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# Heroes and Friends: Behind the Scenes at the Treaty of Portsmouth

*Michiko Nakanishi*

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**Heroes and Friends: Behind the Scenes at the Treaty of Portsmouth** Michiko Nakanishi
This new book focuses on events and people involved in the background of the Portsmouth Peace Conference in August 1905. The interactions of several individuals had a profound impact on both the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 as well as the peace conference. Profiled in the book are Jacob Schiff, a powerful Jewish financier who provided the funding for Japan's war loans and Korekiyo Takahashi, Japan's finance minister. These two men worked closely together and, 100 years later, their descendents remain friends. Another important character was Kentaro Kaneko, a Harvard educated lawyer who had many American friends and contacts. The Japanese government sent him the United States to develop relations with Japan and he met regularly with President Roosevelt during the treaty negotiations. The author also discusses the role of the two Russian negotiators, Sergey Witte and Roman Rosen, the latter a long-time Russian diplomat in Japan, then ambassador to the United States. Blunt speaking, towering Witte was disliked by Tsar Nicholas II, but remained the only capable Russian available to represent the country in Portsmouth. Of course, another hero of the negotiations was President Theodore Roosevelt, whose back channel diplomacy, working with Kaneko and pressuring Tsar Nicholas, helped to make the Treaty of Portsmouth possible.

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