



AUGUST 2016 - Volume 14 Number 08

# The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

## SEPTEMBER Calendar

### Birthdays

**Swami  
Abhedanandaji**  
Saturday, 14 September

**Swami  
Akhandanandaji**  
Friday, 30 September

### Kyokai Events

10th (Sat)  
**Bhagavad Gita**  
Indian Embassy, Tokyo  
(14:15 - 16:30)

11th (Sun)  
**Zushi Monthly Retreat**  
(from 10:30-16:30)

13th (Tue)  
**Study class at Zushi**  
(9:30am~11:30)

23rd (Fri)  
**Service to Homeless  
Narayan**  
Please Contact: Yoko  
Sato (090-6544-9304)

24th (Sat)  
**Discourses in Osaka**  
Osaka Training Center  
(大阪研修センター)

24~25th (Sat~Sun)  
**Namaste India**  
Tokyo Yoyogi Park  
Ganga CD & Bookstore

**(more info page 7)**



## ✧ Thus Spake ✧

“Wherever virtue or vice is discussed, everyone present must take some share at least of that.”

- Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother

“Not that which goes into the mouth defiles a man; but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”

- Jesus the Christ

Public Celebration: Sunday, July 10, 2016  
Swami Vivekananda 153rd Birth Anniversary  
The Vivekananda Cultural Centre of the Indian Embassy Tokyo  
On the Theme: “Selfless Service”

### “The History, Principles, and Activities of the Red Cross”

A talk by Mr. Tadateru Konoe, President,  
International Federation of the Red Cross and  
Red Crescent Societies and The Japanese Red Cross Society

### Origin of the Red Cross

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## Red Cross (from page 1)

The Red Cross was founded in by Henri Dunant, a businessman in Switzerland, who was inspired by his own experience in the battlefield in Solferino in North Italy, a battle between Austria and France in 1859.

He was moved by witnessing a number of wounded soldiers unattended in miserable situation, then started makeshift relief activities together with some volunteers from the local community. After this battle, he wrote a book entitled “A memory of Solferino,” where he made two proposals.

In 1863, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was founded, the origin of the Red Cross Movement. Then in 1864, the very first Geneva Convention was created by no more than 10 articles including the Red Cross emblem to form national voluntary relief

societies in each country during peacetime in the case of war, and to develop international treaties to guarantee neutral relief activities for such societies.

Henri Dunant’s first proposal was to form a Voluntary Relief Organization in each country. The foundation of National Red Cross Societies in Europe then followed.

### The Japanese Red Cross

Some years later, in 1877, “Hakuaisha,” the predecessor of the Japanese Red Cross was founded. During the Satsu Re-

bellion of 1877 Hakuaisha offered the first wartime aid in 1877. In 1886 the Japanese Government acceded to the Geneva Convention. In 1887 Hakuaisha was renamed as “Japanese Red Cross Society,” becoming the first Red Cross in Asia. The Japanese Red Cross dispatched relief team to provide aid to wounded soldiers during the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, World War I and World War II.

The first Japanese Red Cross Hospital was founded in 1886 and began nurturing nurses in 1890, graduating their first class of nurses in May 1892. Today the Japanese

Red Cross Society (JRCS) operates 92 hospitals with some 36,000 beds attended to critical care, acute medical care and disaster relief. With a budget exceeding ¥1 trillion and 66,000 employees the JRCS spends 80% of this budget in running these hospitals. The

JRCS also has 25 nursing schools, graduating some 1,400 students annually. This equals about 3% of all college graduates in Japan.

With some 5 million blood donors per year, JRCS provides 100% of the blood supply for transfusion in Japan, saving around 1 million lives every year. JRCS is also active in Social Welfare Institutions, providing First Aid, Red Cross Volunteers and youth activities. Disaster Relief and International Activities are funded by Red



Swami Medhasananda greets Mr. Konoe

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## Red Cross (from page 2)

Cross membership fees and other voluntary contributions.

## International Federation of RC/RC-IFRC

The League of Nations was created following World War I, yet, the worldwide conflict left a very large number of refugees and impoverished people. This dire need created a new calling for the Red Cross, to become a peacetime organization. This led to National Societies to form the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 1919 to promote peacetime actions.

The five founding Societies were in Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the United States. Now called the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) membership totals some 190 Societies. Although the activities of Red Cross Societies are different depending on each local context, relationship with their government and level of organizational capacity, these Societies share the Seven Fundamental Principles adapted officially in 1965 and marked its 50th anniversary last year.

The Seven Fundamental Principles are:

1. Humanity
2. Impartiality
3. Neutrality
4. Independence
5. Voluntary Service

6. Unity
7. Universality

Among them, 'Humanity,' 'Impartiality,' 'Neutrality' and 'Independence' are considered as indispensable to humanitarian activities, and major international humanitarian organizations, including the United Nations, have started sharing them in recent years. One additional way in which the Red Cross differs markedly from other organizations is its network of volunteers in 190 countries, working at grassroots, regional, and nationwide levels and strongly linked by a global sense of solidarity.



Mr. Konoe Gives Slide Presentation

When disasters strike, the IFRC issues an appeal for assistance at the request of the affected country's National Society. Individual Societies respond to the appeal through various means including funds donated by governments, the general public and corporations.

## Gujarat Earthquake of 2001

In January 2001 the Indian state of Gujarat was affected by a massive earthquake leaving 20,000 dead, 170,000 injured and 400,000 homes destroyed. The IFRC issued an emergency appeal and distributed 220,000 blankets, 110,000 plastic sheets and other emergency goods. Working with the Indian Red Cross Society, the International Red Cross provided aid to the survivors with the Norwegian and Finnish RC establishing a field hospital; the German and French RC setting up a

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## Red Cross (from page 3)

water treatment module; the Australian RC created a wireless telecommunication module, and the Spanish RC provided a rapid deployment clinic.

The JRCS, too, sent a medical team into the field and set up a clinic (Emergency Response Unit, or ERU) to provide medical relief. This was the first JRCS deployment of a fully equipped, fully self-sufficient, medical team of 41 professionals sent for the 2-month relief operation. JRCS treated some 5,500 wounded during that time.

## Recent Japan Earthquakes

In 2011 Japan was hit with the Great Eastern (Tohoku) Earthquake and Tsunami. In response to this disaster over ¥100 billion was donated to the JRCS by 100 National Societies of the Red Cross and other organizations. The JRCS engaged in emergency relief and multi-faceted recovery support.



On April 16, of this year the Kumamoto area of the Island of Kyushu was hit with a severe earthquake. Utilising funds donated through overseas Red Cross Societies (¥130 million), the JRCS also conducts health care support for people who continue living in emergency shelters.

## Nepal Earthquake 2015

On April 25, 2015 Nepal was struck with a devastating quake. Over 250 Red Cross rescue members from 24 countries converged in Nepal when the April 2015 earthquake resulted in 8,278 dead and 17,818 wounded. The IFRC issued an

emergency appeal for approximately ¥11.1 billion, based on the plan to support 700,000 people in the country for a period of two years. The JRCS sent a 17-person emergency response medical team as well as ¥50 million worth of funds and relief goods. Around ¥2 billion in donations have been collected, and the JRCS is using the funds to support a mid- to long-term recovery.

## IFRC and ICRC annual expenditure in 2014

International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies: US\$3.4 million. International Committee of the Red Cross: US\$10 million.

Henri Dunant's Second Proposal for Int'l agreement to ensure neutral activities.

ICRC:

- Swiss organization with headquarters in Geneva
- Governance members are all Swiss
- Guardian of Geneva Conventions (international convention to en-

sure neutral activities)

## The Geneva Convention and International Criminal Court

In the beginning, the Geneva Convention was concerned with ground combat. In 1929 it grew to cover prisoners of war. It set the minimum humanitarian standards that must be observed even in the extremes of war. Now known as "International Humanitarian Law" it is continuing to evolve daily, taking in the lessons of history. For example, the 1949 addition of the Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which

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## Red Cross (from page 4)

followed the end of World War II, is founded on contrition at the surge in civilian casualties over the two world wars as a result of significant advancement in weapons technology.

Two more protocols were added in 1977 in response to the growing number of civil conflicts. Following a rash of massacres following the Cold War, 1998 saw the establishment of the International Criminal Court in the Hague, Netherlands, creating a setting for judging crimes against humanity. Based on International Humanitarian Law (IHL), four ideals are set forth:

1. To secure respect to humans at all times even in the case of military needs
2. To be oriented only to destruction of the enemy's military force, and to observe the principle on balance of power without permitting unlimited use of force even in that case;
3. To respect, protect and humanely treat those who have lost fighting capabilities or do not join battles;
4. To restrict fighting approaches and means;

Full compliance with the IHL means that while wars may still exist, they should become more merciful and humane. Not only has that not come to pass, acts as inhumane as any seen in wartime proliferate even in everyday life. To date, the IHL has faced the following specific challenges.

### Humanitarian Challenges Today

Right now, the world has 60 million refugees, said to be the largest since the end of World War II. In addition, 1.5 billion people live in zones of conflict or political instability. In 2014 alone, 102 million people fell prey to disaster, and that number has since risen along with the number of disasters.

According to the UN, the number of people in need of aid exceeds 80 million. The world's humanitarian needs are clearly on the upswing, and the number of NGOs

and volunteers engaged in relief work is growing.

Yet, the funding to support these actions is not keeping pace due in part to sluggish economies in the developed world, and the competition for financial and human resources is intensifying. Performance, transparency, accountability, and public relation prowess form the benchmarks for evaluation.

### With Humility, Towards Peace

The Red Cross in 190 countries continues to work under the shared banner of humanitarianism despite these harsh realities and remains the hope of mankind. Our motto is "Per Humanitatem ad Pacem (With humanity, towards peace)." We may not believe that humanitarianism can conquer war, but we do believe it can create a chance at peace.

Thank you. •



Mr. Konoe Releases  
'Meditation and Spiritual Life'

Public Celebration: Sunday, July 10, 2016  
Swami Vivekananda 153rd Birth Anniversary  
The Vivekananda Cultural Centre of the Indian Embassy Tokyo

**Vote of Thanks**

by Mr. Kenichi Mitamura, Secretary, Vedanta Society of Japan

I wish to offer a few words of greeting on this occasion of the closing of celebrations in commemoration of the 153rd Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.

In having organised this magnificent gathering, we have to express our gratitude to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda, since it is undeniably through the grace of these three saintly individuals that this program has come to successful fruition.

We also express our thankfulness to His Excellency Ambassador Sujan Chinoy, the Deputy Chief of Mission Mr. Amit Kumar, and the staff of the Vivekananda Culture Center, for having kindly granted us the use of this hall, as well as for the support they have extended to us in a variety of ways.

The outstanding addresses we received today from Mr. Amit Kumar, the Deputy Chief of Mission, Swamiji Bodhasarananda, the Assistant General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and Mr. Tadateru Konoe, the President of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Japanese Red Cross Society, all centred around the concept of 'Selfless Service'

as undertaken by these two international bodies.

To all these eminent individuals, I proffer my sincere gratefulness and praise.

I also convey my genuine felicitations to our guests seated here, many of whom have taken the trouble to travel here from

far off places. To all of you I tender my heartfelt appreciation. We of the Vedanta Society too have gained a lot from this occasion, and thanks to you all we not only attained an authentic and comprehensive understanding of the activities of the Red

Cross Societies, we have developed within ourselves a keen desire to embrace the message of Swami Vivekananda, namely to do good to others, and to serve God who is present in the poor, the weak, the

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• **Thought of the Month** •

“Wisdom can be learned,  
but it cannot be taught.”

– Anthony de Mello

• Vedanta Society of Japan •

**SCHEDULE of EVENTS  
SEPTEMBER 2016**

**3rd~4th (Sat - Sun)**

**Ibaraki University**

Talk by Swami Medhasananda

**4th, 11th, 18th, 25th (Sun)**

**Yoga-asana Class**

(At Zushi Centre from 14:00-15:30)

Contact: Hanari (080-6702-2308)

**10th (Sat)**

**Discourse on Bhagavad Gita**

Indian Embassy, Tokyo

\*Bring photo ID (14:15 - 16:30)

**11th (Sun)**

**Zushi Monthly Retreat**

(from 10:30-16:30)

**13th (Tue)**

**Study class at Zushi**

\*TIME CHANGE this month 9:30~11:30

**13th~20th**

**Swami Medhasananda Visits**

**Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of the Philippines**

<http://www.vedanta-philippines.org>

**23rd (Fri)**

**Nara Narayan: Service to Homeless Narayan**

Please Contact: Yoko Sato (090-6544-9304)

**24th (Sat)**

**Discourses in Osaka**

(In Japanese Only)

Osaka Training Center (大阪研修センター)

**24~25th (Sat~Sun)**

**Namaste India at Tokyo Yoyogi Park**

Ganga CD & Bookstore

<http://www.indofestival.com/index.html>

NOTE: Please remember to bring photo ID to all Embassy events!  
Embassy Talks on Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads are in the Japanese language.

**Vote of Thanks** (from page 6)

troubled, and the sick. If we hereafter in our everyday lives could actualise this even a little, our spirits and hearts will be enhanced and we will be imbued with pure joy. We earnestly pray that this purity of heart will give rise to a transformation of society, and generate a spirit of harmony in the world.

Hereafter we shall shortly begin the second part of the program. It is a program involving song and dance, and so we request those of you who can spare the time to remain for it and enjoy this aspect of the celebration. Next year we intend on organising a program similar to this one, and so on that occasion too we request you all to be present along with your family and friends.

In conclusion, I pray that the unsullied love that characterised Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda, shower down upon you all.

Thank you very much once again.



Guests Conclude



Bookstore is Busy



Greenroom Gets Crowded



Cultural Programme to Begin



## • A Story to Remember •

### Such Indeed is Maya!

Once Narada besought the Lord of the universe, "Lord, show me that Maya of Thine which can make the impossible possible." The Lord nodded assent. Subsequently the Lord one day set out on a travel with Narada. After going some distance He sat down and said to Narada, "Narada, I feel rather thirsty; please get me a little water from somewhere." Narada at once ran off in search of water.

Finding no water nearby, he went far from the place and saw a river at a great distance. When he approached the river, he saw a most charming young lady sitting there, and was at once captivated by her beauty. As soon as Narada went near her, she began to address him in sweet words, and ere long, both fell in love with each other.

Narada then married her, and settled down as a householder. In course of time he had a number of children by her. And while he was thus living happily with his wife and children, there came a pestilence in the country. Death began to collect its toll from every place.

Then Narada proposed to abandon the place and go somewhere else. His wife acceded to it, and they both came out of their house leading their children by the hand. But no sooner did they come to the bridge to cross the river than there came a terrible flood, and in the rush of water, all their children were swept away one after another, and at last the wife too was drowned. Overwhelmed with grief at his bereavement, Narada sat down on the bank and began to weep piteously.

Just then the Lord appeared before him, saying, "O Narada, where is the water? And why are you weeping?" The sight of the Lord startled the sage, and then he understood everything. He exclaimed, "Lord, my obeisance to Thee, and my obeisance also to Thy wonderful Maya!"

**- Tales and Parables of Sri Ramakrishna**

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