

VISIT TO GENEVA OF TWO PRIZE-WINNERS

The Japanese Red Cross recently organized a competition open to all the inhabitants of the archipelago and intended to disseminate knowledge of the Geneva Conventions. This undertaking was a great success and there were 188 entrants for the competition. The winners of the first two prizes were awarded a free trip to Geneva, where they were the guests of the International Committee and the League of Red Cross Societies.

Mr. Kiichiro Kosaka (First prize) and Mr. Yoshihito Sumiyoshi (Second prize) ¹ were duly welcomed at the ICRC on June 17, 1964. Mr. Kosaka, who is 23 years old, studied political science and is at present employed at the Japanese Ministry of the Interior. Mr. Sumiyoshi, aged 30, is preparing for his law doctorate. Both are keenly interested in humanitarian law and entered the competition as a result of an advertisement in the press.

They were welcomed at the International Committee's headquarters by Mr. Bodmer and Mr. Siordet, respectively Vice-President and Member of the ICRC, together with other collaborators, amongst whom was Mr. J. Pictet, Director for General Affairs. After a few words of greeting, Mr. Bodmer spoke as follows :

" I wish to congratulate you on your magnificent success. In winning the first and second prize in the great essay contest organized by the Japanese Red Cross, you have scored a great personal victory. You were facing hard competition. No less than 190 of your compatriots submitted their work to the jury. Your learning, your interest in humanitarian law embodied in the Geneva Conventions, your enthusiasm for the cause of humanity have certainly contributed to your success.

I would also like to take this opportunity of paying a tribute to the Japanese Red Cross Society, which has given the world in organizing its great contest, an outstanding example we hope many nations will follow. The success of its endeavours is clearly demonstrated by your visit here."

¹ *Plate*

Mr. Kosaka thanked Mr. Bodmer and spoke a few words about the competition and its results. In conclusion he said :

“ We, the Japanese, are so much interested in the problem of humanity and the world’s peace. Although both of us were fortunately awarded the first and second prizes among the applicants, there were many other good essays which compared favorably with each other, the judges say. The contest was successful in the meaning that it excited very considerable interest and broad study in the Red Cross. The spirit of the Red Cross as one of the elements of universal peace and humanity is not able to be said to have spread among the Japanese. We had known little about the Red Cross until we began to study it for the essay. Now that we know that the Red Cross can constitute the basis of humanitarian ethics in the future of human beings, we want to express our resolution to make our efforts to establish the world’s peace and elevate humanity on the sure and sound foundation of the Red Cross spirit.”

The two Japanese prizemen took the opportunity of their stay in Switzerland to observe the activities of the International Red Cross institutions in Geneva and of the Swiss Red Cross in Berne. At their request they were given detailed documentation and they were able to talk with the heads of the various sections both at the ICRC and at the League. They made a special point of seeing the original of the first Geneva Convention and Japan’s instruments of ratification in the Federal Archives at Berne.

On their departure, Mr. Kosaka and Mr. Sumiyoshi declared that they took with them a deep and lasting impression of their stay in Switzerland.

“ Our visit to Geneva has still further strengthened our conviction that the work of the Red Cross on the international level, the Geneva Conventions and humanitarian law, of which we both have the intention of pursuing our studies, play an immense rôle in the world. We will attempt to make them better known in our country, which is becoming more and more aware of their importance for mankind.”

The *International Review* will return, at a later date, to the Japanese competition, its subjects and the main work submitted.