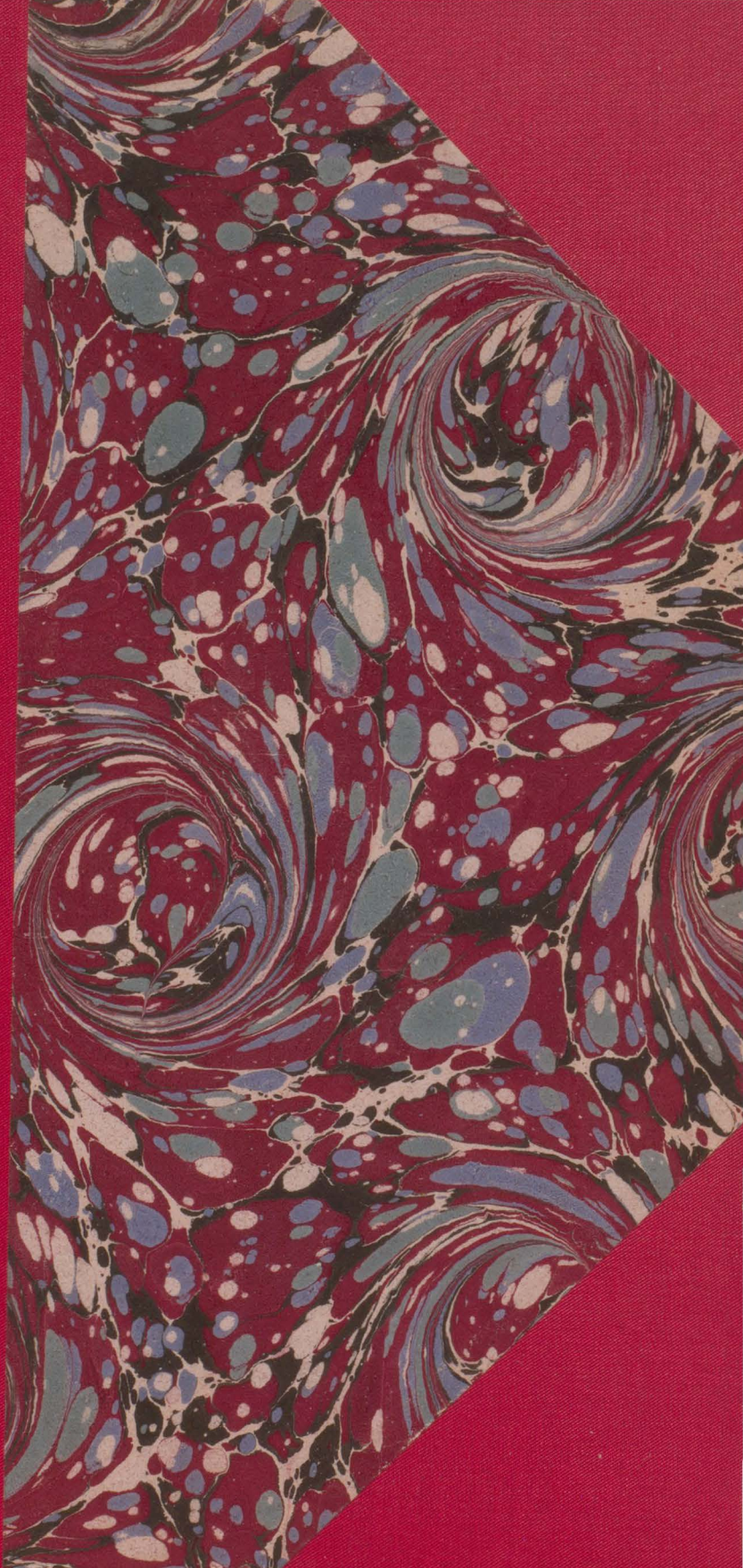

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DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

ET

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THE NINETIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION

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THE GENEVA CONVENTION IS NINETY YEARS OLD

In a few weeks' time we shall be able to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Geneva Convention of 1864. At that age many international treaties have long since fallen into abeyance. The Geneva Convention, on the contrary, has steadily grown and developed. Revised and amplified three times, extended to cover in turn first armed forces at sea, then prisoners of war, and finally civilians, its modest provisions have developed into a veritable arsenal of shields and bucklers protecting us against certain effects of war. For the four Conventions of 1949, with their 430 Articles, are nothing else but a reaffirmation, and the rules of application, of the principle proclaimed in 1864—namely, respect for the human person.

The Red Cross may well feel proud when it contemplates the legal edifice which the old Convention has now become, and the series of other treaties which it has, to a greater or lesser extent, inspired. For the fact that a privately-founded voluntary movement, poor in material means, has induced the Governments of nearly all the States of the world to embody the principle it proclaimed in international law, give that principle effective form, and limit their own sovereignty in a way which would have been inconceivable not long ago, bears witness to remarkable faith and perseverance in the service of a just idea.

But this feeling of pride is tinged with bitterness when one considers the causes which have at intervals led the Red Cross to renew its efforts to draw up humanitarian law. For whereas

the 1864 Convention did in fact represent a victory of the spirit of humanity over a state of affairs which had existed for centuries, its successive revisions and extensions are hardly more than dams or dykes erected to stem the fury of war.

In past centuries war, cruel as it was in its ignorance of written rules, nevertheless respected certain bounds set by its very object and by reason. But hardly had it been legally regulated by the original Geneva Convention and the Hague Conventions, than scientific developments in their application to armaments led to even worse excesses. That is how we have arrived at the veritable paradox represented by the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 (relating to the protection of civilians) : after having, 85 years earlier, proclaimed the principle that a wounded or sick soldier, being no longer able to fight, should be respected and protected to the same extent as a simple civilian, it was now found necessary to provide that patients in civilian hospitals, women and children must enjoy respect and protection at least on a par with that assured to members of the armed forces !

It will be seen, therefore, that although the Geneva Conventions undeniably represent legal progress, they nevertheless point, at each stage in their development, to the progressive degradation of civilization.

Ours is the age of a lightning development of the field of science, the creation of man's mind. But whereas the mind of man was able, for thousands of years, to keep his discoveries under control, to give them the form desired and decide on their use in accordance with his moral beliefs, we now note the contrary phenomenon : it is the use to which scientific creations are put, and their effects, which are forming the mind and determining man's moral outlook. That man is becoming to an ever increasing degree a slave of the machine is today a truism —a self-evident fact which is more atrociously true in war than in any other domain. We are in the presence here of a slipping of mind and conscience which, if nothing stops it, will lead straight to the end of all civilization. Formerly war had a definite objective. The warrior, armed with sword or spear, or even with the first cannons, knew at whom he was striking ; if

he missed, no harm was done. But with the increase in the range of fire-arms, and later in the power of explosives, the character of battles altered. From that time forward the most carefully aimed shots might carry beyond their objective and hit harmless people. Lamentable accidents occurred; to begin with they were in fact regarded as deplorable, but their repetition, instead of impelling men to find a means of eliminating them, gradually led to their being considered inevitable, as something inherent in a state of war. The "inevitable» came to be regarded as something authorized, and then as something lawful and legitimate. If an infantry officer orders his men to kill the women and children in a village into which he penetrates, he is regarded as a war criminal, even in his own country. But if he is transferred to the air force and orders his squadron to drop bombs on that same village and raze it to the ground, no one, even on the side of the enemy, will think twice about the matter. "That is war", they feel, "What else can be expected with present-day weapons?"

This mental trend did not stop there, however. Such accidents, after being in the first place accepted as inevitable, were referred to as a "military necessity" and finally came to be used deliberately as a means of combat. It is not necessary to harp on this point; there have been all too many recent examples. But there have also been all too many new discoveries—all too many cynically realistic speeches—which make one fear that the above trend may be accentuated until the means becomes and end. Then war, changing its character completely, will no longer be aimed at making the enemy State see reason, but at wiping it purely and simply from the face of the earth by exterminating its inhabitants.

The very basis on which the Red Cross was established is thus assailed. The Red Cross proclaims that there should be "no unnecessary suffering!" But modern warfare, with its blind weapons, takes unnecessary suffering for granted, when it does not aim deliberately at producing it as a means of waging war. One may well wonder whether the human person, although still respected in theory, will count at all in a future war except by a reason of its capacity for suffering.

It will be thought that such remarks are too pessimistic and little suited to the celebration of the anniversary of a glorious event! But this is not pessimism; or if it is, Dunant himself was a pessimist when he observed that there would always be war and that the States were engaged—even then—in an armament race. It was because he believed that something could be done that Dunant stigmatized the mental outlook of his time. And it was because he saw battles as they really were that he was able to conceive of and build up his instrument for saving life. Similarly, it is because we believe that all is not yet lost that we must consider facts and ideas as they really are today. A man who wishes to achieve his object does not set out blindly. He explores the terrain; and if he takes time to study or envisage the obstacles he may meet, it is in order that he may more readily assemble the means of overcoming them.

Besides, since we are speaking of the Geneva Conventions, real pessimism would only be justified if they had completely failed to achieve their object. And that is not the case. It is true that the Red Cross has not yet won the day in its struggle against war. War has up to now been the stronger. But the Red Cross has at least rescued millions of war victims, and the Conventions have limited the damage done. To convince ourselves of this we need only compare, for example, the fate of prisoners of war in countries where the 1929 Convention was legally in force with that of prisoners to whom this legal protection was refused.

Man is small and insignificant compared with the great forces of nature. Yet one has seen how men, by uniting their efforts, have actually been able to hold back the seas. Why should not the same thing be true in face of great human catastrophes, in face of war? We, for our part, believe that here also men can save, re-erect and rebuild. Everyone must unite in a constant effort to perfect the weak protective barriers which the Conventions represent, reinforce them, and ensure that they are ratified and respected. And at the same time, while enjoying the shelter provided by these barriers which limit the extent of the disaster, let us go right to the source of the latter and endeavour to divert the encroaching tide, or in other

words, turn civilization from the fatal course it is allowing itself to pursue.

There are many means of achieving this—religions, moral codes, a sane policy, and, finally, the arguments of plain good sense, not to speak of the instinct of self-preservation which the menace of military science may in the end arouse. The choice of these various means is open to each of us ; and they are not mutually exclusive. But there is one which is peculiar to the Red Cross, whatever the religion, the philosophy, or the policy which incites its adherents to take part in the work of saving lives : it is to be true to the Red Cross itself in one's daily life, to be willing at all times to recognize a replica of oneself in every human being, and never to tire of renewing, time after time, one's charitable actions on behalf of the suffering.

At the beginning of May 1954, a new " Convention for the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict " was signed at the Hague. A passage in the preamble to this Convention expresses the conviction that damage to cultural property, whatever the nation to which it belongs, constitutes damage to the cultural heritage of the whole of mankind, inasmuch as each nation makes its contribution to world culture.

We share that conviction. And we think that what is true of things is still truer of men. Just as humanity as a whole is made poorer by the destruction of a cathedral or a museum, so all men, however far removed from the fighting, are diminished in their stature as men by war crimes. Conversely, just as the whole world is made richer by a single work of art, so also the noble action of one man gives everyone a sense of being better.

What richer contribution could be made to world culture today, in the XXth century, than a mental and spiritual revival ? For that is the only means still available to men to turn civilization back from the suicidal course on which it has embarked.

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President of Japan Nurses' Association

THE INFLUENCE OF MISS FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE ON THE NURSING PROGRAMS IN JAPAN

It is next to impossible to trace the exact date when the story of the "Angel at Crimea", Florence Nightingale, was first introduced to Japan, but, judging from the fact that a story entitled "Miss Nightingale and a Puppy" is found in a state-textbook for morals used in primary schools about the middle of the Meiji Era (1868-1911), it can safely be said that the story was introduced to this country about that time. The story about a dog owned by an old shepherd, hit by a stone thrown by a naughty boy, got hurt at his knee and left alone in pain and a pretty girl, Florence, who was kind enough to take care of the poor dog was taught to the Japanese boys and girls through this textbook, affected a great influence on their pure hearts and did much in fostering their philanthropic minds. The life of this pretty girl, Florence, who became a nurse, volunteered to serve at front line when Crimean War took place, devoted herself in giving nursing care to many officers and soldiers at the Scutari Field Hospital struggling with many kinds of difficulties and who, when the Crimean War ended in a victory for the allied forces, was given a great appreciation and gratitude by the whole people of England, gave a strong influence on Japanese people in the Meiji Era when nurses' social position was so low and the nursing programs were not in favorable condition.

The fact that a lady of a British noble family became a nurse and took care of sick and wounded officers and soldiers helped very much to raise the standard of nursing in Japan.

During the three hundred years under the Tokugawa Shogunate regime preceding the Meiji Era, the feudalism was firmly rooted and the habit of predominance of man over woman deeply founded in the society of this country thus making women servants who always stay at home to serve men. All the women working outside were persons of low birth. Women of good parentage never worked outside at all; consequently, no progress was made in nursing, a calling of women.

When the civil war took place at the beginning of the Meiji Era (1868), and many officers and soldiers of the Government forces were wounded and accommodated at the medical stations, the servicemen were rough-tempered and members of the army medical teams failed in giving proper medical treatment to them, so there arouse the opinion to use women for taking care of these servicemen. Thus women to engage in nursing were recruited. As I have mentioned above, in those days, women working outside were less educated and most of them were called "Abazure" (Jades) and, moreover, the sick and wounded servicemen of the Government forces were rumoured to be rough-tempered, so the women who applied for the job were most shameless women of the community. However, nursing was indeed the calling of women. These women did a wonderful job in nursing the servicemen and the servicemen became very gentle and willing to receive medical treatment, which naturally brought a very good result. Among those women there were some who were unexpectedly good-natured and gradually they became interested in studying nursing. These women were the first nurses in Japan. Such being the case, those women who became nurses at first were of low birth, so nursing was considered a mean job, though there had been a proverb in this country saying "Nursing should come first and then medicine". Thus the general public of this country did not have good impression on this job of nursing. To our regret, the above mentioned fact had been hindering a great deal the development and progress of nursing as a profession in this country. The introduction of the story of Florence Nightingale who was born in a noble family and yet

applied for a nursing job to go to the front line and render service for the sick and wounded servicemen changed the misled notion of nursing profession completely.

Since about the beginning of the Meiji Era (1868-1911), Western civilization, coming into this country, gave a grave influence on many phases of Japanese life, and the feudalism had been gradually broken down until at last the light of modern society began to beam on this country. The Western medical science introduced to Japan, the methods of nursing were changed and, consequently, there arose the need for well-educated nurses. The nurses up until that time had not been well qualified.

When the rebellion in the South-Western provinces broke out in the 10th year of Meiji (1877), an association was founded under the name of the Hakuaisha (Benevolence Society) with the purpose of caring for the sick and wounded at the seat of hostilities and in the 19th year of Meiji (1886) when the Government of Japan acceded to the Geneva Convention, the name of this association was changed to " The Japanese Red Cross Society " ; and one of the first programs taken up by the Society was the training of nurses.

It is true that the origin of the Red Cross is based on the benevolent mind of Henry Dunant who happened to be on the scene of one of the most savage battles of history—the battle of Solferino, but what encouraged him very much then was the sublime acts of devotion done by Miss Nightingale at the Crimean War. This was just the same with the origin of nurse training of the Japanese Red Cross Society. We cannot tell the origin of our nurse training without thinking of the strong influence of Miss Nightingale. It was in the 23rd year of Meiji (1890) that the Japanese Red Cross Society started its nurse training program, and, in the previous year, the regulations and rules of the Nightingale Nurse Training School in the St. Thomas Hospital in London were carefully studied and many of them were adopted. The purpose of nurse training was primarily to train nurses with Miss Nightingale's benevolence and Henry Dunant's humanity in their hearts. The Japanese Red Cross needed excellent nurses in order to carry on its

valuable mission of taking care of sick and wounded servicemen without discrimination of nationalities and races. An excellent nurse means a nurse who stands on philanthropy and humanity like Miss Nightingale and Henry Dunant.

The Red Cross Hospital which was located only in Tokyo at that time was completely equipped with things necessary for the purpose of nurse training, and this was the only one hospital in Japan which was organized just for this purpose. According to the regulations of this nurse training school, students allowed to enter the school should be, at the lowest, of middle class, of good conduct and should be equal to or surpass primary school graduates in scholarly attainments. (In those days primary school education required six years in Japan.) As for the age, they should be between twenty and thirty years of age and the emphasis was specially put on their good character.

These qualifications for the applicants of our Red Cross Nurse Training School and those of the Nightingale Nursing School seem very much alike especially in point of the age. This is very interesting when we think of what Miss Nightingale said about the age. She said that the students to enter her Nursing School should be more than (about) twenty-five, in view of the fact that nurses cannot give good nursing care to patients unless they were mature as women.

The number of student nurses allowed to enter the school were only eight at first, but they were very strictly chosen. The first six months following the entrance to the school were the probation period. The educational policy of the school was so strict and the class works and practical exercises were so difficult that it gave to the general public the impression that it was not easy to become a Red Cross nurse. This was very good, for it helped very much get the credit of Red Cross nurses, and, not only that, it changed not the whole but some of the misled attitude of the general public of despising nurses and the job of nursing. In those days there were three nurse training schools in Japan and the standard of qualifications for entrance and that of training of these schools were lower than that of Red Cross Nurse Training School. The student nurses were trained

three years in the latter, while one or two years in the former.

The Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) broke out, severe battles were fought in China Proper, and a great many sick and wounded officers and soldiers were sent back to the Army Hospital in Hiroshima. In the Army Hospital the number of members of Army Medical Team was not enough to care for so many hospitalized patients and, consequently, the treatment was not effective.

At this moment Mr. Tadanori Ishiguro, Commander of Army Medical Teams in Front (later, President of the Japanese Red Cross Society), suggested to despatch Relief Teams composed of Red Cross nurses to the Army Hospital. But the army authorities refused this suggestion on the ground that they did not think it proper to despatch relief teams of nurses, women of low birth and mean character, to the Army Hospital and let them take care of the honourable sick and wounded servicemen, for, if there should arise the rumour on the corruption of morals among the soldiers of the Great Empire of Japan, it would bring disgrace on them.

Commander Ishiguro strongly opposed this opinion insisting that the corruption of morals would never arise among patients and nurses, if only the nurses were well trained as Red Cross nurses. He earnestly requested the army authorities to give, at this critical moment of the nation's history, Red Cross nurses the opportunity to serve for their country. At last the army authorities sanctioned the request and eight nurses were elected to compose a relief team and they were despatched to the Hiroshima Army Hospital. These eight nurses, struggling with many difficulties, did their very best in caring for sick and wounded servicemen for about two years until the end of the war. Meanwhile, there never arose such problem as feared at first and, not only that, they worked so faithfully that the efficiency of treatment was better than expected and the general public started to praise nurses gradually.

People who know the distinguished service given by Miss Nightingale at the time of the Crimean War called them Misses Nightingales in Japan and they also made a song on

Red Cross nurses calling them beautiful flowers of civilization. As the time went on, the number of nurses despatched as the members of relief teams increased. The lamp of love raised high up by Miss Nightingale at Crimea gave the same light of love by the hand of Japanese nurses here in Japan after forty years.

After the end of the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese Red Cross Society, recognizing the necessity of training many nurses for the purpose of social welfare, continued to make strenuous efforts in nurse training and established Red Cross Hospital in every Prefecture to train nurses. The regulations set up by the nurse training school in Red Cross Hospital in Tokyo have been strictly observed even in these Red Cross Hospitals in local places, thus maintaining the highest standard of nursing education in this country.

Unfortunately, in 1904, the Russo-Japanese War broke out, which was so much bigger in its scale than the Sino-Japanese War as to decide the fate of this nation, and, accordingly, the number of the sick and wounded servicemen was greater than before. Therefore, this time, the army authorities made a request to the Japanese Red Cross Society for the despatch of Red Cross medical relief teams and the general public expected and believed in the work of Red Cross nurses. As the Japanese Red Cross Society had trained a great many nurses utilizing the experiences it had in the Sino-Japanese War, it could organize and despatch many medical relief teams to the Field Hospitals, Hospital-ships, Army Hospitals in Japan proper, etc.

When this war was over, the whole people of Japan, to say nothing of the sick and wounded servicemen, praised the wonderful work done by these nurses, very much just as it was the case with Miss Nightingale when the Crimean War was over. Thus the reputation and credit of Red Cross nurses became higher than after the end of the Sino-Japanese War.

In other words, what these great praises and reputations meant was how well the general public recognized the necessity and importance of nursing service for both social and individual human life. When we look back the history of nursing, we find the fact that wars have played an important part in developing

nursing programs in all the countries both in the Orient and Occident without exception. However, it would be safer to say that when human lives are exposed to danger or many people have to suffer from difficulties as in the time of war, people really understand how necessary the nursing service is and how valuable it is in such cases than to say that wars have contributed to the development of nursing service. The deeper the understanding of people in the necessity and value of nursing service becomes, the greater the development of this program be made.

Miss Nightingale, Mother of nursing service, not only raised the lamp of humanity at the time of the Crimean War but also she put on the first light in the dark age of nursing. The Japanese Red Cross nurses trained in the spirit of Miss Nightingale did really contribute a great deal for the development of nursing service and the enlightenment of the general public of this country.

After the end of the Russo-Japanese War, a great improvement was brought on the medical treatment in Japan owing to the development in medical science and the progress of society; and hospitals were established in many places in this country and nurses were trained to work in these hospitals. These excellent hospitals throughout the country invited Red Cross nurses to ask them to train nurses and give guidances in nursing, so the spirit of Miss Nightingale has been living in every corner of nursing programs in this country through our Red Cross nurses.

Through the World War I and II Japan has made progress in some fields and took a backward step in another, but so far as the nursing service is concerned, it has been making remarkable progress.

The Japanese Red Cross Society has been keeping its nursing education at the highest standard and trying to raise the standard of nursing in this country. In Japan the spirit and the achievement of Miss Nightingale have been highly estimated and she is respected and adored by most Japanese.

Japanese Red Cross nursing service based on the humanism of Miss Nightingale has been understood and appreciated by

the general public and it is generally believed that the standard of Japanese Red Cross nursing service is the goal for those who start to learn nursing and those who are engaged in nursing education. In other words, the Japanese Red Cross Society has been playing the part of a pioneer in nursing service in Japan.

In 1932 the Japanese Red Cross Society raised the standard of minimum entrance qualification for the nursing school in order to raise the standard of nursing education of Red Cross. Until that time eight years schooling had been required to enter the school but they changed it to eleven years schooling. The period of education in the school is still three years. After the end of the World War II, in 1948, a law on nurses was enacted in Japan. This was the first time in Japanese history that a law on nurses was enacted. The standard established by this law is almost the same with what was made by the Japanese Red Cross Society in 1932. Thus the standard made by the Japanese Red Cross Society which had the sixty-year-old history in nursing became that of nursing throughout this country.

The part the Japanese Red Cross Society has played in the development of nursing in Japan in its seventy-five-year-old history should be especially remembered. It really contributed very much to the welfare of society of this country. It goes without saying that what made the Japanese Red Cross Society do such a valuable contribution to this country is no doubt the spirit of philanthropy of Miss Nightingale. As it is widely known, Henry Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross, was also greatly influenced by Miss Nightingale.

The reason why Miss Nightingale is so much respected and adored in this country is this that her spirit of philanthropy together with the lamp she raised at Crimea has been guiding the course of nursing programs in this country and the lamp is increasing its light here in Japan devastated after the last war, even after one hundred years to bring the service for humanity into action which is the ideal of nursing profession.

(March, 1954)
