

Current problems and challenges relating to international humanitarian law in Japan

Seminar held at Tokyo University, 19-20 February 1997

On the initiative of the ICRC and with its cooperation, the Japanese Red Cross Society organized a seminar at the University of Tokyo on problems and challenges relating to international humanitarian law in Japan. The meeting, held with the support of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, took place on 19 and 20 February 1997.

The seminar was opened by the Vice-President of the Japanese Red Cross, Tadateru Konoe, and by the ICRC Delegate General for Asia and the Pacific, Jean-Michel Monod. It brought together some 60 people concerned with international humanitarian law, from universities, Ministries (in particular the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice and the Defence Agency), several non-governmental organizations and the National Society. The proceedings were divided into four sessions, dealing with the following topics:

- *The impact of the international system of legal protection for the individual*, presented by Professors Hisakazu Fujita (Tokyo University) and Yozo Yokota (Tokyo University). The ICRC Regional Delegate for East Asia, Christophe Swinarski, also presented a paper.
- *The applicability of international humanitarian law in Japanese law*, chaired by Professor Ribot Hatano (University of Gakusyu-inn). This topic was covered by Professors Shigeki Miyazaki (Meiji University), Kimio Yakushiji (Ritsumeihan University), Toshio Okuhara (Kokushikan University), Yoshiro Matsui (Nagoya University) and Izumi Okada (Nauzan University). A report on the applicability of international humanitarian law in the Philippines, Indonesia and Cambodia was presented by the ICRC Delegate General for Asia and the Pacific.
- *Current problems facing international humanitarian law*, chaired by Professor Masayuki Takemoto (Kansai University), with papers

presented by Professors Michihiro Yamashita (Fukuoka University), Kazuhiko Higuchi (Ryukyu University), Seigo Iwamoto (Suzuka Kokusai University) and Terumi Furukawa (Housei University), and by Christophe Swinarski;

- *Peace-keeping and international humanitarian law*, chaired by Professor Shigeru Kozai (Osaka University). Professors Tatsuro Kunugi (International Christian University), Tetzuo Sato (Hitotsubashi University), Toshiki Mogami (International Christian University) and Akira Mayama (Kohnan University) presented papers on this topic.

This important event — the first of its kind in the Japanese archipelago — was held within the framework of celebrations marking the 120th anniversary of the Japanese Red Cross and coincided with the 100th anniversary of the Japanese Society for International Law. It opened up new prospects for the dissemination of international humanitarian law in the country, and concluded with a call for Japan to ratify the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions, together with an undertaking by the National Society and the experts present to work towards that goal. Furthermore, pursuant to the decisions of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, a proposal was put forward to set up an interministerial committee for the implementation of international humanitarian law in Japan.

The proceedings of the seminar will be published by the National Society in Japanese.

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for East Asia