion. On the second blockade of Port Arthur carried out on 27, March, four ships were used. Hirose approached a point about two miles distance from other ships commanding the *FukuiMaru* (福井丸).

When a fleet of Japanese vessels gained steadily upon a point, the enemy's searchlights found them and began firing from the forts and torpedo boats. Hirose was determined to accomplish the blockade near at the mouth of the harbour when the *FukuiMaru* was stuck by a torpedo from a

Russian destroyer. She exploded and began sinking. Hirose and his men jumped into a boat, however warrant officer Sugino (杉野) was missing. So he went thrice back to the sinking ship searching for him at the peril of his life. But he couldn't find him. Shigeno seemed to have died due to torpedo's explosion. The waves were washing the upper deck. Finally Hirose jumped into the boat which began leaving the ship when suddenly a shot pierced his brain and his body was thrown into the sea, leaving a fragment[†] of his body in the boat.

† The Russo-Japanese War, fully illustrated, No.I, Kinkido Publishing Co and Z.P.Maruya & Co., 1904, p.101

Commander Hirose died at the age of 36. He was a bachelor whereas Sugino (39) had a wife and three children. In Hirose's view, a wife is not necessary for military or naval men, He knew how to live and die soldierly. He didn't like smoking and drinking and led a sober life. His only hobby was Jūdo. He was kind to everybody, treating people impartially. He never talked about his exploits. He was modest and humane and a loyalist and patriot. He wrote in his life some 360 letters which show his respectable character well.

He was also a man of humour. He excited his men's laughter by felling the theory of '*Kintama*' (i.e. the *balls*). He said that our testicles would be a test of our courage. When they dangle from the thigh, it means we are bold when they are smaller, we are timid. Hirose asked his men to touch their balls again and again to boost up their morale when leaving the *FukuiMaru* at Port Arthur.

Though Hirose's lifework was 'Russian Studies', they broke down in the middle due to his death. While in St. Petersburg he became intimate with the Russian officers and civilians being given free access to their homes and villas. A girl named Ariazuna, a daughter of a high ranking naval officer, became his close friend. Hirose died leaving his will to her in Russian.