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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK JAPAN WILL TURN ABLAZE! ***

Japan Will Turn Ablaze!

by Barbara R. Sims

Edition 1, (September 2006)

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Contents

[Baha'i Terms of Use](#)

[\[Frontispiece\]](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Part I: The Epoch of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ministry](#)

[1: Miss Agnes B. Alexander 1875-1971](#)

[Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Miss Agnes Alexander](#)

[\[Tablet of June, 1901\]](#)

[\[Tablet Translated January 25, 1903\]](#)

[\[Tablet Translated August 14, 1909\]](#)

[\[Tablet of Translated August 16, 1913\]](#)

[\[Tablet Translated October 31, 1913\]](#)

[\[Tablet of August 4, 1914\]](#)

[\[Tablet Translated October 27, 1916\]](#)

[\[Tablet Translated October 30, 1916\]](#)

[\[Tablet Translated December 27, 1918\]](#)

[\[Tablet Translated July 30, 1919\]](#)

[\[Tablet Translated June 3, 1920\]](#)

[\[Tablet Translated August 2, 1921\]](#)

[\[Tablet of November 7, 1921\]](#)

[2: Dr. George J. Augur 1853-1927](#)

[Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Dr. George Augur](#)

[\[Tablet Translated November 21, 1913\]](#)

[\[Tablet Translated February 12, 1914\]](#)

[\[Tablet Translated August 12, 1914\]](#)

[\[Tablet of 1919\]](#)

[3: Mr. Kanichi Yamamoto 1879-1961](#)

[Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Mr. Kanichi Yamamoto](#)

[\[Tablet of 1902\]](#)

[\[Tablet of January 1903\]](#)

[\[Tablet of \(Date unknown\)\]](#)

[\[Tablet of August 4, 1904\]](#)

[\[Tablet of January 25, 1903\]](#)

[\[Tablet of October 18, 1906\]](#)

[\[Tablet Translated October 6, 1907\]](#)

[\[Tablet Translated March 23, 1909\]](#)

[4: Mr. Saichiro Fujita 1886-1976](#)

[Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Mr. Saichiro Fujita](#)

[\[Tablet Translated November 10, 1906\]](#)

[\[Tablet of May 29, 1907\]](#)

[\[Tablet Translated May 15, 1913\]](#)

[\[Cable received May 10, 1976\]](#)

[5: Tablets to Japan](#)

[Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Japanese and One to Koreans](#)

[\[Tablet of October 28, 1916\]](#)

[\[Tablet of December 27, 1918\]](#)

[\[Tablet of June 11, 1920\]](#)

[\[Tablet of December 17, 1918\]](#)

[\[Tablet of August 10, 1920\]](#)

[\[Tablet of December 9, 1920\]](#)

[\[Tablet of December 17, 1919\]](#)

[\[Tablet of February 1920\]](#)

[\[Tablet of August 10, 1920\]](#)

[\[Tablet of August 10, 1920\]](#)

[\[Tablet of December 8, 1920\]](#)

[\[Tablet of August 19, 1920\]](#)

[\[Tablet of August 19, 1920\]](#)

[\[Tablet of January 11, 1921\]](#)

[\[Tablet of September 9, 1920\]](#)

[\[Tablet of October 15, 1920\]](#)

[\[Tablet of June 1, 1921\]](#)

[\[Tablet of October 7, 1921\]](#)

[\[Tablet of November 5, 1921\]](#)

[6: 'Abdu'l-Bahá Speaks to a Japanese Audience](#)

[Talk by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the Japanese Independent Church, Oakland, California, October 1912](#)

[7: Excerpt from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá](#)

[8: 'Abdu'l-Bahá Meets President Naruse of Japan Women's College By Miss Agnes B. Alexander](#)

[9: Excerpt from The Chosen Highway by Lady Blomfield, Concerning 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Japanese Diplomat \(1912\)](#)

PART II: Letters of Shoghi Effendi and Communications From the Universal House of Justice

10: Letters and Cables to Miss Agnes B. Alexander, 1923-1957

[Letter of January 27, 1924]
[Letter of July 16, 1927]
[Letter of October 12, 1927]
[Letter of October 22, 1927]
[Letter of October 31, 1927]
[Letter of December 30, 1927]
[Letter of March 13, 1928]
[Letter of March 29, 1928]
[Letter of May 20, 1928]
[Letter of November 14, 1928]
[Letter of December 21, 1928]
[Letter of April 19, 1929]
[Letter of January 5, 1930]
[Letter of April 18, 1930]
[Letter of October 8, 1931]
[Letter of January 25, 1932]
[Letter of February 11, 1933]
[Letter of June 8, 1933]
[Letter of November 1, 1934]
[Letter of April 17, 1935]
[Letter of July 6, 1935]
[Letter of September 23, 1935]
[Letter of November 3, 1935]
[Letter of May 11, 1936]
[Letter of November 3, 1936]
[Letter of November 19, 1936]
[Letter of January 24, 1937]
[Letter of June 3, 1946]
[Letter of July 23, 1946]
[Letter of June 28, 1947]
[Letter of May 31, 1949]
[Letter of October 6, 1950]
[Letter of November 15, 1951]
[Letter of May 22, 1952]
[Letter of September 29, 1952]
[Letter of August 15, 1953]
[Letter of May 3, 1954]
[Letter of May 5, 1954]
[Letter of May 27, 1954]
[Letter of May 27, 1954]
[Letter of March 1, 1955]
[Cable sent March 29, 1957]
[Letter of April 14, 1957]
[Cable sent January 4, 1971]

11: Letters and Cable to the Bahá'ís of Japan in the Early Days, 1922-1931

[Letter of January 26, 1922]
[Cable dated December 15, 1922]
[Letter of December 17, 1922]
[Letter of May 10, 1923]
[Letter of May 22, 1923]
[Letter of October 22, 1925]
[Letter of January 12, 1930]
[Letter of December 24, 1930]
[Letter of March 5, 1931]
[Letter of June 20, 1931]
[Letter of January 9, 1932]

12: Letters and Cables to Administrative Institutions

[Letter of April 1957]
[Cable of April 29, 1957]

To National Spiritual Assemblies

To the National Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia—1957

[Cable dated May 2, 1957]
[Letter of May 20, 1957]
[Letter of July 15, 1957]
[Cable dated August 27, 1957]
[Letter of October 20, 1957]

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, 1951-1956

[Letter of February 29, 1951]
[Letter of November 20, 1955]
[Letter of December 27, 1956]

To the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia

[Letter of July 19, 1957]

To the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran

[\[Letter of January 6, 1957\]](#)
[To Local Spiritual Assemblies, 1948-1957](#)

[\[Letter of September 21, 1948\]](#)
[\[Letter of December 20, 1951\]](#)
[\[Letter of April 14, 1952\]](#)
[\[Letter of August 30, 1952\]](#)
[\[Letter of July 24, 1953\]](#)
[\[Letter of November 26, 1953\]](#)
[\[Letter of March 2, 1954\]](#)
[\[Letter of May 29, 1954\]](#)
[\[Letter of June 7, 1954\]](#)
[\[Letter of June 8, 1954\]](#)
[\[Letter of July 19, 1954\]](#)
[\[Letter of September 26, 1955\]](#)
[\[Letter of April 24, 1956\]](#)
[\[Letter of June 11, 1956\]](#)
[\[Letter of April 19, 1957\]](#)

[To the Local Spiritual Assembly of Hyogo-ken \(prefecture\)](#)

[\[Letter of January 2, 1956\]](#)

[13: Letters to Individuals](#)

[Excerpts from letters to Japanese believers, 1947-1957](#)

[\[Letter of October 15, 1947\]](#)
[\[Letter of October 6, 1950\]](#)
[\[Letter of March 21, 1952\]](#)
[\[Letter of April 22, 1952\]](#)
[\[Letter of October 5, 1953\]](#)
[\[Letter of December 30, 1955\]](#)
[\[Letter of September 19, 1957\]](#)

[The following excerpts are from letters to pioneers to Japan and Korea, 1948-1957](#)

[\[Letter of January 21, 1948\]](#)
[\[Letter of October 16, 1948\]](#)
[\[Letter of December 20, 1949\]](#)
[\[Letter of September 17, 1950\]](#)
[\[Letter of February 27, 1951\]](#)
[\[Letter of September 21, 1951\]](#)
[\[Letter of November 12, 1952\]](#)
[\[Letter of May 25, 1953\]](#)
[\[Letter of July 10, 1954\]](#)
[\[Letter of October 19, 1955\]](#)
[\[Letter of November 23, 1955\]](#)
[\[Letter of May 3, 1956\]](#)
[\[Letter of March 18, 1957\]](#)
[\[Letter of August 18, 1957\]](#)
[\[Letter of October 18, 1957\]](#)

[14: Shoghi Effendi Writes to Emperor Showa of Japan](#)

[15: Message from the Universal House of Justice to the North Pacific Oceanic Conference, Sapporo, Japan, September, 1971](#)

[Afterword](#)

[Frontispiece]

Japan Will Turn Ablaze!

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Letters of Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice, and
Historical Notes About Japan

(Revised Edition)

Compiled by Barbara R. Sims
Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Japan, 1992

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[Photograph with the following caption:
Hand of the Cause Miss Agnes B. Alexander
(Circa 1900)]

“Your name will forever remain associated with the rise of the Faith and its establishment in Japan and the record of your incessant and splendid endeavors will shed on its annals a lustre that time can never dim.” (Shoghi Effendi, June 8, 1933)

Introduction

As early as 1903 and for years thereafter, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá urged Bahá’ís to travel to Japan to spread the Message of Bahá’u’lláh. On occasion He said He Himself would like to go to Japan, and also to some other countries.

In 1908 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote to an American believer, Mr. Howard McNutt¹, “A trip of the believers of God to the Orient is of the utmost importance and it will become the cause of great connection between the two regions... Perchance, God willing, in Japan, you may lay the foundation for the Kingdom!”

In 1910 He said to the first two Bahá’ís to visit Japan, “Blessed results will appear from the Holy Cause established in that land. I have sent your letter regarding the work in Japan to Mr. McNutt in New York, that he may spread the word for some of the American Bahá’ís to go to Japan, and there serve and teach the Cause. It is very good for teachers to travel, and, through the love of God, give life to the people. American Bahá’ís should go to Oriental countries as teachers.”

The first Bahá’ís to make the long voyage, Mr. Howard Struven² and Mr. C.M. Remey, 1909; Mme. Aurelia Bethlen, 1911; Mr. and Mrs. Dreyfus-Barney, 1914, stayed for brief periods of time and continued around the world. Dr. George Augur and Miss Agnes Alexander both arrived in 1914—Miss Alexander shortly after Dr. Augur. They sailed to Japan with the intention of residing there for some time. All these believers traveled in response to the wishes of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Besides Japan, He also encouraged travel in those early days to China, India, Persia and other Asian countries.

In the Tablet of the Divine Plan written to the Bahá’ís of the United States and Canada, Japan is mentioned six times and the Japanese language itself once. In those Tablets ‘Abdu’l-Bahá again urged travel. “How good would it be were there any possibility of a commission composed of men and women, to travel together through China and Japan...”

In 1919 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote to Mr. Roy Wilhelm³, “Attach great importance to the Japanese people. Mrs. Magee should continually communicate with them.” And again, later in the year to the same believer, “Convey to Mr. Nasu⁴, the Japanese, my greeting and say:

The world of nature is darkness but the heavenly Sun dissipates by its light this darkness that prevails over the world. Likewise the world of mind and of souls is a dark one and nothing will illuminate it save the rays of the Sun of Truth. My hope therefore is that thou mayest be the cause of the shining of the Divine Teachings in Japan, that thou mayest vivify the dead. The people of Japan are intelligent but they are in need of a leader that he may awaken them. I hope that thou mayest be the cause of their awakening and may vivify them.”

To Mr. William Randall⁵, in 1920, He wrote, “The association which has been formed for promoting the relationship and love between America and Japan, will, God willing, be confirmed and assisted. This association is important. It will unquestionably, bring forth great results.”

“These are His very words, that still keep ringing in my ears: ‘Japan will turn ablaze!’”

The title of this book was taken from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s prophecy of the spiritual future of Japan as quoted by Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith, in his first letter to the Bahá’ís of Japan,

We have taken the liberty of adding a few words, for the sake of continuity, and also that the reader, knowing something of the individuals and circumstances might better observe the creative power in the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi as reflected in the lives and actions of the recipients.

For further information on the history of the Bahá'í Faith in Japan, we recommend to the reader History of the Bahá'í Faith in Japan 1914-1938 by Agnes B. Alexander, and Traces That Remain, (A Pictorial History of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Faith Among the Japanese) by Barbara R. Sims.

Barbara R. Sims
Tokyo, Japan 1992

Part I: The Epoch of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ministry

1: Miss Agnes B. Alexander 1875-1971

The year was 1913, and Miss Alexander recalls: "My only desire was to serve His Cause. The words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá rang in my ears: 'I have a lamp in My Hand searching through the lands and seas to find souls who can become heralds of the Cause. Day and night I am engaged in this work.'

"I prayed that His lamp might find me. For nearly twelve years I had been privileged to assist in establishing His Cause in Hawaii. Now the time had come when I was free to go forth to serve in other parts of His lands... I received a Tablet from the Master which contained the first intimation that He wished me to travel to Japan. He wrote in part: 'Therefore if thou travelest toward Japan unquestionably Divine confirmations shall descend upon thee.'

"Through the Divine favors all difficulties were overcome and I sailed ... reaching Japan November 1, 1914."

Between the time of her arrival and 1967 when she left for the last time, Miss Alexander spent a total of about 31 years in Japan. The rest of her time was spent in Hawaii or other parts of the world teaching the Faith.

Shoghi Effendi referred to Miss Alexander as a "distinguished pioneer" and wrote the following to her regarding her role in the development of the Faith.

"Your glorious services in those remote regions of the earth (China and Japan) are never to be forgotten. I ever pray on your behalf and wish you to remember the sacred interests of the Cause in far-away Japan as you are that radiant herald who has raised the Call of Salvation in its very heart and to whom it owes a great debt of gratitude... I never, never forget you." (January 27, 1924)

"I feel that your destiny lies in that far-off and promising country (Japan) where your noble and pioneer services future generations will befittingly glorify and thankfully remember." (January 10, 1928)

Miss Alexander received thirteen Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. They are quoted below.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Miss Agnes Alexander

[Tablet of June, 1901]

O thou maid-servant of God!

The tongues have spoken of thy attraction to God, and the pens have testified of thy burning by the Fire of the Love of God. Indeed the heart of 'Abdu'l-Bahá approves of this because it feels its heat from this distant and Blessed Spot.

O maid-servant of God! By God, the Truth, the Spirit of Christ from the Supreme Concourse doth in every time and aspect announce to thee this great good-news.

Be, therefore a divine bird, proceed to thy native country, spread the wings of sanctity over those spots and sing and chant and celebrate the name of thy Lord, that thou mayest gladden the Supreme Concourse and make the seeking souls hasten unto thee as moths hasten to the lamp and thus illumine that distant country by the Light of God.

(Translated by Anton Haddad. Received in Paris, June, 1901)

[Photograph at bottom half of the page with the following caption:

"Mr. Struven became a herald of the Kingdom and traveled through the countries of China, India and Japan." ('Abdu'l-Bahá) Mr. Howard Struven, the first Bahá'í to visit Japan, is at the far left. Dr. Augur is at the far right and Miss Alexander is sitting second from left. Taken in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1909.]

[Tablet Translated January 25, 1903]

O thou bird warbling in the Garden of the Love of God!

Thank God that He has illumined thy insight, led thee unto the Fire glowing in the tree of man; caused thee to utter His Praise among the creatures and guided certain women to whom thou spoke the Word of God.

O maid-servant of God! Verily thy Lord lighteth the lamp of Love in the heart of whomsoever He chooseth. This is indeed the great happiness. He confirmeth him in the service of the Supreme Vineyard.

I pray God to confirm the relatives in attaining to the Brilliant Light, to let the light of Insight shine forth to the hearts and sights; to aid thy friends in being illumined by the Light of El Bahá and fed from the Heavenly Table, and to make thee empty, void from the thoughts of the life of this world and filled with the Love of thy Lord, ready for His service, uttering His Praise and demonstrating with proofs the appearance of the Kingdom of God.

(Translated by Mirza Ameen, Chicago, Illinois, January 25, 1903)

[Tablet Translated August 14, 1909]

O thou seeker of the Kingdom!

Thy letter was received. I prayed at the Court of Holiness to deliver thee from the darkness of the attachment to this world, enlighten thee by the Divine Illumination and purify the mirror of thy heart, so that the Rays of the Sun of Truth may shine therein.

Permission is granted thee to marry Mr. W ... W ... but thou must try with heart and soul to guide him and cause him to enter under the Shade of the Covenant and Testament, so that ye may become united as one soul in two bodies and be engaged in the service of the Kingdom.

(Translated by Ahmad Sohrab, Chicago, August 14, 1909. Received in Honolulu, September 8, 1909)

[Tablet of Translated August 16, 1913]

O maid-servant of God!

Thy letter was received. Thou hast written something about Mr. Remy. In reality that youth is the son of the Kingdom and the herald of the appearance of Bahá'u'lláh. All the believers of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful must summon the people to the Kingdom and be the means of the guidance of their souls. They must live and conduct themselves in such a manner so that they may become distinguished above other people in sanctity, prayerfulness and humility. I hope that thou mayest attain to this station and become the cause of the diffusion of the Manifest Light.

(Translated by Ahmad Sohrab, August 16, 1913, Ramleh, Egypt. Received in Honolulu, September 15, 1913)

[Tablet Translated October 31, 1913]

O thou dear daughter!

Thy letter was received. It became the cause of infinite rejoicing for it expressed eloquently thy faith and thy turning thy face toward the Kingdom of God. This light of guidance which is ignited in the lamp of thy heart must become more brilliant day by day and shed its light to all parts. Therefore, if thou travellest toward Japan unquestionably Divine confirmations shall descend upon thee.

Convey the utmost kindness to Mrs. ... on my behalf and say: The doors of the Kingdom of God are open, the Call of the Lord of the Kingdom is raised, the Bestowals of the Almighty are endless and the effulgence of the Sun of Reality has illumined the East and the West. In such a time patience and tranquility are not allowable. Thou must engage with infinite joy and happiness in the mention of the Forgiving Lord.

(Translated by Ahmad Sohrab, October 31, 1913, Ramleh, Egypt. Received in Brooklyn, New York, January 1914)

[Tablet of August 4, 1914]

O thou my dear daughter!

Thy letter was received. It imparted great happiness. Praise be to God that that dear daughter is sacrificing herself in the path of Bahá'u'lláh and enduring every difficulty.

It is now more advisable for thee to depart directly to Japan and while there be engaged in the diffusion of the fragrances of God. From there thou mayest return to India and from India to the Holy Land.

Today the greatest of all divine bestowals is teaching the Cause of God for it is fraught with confirmations. Every teacher is confirmed and is favored at the Divine Threshold. In the

estimation of the Ideal King, the army which is in the front of the battlefield is encircled with the glances of His mercifulness and in the sight of the Divine Farmer, the sower of the seed is accepted and favored.

I hope that thou mayest be like unto a realm conquering army and a farmer, therefore thy voyage to Japan is preferred to everything else. Still thou are perfectly free.

(Mount Carmel, Haifa, August 4, 1914. Received in Geneva, Switzerland, August 22, 1914)

[Tablet Translated October 27, 1916]

O thou heavenly daughter!

Thy letter through Mr. Hannen was received from Japan; likewise the letters of Mr. Fukuta. The contents of both letters imparted exceeding joy, for each word was an eloquent tongue explaining the wonders of the Love of God and elucidating the story of the attraction of the heart with the Breaths of the Holy Spirit.

Praise be to God that thou hast become assisted to promulgate the Word of God in Japan. Ere long this circle in Japan will be enlarged obtaining heavenly blessings.

God says in the glorious Qur'an: "A seed, growing out of it seven ears, and God is able to double this for whomsoever He willeth." This verse means: Whenever the Word of Truth is proclaimed, it is like unto a seed, which sown in a pure soil brings forth seven ears and every ear produces one hundred kernels, and God says again that for whomsoever He desireth, He will double this number, that is, He will make the seven hundred kernels fourteen hundred.

Now I hope that thy call in Japan may be like unto that seed, so that it may obtain heavenly blessing and benediction, and the souls be educated and taught the oneness and singleness of God, the truthfulness of the prophets and the usefulness of the Divine Teachings.

An answer is written to the letters of Mr. Fukuta and forwarded. Present it to him.

(Translated by Ahmad Sohrab, Haifa, October 27, 1916. Received in Tokyo, February 7, 1917)

[Tablet Translated October 30, 1916]

O thou daughter of the Kingdom!

Thy letter dated July 15, 1916 was received. Its contents indicated that thou hast organized a meeting in Japan. Consider thou what a great favor God hast bestowed that such spiritual meetings are being held in Tokyo and such heavenly gifts are being distributed.

God says in the Qur'an: "The example of the people of faith is like unto a field which obtains freshness and verdancy from the rain descending from the clouds, attaining to full fruition and finding the blessings of the Kingdom. There is no doubt that day by day it will grow and develop and in the end the ears of the sheaves will be laden with God's benediction bringing forth one hundred fold."

Now, ye are the fields of the plain of Reality and are under the protection of the educative rays of the Sun of Truth. At every moment ye obtain a new vitality from the rain of divine bestowals and ere long ye will produce full grown seeds which are blessed by the care and attention of the Divine Farmer. There is no doubt that such will be the end.

Convey on my behalf the utmost longing and greeting to the friends residing in Tokyo as well as the recently arrived travelers and say to them: All the individuals of humanity are farmers. Every soul sows a certain kind of seed, but at the season of the harvest there will be gathered no result except the seeds which are sown by the believers of God. That alone will obtain heavenly blessings. Reflect that His Holiness Christ and His Holiness Muhammad scattered such holy seeds the fruits of which are being gathered until now, but all the other farmers were finally doomed to regret and disappointment.

[Tablet Translated December 27, 1918]

O thou daughter of the Kingdom!

Although your letter has not yet been received, yet we do answer it. Praise be to God, that in Japan thou hast been assisted in the accomplishment of a distinguished service. Thou hast raised the Call of the Divine Kingdom and hast led the people to an illumined world and a heavenly Cause. Thou hast become the cause of enlightenment and the wisher for the education of human souls. For those regions are in sheer need of Divine Teachings and are endowed with sufficient capability. Those souls must be emancipated from the obscurity of blind imitations and be illumined by the light of heavenly instructions. Whosoever arises for such a work, divine confirmations shall assist him and the power of the Kingdom shall be made manifest.

Effort must be exerted that the East and West may be reconciled, that the darkness of bigotry may vanish, that the unity of mankind may be made manifest and that East and West, like unto two longing souls, may embrace each other in the utmost love, for all are the sheep of God and God is the Real Shepherd and is kind to every one.

In accordance with the wish of the attracted maid servant of God to the love of God, Mrs. Maxwell, go thou to Canada and stay there for a time and then hasten back to Japan for in Japan you will be assisted and exalted.

Some letters are enclosed for the friends in Japan. Forward them.

(Translated by Shoghi Rabbani, Haifa, December 27, 1918. Received in Montclair, New Jersey, March 8, 1919)

[Tablet Translated July 30, 1919]

O thou daughter of the Kingdom!

Thy letters were received. The travel to Japan was in the utmost necessity. Thou hast undoubtedly met the attracted maid servant of God, Mrs. Maxwell before sailing to Japan, for that maid servant of God is ablaze with the Fire of the love of God. Whosoever meets her feels from her association the susceptibilities of the Kingdom. Her company uplifts and develops the soul.

Thou didst well to travel to Japan for the seed thou hast sown needs watering. Capable souls are found in Japan; the Breath of the Merciful is necessary to stir and enliven them and to bestow a spiritual liveliness. A blind soul is there but is in the utmost enkindlement and likewise a priest lives there and is endowed with great capacity. I hope that thou wilt find the doors flung open and become the cause of the guidance of souls.

Convey on my behalf the utmost love and kindness to the maid servants of God, Elizabeth Stevens and Maud Gaudreaux. Through the bounties and blessings of God, I supplicate that Mr. Weirs may become attracted to the Divine Kingdom and may be so enkindled with the love of God that he may illumine the surrounding regions.

Of the death of Richard Potter we were made infinitely sad, but that nightingale of the Kingdom has flown to the rose garden of the Kingdom, and that drop returned to the limitless ocean. That wanderer has ascended to his original abode. On his behalf I supplicate from the Threshold of Oneness pardon and forgiveness.

Convey on my behalf to the maid servants of God, Miss Ragina Sunshine, Mrs. Louise Smith and Louise Bosch the wonderful Abhá greetings. I have entreated and supplicated to the Abhá Kingdom and have begged for those maid servants of the Merciful unbounded blessings, that each may unloosen an eloquent tongue and engage in the commemoration of the Beloved of the world.

Convey to the friends of Geyserville the intensity of my love and my spiritual attachment. At dawn

I entreat at the Threshold of the All-Knowing God and beg for them the exaltation of the Kingdom.

Remain for some days in Honolulu and then immediately hasten to Japan.

(Translated by Shoghi Rabbani, Haifa, July 30, 1919. Received in Tokyo November 26, 1919)

[Tablet Translated June 3, 1920]

O thou who art the daughter of the Kingdom!

Thy letter has been received. Praise be unto God that in those regions the Breezes of the Rose Garden of Abhá are spreading. It is my hope that they (those regions) would become perfumed; the Breezes of Favor would waft, the Lights of Guidance would radiate and the Graces of the Merciful would unveil.

Convey on my behalf respectful greetings to Mrs. Finch. I hope that you two would in the utmost affection and union start in the service of the Kingdom, become the cause that that dark country may become illumined and that the Breezes of the Heavenly Rose Garden may be spread.

Convey my deepest love and affection to Mr. Torii and Mr. Inouye and Mr. Saiki, and also to all others. Through the graces of the Beauty of Abhá I cherish the hope that those souls will become sublime emblems and fruitful trees in this Supreme Paradise because a productive man is like unto a tree which is fruitful and of large shadow and so he is the ornament of the garden of Paradise.

This world, though apparently ornamented, yet its ornamentation is like unto the freshness of the flowers on the meadow whose prosperity lasts but for a short time, fading speedily through the heat of the sun and the blowing of the wind. The Heavenly Trees, however, are always green, fresh, full of blossoms and continually yielding fruits. They remain till Eternity in perfect fineness, freshness and vigor.

Extend my great kindness and praise to the maid servant of God, Fuyo (Yuri) Mochizuki, so that she may, with a divine power, a heavenly purpose and Godly motive start her writing and that the Breaths of the Holy Spirit may help her pen.

I am supplicating to God to help Mr. Fukuta progress day by day, to guide the Japanese women to tear up the curtains of superstitions, observe Lights of Truth, seek Eternal Life and long for everlasting Bestowals.

(Translated by Azizullah S. Bahadur, Haifa, June 3, 1920. Received in Tokyo, July 28, 1920)

[Tablet Translated August 2, 1921]

O thou who wanderest in the divine Path!

In the path of God thou didst leave behind thy familiar country and traveled to those distant regions, so that thou mayest spread the Teachings of God and give the people the Glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God. Be assured that confirmations will reach thee and thou wilt become assisted in accomplishing a great service to the world of humanity. Thousand tidings may reach thee!

Thy brother Ono San, also will be confirmed and with utmost joy and happiness he will come back.

(Translated by Rouhi Afnan, Haifa, August 2, 1921)

[Tablet of November 7, 1921]

O thou who proclaimest the Kingdom of God!

Thy letter has been received and gave much joy. Praise be to God that the confirmations of the Kingdom of Abhá reached and thou becamest the cause of guidance of the souls. It is my hope that in Korea thou wilt raise the banner of the Greatest Guidance. Convey my utmost kindness to Mr. Roh⁶. I have utmost love for him and ask for him Heavenly blessings.

(November 7, 1921, Haifa. Received in Tokyo, February 14, 1922)

2: Dr. George J. Augur 1853-1927

Dr. George Jacob Augur, a dedicated and deeply spiritual “Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá”² received several Tablets from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. At the Master’s summons Dr. Augur left his home in Honolulu and went to Japan. He arrived the first time in June 1914 and stayed until April 1915. He made several other trips to Japan with his wife, Ruth, also a firm believer. The Augurs worked closely with Miss Alexander to establish the Faith in Japan. While there Dr. Augur lived in the Japanese style, learned Japanese and wore the kimono. With ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s permission he returned to Hawaii to stay in 1919.

Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Dr. George Augur

[Tablet Translated November 21, 1913]

O thou dear son!

From thy letter the fragrance of the rose garden of significances was inhaled, that praise be to God, thou art assisted by the Divine confirmations, hast found the way to the Kingdom of God and thy heart and soul are quickened. Arise thou to perform the blessed intention thou art holding and travel thou to Japan and lay there the foundation of the Cause of God, that is, summon the people to the Kingdom of God. Japan has great capacity, but there needs be a teacher who will speak by the confirmations of the Holy Spirit. I hope thou wilt become assisted in this.

(Translated by Ahmad Sohrab, Ramleh, Egypt, November 21, 1913)

[Tablet Translated February 12, 1914]

O thou who art advancing toward the Kingdom!

Thy letter was received. It indicated, praise be to God, that in the matter of advancing toward the Kingdom of God thou art firm and steadfast and thou hast resolved to go to Japan to spread the Divine Teachings. This lofty magnanimity befits praise. I hope thou mayest become confirmed

therein and in the affairs of the Kingdom thou mayest follow the inspiration and the teachings of God and not any human suggestion. Rest assured that thou wilt become assisted.

(Translated by Ahmad Sohrab, Haifa, February 12, 1914)

[Tablet Translated August 12, 1914]

O thou herald of the Kingdom of God!

Thy letter was received. A thousand times bravo to thy magnanimity and exalted aim! Trusting in God and while turning thy face toward the Kingdom of Abhá, unfurl thou the divine Flag in Tokyo and cry at the top of thy voice: "O ye people. The Sun of Reality hath appeared and flooded all regions with its glorious light; it has upraised the Standard of Oneness of the world of humanity and summoned all mankind to the refulgent Truth. The cloud of Mercy is pouring, the zephyr of Providence is wafting and the world of humanity is being stirred and moved. The Divine Spirit is conferring eternal life, the heavenly lights are illumining the hearts, the table of the sustenance of the Kingdom is spread and adorned with all kinds of foods and victuals. O ye concourses of men! Awake! Awake! Become mindful! Become mindful! Open ye the seeing eye! Unstop the hearing ear! Hark! Hark! The soft notes of the Heavenly Music are streaming down, ravishing the ears of the people of spiritual discernment. Ere long this transcendent Light will wholly enlighten the East and West!"

In short, with a resounding voice, with a miraculous power, and with the magnetism of the Love of God, teach thou the Cause of God and rest assured that the Holy Spirit shall confirm thee.

(Translated by Ahmad Sohrab, Haifa, August 12, 1914)

[Photograph with the following caption:]

A group who were studying the Faith with Miss Alexander and Dr. Augur. He is sitting in front. Mr. Fukuta, top left, was the first to become a Bahá'í in Japan. Taken in 1916.

[Tablet of 1919]

On August 8, 1915 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary wrote: "Your beautiful petition ... was read to the Beloved ... as He was walking to and fro in the parlor of the Pilgrim House. His face beamed with a heavenly smile as he heard your name. He said: 'Write to Dr. Augur to return to Japan as soon as the first opportunity offers itself to him. Great blessings will descend upon the soul who teaches the Cause in that country. Its people are endowed with great capability. Should five or six of them be thoroughly grounded in the teachings of this Cause and attracted with its fire, great results will be forthcoming.'"

O ye the two doves nestling in the garden of the Love of God!

Your detailed letter was received. Your services at this spot are recognized and appreciated, particularly (your services) in Tokyo. Praise be to God that in that region ye have been assisted in diffusing the musk-scented perfume, and this in future is pregnant with remarkable results. These few seeds of corn that ye have sown in that soil shall lead to luxuriant crops, this limited number of souls will be converted into great cohorts, nay, rather into an imposing spiritual army, and that seed, under the Divine Direction, shall yield abundant and heavy clusters.

Praise ye God that ye have been assisted with such Divine Bounty. Ye have sown some seeds and now watering is needed. If souls should undertake a voyage from America or Honolulu to the land of Japan, the teachings of God shall thereby be swiftly propagated and important consequences shall result. You two have fulfilled your roles and have striven within the limits of your capacity. At present ye must rest for a time; the turn of others has arrived, that they may similarly travel to Japan, may water the seeds that have been sown and may serve and take care of the tender shrubs. The days of life are swiftly going by, and eventually man will be confined into subterranean regions and his name shall perish, except those souls who become Divine gardeners and who sow seeds in the soil of hearts. Those shall eternally remain shining and glittering like unto stars from the horizon of Truth.

3: Mr. Kanichi Yamamoto 1879–1961

Mr. Kanichi⁸ Yamamoto has the distinction of being the first Japanese believer. He immigrated from Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan, to Hawaii, where he worked in the home of the family of a believer. Also living there was one of the early Bahá'ís of Hawaii, Miss Elizabeth Muther.

Miss Muther wrote to a friend on September 8, 1902, "After I became a believer I felt that sometime I might tell (Mr. Yamamoto). I prayed that his heart might be prepared to receive the truth. Although it was a little difficult to give him the Message because of his imperfect knowledge of English, yet God helped me so that he understands perfectly and is rejoicing in the Knowledge of His Truth. I have just had a little talk with him and he told me how happy he was and that he expects to write his letter to the Master this evening."

[Photograph with the following caption:]

Mr. Kanichi Yamamoto, the first Japanese Bahá'í with four of his sons. The three oldest boys were given Persian names by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Taken in Berkeley, California in 1920.

Mr. Yamamoto rewrote his letter four times before he was satisfied. "He felt that he could not write in English, so I told him that I thought it would be all right for him to write in Japanese. I was sure the Master would understand the spirit of his letter. Mr. Yamamoto said that although his letter was written in Japanese, the Master fully answered him."

Mr. Yamamoto wrote other letters to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Japanese. At the time no one in the Holy Land could read Japanese. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary recorded that He said, "I will turn to Bahá'u'lláh, and He will tell me what to say." He always answered Mr. Yamamoto's questions.

Mr. Yamamoto later lived in the Berkeley-Oakland area of California. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited Oakland in 1912, Mr. Yamamoto had the privilege of arranging a meeting for him at the Japanese Independent Church. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's talk is quoted in Ch. 6.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Mr. Kanichi Yamamoto

[Tablet of 1902]

O thou who art attracted by the Word of God to the Kingdom of God!

Turn with the whole of thy being to God, forget aught else save God, and supplicate God to make thee a sign of guidance in the midst of people who are veiled from God; perchance they may be guided to the Orb of all horizons, enter the kingdom of harmony, drink of the cup of the love of God, rejoice at the manifestation of the Kingdom of God, taste the delight of the mention of God, and shelter themselves in the shadow of the Tree of Life in the midst of the Paradise of God.

This beseemeth the believers; this is the qualification of the sincere; this is the path of the knowers; and this is the utmost aim of the faithful.

Exert thy utmost power that thou mayest share this great bounty.

[Tablet of January 1903]

O thou who hast addressed 'Abdu'l-Bahá!

Verily, I pray my Lord to teach thee a language and writing of the Kingdom which will satisfy thee, so as to dispense with all things; for that spiritual writing and instructive tongue are eloquent, clear, laudable, legible, read by the tongue and preserved in the heart. Blessed is he who knows it in the world of man!

Know, verily, that the Ocean is waving, the Sun shining, the Stars dawning. (Understand what I say!)

The tree will grow, the earth will send forth hyacinths⁹ and give blessings, and man will become of the heavenly angels. Feed on the light of guidance and impart light to the people. The bird will warble melodies unknown save by the birds of heaven; then tear asunder the veil and see the realities of things with the eye of God. Verily, thy Lord guideth whomsoever He willeth unto the Straight Path!

The Promised Spot will be made a racecourse for the steeds of the race of Knowledge and the lights of the Merciful will shine upon it. The dispersed ones will return to the Center of Gathering and the birds will return from the meadows of the world unto the Nest of Harmony. This is a preordained matter.

As to thee: Thou hast borne every difficulty and hardship and soon will be rewarded by God with a good reward. He will destine to thee all that is good, and choose for thee the manifestation of His mercy among the servants; that they may thus see that the Sons of the Kingdom have gone out¹⁰, while there hath come a soul from the remotest horizon who hath entered the Kingdom of God.

(January 1903)

[Tablet of (Date unknown)]

O thou youth of God!

Thank God that thou hast found thy way to the Radiant Kingdom, torn asunder the veil of superstition and learned the reality of the mysteries.

All the people have formed a god in the world of thought, and that form of their own imagination they worship; when the fact is that the imagined form is finite and the human mind is infinite¹¹. Surely the infinite is greater than the finite, for imagination is accidental (or non-essential) while the mind is essential; surely the essential is greater than the accidental.

Therefore consider: All the sects and peoples worship their own thought; they create a god in their own minds and acknowledge him to be the creator of all things, when that form is a superstition—thus people adore and worship imagination (or illusion).

The Essence of the Divine Entity and the Unseen of the unseen is holy above imagination and is beyond thought. Consciousness doth not reach It. Within the capacity of comprehension of a produced (or created) reality that Ancient Reality cannot be contained. It is a different world; from it there is no information; arrival thereat is impossible; attainment thereto is prohibited and inaccessible. This much is known: It exists and Its existence is certain and proven—but the condition is unknown.

All the philosophers and the doctors know that It is, but they were perplexed in the comprehension of Its existence and were at last discouraged, and in great despair they left this world. For the comprehension of the condition and mysteries of that Reality of realities and Mystery of mysteries there is need for another power and another sense. That power and sense is not possessed by mankind, therefore they have not found any information. For example: If a man possess the power of hearing, the power of tasting, the power of smelling and the power of feeling but no power of seeing, he cannot see. Hence, through the powers and senses present in man the realization of the Unseen Reality, which is pure and holy above the reach of doubts, is impossible. Other powers are needed and other senses required. If those powers and senses are obtained, then information can be had; otherwise, not.

As to the question of marriage, according to the law of God; First you must select one, and then it depends upon the consent of the father and mother. Before your selection they have no right of interference.

Endeavor as much as thou canst to acquire the English language with the utmost eloquence and excellence, so that thou mayest be enabled to translate the Tablets into the Japanese tongue. This is my advice. Certainly exert thy utmost endeavor to attain this bounty.

(Date unknown)

[Tablet of August 4, 1904]

O thou who art the single one of Japan and the unique one of the extreme Orient!

That country hath been deprived of the divine breath until this time; now, God be praised! thou art initiated in the mysteries and conscious of the secrets of the lights.

Thou hast been earthly, I hope that thou wilt become heavenly; thou hast been gloomy, I desire that thou wilt become luminous. Thou wert wandering in the wilderness, thou hast found a way to the abode of the Beloved One; thou wert a thirsty fish, thou hast attained to the endless Ocean; thou wert a roving bird, thou hast reached the divine Rose Garden; thou wert spiritually sick and thou hast found real health!

Now is the time that thou shouldst entirely abandon the comfort, ease, enjoyment and the life of this transient world, and wholly arise to guide the people of Japan, illuminating faces, perfuming nostrils and conquering, through the heavenly hosts and divine reinforcements, the hearts of the people of that region.

Do not wonder at the favor and bounty of the Lord. By the favor of God, how often a drop hath become undulating like a sea, and an atom become shining like the sun!

The Sun of Truth hath enlightened the divine world and illumined the universe. The rays of His grace have shone upon the East and West, and His heat hath caused vegetation in all countries. So the lights and the heat of the Sun of Truth being help and assistance, what more dost thou need?

Thou must warble, like the nightingale of significances, in the rose garden so that thou mayest inspire all the birds of the meadow to chant and to sing.

(August 4, 1904)

[Tablet of January 25, 1903]

To Miss Elizabeth Muther in Hawaii

I have written a reply to the letter of Kwanichi Yamamoto and have enclosed it with this letter. I ask God to make him a sign of guidance and to guide through him souls of his native land and of other people.

(January 25, 1903)

[Tablet of October 18, 1906]

To Mrs. Helen S. Goodall

The Japanese youth, K. Yamamoto should act in accord with the Law of God—namely—he must first choose a companion (wife) for himself and then his father and mother must sanction. If their sanction and consent is not attained, that engagement is not completed.

He must acquire the English language well, so as to enable him to translate the Divine Tablets into the Japanese language.

(October 18, 1906)

[Tablet Translated October 6, 1907]

To Mrs. J. D. Brittingham

Announce greetings on My behalf, to the two young Japanese (Yamamoto and Fujita) and say: His Imperial Majesty, Mikado, became the cause of the material progress of Japan. I hope that you may become the cause of her spiritual development. This is the principle of progress.

Unless man makes spiritual progress in the world of spirit, intellect and heart, he cannot gather universal results from material advancements. Now, you must gird up the loins of endeavor, and reflect duly, so that ye may quicken the people of Japan through the Spirit of God.

(Translated by A. Esphahani, Washington, October 6, 1907)

[Tablet Translated March 23, 1909]

To Mrs. Ella Goodall Cooper

It is written in Miss Barney's book that the human fetus is not an animal fetus although it has gone through various and complex transformations and metamorphosis in the womb until it has taken to itself human form and appearance. Therefore that fetus was essentially human and the problem is solved when we realize that it has transformed from one form to another until it appears and manifests with the utmost beauty...

Concerning the marriage feast of the young Japanese, Kanichi Yamamoto. It became the cause of great joy and I hope that this marriage will be conducive to great blessings.

(Translated by A. Esphahani, March 23, 1909)

[Photograph with the following caption:]

Mr. Fujita with his niece, Kinue, in his home in Yanai, Japan in 1946.

4: Mr. Saichiro Fujita 1886–1976

Mr. Saichiro Fujita was the second Japanese to accept the Faith. Originally from Yanai, Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan, he immigrated to the United States when he was a teenager. While he was attending school in Oakland, California in 1905 he was taught the Faith by Mrs. Kathryn Frankland.

He received two of the Tablets quoted below from 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1906 and 1907. In 1911 he received a Tablet urging him to complete his professional training. In 1912 Mr. Fujita had the privilege of meeting the Master and traveling with Him in the United States. In this revised

edition we have included one more Tablet by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, translated in 1913, because it contains a prediction about Mr. Fujita.

Between 1912 and 1919 there were several communications from 'Abdu'l-Bahá urging Mr. Fujita to study various aspects of engineering and also advising him to study flower culture. In 1919 he had completed his studies and left for Haifa as instructed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Mr. Fujita served in the Holy Land until the end of his life except for the years between 1938 and 1955 which were spent in Japan.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Mr. Saichiro Fujita

[Tablet Translated November 10, 1906]

O thou fresh plant in the garden of the Love of God!

What thou hast written was considered. It was an evidence of following in the Pathway of Guidance, and a proof of the attraction of the heart to the Beauty of His Majesty, God.

Consider what bounty God has manifested for thee, whence thou art and from whence are we. Yet, nevertheless, such a candle of love is burning in the hearts that its light is radiating from the East to the West and from the West extending to the East.

Rest assured thy name is registered in the Book of God, and it is hoped that thou mayest enter the Paradise of the Kingdom and find stability; to reach that which is the cause of the progress of the world of humanity in the world and in the Kingdom, and with perceiving eye, attentive ear, eloquent tongue and radiant face may serve in the Vineyard of God and spread the Divine Glad Tidings. If thou art confirmed as thou oughtest to be, thou wilt certainly establish an eternal Kingdom. This Kingdom is greater than that of Mikado, for the sovereignty of the Emperor of Japan is for numbered days, but this sovereignty is lasting and will stand unto the Eternity of Eternities.

That sovereignty can be hidden under one handful of dust, that is when Mikado goes beneath the handful of dust, he is entirely effaced and erased, but this Kingdom withstands the greatest revolution of the worlds, and will stand with perfect stability unto eternity. The former kingdom is established by the power of the sword, burning fire, devouring, and the shedding of blood, while this Kingdom is built upon freedom, glory, greatness and the love of God. Consider how much difference there is between them.

(Translated by Ameen Fareed, November 10, 1906, Chicago)

[Tablet of May 29, 1907]

O thou spiritual Youth!

Japan has made wonderful progress in material civilization, but she will become perfect when she will also make spiritual developments and the Power of the Kingdom become manifest in her.

One will encounter a little difficulty in the beginning of the establishment of the Cause of God in that country, but later it will become very easy. For the inhabitants of Japan are intelligent, sagacious, and have the power of rapid assimilation. For the present a perfect youth like thee is favored by the Bounty of the Kingdom, and attained to the knowledge of the Lord of the Kingdom. Show thou forth an effort that thou mayest finish that which is necessary in the acquisition and study of science and art; then travel thou toward the countries of Japan; so that thou mayest hoist the Ensign of Truth, waving upon the Apex of the Supreme Concourse. Look thou not upon thine own capability, the Invisible Divine Confirmations are great, and the Protection and Providence

of the Beauty of Abhá is the helper and assistant. When a drop draws help from the ocean, it is an ocean itself, and a little seed through the outpouring of rain, the favor of the sun, and the soul-refreshing breeze will become a tree with the utmost freshness, full of leaves, blossoms and fruits. Therefore do not consider thy capacity and merit, but rely upon the infinite Bounty and trust to His Highness the Almighty. Do not delay. Undertake soon that which thou art intending.

There are prophecies concerning the Manifestation in the Buddhist books, but they are in symbols and metaphors, and some spiritual conditions are mentioned therein, but the leaders of religion do not understand. They think these prophecies are material things, yet those signs are foreshadowing spiritual occurrence.

(Revealed in Akka, May 29, 1907. Translated by Ahmad Esphahani, July 21, 1907, Washington, D.C.)

[Tablet Translated May 15, 1913]

O thou servant of God

Thy letter was received. It was an indication to the outward and inward health and safety. Therefore it became the means of joy.

As regard to thy profession of electricity. Endeavor from every direction that thou mayest gain perfect efficiency in it—so that I may send for thee to come with electrical machine (automobile) and lighting plant—in order that in the Holy Land thou mayest know how to run the electrical engines and dynamos, how to install electrical lights through the buildings and how to fill the batteries of the (automobile) and act (if necessary) as chauffeur. When thou shalt learn these things then I will send for thee. Thou wilt be confirmed to render a great service and this will become the cause of thine everlasting glory.

(Translated by Ahmad Sohrab, May 15, 1913, Paris)

[Cable received May 10, 1976]

After Mr. Fujita's passing the Universal House of Justice sent out the following cable:

Dearly-loved tireless steadfast Saichiro Fujita passed to Abhá Kingdom after long years service sacred threshold. His rank in vanguard first Japanese believers. His labours World Center his dedication humility sincerity love will forever be remembered and provide shining example to rising generations Japanese Bahá'ís who will view with pride distinction conferred upon him. Praying Holy Shrines progress his radiant soul under loving grace his Master and Guardian both of whom he served so well.

Universal House of Justice

(Cable received May 10, 1976)

5: Tablets to Japan

Miss Alexander wrote in her account of the early days of the Faith in Japan, "After 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension every word He had written became a sacred treasure. When I began collecting the Tablets He had revealed to Japanese living in Japan, and one to Koreans, I found there were nineteen in all." These Tablets were published in 1928, thus preserved for all time. In the foreword to the book Miss Alexander wrote: "The following are the Tablets which were revealed

by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to friends residing in Japan and Korea. There are nineteen Tablets revealed between the years 1916 and His passing in 1921. Eighteen of these Tablets were addressed to Japanese and one to Korean friends. Seven of those to Japanese were to school girls in Tokyo, the others, with two exceptions, were to young men, and five of these were addressed to blind young men, three having found the true Light of this Day.

"The first supplication by a Japanese in Japan to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was sent July, 1915 from a young student¹² in Tokyo who wrote his supplication in Japanese on a scroll. The following is the translation: 'O my Master 'Abdu'l-Bahá!... Although I am a base and poor youth in this world, I have been awakened and bathed in the ocean of Thy mercy and am so happy that I pity the king and the prince who are wandering about in the dream of temporal variance. Accept, O Master, my deep thankfulness from the bottom of the heart. I am very sorry though, when I think of our fellow men who take no thought of real happiness and do not rely upon the warm hand of Thy love. O my Lord, water me forever from the fountain of Thy mercy; I will never refuse Thy command whatsoever it may be. Forgive my sins and allow me to awaken my fellow men.'

"In February 1917 a reply to this supplication was received in Japan from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It had come in the contents of a letter from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary and had been passed by the censor. This was the first Tablet received addressed to a Japanese resident in Japan and is the first herein published.

"The second supplication to 'Abdu'l-Bahá was sent September, 1916 by a blind young Japanese¹³ who wrote in Esperanto. After receiving a reply from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the second Tablet herein published, he wrote again supplicating in English. The following words are a portion of his supplication: 'O my 'Abdu'l-Bahá whose image so calm and peaceful I dreamed of and it cannot be effaced from my heart; whose Name makes my withered heart fresh and strong and who makes the fountain of love and light spring up in the bottom of my heart whenever I think of Thee. Make my heart to be always thirsty for the Fountain of Life. Make me strong enough to be able steadily to hold Thy torch of love firm and high. I confess to Thee that my heart sometimes withers like a flower in the day of summer, and loses its whole strength, nevertheless, my beloved Lord, give to me power that I can throw away every kind of prejudice and ignorance from my heart. Make my heart as pure and fresh as green grass of the spring pastures and let my soul grow more and more by Thy shower of Mercy!' In answer to this blind young man's supplication, 'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed a Tablet which is the third published herein."

Most of the original Tablets were translated in Haifa and sent to the recipients in care of Miss Alexander. One, to a group of students, was sent in care of Mr. Torii. A search in later years located only those Tablets addressed to Mr. Torii himself.

[Photograph with the following caption:]

Miss Yuri Mochizuki (Furukawa), the first Japanese woman to become a Bahá'í.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Japanese and One to Koreans

[Tablet of October 28, 1916]

O thou who art guided by the Light of Guidance! (Mr. Kikutaro Fukuta)

Thy first and second letter was received. Praise be to God that the light of Guidance shone forth, the glass of the heart became illumined and the darkness of ignorance dispelled. The most Great Guidance is a crown the brilliant gems of which will shine upon the future ages and cycles. If it is placed on the head of a servant, he will become the object of the envy of kings, for this is an imperishable crown and everlasting sovereignty. God says in the great Qur'an, He particularizes with His Mercy whomsoever He desireth.

Praise be to God, that thou hast become especialized with Divine Favor and Bounty. Thou didst become awake, beheld the lights and harkened unto the Melody of the Supreme Concourse.

In the Glorious Gospel it is said, "Freely ye have received, freely give." That is, you have found this Bestowal, you have paid nothing for it, therefore give it to others without any exchange. Now with a heavenly power, with a lordly gift, with spiritual morals, with Godlike deeds, and with

supreme glad tidings be thou engaged in the promotion of the teachings of God in Japan. The confirmations of the Kingdom shall encompass and the cohorts of the Realm of Might will grant triumph.

(October 28, 1916. Translated by Ahmad Sohrab)

[Tablet of December 27, 1918]

O thou possessor of a seeing heart! (Mr. Tokujiro Torii)

Although, materially speaking, thou are destitute of physical sight, yet, praise be to God, spiritual insight is thy possession. Thy heart seeth and thy spirit heareth. Bodily sight is subject to a thousand maladies and ultimately and assuredly will be obscured. Thus no importance may be attached to it. But the sight of the heart is illumined, it discerns and discovers the Divine Kingdom and is everlasting and eternal. Praise be to God, therefore, that the sight of thy heart is illumined, and the hearing of thy thought responsive.

The meetings you have organized, wherein you feel heavenly emotions and comprehend realities and significances,—that meeting is like unto the firmament with those souls as resplendent stars shining with the light of guidance. Happy is the soul that seeks, in this brilliant era, heavenly teachings, and blessed is the heart which is stirred and attracted by the love of God. At present the Sun of Truth has dawned upon the land of Japan and the hope is that it may be illumined by heavenly teachings.

Convey on my behalf the utmost love and longing to Mr. D. Inouye¹⁴ and Mr. S. Saiki¹⁵. My hope is that those two blessed souls may shine like unto two heavenly stars from the horizon of Japan and may be the cause of its enlightenment. That land has acquired material civilization and ephemeral advancement; we hope that it may acquire heavenly civilization.

Convey to thy respected wife my greetings and my message and the same to thy young babe, Akira¹⁶, whose name may be ever blessed for it is quite an appropriate one.

(December 27, 1918. Translated by Shoghi Rabbani)

[Tablet of June 11, 1920]

O thou who hast turned thy attention to the Kingdom of God! (Mr. Tokujiro Torii)

Thy letter arrived and imparted joy. Thou hast been longing to spread the Light (the Teachings) in those regions. My wish is also that the Musk of the love of God should be diffused in that land, and that Miss Alexander and Mrs. Finch may conjointly strive so that the rays of the Sun of Reality may be projected all over that country.

Whenever the means of travel is secured, thou art permitted to come. I am supplicating God to strengthen thee and make thee grow like unto a lily in the Garden of the Kingdom.

O faithful friend! The inhabitants of that region (Japan) are bright and noble-minded. Through the great distance however, the musky Breeze has not yet reached their nostrils. They know not of the rise of the Sun of Reality upon the horizon of Persia. If you who are there be self-sacrificing and become enkindled with the love of God, and like unto stars shine from the horizon of Truth, that country will before long be turned into a paradise of comfort. Japan will become illumined, and like unto a meadow and a rose-garden will invigorate the hearts of every assembly. Do ye strive as hard as possible in order to be attracted to the Beauty of the Beloved of the world, and through the fire of His love inflame that Kingdom.

(June 11, 1920. Translated by Azizullah Bahadur)

[Tablet of December 17, 1918]

O thou beloved daughter! (Miss Yuri Mochizuki)

Thy letter was received and was perused in the utmost joy, that, praise be to God, in the land of Japan, the light of the love of God has appeared resplendently and a torch such as thee, has been kindled, for thy heart overflows with the wine of the love of God and thy spirit is ablaze. Like unto a shrub, thou art fresh and tender, growing and flourishing through the outpourings of the cloud of Bounty. My hope is that thou mayest soon bud and blossom and bring forth delectable fruits.

The Real Shepherd is undoubtedly kind unto his flock and is in the utmost of attachment, mercy and solicitude. This is only a natural fact. Rest thou assured, therefore, that thou art always within sight and art encompassed by tender cares.

The people of Japan are like unto a soil that has been deprived of rain for cycles and generations and has had no share of the outpouring of rain and even of dew. Certainly it is quite athirst. Now thou shouldst become the divine gardener and should satisfy that thirsty soil with the water of divine teachings, so that heavenly bounties may be poured out and the flowers of reality and fragrant herbs of human perfections spring forth and that land turn into a paradise of Eden.

(December 17, 1918. Translated by Shoghi Rabbani)

[Tablet of August 10, 1920]

O thou loved maid-servant of God! (Miss Yuri Mochizuki)

Do thou observe the Divine Bounty! We are in Haifa and thou in Tokyo, nevertheless how (our) hearts have become related to one another! This is through the power of the Kingdom which has made the East and West embrace each other.

I feel the utmost kindness towards thee. If thou art able to write the story of Qurratu'l-Ayn as a drama, thou art permitted to write it.

(August 10, 1920. Translated by Azizullah Bahadur)

[Tablet of December 9, 1920]

O thou who art a new grown tree on the meadow of Truth!¹⁷ (Miss Yuri Mochizuki)

Thy letter dated October 14, 1920 has been received. As it was indicative of the susceptibilities of thy conscience it became the cause of joy.

Japan is like unto a farm whose soil is untouched. Such a soil as this has great capacity. One seed produces a hundred-fold. Now, praise be unto God, ye have found such a farm. Ye must develop the lands; ye must free them from thorns and weeds; ye should scatter the seeds of the love of God thereupon, and irrigate them with the rain of the knowledge of God. Rest ye assured that heavenly blessing will be bestowed!

It is my hope that in that farm ye will become divine farmers. The enlightened people of Japan are tired and disgusted with the superannuated and putrefied blind imitations. They are assured that these blind imitations are pure superstitions without any truth. Therefore they have capacity to hear the Call of God. The land is untouched. We will have to see what the divine farmers will do!

At present thou hast started a journal. It is my hope that this journal will shine as the Star of the East. In the journal write thus:

When the horizon of the East was covered with immense darkness; when dark clouds were predominant, and when all the heavenly stars were concealed to the eye, His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, like unto the sun shone forth from the horizon of the East and with radiating

splendor He illumined the Orient.

[Photograph with the following caption:]

Mr. and Mrs. Tokujiro Torii with Miss Alexander in 1916.

The light of the Sun of Reality consisted of heavenly teachings which were spread in the Orient, because there the obscurities of blind imitations of religions, sectarian, racial, political, economic and home prejudices were in ascendancy. The darkness of these prejudices had dominated the Oriental world to such a degree that it had blinded all the eyes and deafened all the ears. There prevailed quarrel and strife, warfare and bloodshed.

In short, it has a long description, but I mention it briefly. When the Sun of Truth shone forth with all might and energy, these obscure and dark clouds dispersed and the splendid Day presented to the eye an aspect with such freshness and beauty that the wise became astonished; the sick were cured; the blind received sight; the deaf obtained hearing; the dumb proved eloquent, and the dead quickened. A heavenly table was spread in the Orient. The divine teachings like unto an unshakable edifice were instituted.

The first principle of Bahá'u'lláh is independent investigation of truth, that is, all the nations of the world have to investigate after truth independently and turn their eyes from the moribund blind imitations of the past ages entirely. Truth is one when it is independently investigated, it does not accept division. Therefore the independent investigation of truth will lead to the oneness of the world of humanity.

Another one of these teachings is the oneness of the world of humanity. All mankind are the trees of the divine garden and the Gardener of this orchard is the Most High, the All-Sustainer. The hand of His favor hath planted these trees, irrigated them from the cloud of Mercy and reared them with the energy of the Sun of Truth.

Then there remains no doubt that this heavenly Farmer (Gardener) is kind to all these plants. This truth cannot be denied. It is shining like unto the sun. This is the divine policy and unquestionably it is greater than the human policy. We must follow the divine policy.

The point is this that some people are sick; some are immature and ignorant, and some without any knowledge of their beginning and of their end. The sick should be cured; the immature should be brought to maturity, and the ignorant should be taught to become wise and not that enmity should be exercised toward them.

Similarly describe fully in that journal the other teachings which thou art acquainted with, one by one, a detailed description. For example, that religion must be the cause of concord; that it should agree with science and reason; that it must be a factor of progress to the world of humanity, that it should be free from blind imitations. Another example is that all prejudices are destructive to the foundation of the world of humanity.

Other examples are: The equality of men and women; the universalization of knowledge (education); the creation of one universal language; justice and righteousness; economic facilities among mankind; the need of the world of humanity of the breaths of the Holy Spirit; the establishment of universal peace; the institution of the Supreme Court of Arbitration; the freedom and equality of all mankind; the brotherhood of the world of humanity, and other teachings like these which are mentioned in the Tablets of God. Describe all these teachings fully in the most eloquent and sweetest terms expressive of the most charming realities and insert them in the journal.

It is my hope that thou together with Miss Alexander will be confirmed to accomplish this service. Miss Alexander is the herald of Truth in Japan. Rest assured that she will be confirmed and assisted.

(December 9, 1920. Translated by Azizullah Bahadur)

[Tablet of December 17, 1919]

O thou wooer of Reality! (Mr. Tomonaga Noto¹⁸)

Thy letter was received. Praise be to God, the sight of thy mind has been opened and thou hast acquired the power of spiritual healing. Thou hast sought and found the Truth and hast been aware of Heavenly Mysteries.

The teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh like unto the rays of the sun illumined the East as well

as the West, vivify the dead and unite the various religions. They prove the Oneness of God, for they gather all communities of the world under the pavilion of the oneness of the world of mankind.

Consider how stirred the world is and in what a commotion are the people of the world. Heavenly Power is needed to do away with this stir and agitation. Otherwise, this great Cause will not be realized through human power. Human power, no matter how strong it may be, it illumines like unto an ignited lamp a limited space and trains a small number of souls. It is the sun which illumines all regions, and it is the Heavenly Power which gathers around a single spot all the sects and communities. Strive therefore, that thou mayest serve this remarkable Power and attain unto profitable and far reaching results.

(December 17, 1919)

[Tablet of February 1920]

O ye the honored souls! (a group of men students)

Your letter of congratulation arrived and imparted joy, because its contents indicated that the Sun of Reality hath begun Its radiation upon those regions. It is my hope that that region may get illumination and the Heavenly Dawn may break forth. This will be attained through the power of Faith in the Covenant.

Therefore we are expecting that every one of those friends may in that country become like a brilliant and luminous candle, and so the Light of Guidance may emanate upon the hearts.

How often it hath happened that one blessed soul hath proved to become the cause of guidance unto a continent. I also congratulate you on (the advent of) this Blessed Day.

(February 1920. Translated by Azizullah Bahadur)

[Tablet of August 10, 1920]

O thou beloved maid-servant of God (Miss Haruko Mori)¹⁹

Praise be unto God, that through the guidance of Miss Alexander thou couldst hear the Call of God. Then strive as far as thou art able to spread the Divine Teachings, so that thou mayest become distinguished with this great Bestowal among the women of the world.

(August 10, 1920. Translated by Azizullah Bahadur)

[Tablet of August 10, 1920]

O thou who art a favored servant at the Threshold of the Most High! (Mr. Kenjiro Ono²⁰)

Thy letter was received. Verily, verily hast thou suffered in thy life time. Do not thou be grieved because of the loss of thy sight. Praise be unto God, that thy insight is keen. Do not thou lament over thy poverty, for the Treasury of the Kingdom is thine. Do not thou worry that thou couldst not study in the material schools, because thou hast received lessons in the Verses of the Oneness (of God) in the Divine University.

Offer thou thanks to God that thou couldst finally attain to Truth. Then be thou firm and steadfast so that the doors of the most Great Bestowals may be opened unto thy face. The greatest of all questions is steadfastness and firmness. Every tree which is firmly rooted grows.

(August 10, 1920. Translated by Azizullah Bahadur)

[Tablet of December 8, 1920]

O thou heavenly person! (Mr. Kenjiro Ono)

Praise be unto God, that having rent asunder the veils and having seen the rays of the Sun of Reality, thou didst turn thine attention to the Center of the Covenant.

Rest thou assured that thou wilt be confirmed to give sight to the blind and hearing power to the deaf and even thou wilt give life to the dead!

(December 8, 1920. Translated by Azizullah Bahadur)

[Tablet of August 19, 1920]

O ye daughters of the Kingdom! (Six school girls; Otoe Murakami, Kimiko Hagiwara, Kazu Fukusawa, Haruko Mori, Yuri Takao, and Yuri Mochizuki)

Your congratulation on the Feast has been received. Its perusal imparted joy and happiness. Through the Bounties of the Supreme Lord do I hope that these daughters of the Kingdom will, day by day, progress so that they may, like unto a magnet, attract the Divine confirmations. I am always supplicating for you that ye may attain to the Most Great Bestowal and act and behave according to the Teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh.

(August 19, 1920. Translated by Azizullah Bahadur)

[Tablet of August 19, 1920]

O seekers for the Truth! (revealed to nine persons, eight of whom were young men students)

Praise God that you have heard the celestial Call, seen the ray of the Sun of Truth, followed the right Direction and reached the longed-for Home!

You have sent me your congratulations for the Feast: I was very much gratified at your feelings and at the fact that such a tie exists now between East and West, such friendship between different nations!

It is evident that, through your efforts, the inhabitants of those regions are now inhaling the fragrances of Musk from the Garden of the Kingdom. In Japan the divine proclamation will be heard as a formidable explosion, so that those who are ready will become uplifted and illumined by the Light of the Sun of Truth.

(August 19, 1920)

[Tablet of January 11, 1921]

O ye daughters of the Kingdom! (the previously mentioned six school girls)

The reflection of your forms (photograph) arrived in this Holy Land. Praise be unto God, these figures are luminous. From your eyes the light of the love of God is emanating. This picture has been taken while ye have been in the utmost of joy and happiness. Praise ye God, that in this age of youth ye have entered the Kingdom of God! Ye have become enlightened. Ye have become celestial, divine and heavenly.

Through the graces of His Holiness, Bahá'u'lláh—may my life be sacrificed for His friends—I cherish the hope that ye will, day by day, progress more and more in the Kingdom of God; that each one of you will shine like unto a brilliant star from the horizon of the supreme Guidance, thus proving to be the cause of guidance unto others, giving sight unto their eyes, hearing power unto their ears and quickening unto their hearts.

(January 11, 1921. Translated by Azizullah Bahadur)

[Tablet of September 9, 1920]

O thou blessed soul! (Miss Mikae Komatsu, who in later years was known as Mrs. Tadako Arakawa)

Thy letter was received. It was not a letter. It was a scent bag of the musk-deer from which the fragrance of the love of God was perceived. After I read it, I turned to the Kingdom of the Merciful and supplicated so that thy soul may become purified; that thy heart may be converted into a brasier of the fire of the love of God; that in every moment thou mayest find the Light of Truth radiating; that thou mayest kindle the lamp of Guidance; that thou mayest seek heavenly joy and happiness, and mayest consecrate thy life to the service of the Heavenly Father.

I feel the utmost kindness toward thee. And I pray, through the Infinite Bounties, for a spiritual dynamic force and a heavenly blessing unto thee. Convey to all the friends my greetings and love.

(September 9, 1920. Translated by Azizullah Bahadur)

[Tablet of October 15, 1920]

O thou who art seeking the Truth! (Mr. Sensui Saiki)

Thy letter has been received. Thou hast taken much pain in inventing the new Japanese writing. Thou hast rendered a service to the world of humanity—May God reward thee!

Today, however, there exist many kinds of writing. That which is most necessary and is assisted by divine confirmations is the propagation of the heavenly Call. It is this which energizes the world of existence. It is this which bestoweth life unto the dead souls, which refresheth the dried tree and ornamenteth it with leaves, blossoms and fruits. Concentrate all thine energy in this that thou mayest make heavenly progress, that thou mayest attain to the light of the Sun of Reality, that thou mayest become the cause that the dead body of Japan may attain to heavenly life, may be endowed with solar illumination and like unto the moon and star it may shine forth.

This is important! Convey on my behalf the warmest Abhá greetings to all the friends one by one.

(October 15, 1920. Translated by Azizullah Bahadur)

[Tablet of June 1, 1921]

O thou who art devoted to Truth! (Mr. Kenkichi Futakami)

In this divine garden, thousands of fresh and verdant trees have raised their tops to the Supreme Apex and on every tree there are thousands of nests. Therefore, for thee, who art a bird of high flight, a nest has been prepared. Then soar, that thou mayest attain to that nest. This is a divine nest in the Heavenly Kingdom. Every bird that attained to this nest learned a melody and also taught the birds of the meadows the divine harmony which moves and enraptures the East and the West. Do thou therefore strive with all thy heart and soul that thou mayest abide in this nest and thrive till eternity.

(June 1, 1921. Translated by Azizullah Bahadur)

[Photograph with the following caption:]

The first photo of a Bahá'í meeting taken in Japan. Miss Alexander is in the back row; Miss Martha Root is in front. Mr. Fukuta, the only other Bahá'í in the group is in the front left. Behind Mr. Fukuta is Miss Ichi Kamichika who helped Miss Alexander translate articles. Many years later she became prominent as one of the first women elected to the Japanese Diet (parliament). Taken in July 1915.

[Tablet of October 7, 1921]

O thou son of the Kingdom! (Mr. Kenkichi Futakami)

Thy letter has been received. The contents were indicative of spiritual susceptibilities. I pray God that thou mayest rise above worldly attachments and restricted thought to the realm of the Kingdom; that thou mayest become enlightened and spiritual, be completely released from the darkness of the material world, like unto the bud and rose mayest diffuse fragrances in the Heavenly Rose-Garden, be confirmed by the breath of the Holy Spirit and assisted by the Hosts of the Supreme Concourse. By deeds and words awaken thou the unaware souls and confer upon them the spirit of Life.

(October 7, 1921)

[Tablet of November 5, 1921]

The following Tablet was addressed to the "new friends in Korea", fifteen names being mentioned in addition to Miss Alexander's: Sang Sun Oh, U.U. Cuan, Kinng S. Ko, Chy Rin, Inki Hong, Pyung C. Lee, Soon Y. Lee, Wen H. Ma, Young N. Pyeur, Chan Young Kim, Z.Y. Roe, S. Wo Kloon, S.Y. Zee, Ze Kyung Sang, S.T. Suh. O ye heavenly sons!

Your heartfelt and sincere greetings have reached 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ears and your message gave great spiritual pleasure.

Praise be to God, that celestial light guided and led you to the Sun of Reality, bestowed everlasting life and granted heavenly illumination. Ye are like seedlings which have been planted by the hand of Bestowal in His Spiritual Rose-Garden. It is my hope that through the warmth of the Sun of Reality, the pouring down of the showers of mercy and the wafting of the breezes of bestowal, ye may progress day by day, so that each one may become a blessed tree, full of leaves and flowers and throw your shade over great multitudes.

The Graces of the Kingdom of Abhá are the rays of the Sun of Reality. It illumines the earth and heaven, makes the star a shining moon, turns the speck into a huge mountain, bestows strength to the weak, gives everlasting healing to the sick, grants heavenly treasures to the poor, confirms the oppressed ones to everlasting glory and turns the people of darkness to those of light.

O heavenly friends, the doors of heaven have been opened, the lights of God have shone forth and the heavenly Call has been raised. Summon ye all humanity to listen to this Heavenly Call and invite them to the Celestial World, so that they may find a new spirit and attain to a new life. In all conditions my heart and spirit are with you.

(November 5, 1921)

6: 'Abdu'l-Bahá Speaks to a Japanese Audience

Mr. Yamamoto, the first Japanese Bahá'í, arranged for 'Abdu'l-Bahá to speak at the Japanese Independent Church, in Oakland, California. It was the only talk given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to a Japanese audience. It was translated from Persian into English and then into Japanese.

Talk by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the Japanese Independent Church, Oakland, California, October 1912

It is a great happiness to be here this evening, especially for the reason that the members of this Association have come from the region of the Orient. For a long time I have entertained a desire to meet some of the Japanese friends. That nation has achieved extraordinary progress in a short space of time; a progress and development which have astonished the world. Inasmuch as they have advanced in material civilization they must assuredly possess the capacity for spiritual development. For this reason I have an excessive longing to meet them. Praise be to God! this pleasure is now afforded me, for here in this city I am face to face with a revered group of the Japanese. According to report the people of the Japanese nation are not prejudiced. They investigate reality. Wherever they find truth they prove to be its lovers. They are not attached tenaciously to blind imitations of ancient beliefs and dogmas. Therefore it is my great desire to discourse with them upon a subject in order that the unity and blending together of the nations of the east and the nations of the west may be furthered and accomplished. In this way religious, racial and political prejudice, particularly bias and sectarianism will be dispelled amongst men. Any kind of prejudice is destructive to the body-politic.

When we review history from the beginning of human existence to the present age in which we live, it is evident all war and conflict, bloodshed and battle, every form of sedition has been due to some form of prejudice, whether religious, racial or national, to partisan bias and selfish prejudice of some sort. Even today we witness an upheaval in the Balkans, a war of religious prejudice. Some years ago when I was living in Roumelia, war broke out among the religious peoples. There was no attitude of justice or equity whatever amongst them. They pillaged the properties of each other, burning each other's homes and houses, slaughtering men, women and children, imagining that such warfare and bloodshed was the means of drawing near to God. This clearly proved that prejudice is a destroyer of the foundations of the world of humanity whereas religion was meant to be the cause of fellowship and agreement.

Religion must be the cause of love. Religion must be the cause of justice, for the wisdom of the Manifestations of God is directed toward the establishing of the bond of a love which is indissoluble. The bonds which hold together the body-politic are not sufficient. These bonds may be mentioned; for instance the bond of patriotism. This is evidently not a sufficient bond, for how often it happens that people of the same nation wage civil war amongst themselves. The bond of fellowship may be racial but history proves this is not sufficiently strong, for tremendous wars have broken out between peoples of the same racial lineage. Again the bond holding men together may be political. How often it happens that the diplomacy of nations makes a treaty of peace one day and on the morrow a declaration of war! It is historically evident and manifest that these bonds are not self-sufficient.

The real bond of integrity is religious in character, for religion indicates the oneness of the world of humanity. Religion serves the world of morality. Religion purifies the hearts. Religion impels men to achieve praiseworthy deeds. Religion becomes the cause of love in human hearts, for religion is a divine foundation, the foundation ever conducive to life. The teachings of God are the source of illumination to the people of the world. Religion is ever constructive not destructive.

The foundation of all the divine religions is one. All are based upon reality. Reality does not admit plurality, yet amongst mankind there have arisen differences concerning the Manifestations of God. Some have been Zoroastrians, some are Buddhists, some Jews, Christians, Muhammadans and so on. This has become a source of divergence whereas the teachings of the holy souls who founded the divine religions are one in essence and reality. All these have served the world of humanity. All have summoned souls to peace and accord. All have proclaimed the virtues of humanity. All have guided souls to the attainment of perfections but among the nations certain imitations of ancestral forms of worship have arisen. These imitations are not the foundation and essence of the divine religions. Inasmuch as they differ from the reality and the essential teachings of the Manifestations of God dissensions have arisen and prejudice has developed.

Religious prejudice thus becomes the cause of warfare and battle.

If we abandon these time-worn blind imitations and investigate reality all of us will be unified. No discord will remain; antagonism will disappear. All will associate in fellowship. All will enjoy the cordial bonds of friendship. The world of creation will then attain composure. The dark and gloomy clouds of blind imitations and dogmatic variances will be scattered and dispelled; the Sun of Reality will shine most gloriously.

Verily we should consider the divine prophets as the intermediaries, but mankind has made use of them as causes of dissension and pretexts for warfare and strife. In reality they were the intermediaries of love and reconciliation. If they were not sources of love and fellowship amongst men, then undoubtedly they were not true, for the divine wisdom and purpose in sending the prophets was the manifestation of love in human hearts. Therefore we must investigate reality. First of all let us determine whether these prophets were valid or not by using rational proofs and shining arguments, not simply quoting traditional evidences, because traditions are divergent and the source of dissension.

Among the holy, divine Manifestations of God was His Holiness Moses. The sending of prophets has ever been for the training of humanity. They are the first educators and trainers. If Moses has developed the body-politic, there is no doubt that he was a true teacher and educator. This will be proof and evidence that he was a prophet. We shall consider how His Holiness was sent to despair, in the lowest degree of ignorance, and heedlessness, degraded and under conditions of bondage. His Holiness Moses rescued these degraded people of Israel from that state of bondage. He raised them from that condition of ignorance, saved them from barbarism and led them into the Holy Land. He educated them, endowed them with sagacious instincts, made them worthy and honorable. He civilized them, raised them to a higher plane of existence until they were enabled to establish a national sovereignty, the great kingdom of Solomon. This proves that His Holiness Moses was a teacher and an educator. He had neither army nor dominion, neither did he possess wealth. It was only through an idealistic power that he cemented them together proving that he was a prophet of God, an educator and trainer.

Likewise must we set aside prejudice in considering other divine educators, by investigating reality. For instance, let us take His Holiness Christ. He achieved results greater than Moses. He educated the body-politic, trained mighty nations. There is no doubt whatever that such souls were prophets, for the mission of prophethood is education, and these wondrous souls trained and educated mankind.

His Holiness Christ was a unique personage without helper or assistant. Single and solitary he arose to train great and mighty nations; the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Syrians, Chaldeans and Assyrians came under his influence. He was able to bind together many nations, melting them together as it were and pouring them into one mould, changing their enmity into love, war into peace. Under his influence satanic souls became veritable angels, tyrannical rulers became just, the human moral standard was raised. This proves that His Holiness Christ was an educator, a teacher and trainer of nations. If we deny this it is nought but injustice.

Blessed souls whether Moses, Jesus, Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, Confucius, or Muhammad were the cause of the illumination of the world of humanity. How can we deny such irrefutable proof? How can we be blind to such light? How can we dispute the validity of His Holiness Christ? This is injustice. This is a denial of reality. Man must be just. We must set aside bias and prejudice. We must abandon the imitations of ancestors and forefathers. We ourselves must investigate reality and be fair in judgment.

The old nation of Persia denied all these facts, harboring the utmost hatred and enmity toward other religious beliefs besides their own. We have investigated reality and found that these holy souls were all sent of God. All of them have sacrificed life, endured ordeals and tribulations in order that they might educate us. How can such love be forgotten? The light of Christ is evident. The candle of Buddha is shining. The star of Moses is sparkling. The flame ignited by Zoroaster is still burning. How can we deny them? It is injustice. It is a denial of complete evidence. If we forsake imitations all will become united and no differences will remain to separate us.

We entertain no prejudice against Muhammed. Outwardly the Arabian nation was instrumental in overthrowing the Parsee dominion, the sovereignty of Persia. Therefore the old Parsee nation manifested the utmost contempt toward the Arabs. But we deal justly and will never abandon the standard of fairness. The Arabians were in the utmost state of degradation. They were blood-thirsty and barbarous, so savage and degraded that the Arabian father often buried his own daughter alive. Consider, could any barbarian be lower than this? The nation consisted of warring, hostile tribal peoples inhabiting the vast Arabian peninsula, and their business consisted in fighting and pillaging each other, making captive women and children, killing each other. Muhammad appeared among such a people. He educated and unified these barbarous tribes, put an end to their shedding of blood. Through his education they reached such a degree of civilization that they subdued and governed continents and nations. What a great civilization was established in Spain by the Muhammadans! What a marvelous civilization was founded in Morocco by the Moors! What a powerful caliphate or successorship was set up in Baghdad! How much Islam served and furthered the cause of science! Why then should we deny Muhammad? If we deny him we awaken enmity and hatred. By our prejudice we become the cause of war and bloodshed; for prejudice was the cause of the tremendous storm which swept through human

history for thirteen hundred years and still continues. Even now in the Balkans a commotion is apparent, reflecting it.

The Christian people number nearly three hundred millions and the Muhammadans about the same. It is no small task to do away with such numbers. And furthermore why should they be obliterated? For these are all servants of the one God. Let us strive to establish peace between Christians and Muhammadans. Is it not better? What is the benefit of war? What is its fruitage? For thirteen hundred years there has been warfare and hostility. What good result has been forthcoming? Is it not folly? Is God pleased with it? Is His Holiness Christ pleased? Is Muhammad? It is evident that they are not. The prophets have extolled each other to the utmost. His Holiness Muhammad declares Christ to be the Spirit of God. This is an explicit text of the Qur'an. He declares Christ to be the Word of God. He has eulogized the disciples of Christ to the utmost. He has bestowed upon Her Grace Mary, the Mother of Christ, the highest praise. Likewise His Holiness Christ has extolled Moses. He spread broadcast the old testament, the Torah, and caused the name of Moses to reach unto the east and the west. The purpose is this:—that the prophets themselves have manifested the utmost love toward each other but the nations who believe and follow them are hostile and antagonistic among themselves.

The world was in this condition of darkness when His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh appeared upon the Persian horizon. He hoisted the banner of the oneness of the world of humanity. He proclaimed international peace. He admonished the Persian nation to investigate reality, announced that religion must be the cause of unity and love, that it must be the means of binding hearts together, the cause of life and illumination. If religion becomes the cause of enmity and bloodshed, then irreligion is to be preferred, for religion is the remedy for every ailment, and if a remedy should become the cause of ailment and difficulty, it is better to abandon it. Today in Persia you will see Muhammadans, Christians, Zoroastrians, Buddhists assembled together in the same meeting, living in accordance with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, manifesting utmost love and accord. Rancor, hatred, antagonism and violence have disappeared; they live as one family.

And ye, who are the people of the Orient—the Orient which has ever been the dawning-point of lights—from whence the Sun of Reality has ever shone forth casting its effulgence upon the West—ye therefore must become the manifestations of lights. Ye must become brilliant lamps. Ye must shine as stars radiating the light of love toward all mankind. May you be the cause of love amongst the nations. Thus may the world become witness that the Orient has ever been the dawning-point of illumination, the source of love and reconciliation. Make peace with all the world. Love everybody; serve everybody. All are the servants of God. God has created all. He provideth for all. He is kind to all. Therefore must we be kind to all.

I am greatly pleased with this meeting. I am joyous and happy, for here in these western regions I find Orientals seeking education, and who are free from prejudice. May God assist you!

[Photograph with the following caption:]

'Abdu'l-Bahá in Oakland, California, 1912, at the home of Mrs. Helen Goodall, an early California Bahá'í. Mr. Yamamoto, holding one of his sons, can be seen in the front right. Mr. Fujita is standing between trees at the top left. It was during those days that Mr. Yamamoto arranged for 'Abdu'l-Bahá to speak before the Japanese Independent Church in Oakland.

7: Excerpt from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O thou who art firm in the Covenant!²¹

The International Congress of Religions was organized this year (1906) in the capital of Japan. Many souls hastened to that empire from different parts of the world, in order that they might talk of and discuss the principles of their own religions, each one longing to convert that assembly to his own religion and establish the validity of his own particular belief. This congress had under discussion the politics of the religions. In truth, it is a political affair and not the attraction of the heart, faith, advancement toward God nor enkindlement with the fire of the love of God. This congress will not produce a lasting effect, for it is essentially politico-religious. What is effective and conducive to the penetration of the Word of God and the attraction of hearts is the fragrances of holiness and the divine glad-tidings, which the members of the congress do not in the least comprehend.

Consequently, if the believers of God go to that country—not to the congress—and through the power of the Word of God, the breath of the Holy Spirit, the reading of the verses of Oneness and associating with the individual inhabitants of that kingdom, undoubtedly untold and tremendous results will be realized and the sweet fragrance of the rose-garden of mysteries will perfume the nostrils of the people of those regions. It is significantly useful if some of the friends of God put

forth an effort and hasten from America to those parts (Japan)...

(1906)

8: 'Abdu'l-Bahá Meets President Naruse of Japan Women's College By Miss Agnes B. Alexander

In the spring of 1912, in Tokyo, Viscount Shibusawa, an honored banker and financier, together with President Jinzo Naruse, the founder of the first Women's College in Japan, and Dr. Masaharu Anesaki of the Imperial University formed a nucleus of a movement called "Concordia". Its object was to try to find a common ground on which all nations could harmonize. President Naruse then undertook a journey around the world in the interest of the movement. He carried with him an autograph book in which he collected expressions of good-will from prominent people in the different countries he visited. On his return to Japan these were translated into Japanese and published.

In London in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary recorded the following: "A distinguished Japanese, the president of the Women's University in Tokyo, who has been in the United States for many months, came to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and showed Him an article on the Concordia movement in Japan which appeared in the Oriental Review. 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke to him about the principles of the Bahá'í Cause and how we are in need of Divine Power to put these principles into practice. He said, 'Just as the sun is the source of all light in the solar system, so today Bahá'u'lláh is the Center of unity of the human race and of the peace of the world.' 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote a beautiful prayer in the autograph book and earnestly pleaded with him to go back to Japan and spread these lofty ideals."

The prayer follows: "O God! The darkness of contention, strife and warfare between the religions, the nations and peoples has beclouded the horizon of Reality and hidden the heaven of Truth. The world is in need of the light of Guidance. Therefore, O God, confer Thy favor, so that the Sun of Reality may illumine the East and the West."

(December 30, 1912. Translated by Ahmad Sohrab)

9: Excerpt from The Chosen Highway by Lady Blomfield, Concerning 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Japanese Diplomat (1912]

The Japanese Ambassador to a European capital (Viscount Arakawa—Madrid²²) was staying at the Hotel d'Jéna. This gentleman and his wife had been told of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence in Paris, and the latter was anxious to have the privilege of meeting Him.

"I am very sad," said Her Excellency. "I must not go out this evening as my cold is severe, and I leave early in the morning for Spain. If only there were a possibility of seeing Him."

This was told to the Master, Who had just returned after a long, tiring day.

"Tell the lady and her husband that, as she is unable to come to me, I will call upon her."

Accordingly, though the hour was late, through the cold and rain He came, with His smiling courtesy, bringing joy to us all, as we awaited Him in the Tapestry Room of the Hotel d'Jéna.

'Abdu'l-Bahá talked with the Ambassador and his wife of conditions in Japan, of the great international importance of that country, of the vast service to mankind, of the work for the abolition of war, of the need for improving conditions of life for the worker, of the necessity of educating girls and boys equally.

"The religious ideal is the soul of all plans for the good of mankind. Religion must never be used as a tool by party politicians. God's politics are mighty, man's politics are feeble."

Speaking of religion and science, the two great wings with which the bird of human kind is able to soar, He said: "Scientific discoveries have increased material civilization. There is in existence a stupendous force, as yet, happily undiscovered by man. Let us supplicate God, the Beloved, that

this force be not discovered by science until spiritual civilization shall dominate the human mind. In the hands of men of lower nature, this power would be able to destroy the whole earth.”

PART II: Letters of Shoghi Effendi and Communications From the Universal House of Justice

10: Letters and Cables to Miss Agnes B. Alexander, 1923–1957

“The beloved Guardian continually sent reinforcements to me in his precious letters which were the joy and strength of my heart,” Miss Alexander wrote.

Aside from her own inner conviction, the main source of positive guidance and direction, during her early years in the Orient were Shoghi Effendi’s letters.

Of the first personal letter she received from the Guardian (December 2, 1923) she wrote, “The words penned by his hand at the end of the letter so affected me that for several days my heart was filled with joy and inspiration, and a realization came to me of the power with which God had endowed him.”

Following are excerpts from some of the many letters written to Miss Alexander by the Guardian, or on his behalf, which give insights, not only into her role as a “distinguished pioneer”, but also into her relationship with the Japanese, among whom she lived for so many years and whom she loved so dearly.

My dear sister in God,

Your letter to our very dear Shoghi Effendi was most encouraging and created in him new hopes for the spread of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s great and noble Message after the painful calamity in Japan²³. It was indeed a miracle that amid a city all shaken to pieces and burned to ashes by the wild flames, the Lord should have kept you so safe and unscathed. We can never doubt that this is a direct proof of the mighty task which the Lord has wanted you to take up and fulfill in that far away East. Shoghi Effendi has always looked forward with great expectations at the progress of the Cause in Japan to which he attaches very great importance.

The Japanese are really progressive people and such vital teachings which comprise the principles of the Bahá’í religion are sure to seize their attention and arouse a deep interest in them. Your presence in Japan was always a means of comfort to Shoghi Effendi’s heart because he fully realized the zeal and ardour with which you had taken up your work there and although Japan might now miss you, he is sure that wherever you are you will strive to your utmost in spreading far and near this Message of Peace to humanity. Furthermore he hopes that you will not give up altogether your interest in that promising country, but as long as you are away you will keep your tender plants all fresh and green with stimulating messages to them. These are Shoghi Effendi’s earnest hopes...

(signed by Soheil Afnan)

(in the Guardian’s handwriting)

With loving greetings and prayers for the success of my dearly-loved sister, Miss A. Alexander.

Shoghi

(December 2, 1923)

[Letter of January 27, 1924]

In October 1923 Miss Alexander and her sister went to Beijing, stopping on their way in Seoul, Korea. In China they joined Miss Martha Root and had an exceedingly fruitful time. After about a three month visit Miss Alexander left to go to her home in Hawaii. After she reached Hawaii she received a letter from the Guardian.

My dear Bahá'í sister,

Your letter to Shoghi Effendi was very gladly received and he was most delighted to hear of your activities in the wonderful country of China... It is very unfortunate that you are forced to leave for the time being your work in (Japan) but Shoghi Effendi earnestly hopes that you will soon return and take up your blessed task.

(signed by Soheil Afnan)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

My dear and esteemed Bahá'í sister,

Your glorious services in those remote regions of the earth are never to be forgotten. I ever pray on your behalf and wish you to remember the sacred interests of the Cause in far-away Japan as you are that radiant herald who has raised the Call of Salvation in its very heart and to whom it owes a great debt of gratitude. Fujita is with us happy, active, and extremely helpful. His presence is such a help and support to me in my work. I never, never forget you.

Shoghi

(January 27, 1924)

[Letter of July 16, 1927]

My dear Bahá'í sister,

Our dear Guardian has instructed me to acknowledge the receipt of your welcomed letter dated June 3, 1927. He is delighted to hear of your intended visit to Japan where he hopes and prays you will receive your full share of confirmations from the Abhá Kingdom.

He cherishes great hopes for your future contributions to the progress of the Cause in that far away and promising country. He wishes you to write to him frequently of the progress of your activities and of those whom you will interest in the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

He would specially request you to prolong your stay in Japan as the soil is exceedingly fertile and the workers are so few in number. The hosts of the Supreme Concourse will surely aid you and assist you in your endeavor to spread the Faith which the world needs so vitally today.

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Dear and precious sister:

Do not feel disheartened if you meet at first with trials and obstacles in His Path. I will pray for their removal and will supplicate for you Divine Guidance and strength. Your reward is indeed great and glorious in the world to come for all your endeavors and exemplary services to the sacred Threshold.

Shoghi

(July 16, 1927)

[Letter of October 12, 1927]

My dear and precious co-worker:

I cannot exaggerate the importance, nay the urgent necessity of your return to Japan. Your place there is vacant, and the opportunities are varied and brilliant. The few friends there have to be nursed and assisted to renew their activity and consolidate their work. I will pray that you will be guided by our dear Master who loved you so dearly and wanted you so keenly to train and guide the rising generation in Japan into the light of this Divine Revelation.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(October 12, 1927)

[Letter of October 22, 1927]

My dear and precious co-worker:

Though immersed in an ocean of activities and cares, I find always the time to think of you and express to you in writing my sentiments of love and appreciation of all you are doing for our beloved Cause. I trust the way to Japan may open soon, and that you may resume in that important field, the work so dear to your heart.

Your true brother, Shoghi

Please assure dear Mrs. Augur of my tenderest brotherly sympathy in her affliction.²⁴ The services of her dear husband are engraved upon my heart. I will pray for him from the bottom of my heart at the Beloved's Shrine.

Shoghi

(October 22, 1927)

[Letter of October 31, 1927]

My dear and precious sister:

I am glad that the date of your voyage to Japan is at last settled and I hope and trust that you will be enabled to consolidate the great work you have initiated in Japan. My prayers will accompany you wherever you go, and I ask you to assure the loved ones in Japan of my continued prayers for their progress and spiritual advancement.

Shoghi

(October 31, 1927)

[Letter of December 30, 1927]

My dear co-worker:

What a relief to learn that you are at last on your way to Japan where I trust and pray you may witness the growth of the Cause so dear to our hearts. I will pray that your efforts may meet with the fullest success and that you may be enabled to establish a powerful centre in the heart of that promising country.

Shoghi

(December 30, 1927)

[Letter of March 13, 1928]

My dear and precious co-worker:

I rejoice to learn of the resumption of your most valuable and pioneer work in Japan, and I wish to assure you again and in person of my continued and fervent prayers at the Holy Shrines for your success in spreading and consolidating the Cause in that land. I urge you to make a special effort to organize the believers there into a local Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly as a nucleus round which will gather and flourish the future Bahá'í community in Japan. I trust that the Beloved may guide your steps and bless your efforts in this connection. Awaiting eagerly your good news.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(March 13, 1928)

[Letter of March 29, 1928]

My dear Bahá'í sister,

Our Guardian has received with extreme pleasure your letter of February nineteenth from Tokyo.

He is so glad to know that you are finally there and actively busy in a work to which he pays the greatest importance. Being pioneer work it is bound to be slow, but he hopes that it will soon pass beyond the pioneer stage and that Bahá'í Assemblies and groups composed of full fledged and confirmed Bahá'ís will replace your isolated individuals with whom you now communicate.

(signed by Soheil Afnan)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

My dear co-worker:

Please assure the dear friends in Tokyo of my brotherly affection, and sincere and continued prayers for the success of their efforts in the service of our beloved Cause. May the Beloved aid you to assist them and guide them in their task, and strengthen you in your efforts to consolidate the work that has been started in that land.

Your well-wisher, Shoghi

(March 29, 1928)

[Letter of May 20, 1928]

He (the Guardian) was very pleased to receive the encouraging news that (your letter) contained and to learn that an article had already appeared on the subject of the Cause in the press. Perhaps you will make an effort that similar articles may appear in other papers so as to attract the attention of the reading and thinking public. Of course your ultimate goal, Shoghi Effendi is sure, is nothing less than the establishment of a capable, devoted and progressive Bahá'í center there.

(signed by Soheil Afnan)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

My dear and valued Bahá'í sister:

I wish to assure you in person of my eagerness to hear from you regularly, frequently and in detail, of my continued prayers for you, and of my sense of pride and satisfaction in view of your devoted and pioneer services in that promising country. Though trials, tests, anxieties and cares beset your path, yet you should never falter in your faith and hope that eventually, through you and those who after you will tread your path, the sovereignty of Bahá'u'lláh will be firmly established in that land and your heart's desire will in the end be fulfilled.

Your true and affectionate brother, Shoghi

(May 20, 1928)

[Letter of November 14, 1928]

My dear and precious co-worker:

It always gives him (the Guardian) great pleasure to hear of the progress of the Cause in distant lands and he prays for those who are undertaking the task with great zeal and unfailing sacrifice. The activities of such devoted souls will surely leave ever-lasting traces on the history of man. The pioneer work is always the most difficult and entails the greatest sacrifice. Be thankful to God for having chosen you to undertake such a task. The Master always looked to the Eastern countries as a ready field of service and promised a great harvest to one who would sow the seed.

(signed by Soheil Afnan)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

My dear and precious co-worker:

Your letter has served to reveal once again the undying spirit of devotion that animates you in the service of the Cause. My prayers will be offered again for you at His Holy Shrine that you may be assisted to establish permanently a Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly in that land, and help that centre to get in close and constant touch with Assemblies both in the East and West.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(November 14, 1928)

[Letter of December 21, 1928]

My dear and valued co-worker:

Your letters have gladdened my heart and fortified me in my task. I will continue to supplicate for you at His Shrine, that He may graciously assist you to make of those who are merely interested, active supporters of the Faith, recognizing fully the significance and station of Bahá'u'lláh, and who will form a nucleus of believers who will carry on the work, loyally and effectively after you and in your absence. This is my fervent prayer for you.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(December 21, 1928)

[Letter of April 19, 1929]

Your perseverance and constancy in the service of the Cause in Japan, your effort to sow the seed among the educated and enlightened people and at the same time to carry the comforting and inspiring teachings of the Faith to the poor and blind, all these are the causes of deep satisfaction and pleasure to the heart of the Guardian.

(signed by Soheil Afnan)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

With the assurance of my keen appreciation of your devoted and constant efforts and of my fervent and continued prayers in your behalf at the Holy Shrines.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(April 19, 1929)

[Letter of January 5, 1930]

He (the Guardian) hopes that you will leave a wonderful group of Bahá'ís in that land. Once they come to appreciate the futility of mere material progress and come to desire a spiritual impetus they will see that the source of all inspiration in this day is Bahá'u'lláh and His teachings.

(January 5, 1930)

[Letter of April 18, 1930]

My dear co-worker:

Your separate messages have rejoiced my heart. I will pray for each one of you that the Beloved may bless you, guide you and strengthen you to render notable services to the cause of world brotherhood and peace. I deeply value your expressed sentiments and reciprocate your expressions of brotherly love.

Praying for your spiritual advancement,
Shoghi

(April 18, 1930)

[Letter of October 8, 1931]

He (the Guardian) sincerely hopes that the translation of Dr. Esslemont's book will proceed at a rapid pace, because no real advance can be made in the teaching work without proper literature, and this book is undoubtedly the most comprehensive exposition of the Teachings yet written. The language should, however, be worthy of the theme otherwise it would not make the necessary appeal to the educated classes.

Shoghi Effendi was very pleased to hear that Keith (Ransom-Kehler) has achieved some success in Japan. The explicit promise of Bahá'u'lláh is that God's spirit will assist all those who, with a sincere and detached heart, arise to spread the teachings. There is no reason for astonishment therefore if the teachers of the Cause find success in their work. May God's spirit continue to sustain them.

(signed by Ruhi Afnan)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Dear and valued co-worker:

I am eagerly awaiting the news of the publication in Japanese of that prized book which Dr. Esslemont has so wonderfully laboured to produce. When received it will adorn the newly-restored mansion of Bahá'u'lláh adjoining His Shrine at Bahji. May the Beloved sustain and bless your magnificent efforts.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(October 8, 1931)

[Letter of January 25, 1932]

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated December 29, 1931 bearing the sad news of the death of Mr. Susumu Aibara²⁵. It is surely a great loss to have a young man of his ability and standing leave the group. Our sole comfort should be in this that he is at present in a higher spiritual realm enjoying a blissful being far beyond our powers to appreciate. Shoghi Effendi hopes that the members of his family will view his passing in that light and appease their sorrows. Please convey to them all Shoghi Effendi's sympathies.

(January 25, 1932)

[Letter of February 11, 1933]

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to ... inform you of the safe arrival of the one hundred copies of Dr. Esslemont's book that you sent him. The book surely looks beautiful and is fully befitting the message it conveys.

The Guardian hopes that now that this task is completed the friends in Japan will make a stupendous effort to spread it throughout the country and get it to the attention of those seeking souls who are yearning to find some source of spiritual light and help to which they can turn for guidance and salvation.

With such a comprehensive book at hand ready for distribution, the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh should spread in no time. The friends should become conscious of this, and, uniting their efforts, arise in an unprecedented form to spread the Teachings.

(signed by Ruhi Afnan)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Dear and much-prized co-worker:

With feelings of intense delight and gratitude, I have sent, this very afternoon the books you have sent me to the library of the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí. They will be placed by myself side by side with the fourteen different printed versions of "The New Era", and will be a constant reminder of your perseverance, your magnificent efforts, your exemplary devotion to the Cause of God. It is a historic service that you have rendered to the Abhá Threshold. I urge you to send one copy to each of the most important Bahá'í centers in East and West. Its effect, I feel, will be remarkable.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(February 11, 1933)

[Letter of June 8, 1933]

He (the Guardian) has directed me to thank you on his behalf and to assure you of his abiding appreciation of your unforgettable services to the Cause in Japan.

He was very glad to learn that you have decided to leave for Honolulu as he firmly believes that such a visit will give you a chance to rest and will enable you, on your return to Japan, to better serve the Cause. There should always be a limit to self-sacrifice.

(signed by H. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Dear and valued co-worker:

I immensely appreciate your outstanding services in those far-away islands, and I will pray that you may be assisted to resume in the not distant future your manifold and valued activities in the service of our beloved Faith. Your name will forever remain associated with the rise of the Faith and its establishment in Japan, and the record of your incessant and splendid endeavors will shed on its annals a lustre that time can never dim.

Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi

(June 8, 1933)

[Letter of November 1, 1934]

The gratifying news of your projected trip to Japan has particularly strengthened (the Guardian's) hopes for the future expansion of your labours in that country. He trusts that on your return to that land you will find the friends more eager and ready than ever to carry on the teaching work which ever since your departure to the States seems to have been progressing slowly.

The Guardian will fervently pray for the success of your teaching trip, and he hopes that its results will be such as to encourage you to prolong your stay in Japan until a strong, active and well-united community of believers has been duly established. Your patient, sustained and selfless efforts in this connection, he is convinced, are bound to produce satisfactory and abiding results.

(signed by H. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Dearly beloved co-worker:

I wish to add a few words in person in order to reaffirm my deep sense of gratitude to you for all that you have achieved and for your determination to carry on the work that you have so many years so splendidly initiated. I trust and pray that you may be fully guided and assisted to fulfill your heart's dearest wish.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(November 1, 1934)

[Letter of April 17, 1935]

Shoghi Effendi also cherishes bright hopes for your future work in Japan, where, he trusts, you will this time succeed in laying foundations for the establishment of new centers and groups in a not too distant future. He is fervently entreating Bahá'u'lláh to that end, and is confident that through His confirmations and guidance your work will be blessed, enriched and sustained.

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

May the Beloved, whose Cause you have promoted with such unswerving loyalty and devotion, continue to bless your manifold activities, and aid you to consolidate the foundations of His Cause in that promising country.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(April 17, 1935)

[Letter of July 6, 1935]

He (the Guardian) sincerely hopes that this trip to Japan will be quite successful, and that the results achieved will be most encouraging and stimulating to you, and will serve to bring to speedy and successful realization 'Abdu'l-Bahá's deeply cherished hopes concerning the future of the Cause in these far-Eastern countries. The ground, of course, is not yet quite prepared. There is still a tremendous amount of publicity that has to be done before anything solid and enduring can be attained. But the peoples, if not in the large industrial centers, at least in the villages and country, are, as the Master has often remarked, spiritually-minded and eager to absorb a message as sound and as inspiring as that which the Cause offers.

(signed by H. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

May the Beloved of our hearts whose Cause you have served and are still serving with such zeal, devotion and constancy, reward you a thousandfold for your ceaseless services, your high endeavors and historic accomplishments for the furtherance of His glorious Faith.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(July 6, 1935)

[Letter of September 23, 1935]

Regarding Mr. and Mrs. Torii, he (the Guardian) is immensely grieved to learn of the passing away of their son Akira²⁶, and wishes you, therefore, to convey to them his heartfelt condolences and sympathy for this cruel and unexpected loss they have sustained. Will you also assure them of his prayers for the soul of their departed son, that it may develop and receive its full share of Divine blessings in the next world.

The Guardian has been very pleased to learn of Mr. Torii's desire to put the Japanese translation of the "New Era" into Braille for use of his blind friends. He would urge you to encourage him to complete the work as soon as possible, as it may prove of considerable help to the spread of the Teachings throughout Japan.

(signed by H. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Dear and valued co-worker:

Your past and present services are engraved upon my heart. The Beloved is well-pleased with your constancy, your zeal and exemplary devotion. I am proud of the spirit that so powerfully animates you in His service. I will continue to pray for your success from the bottom of my heart. Rest assured and persevere.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(September 23, 1935)

[Letter of November 3, 1935]

Beloved Bahá'í sister,

Shoghi Effendi was very happy to receive your letter of October 2, and wishes me to congratulate you on having succeeded in getting the enclosed article on the Cause published in one of the leading Japanese newspapers. He trusts that this important piece of publicity work will serve to attract the attention of a few competent and spiritually-minded people to the Teachings and thus gradually open the way for the wider penetration of the Message throughout Japan.

(signed by H. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Dear and valued co-worker:

Do not feel discouraged if the work you are doing for His Cause does not bear rich and immediate fruit. The seeds you are so patiently and devotedly sowing will assuredly germinate, and future generations will reap an abundant harvest. The Master is watching over and blessing your historic services. Rest assured.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(November 3, 1935)

[Letter of May 11, 1936]

He (the Guardian) is truly pleased to learn of the many contacts you have succeeded in forming with distinguished people and especially with young Japanese students... (He) feels also deeply appreciative of Dr. Masujima's²⁷ kind offer in presenting his library for the use of the Bahá'ís. He hopes and fervently prays that this eminent friend of the Cause may become one day a confirmed and devoted believer and that through his services the Faith may rapidly spread throughout Japan.

(signed by H. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

May the Beloved bless you and keep you, reward you abundantly for your manifold services, and enable you to extend the scope of your meritorious activities.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(May 11, 1936)

[Letter of November 3, 1936]

Regarding your wish to visit the Holy Shrines, he (the Guardian) fully approves of it and wishes me to extend to you a most hearty welcome.

(signed by H. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Dear and valued co-worker:

Your previous letters of May 21 and June 29 have also reached me, and I deeply appreciate the sentiments they convey. The strike and disturbances in Palestine have at last ceased and the obstacles to your pilgrimage have been removed. I would be so pleased to meet you face to face at this Holy Spot.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(November 3, 1936)

[Letter of November 19, 1936]

The Guardian wishes me to heartily congratulate you for the success of your efforts in connection with the publication of this new (Japanese) Braille edition of "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era", which undoubtedly constitutes a most valuable addition to the literature of the Cause for the blind. I wish to also ask you to transmit the Guardian's grateful appreciation and thanks to Mr. Torii for his painstaking labours for the preparation of this new Braille publication on the Cause.

(signed by H. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Wishing you success from all my heart, your true and grateful brother, Shoghi

(November 19, 1936)

[Letter of January 24, 1937]

On behalf of the Guardian ... (I) wish to assure you again of his abiding appreciation of the splendid activities in which you are so laboriously and so devotedly engaged for the spread and establishment of the Cause in Japan. Do not feel discouraged at the meagerness of the results you now obtain. The Master's promises regarding the share you are destined to contribute towards the spread of the Faith in the Far East will sooner or later be completely realized. No matter how dark the present may appear, you should feel nevertheless confident that the distant future is immeasurably bright. Strive, therefore, with a joyful radiant and confident heart to hasten the fulfillment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's glorious promises. Your reward is unimaginably great, and the success that awaits your labours certain.

Regarding your visit to Fujita's mother²⁸, the Guardian feels rejoiced and thankful for all the kindness and assistance you have so lovingly extended to her, and would certainly approve of your wish to continue helping her in every way you can...

(signed by H. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

With the assurance of my deepfelt and abiding appreciation of your wholehearted and touching response to my request²⁹, and wishing you success and happiness from the depths of my heart.

Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi

(January 24, 1937)

[Letter of June 3, 1946]

Miss Alexander left Japan in 1937. She made her pilgrimage to Haifa and rejoiced in being in the presence of the Guardian. After that she traveled to various places and ended up in her ancestral home in Hawaii. At the Guardian's urging she returned to Japan in 1950. Below are some of the letters from the Guardian sent to her home in Hawaii and then to Japan upon her return.

He (the Guardian) was ... glad to know you have put the soldier Bahá'ís in Korea and Japan in contact with the friends in those places, and hopes and prays this will lead to the rebirth of the Cause out there.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

May the Beloved bless, sustain, and guide you, at all times and under all conditions, aid you to add fresh laurels to the crown you have won in the service of His Faith, and fulfill your heart's desire for its promotion.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(June 3, 1946)

[Letter of July 23, 1946]

It is wonderful to know the Japanese believers are alive and devoted and he (the Guardian) hopes you will do all you can to assist them and stimulate their activities.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(July 23, 1946)

[Letter of June 28, 1947]

He (the Guardian) was very happy indeed to receive the good news of the devotion of the Japanese friends to the Faith, and he feels that the greatest service you can render the Cause is to do everything in your power to encourage and help them. Your letters, the news you give them, and the books you may be able gradually to forward will teach them and keep them up to date in the development of the Cause and its activities.

He does not feel a so-called Bahá'í School is a wise undertaking for Mr. I.; the great need at present is to teach, and he hopes in your letters you will impress this upon him, and the other Bahá'ís there and assure them of his loving prayers on their behalf.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(June 28, 1947)

[Letter of May 31, 1949]

He (the Guardian) thinks it would be excellent if you could return to Japan and meet with your old co-workers there, and assist the new Bahá'ís in their work. Your long and deep association with this country, which at last has begun to put forth flowers in the Bahá'í world community, would be befittingly crowned by this service, and he hopes the way will open for you to go there as soon as possible.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(May 31, 1949)

[Letter of October 6, 1950]

He (the Guardian) is so happy to have you at last in Japan, and feels your presence there will be of great help and inspiration to the Japanese friends.

They seem dear and devoted souls, and he rejoices to see that, after all these years, and the long period of patient toil you spent there in the past, the tree of the Faith has struck deep roots, and the fruits are beginning to appear at last.

He feels you, and dear Fujita too, should devote particular attention to deepening the friends in the Covenant, which is the ark of safety for every believer.

(signed by "Ruhiyyih")

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

May the Almighty sustain, guide and bless you always, give you all the strength you need to enrich the splendid record of your past services in Japan, and enable you continually to extend the range of your meritorious accomplishments.

Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi

(October 6, 1950)

[Letter of November 15, 1951]

He (the Guardian) urges you never to feel discouraged but to go on showering your love on the friends (in Japan) and helping them to a deeper understanding of the Covenant.

The Guardian was pleased to hear Mr. Torii is arranging for the Hidden Words in Braille. Please thank him and assure him of the Guardian's loving prayers.

(signed by "Ruhiyyih")

(November 15, 1951)

[Letter of May 22, 1952]

The Guardian was most happy to learn of the many teaching opportunities which have been coming to you in that land, where you have labored so tirelessly and so lovingly, and assures you of his prayers for you and for those whom you are attracting to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(May 22, 1952)

[Letter of September 29, 1952]

The Guardian greatly values your continuous sacrificial services in behalf of the Faith,

particularly in Japan. He prays for the success of the efforts of the friends in Japan, that the Cause may spread rapidly in that country. He will particularly pray for the success of your work in Kyoto. He is hopeful that your contact with the Esperantists in Japan will bring many of them into the Faith.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(September 29, 1952)

[Letter of August 15, 1953]

The Guardian is indeed deeply grateful for your ceaseless services in the Cause of God, and was very happy to learn from you of the progress of the work in Japan.

He urges you by all means to make your plans to attend the International Teaching Conference to be held in New Delhi in October. You should then return to Japan, as he feels that this is the time for you to resume your work in that country.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

May the Beloved bless, guide and sustain you always, reward you abundantly for your long record of historic services, and enable you to enrich it in the days to come.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(August 15, 1953)

[Letter of May 3, 1954]

The Guardian has been greatly pleased with the manner in which the Faith has been spreading in Japan. He sincerely hopes that during the second year of the Crusade it will spread even more rapidly, and to more centers.

The future of the Faith in Japan is very great. It now depends upon the Bahá'ís to teach, to develop the Faith in a city and then move on to a new area. If this is continued diligently, it will bring the light of guidance to all parts of Japan in a very short time.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(May 3, 1954)

[Letter of May 5, 1954]

He (the Guardian) was very happy to hear of the progress of the work in Japan; and he greatly appreciates the fact that you have returned once more to that country, so dear to your heart, and where the Master was so eager for you to serve.

He wishes to assure you that he will pray for Mr. Mori³⁰, and that before he passes from this world, his spirit may be illumined, and he may come to accept Bahá'u'lláh.

The Guardian was also very pleased to hear that the Momtazis have given their home as a Bahá'í hall and Hazira, and hopes that this will open the way for the foundation of a firm Spiritual Assembly in the city.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(May 5, 1954)

[Letter of May 27, 1954]

He (the Guardian) was glad to hear Mr. Mori died a firm Bahá'í and that his funeral was in itself a service to the Faith. He will pray for his soul, and for his dear family.

(signed by "Ruhiyyih")

(May 27, 1954)

[Letter of May 27, 1954]

He (the Guardian) hopes that, in your capacity as a member of the Auxiliary Board of the Hands in Asia, that you will be able to create ever greater unity and enthusiasm amongst the Japanese friends, and the other believers in Japan.

(signed by "Ruhiyyih")

(May 27, 1954)

[Letter of March 1, 1955]

The progress of the Faith in Japan is a source of great joy to the Guardian. It is truly making rapid strides among these keen-minded and receptive people.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(March 1, 1955)

[Cable sent March 29, 1957]

Gladly announce your elevation rank Hand of Cause. Praying further enrichment record historic services, Shoghi, Haifa

(cable sent March 29, 1957)

[Letter of April 14, 1957]

He (the Guardian) is confident that you will discharge your duties as a Hand with the same characteristics of loyalty and devotion, and in the same spirit of service, that you have always shown in your Bahá'í life, and which has entitled you to this great honor.

It will no doubt be a source of encouragement to the believers that they now have two Hands of the Cause, one in the South and one in the North Pacific; and, in view of the remarkable spread of the Faith throughout that whole region, your services will be of much help in stimulating and reassuring the friends, and encouraging them to arise and constantly extend the outposts of the Faith.

He will remember you in the Holy Shrines, and pray that you may be strengthened, guided and blessed in this new form of service to the Cause you love so dearly.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

May the Almighty, Whose Cause you have served so long, so nobly and so devotedly, shower His manifold blessings upon you, and aid you, now that you occupy so lofty a position in the ranks of the followers of His Faith, to enrich the record of your distinguished and truly historic services to its institutions.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(April 14, 1957)

[Cable sent January 4, 1971]

At the time of the passing of Hand of the Cause Miss Alexander, the Universal House of Justice sent the following cable to the Bahá'í world:

Profoundly grieve passing illumined soul Hand Cause Agnes Alexander long standing pillar Cause Far East. First bring Faith Hawaiian Islands. Her long dedicated exemplary life service devotion Cause God anticipated by Center Covenant selecting her share May Maxwell imperishable honor mention Tablets Divine Plan. Her unrestrained unceasing pursuit teaching obedience command Bahá'u'lláh exhortations Master guidance beloved Guardian. Shining example all followers Faith. Her passing severs one more link heroic age. Assure family friends ardent prayers holiest Shrine progress radiant soul...

Universal House (of) Justice

(Cable sent January 4, 1971)

[Photograph with the following caption:]

Miss Alexander and Sheridan Sims at the old Bahá'í Center in Tokyo in 1960. The Haziratu'l-Quds was demolished and a new one built on the same property in 1982.

11: Letters and Cable to the Bahá'ís of Japan in the Early Days, 1922-1931

[Letter of January 26, 1922]

My well-beloved brethren and sisters in 'Abdu'l-Bahá:—

Despondent and sorrowful, though I be in these darksome days, yet whenever I call to mind the hopes our departed Master so confidently reposed in the friends in that Far-Eastern land, hope revives within me and drives away the gloom of His bereavement. As His attendant and secretary for well-nigh two years after the termination of the Great War, I recall so vividly the radiant joy that transfigured His Face wherever I opened before Him your supplications as well as those of Miss Agnes Alexander. What promises He gave us all regarding the future of the Cause in that land at the close of almost every supplication I read to Him! Let me state, straightway, the most emphatic, the most inspiring of them all. These are His very words, that still keep ringing in my ears;—"Japan will turn ablaze! Japan is endowed with a most remarkable capacity for the spread of the Cause of God! Japan, with (another country whose name He stated but bade us conceal it for the present) will take the lead in the spiritual reawakening of the peoples and nations that the world shall soon witness!" On another occasion,—how vividly I recall it!—as He reclined on His chair, with eyes closed with bodily fatigue, He waved His hand and uttered vigorously and cheerfully these words in the presence of His friends:—"Here we are seated calm, quiet and inactive, but the Hand of the Unseen is ever active and triumphant in lands, even as distant as Japan."

My dear and steadfast friends! Now if ever is the time for you and for us to show, by our unity, service, steadfastness and courage, the spirit that the Master has throughout His lifetime so laboriously, so persistently kindled in our hearts. Now is the time for us to prove ourselves worthy of His love for us, His trust in us and His hopes for us. Japan, He said, will turn ablaze. Let us not, in any way, whatsoever, retard the realization of His promise. Nay, let us hasten, through our service, cooperation and efforts the advent of this glorious day.

The bereaved Ladies of the Holy Household, receive with comfort and refreshing gladness any news that may come to them from that wonderful and distant land. They all know what the Master has graciously spoken about the future of the Cause in that land. They all expect from it a rapid transformation, a spiritual transformation even more sudden and startling than its material progress and advancement, for the Power of God can achieve wonders still greater than those the brilliant minds of the Japanese can achieve. This they firmly believe, for more than once, the Master has spoken of the spiritual potentialities hidden in the nature of these capable people. They all await with eagerness the joyful-tidings that your letters to them shall bear in future.

We all wish so much to know more about you, about your little rising Bahá'í community, your number, your meetings, your activities, your difficulties, your plans, your distribution all over Japan and the neighbouring islands. We shall all pray for you most fervently and in a special manner at all the three Hallowed Shrines and beseech the Master, under whose wings we are all, to guide you, to sustain you in your work for Him.

I shall never fail to send you all the news I receive from different parts of the Bahá'í world that you may know of the efforts and triumphs our brethren, the loved ones of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, are achieving and will achieve after Him.

Persia, the leading nation in the Bahá'í world, today will, I am confident, through its centre, Tihiran, communicate with you all, that the East and West, even as our Beloved One has so much wished it, may become even as one.

The letter our dear sister, Miss Agnes Alexander, had written to Mr. Fujita, gave us such a joy and was read at the sorrowful gathering of His friends, in the very room He used to receive His friends and meet them every night.

Ever awaiting your joyful news,
I am, your devoted brother in His love and service,
Shoghi

(January 26, 1922)

[Cable dated December 15, 1922]

To the believers in Japan care Agnes Alexander. Refreshed and reassured I now stretch to you across the distant seas my hand of brotherly cooperation in the Cause of Bahá.

Shoghi

(cable dated December 15, 1922)

[Letter of December 17, 1922]

Dear friends, the chosen ones of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in that Far Eastern land!

Having brought to an end my long hours of retirement and meditation, one of my first thoughts upon my return to these hallowed surroundings has been to inquire after the well-being and spiritual happiness of my far-away fellow-workers who toil and labour in those remote regions of the earth for the blessed Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. How great was my joy when I learned that you were well safe and happy, content and determined, untiring in your labours and hopeful of the future!

That my sudden withdrawal from the field of active service would leave you undeterred in your activities, would never damp your tender hopes nor shake your resolution to stand firmly for the Cause, I never doubted as I knew well the indelible marks of loyalty and steadfastness which the words of our beloved Master have wrought in your lives. I am equally certain that now when we join hands again in carrying the Cause of God a stage yet further, your assistance wholehearted as ever before will give it a fresh impetus that will lead to the establishment of throbbing centres of spiritual activity in those outlying regions of the world.

Japan, a land so richly endowed, so alert and progressive, so quick in its grasp of realities of life, is now the recipient of a Divine Bestowal, greater, richer and more enduring than any material gift she has ever enjoyed in modern times. What blissful thought to remember that you are the chosen ones that shall establish the Kingdom of God in that land; that you are the pioneers of a Work that will endure and supersede all the other achievements, however meritorious and brilliant, of your fellow-countrymen for Japan.

I pray that your vision of the vast opportunities that are yours may never be dimmed; that your efforts to realize that vision may never slacken and that the gracious aid of Bahá'u'lláh may never be withheld from you all through your sacred mission in this world.

And now in conclusion, let us not forget those ringing words of the Beloved, uttered with such force and emphasis:—"The Fire of the Love of God shall assuredly set Japan afire!" and let us arise, now at this moment, with increased and renewed confidence in His Sayings that we may assure and hasten the advent of so glorious an era in the history of that ancient land.

With my best wishes to every one of you
I am your brother and fellow-worker,
Shoghi

(December 17, 1922)

[Letter of May 10, 1923]

The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful in Japan: Susumu Aibara, E. Tanakamura, Y.S. Lo, K.C. Ling, N. Yawata, Y. Ishigumo, H.C. Waung, M. Hataya, E. Noguchi, F. Takahashi, Ida Finch, Agnes Alexander, K. Sawada, Kenjiro Ono, Tokujiro Torii.

Dearest brethren and sisters in Bahá'u'lláh!

The most welcome letter of our dearly beloved Bahá'í sister, Miss Agnes Alexander, imparting the glad news of the progress of her glorious services in Japan has rejoiced my heart, and has served to strengthen my hope and confidence in the future glories of that far eastern land.

The Ladies of the Holy Household are highly gratified and comforted to learn of your untiring labours in His Vineyard, of the success that has attended your efforts, of the perseverance and ardour with which you conduct your teaching work in those distant regions of the earth. 'Abdu'l-Bahá is with you always and your success is assured!

May the visit of our beloved sister, Miss Martha Root, to your shores stimulate widespread interest in the Cause throughout Japan, China and the Pacific Islands, and consolidate the foundation of the Edifice of the Cause in those far-eastern regions. I shall ever pray at the Three Holy Thresholds that the seeds now scattered bear abundant fruit and the promise of our beloved Master be speedily fulfilled.

I shall remember in my prayers Mr. and Mrs. Sam Baldwin and their children, as well as Mrs. and Miss Cramer, and wish them from all my heart signal success in their noble endeavours to promote far and wide the Heavenly Teachings.

It is my earnest hope that the friends in Japan will from now on write me frequent and detailed letters, setting forth the account of their various spiritual activities and giving me the plans for their future services to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

Our devoted brother, Mr. Fujita, is well and happy in the Holy Land, and together with the Ladies of the Household and myself is engaged in the service of the various pilgrims that visit in these days this sacred Spot. He is faithfully and actively carrying on the work which he has started so whole-heartedly during the Master's last years on earth.

I trust that the letters addressed to you by the newly-constituted Spiritual Assembly in Haifa have contributed their share in informing you more fully of the onward and irresistible march of the Movement throughout the world.

Awaiting your joyful letters,
I am your brother and fellow-worker,
Shoghi

(May 10, 1923)

[Letter of May 22, 1923]

To Miss Alexander

Shoghi Effendi has very kindly instructed me to acknowledge receipt of the letter dated April 9th by the following dearly loved friends in the great Cause of El Abhá in Tokyo, K. Sawada, H. Tanaka, Ida Finch, Ei Noguchi, Y. S. Ling, K. S. Ling, Yoshio Nakamura, Fumi Sato, Yuri Takao, B. Enomoto.

The few expressions of devotion by each one of them on one sheet of paper speak out for themselves of the unity and love that exists between the Bahá'í friends of Tokyo and express in a most vivid form the Bahá'í spirit and teachings which indeed above all stand out for unity and love amongst mankind.

Shoghi Effendi is deeply impressed by the letters, and earnestly hopes to see the Bahá'ís of Japan from whom he will anxiously expect to hear, increase their efforts and spread out the Bahá'í teachings all over Japan for the good of mankind.

I hope our dear sister Miss Martha Root has safely arrived and that by the grace of the Almighty her stay will be productive of great results.

(May 22, 1923)

[Letter of October 22, 1925]

To Mr. Susumu Aibara

My dear brother in God!

Your welcome letter has rejoiced my heart. I am sending you some Bahá'í literature which I trust will guide and assist you in your work. I shall be delighted to hear from you directly and regularly and please rest assured of my deep interest in your work and of my fervent prayers for the success of your labours.

Your brother and well-wisher,
Shoghi

(October 22, 1925)

[Letter of January 12, 1930]

To the Bahá'ís of Tokyo

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge receipt of your joint letter enclosed in Miss Alexander's note. Shoghi Effendi hopes that through the combined efforts of the Bahá'ís of Tokyo, the Cause will establish a strong center in that city and then begin and radiate its spiritual light to neighboring localities. Now that Miss Root is with you, you should endeavor to awaken new competent souls and then when she is gone strive to ground them firmly in the teachings.

(signed by Ruhi Afnan)

(January 12, 1930)

[Letter of December 24, 1930]

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Assuring you of my fervent prayers for you all at the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh.

Your true brother, Shoghi

To Miss Agnes Alexander, Miss Martha Root, Mrs. Antoinette Naganuma, Miss Elizabeth Dawe

He (the Guardian) was very happy to hear of your very nice and interesting gathering when Miss Martha Root was there. He sincerely hopes that her short stay will bear wonderful fruits and be the cause of guidance to many souls. Such persons who travel from one country to another, meeting the friends and exchanging thoughts with them, achieve a great part in strengthening the link between the new friends in different parts of the world. They give a new spirit and impart courage and perseverance to those who feel disappointed and overwhelmed by the greatness of the task laid before them.

(signed by Ruhi Afnan)

(December 24, 1930)

[Letter of March 5, 1931]

To Mr. Tokujiro Torii

I am directed by Shoghi Effendi to write and express his great pleasure over the receipt of your kind and happy letter of January 2.

He was very happy to hear from you, to learn that you are well and increasingly enthusiastic about the Bahá'í Faith. He prays from the bottom of his heart that the Almighty may help and strengthen you to render valuable services to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and also to assist the cause of the blind which is in itself a great Bahá'í service.

He deeply regrets that you are handicapped by your early loss of eyesight, but a spiritual light illuminates and guides you and through it, he hopes you will become a channel to His Grace.

It is unfortunate that despite the eager and persistent endeavors of our devoted sister Miss Agnes Alexander, no permanent and thriving centre has yet been established in Japan. But he trusts that soon a special endeavor will be made to establish an active group who will be able to translate the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and make them known to the people of Japan.

With the assurance of Shoghi Effendi's affection and prayers for you, also to Miss Alexander, and of his hope that you will someday come to Haifa.

(signed by Soheil Afnan)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

With the assurance of my fervent prayers at the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh for your happiness, your success and spiritual advancement.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(March 5, 1931)

[Letter of June 20, 1931]

Our Guardian has been overjoyed to hear of your gathering at the library of Dr. Masujima and to receive your very kind messages written on that occasion.

Both the Master and Shoghi Effendi have always cherished great hopes for the Bahá'í Faith in Japan. They have felt that only through the broad spiritual outlook which the Faith provides can the Japanese people introduce true spiritual enlightenment in their fast developing civilization. Hence Shoghi Effendi's great pleasure to hear from you and learn of your increasing interest in and enthusiasm for the Cause.

(signed by Soheil Afnan)

(June 20, 1931)

[Letter of January 9, 1932]

Dear and valued co-workers:

Your message has imparted an indefinable joy to my heart and cheered me in my arduous task. Persevere in your efforts for the spread of our beloved Faith, and rest assured that my prayers will continue to be offered in your behalf. I cherish the brightest hopes for the extension of your deeply valued activities and will supplicate the Almighty to bless and sustain your high endeavors.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(January 9, 1932)

12: Letters and Cables to Administrative Institutions

[Letter of April 1957]

To the First National Convention of the Bahá'ís of North East Asia—1957

To the Delegates and Visitors assembled at the Convention of the Bahá'ís of North-East Asia.

With feelings of exultation, joy, and pride I hail the convocation of this history-making Convention of the Bahá'ís of North-East Asia, paving the way for the emergence of a Regional Spiritual

Assembly with an area of jurisdiction embracing Japan, Korea, Formosa, Macao, Hong Kong, Hainan Island and Sakhalin Island.

This auspicious event, which posterity will regard as the culmination of a process initiated, half a century ago, in the capital city of Japan, under the watchful care and through the direct inspiration of the Centre of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, marks the opening of the second chapter in the history of the evolution of His Faith in the North Pacific area. Such a consummation cannot fail to lend a tremendous impetus to its onward march in the entire Pacific Ocean, a march which will now, no doubt, be greatly accelerated by the simultaneous emergence of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South-East Asia and of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand.

I particularly welcome the establishment of this highly important institution in the capital city of Japan, as it affords a splendid opportunity for the diffusion of the Lights of the Faith, and the erection of the structure of its Administrative Order, among a people representing the overwhelming majority of the yellow race, living in the islands of the Pacific Ocean, and in a country regarded as one of the strongholds of the Buddhist Faith.

I feel a warm tribute should be paid, on this historic occasion, to the members of the American Bahá'í Community, as well as to their elected national representatives, who have, for so long and so devotedly, promoted the interests of the Faith in that country, and, in recent years in its neighbouring islands.

I call upon the Regional Spiritual Assembly now being formed to signalize its birth through the initiation of a subsidiary Six-Year Plan, designed to swell the number of the adherents of the Faith throughout the area of its jurisdiction; to multiply the groups, the isolated centers and the local spiritual assemblies; to incorporate all firmly grounded local spiritual assemblies; to obtain recognition from the civil authorities for the Bahá'í Marriage Certificate, as well as the Bahá'í Holy Days; to inaugurate a national Bahá'í Fund; to consolidate the work initiated in the newly opened territories; to lend an impetus to the translation, the publication, and dissemination of Bahá'í Literature in divers languages; to establish Summer Schools, and Bahá'í burial grounds; to propagate the Faith throughout the smaller islands of Japan; and to acquire a plot to serve as the site of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of North-East Asia.

May the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh be showered, in an ever-increasing measure, on those newly emerged Communities now holding aloft, so steadfastly and so valiantly, the banner of His Faith, and may the outcome of their collective efforts illuminate its annals, and contribute to a notable degree to the consolidation of the institutions of the Bahá'í embryonic World Order now being erected throughout the length and breadth of so vast, so turbulent, and yet so promising, an area of the globe.

Shoghi

(April 1957)

[Photograph with the following caption:]

The first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of North East Asia elected in 1957. Sitting: Mr. Nouredin Momtazi, Miss Agnes Alexander, Mrs. Barbara Sims, Mr. Hiroyasu Takano. Standing: Mr. Ataullah Moghbel, Mr. Michitoshi Zenimoto, Mr. Philip Marangella, Mr. Yadollah Rafaat, and Mr. William Maxwell.

[Cable of April 29, 1957]

Shoghi Effendi's cable to the first Convention of North East Asia:

Deeply appreciate message welcome dedication delegates tasks ahead fervently supplicating richest blessings. Deepest love,

Shoghi

(April 29, 1957)

To National Spiritual Assemblies

To the National Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia—1957

[Cable dated May 2, 1957]

The Guardian's first cable to the new National Spiritual Assembly: Fervently supplicating befitting discharge sacred manifold responsibilities. Deepest love,

Shoghi

(cable dated May 2, 1957)

[Letter of May 20, 1957]

Our beloved Guardian has instructed me to write you on his behalf and inform you that the Hand of the Cause Mr. Varqá, will shortly be forwarding to your assembly the equivalent of five hundred English Pounds, as the Guardian's contribution to your newly established National Fund.

He hopes that, in the formulation of your plans, particular attention will be given to the all-important teaching work, the foundation of all the activities of the Faith and the most urgent task facing the friends in this critical period the world is passing through.

You may be sure he will pray for your success. (signed by R. Rabbani)

(May 20, 1957)

[Letter of July 15, 1957]

He (the Guardian) has read with much interest the reports of the Convention recently held in Tokyo.

The formation of this new Regional Assembly, whose area of operation is so vast and situated in such an important part of the globe, has been a source of great joy to the Guardian. He was also very happy to see that your Assembly has represented on it members of the three great races of mankind, a living demonstration of the fundamental teaching of our Holy Faith, and one which cannot but attract the interest of the public. The fact that so many believers attended the first historic convention, from practically all the territories your Assembly represents, was also most encouraging, and augurs well for your future work.

The work, so faithfully carried on, by both the American and Persian pioneers, has borne its first fruit. The long and loyal service of dear Agnes Alexander, who so faithfully carried out the beloved Master's wishes and served the spiritual interests of Japan for decades, has been richly crowned. Even the death of the devoted pioneer, Mr. Anthony Seto, has added a blessing to the work in that region, for he served in spite of failing health and remained at his post to be laid at rest in a distant land, his very dust testifying to the greatness of the love and the nature of the

ideals Bahá'u'lláh inspires in His servants³¹ .

It has been a great source of joy to the Guardian to see the marked increase of native Bahá'ís throughout that area, particularly in Japan, Korea and Formosa. However devoted the pioneers may be to these distant countries of their adoption, their relation to them cannot but be a transient one, especially in view of the disturbed state of the world and gloomy clouds that hang over its political horizons. They may suddenly be forced to go home; therefore, the native Bahá'ís, in particular, must seize this opportunity and arise too, themselves, in their own countries, pioneer to new cities and towns, new islands and as yet unopened territories, so that they may, with the help of their Bahá'í brethren from overseas, lay a firm and enduring foundation, and commence the great task of building up the Administrative Order, which is itself the foundation of the future World Order.

Special attention must be given during this crucial year to consolidating the precious goals already won, to creating new Spiritual Assemblies, to increasing the groups and the isolated centers.

Your Assembly must be very careful not to overload the Bahá'ís with rules and regulations, circulars and directions. The purpose of the administration at this time is to blow on the fire newly kindled in the hearts of these people who have accepted the Faith, to create in them the desire and capacity to teach, to facilitate the pioneer and teaching work, and help deepen the knowledge and understanding of the friends. The beloved Guardian issues this word of warning, as long experience has shown that it is a tendency on the part of all N.S.A.s to over-administer. In their enthusiasm they forget that they only have a handful of inexperienced souls to guide, and attempt to deal with their work as if they had a large population to regulate! This then stifles the spirit of the friends and the teaching work suffers.

He hopes that special attention will be given to the translation of more literature into the languages in use throughout that area and its publication. Likewise, Summer Schools should be multiplied as they enable the friends to gain in knowledge, and, through taking part in the course, increase their ability as Bahá'í teachers.

He was most happy to receive news of the spread of the Faith to some of the other islands in Japan, and hopes that this initial effort will be carefully followed up, and that the Message of Bahá'u'lláh will be carried to all the Japanese islands—and those in their neighbourhood—including Sakhalin, which is one of the few remaining virgin territories to be opened under the Ten-Year Plan.

The extraordinary progress made in the Far East and the Pacific area has been a constant source of pride and joy to the Guardian, and he feels confident that the door has opened on a new era in the advancement of our beloved Faith in these promising regions, and, indeed, all over the world. To the degree to which the friends consecrate themselves to the teaching work will directly depend the results they achieve during this year and coming years.

The beloved Guardian assures you all of his loving and continued prayers for the success of your work, for your strength, guidance and protection.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Dear and valued co-workers:

The formation of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of North East Asia is to be acclaimed as an event of far-reaching historic significance, whose repercussions cannot be confined to the Pacific area, but are bound to affect the immediate fortunes of the entire Bahá'í world. The emergence of this epochal institution, however transitional its character, represents the culmination of a fifty-year old process that has had its inception in the days of the Centre of the Covenant, during the last decades of the Heroic Age of the Bahá'í Dispensation. The rise and expansion of the Administrative Order of the Faith in the northern regions of the vast Pacific Ocean fills a great gap, and constitutes a notable parallel to the rise of similar institutions in the Antipodes, establishing thereby a spiritual equilibrium destined to affect, to a marked degree, the destinies of the Faith throughout the islands of the Pacific Ocean, in the years immediately ahead. It should be hailed, moreover, as a momentous development paving the way for the eventual introduction of the Faith into the far-flung Chinese mainland and, beyond it, to the extensive territories of Soviet Russia.

A milestone of such tremendous significance in the progress of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, in so strategic and important an area of the globe, should be acclaimed by the members of your assembly, as well as by the rank and file of the believers throughout that area, as a demonstration of the creative energies released by its Author and the Centre of His Covenant, in territories and amidst peoples and races destined to play a role of immense significance in the future development of the human race.

This God-given opportunity, now presenting itself to the prosecutors of the Bahá'í world Spiritual Crusade, at so critical a stage in the history of the peoples and nations established in those far-off islands and territories, should be seized with eagerness and enthusiasm, and exploited to the full

in the years lying immediately ahead.

The Six-Year Plan, designed to lend a tremendous impetus to the awakening of the peoples and races in those regions, should be prosecuted with the utmost diligence, unrelaxing vigilance and whole-hearted consecration. All must participate, young and old alike, both men and women, however limited their circumstances or circumscribed their resources.

An effort, unprecedented in its scope and intensity, must be exerted to attain, speedily and completely the specific objectives of this Plan. The number of the avowed supporters of the Faith must rapidly increase. The isolated centers, groups and local assemblies, constituting the bedrock of a rising Administrative Order, must steadily and continually multiply. All firmly grounded local spiritual assemblies must be speedily incorporated, in order to reinforce the foundations of the institution of this divinely conceived Order. The Bahá'í marriage certificate, as well as the Bahá'í Holy Days must, at the earliest possible opportunity, receive recognition from the civil authorities concerned. The work now being initiated in the Northern and smaller islands of Japan, with such zeal and devotion should be constantly reinforced and its scope continually widened. The literature of the Faith must be translated into as many languages as possible, published and widely disseminated. The holding of the summer-schools is yet another objective that should receive the earnest and immediate attention of the members of your assembly. The purchase of Bahá'í burial-grounds, should, moreover, be, in due course considered and effectively carried out. The newly-opened territories, that have been so painstakingly brought within the pale of the Faith, must at whatever cost, be safeguarded, and the enterprises initiated within their confines carefully expanded and consolidated. The acquisition of a plot, in the outskirts of Tokyo, to serve as the site of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of North East Asia, must, likewise, be seriously considered and brought to a successful conclusion.

The task challenging the spirit and resources of your assembly, as well as those whom you represent, is admittedly arduous, pressing and sacred. The field in which you operate is exceptionally vast, and the barriers standing in your way are varied and formidable. Nothing short of complete dedication to the objectives of the Six-Year Plan you are called upon to fulfill, and of the utmost self-sacrifice on your part, as well as on the part of those who are to participate in its prosecution, can ensure the success to which I confidently look forward, to which your sister, as well as parent, communities throughout the Bahá'í world, are likewise, eagerly anticipating.

May those who are privileged, at this auspicious hour, to render so noble a service to the Cause of God, and fulfill so glorious a destiny, in the course of the evolution of so sacred and precious a Faith, arise to perform befittingly their task, and achieve such feats in the days to come as shall draw forth from the Source on high a still greater measure of divine blessings that will enable them to write a still more brilliant chapter in the annals of God's infant Faith, and to contribute an outstanding share to the world-wide establishment and ultimate recognition of its newly-born administrative institutions.

Shoghi

(July 15, 1957)

[Cable dated August 27, 1957]

Congratulate attendants historic summerschool³² fervently praying expansion valued activities

Love, Shoghi

(cable dated August 27, 1957)

[Letter of October 20, 1957]

He (the Guardian) was greatly pleased to learn of the contacts which have been made by the friends with the original natives of Japan, namely the Ainu people. He hopes that some of them will be quickened in the Faith so that they may teach the call of God to the remainder of their people. There is no doubt that great results will be achieved if this can be done.

Therefore the Guardian hopes your Assembly will take some very active measures to insure the teaching of the Faith amongst this Tribe.

The Guardian will pray for you and will pray for the success of your labors.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(October 20, 1957)

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, 1951–1956

[Letter of February 29, 1951]

He (the Guardian) feels there is no definite action that can be taken by the Tokyo Spiritual Assembly against ... any society which uses our Bahá'í ideas and principles. The best thing is for the Japanese believers, through strengthening their community, enlarging it, obtaining publicity in the press, and holding, whenever possible, dignified public meetings, to gradually assert themselves as the real body of the Faith, and make everything else appear to be mere plagiarism, a shadow of the Faith. Your Assembly should give them (the Japanese believers) as much moral support and encouragement as possible.

(February 29, 1951)

The Guardian attaches great importance to the teaching conference³³ ... and feels that as many friends as possible should attend. He thinks it will be a great stimulant to the Faith, and certainly foundations can be laid for the rapid expansion of the Cause... This will be a historic event, and one that should lay the foundation for great victories in the future.

The beloved Guardian has approved the attendance of one of the Hands of the Cause in Asia ... Mr. Zikru'llah Khádem...

(July, 1955)

[Letter of November 20, 1955]

Your loving letter was received (with the) copy of Miss Linfoot's report to the National Assembly concerning the Teaching Conference held in Japan.

The Guardian was greatly delighted with the Conference and its results; more particularly with the effect which it is going to have on the teaching work of the entire area in the future.

It was a very historic gathering, because it marked the first time a general conference regarding teaching matters had been held in Japan, and furthermore was participated in by representatives of the other countries in the area. It released a new power of the Spirit in that part of the world which will certainly elevate the minds and hearts of the people and attract many to the Cause.

The Guardian appreciates the sacrificial efforts made by all those who undertook the development of the Conference, so that it might produce such beneficial results.

The Guardian is hopeful that the conditions in Japan may not force many of the pioneers to leave that territory. As you know, he attaches the utmost importance to the teaching work in Japan; he anticipates that the Faith will spread rapidly in that country. The help of the American Bahá'ís is very essential; and he hopes therefore it will not be necessary for any of them to leave.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(November 20, 1955)

[Letter of December 27, 1956]

The beloved Guardian feels the time is ripe for the settlement of the Northern Island of Japan, and he wishes your Assembly to consider what might be done to accomplish this before the coming Ridván without in any way interfering with the work now engaged in, in connection with the establishment of the new National Assembly next Ridván.

There are three tasks which the new National Assembly should undertake, when it is formed, and that is the sending of pioneers into Sakhalin Island, and Hainan Island; also the extension of the teaching work in the Northern Island (Hokkaido) of Japan. If no settlers are in the Northern Island, then they should undertake to send some in as quickly as possible.

Will you please actively consider the settlement now of the Northern Island; also pass on to the new N.S.A. the three tasks the Guardian feels they should undertake promptly.

(December 27, 1956)

To the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia

[Letter of July 19, 1957]

...The emergence of a new Regional Spiritual Assembly in the North Pacific Area³⁴, with its seat fixed in the capital city of a country which by reason of its innate capacity and the spiritual receptivity it has acquired, in consequence of the severe and prolonged ordeal its entire population has providentially experienced, is destined to have a preponderating share in awakening the peoples and races inhabiting the entire Pacific area, to the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, and to act as the Vanguard of His hosts in their future spiritual conquest of the main body of the yellow race on the Chinese mainland—the emergence of such an assembly may be said to have, at long last established a spiritual axis, extending from the Antipodes to the northern islands of the Pacific Ocean—an axis whose northern and southern poles will act as powerful magnets, endowed with exceptional spiritual potency, and towards which younger and less experienced communities will tend for some time to gravitate.

A responsibility, at once weighty and inescapable, must rest on the communities which occupy so privileged a position in so vast and turbulent an area of the globe. However great the distance that separates them; however much they differ in race, language, custom, and religion; however active the political forces which tend to keep them apart and foster racial and political antagonisms, the close and continued association of these communities in their common, their peculiar and paramount task of raising up and of consolidating the embryonic World Order of Bahá'u'lláh in those regions of the globe, is a matter of vital and urgent importance, which should receive on the part of the elected representatives of their communities, a most earnest and prayerful consideration...

May this community³⁵ which, with its sister community in the North, has had the inestimable privilege of being called into being in the lifetime of, and through the operation of the dynamic forces released by the Center of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant continue, with undimmed vision, with redoubled vigour, and unwavering fidelity and constancy, to discharge its manifold and ever increasing duties and responsibilities, and lend, as the days go by, an impetus such as it has not lent before, in the course of almost two score years of its existence, to the propagation of the Faith it has so whole-heartedly espoused and is now so valiantly serving, and play a memorable and distinctive part in hastening the establishment, and in ensuring the gradual efflorescence and ultimate fruition, of its divinely appointed embryonic World Order.

(July 19, 1957)

To the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran

[Letter of January 6, 1957]

Regarding pioneers going to Japan, Brazil ... and other places, the beloved Guardian states that they must not gather in one place but scatter to make new centers, e.g., Mr. Assassi and his wife, and Mr. Labib who travelled to Japan must not stay in Tokyo but should go to places where there are no Bahá'ís, or very few Bahá'ís to make new centers. Furthermore (he) says that the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran must write to all pioneers that have left Iran for other parts of the world and instruct them not to gather in one place but to scatter in different places. He says that the matter stated above is very important... (translated from the original Persian)

(signed by Dr. Hakim)

(January 6, 1957)

To Local Spiritual Assemblies, 1948-1957

[Letter of September 21, 1948]

To the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tokyo

To know that a Spiritual Assembly of all Japanese members was formed in Tokyo greatly inspired him (the Guardian). This is a historic and wonderful achievement. At present it might seem to people of the world that these few devoted souls are insignificant when compared to the millions of people residing in Japan—but we who have recognized the Power of Bahá'u'lláh, and that His teaching is God's Message to men in this day, know that the seed of the Tree of Life has at last germinated in your land, and that it will grow to overshadow all those who dwell in the islands of Japan.

The love of the Japanese people, for truth and beauty is very great, and our Guardian feels sure that gradually many souls will become attracted to the Cause of God through your persevering and devoted labours.

Your loyalty and determination touches him deeply, and he assures you all that for each one of you he will pray for guidance and blessings. He urges you to work together for the Cause as one soul in different bodies, and show by your love and unity what a force lies in our Faith for the regeneration of mankind.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Dear and valued co-workers:

I was thrilled by your message and I greatly value the sentiments it expressed. I urge you to

persevere and be confident, and labour unitedly for the spread of the Faith and the formation of new centres, however small, in the vicinity of your capital. I will, from all my heart, supplicate for you Divine guidance and blessings, that your historic work may flourish, your numbers increase and your highest hopes be fulfilled in the service of His glorious Faith.

Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi

(September 21, 1948)

[Letter of December 20, 1951]

The beloved Guardian has received your letter, so beautifully written in Japanese, and which he regrets very much he could not read in the original.

He very deeply appreciated the contribution the Bahá'ís of Japan have made for the Shrine of the Báb; and I am enclosing a receipt herein for the sum you mentioned in your letter, ten thousand yen.

The sentiments expressed by the Bahá'ís of Japan touched him very deeply; and he feels that the contribution they have made to the Shrine enriches its spiritual significance for all of us, coming, as it does, from believers in the Báb, our beloved Martyr-Prophet, who reside in a land so far away, and yet are filled with such great love and devotion for, not only the Báb Himself, but for the Faith He heralded.

The Guardian is most happy over the progress being made in Japan; and he wants you to know that his loving thoughts are with you, and you are mentioned often in his prayers in the Holy Shrines.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

May the Beloved bless you, sustain and guide you, reward you for your meritorious labours, and aid you to win great victories in the service of His Faith.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(December 20, 1951)

[Letter of April 14, 1952]

Your gracious letter of March 20th, conveying Naw-Rúz greetings to the beloved Guardian has been received, and gave the Guardian the utmost of happiness. It revealed anew the power of Bahá'u'lláh, that in that far off land, the banner of His Grace has been raised so effectively, and the friends have been quickened by the new spirit of unity which is sweeping the world.

The Guardian will pray at the Holy Shrines that the powers of the Holy Spirit will inspire and sustain you in your labors for the spread of the true teachings of brotherhood, and the spiritual elevation of the people of Japan.

Today, the head corner-stone of service to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is teaching. It is the source of divine blessings. The beloved Guardian feels your consecration to this most important of all Bahá'í activities will achieve new goals and win many victories for the Faith.

He sends his loving greetings to each one of you, who will ever be in his heart.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(April 14, 1952)

[Letter of August 30, 1952]

It always brings joy to the heart of our beloved Guardian to receive news from you, as he is so happy over the remarkable growth of the Faith in Japan since the end of the war. He has instructed me to answer on his behalf your letter of July 12.

Plans for future works in Japan will certainly form part of the general plan for Asia, which will be discussed at the New Delhi Conference in October 1953. He would be very happy if some of the friends from Japan could attend this historic gathering.

He was delighted to hear that your Assembly is undertaking extension teaching work in other Japanese cities; as Tokyo is the mother Assembly, her responsibility is great. He was particularly glad to hear teaching will be done in Hiroshima, where the people suffered so mercilessly during the war; they have a special right—the people of that city—to hear of Bahá'u'lláh's Message of peace and brotherhood.

The Assembly of Tokyo, until such time as other local assemblies are formed, can receive the applications for enrollment from people living elsewhere. Anyone living outside the civic limits of Tokyo, however, cannot be a voting member of that community, but of course, may attend meetings and Feasts until a local nucleus is established.

The Guardian was particularly happy to note that there are so many Japanese Bahá'ís; although the American friends have rendered a great service in Japan, the object of all teachings is to establish firmly the Faith of God in the hearts and lives of the people of the country. He hopes that special efforts will be made to teach the Japanese, and to provide them with Bahá'í literature in their own language, and to conduct meetings in Japanese, and also to encourage them to understand the Administration and take an active, constructive part in its workings. Without a proper understanding of the Administrative Order, extensive plans cannot be undertaken and harmony will not prevail within the community.

He (the Guardian) will remember you in all his prayers, and is most pleased with your progress and your devoted spirit.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

May the Almighty bless your high and persistent endeavours, guide every step you take in the path of service, and enable you to extend continually the range of your splendid activities, and win great and memorable victories for His Cause.

Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi

(August 30, 1952)

[Letter of July 24, 1953]

The beloved Guardian has said that the future of Japan from every standpoint is very bright indeed. The Faith will spread rapidly in Japan, once the public become acquainted with its universal principles, and its dynamic spirit.

What is necessary at this time is for the Bahá'ís to adhere firmly to the teachings of the Faith, and to become a clear channel through which the power of the Holy Spirit might disseminate itself throughout the country.

So far as the Ananai-kyo Movement is concerned, and their desire for affiliation:

The Bahá'ís may associate with Movements such as this, without becoming supporters and active workers therein; the object being to make friendly contacts which can be developed into firm Bahá'ís.

So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day or he does not. The tenets of the Bahá'í Faith are simple as outlined by the Guardian, but they do not permit any variations. In other words, if any members of the Ananai-kyo Movement wish to become Bahá'ís; they will be most welcome; but they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Báb as the Fore-runner, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order.

When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere; and when the members of the Ananai-kyo Movement reach Bahá'u'lláh in their search for a world teacher, they have reached the goal, and not another step along the path.

I presume you have received by this time full details concerning the Ten Year Crusade, and the Plan which the Guardian has enunciated for the American National Assembly to assist in the development of the Faith in Japan, so that ultimately there may be a National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís in Japan itself.

The American National Spiritual Assembly has appointed a special committee for the Asian countries, and I am quite sure you will find the very closest possible cooperation from them in the development of the work.

You will find, as the Extension Teaching work in Japan moves forward, there will have to be constant and continuous consultation with this important committee.

You can appreciate it will be entirely impossible for the International Council or the staff of the Guardian himself, to undertake the supervision of the teaching work in any one part of the world; furthermore it would be contrary to the general principle of Bahá'í administration. Under Bahá'í administration, Local Assemblies, and the development of teaching work are placed in the hands of National Assemblies. The National Assemblies themselves report directly to Haifa—to the Universal House of Justice, when it is established; and until that time, to the Guardian himself.

At the instruction of the Guardian, I am communicating with the American National Spiritual Assembly, to ask them to set up a program, whereby there will be the closest possible collaboration between their Asia Teaching Committee and your own Assembly. I hope this will be the means of all data reaching you very promptly.

The beloved Guardian asked me to convey to you his deep love. He appreciates and values very highly your devoted services to the Faith. He will pray at the Holy Shrines, for your guidance and confirmation. It is his hope that heavenly blessings may be with you at all times, and every obstacle in the path of your efforts to continually spread the Message in Japan may be removed, so that you may ultimately gain complete victory.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(July 24, 1953)

[Letter of November 26, 1953]

The Guardian is hopeful that some day it may be possible for the Bahá'ís of Tokyo to establish their Hazira; and of course if this were done, some day it will become the National Hazira, because when the National Spiritual Assembly is formed in Japan, Tokyo will no doubt be the seat of the National Assembly.

Shoghi Effendi feels that the time has now come when the Faith will spread rapidly in Japan. The Japanese people have great vision and spirituality, and the difficulties of the last war have prepared many of them for the Divine Guidance. He therefore urges each and every one of you to treble your efforts, so that the Cause may grow and develop rapidly.

He sends his loving greetings to you, and assures you all of his prayers in your behalf.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(November 26, 1953)

[Letter of March 2, 1954]

The beloved Guardian sends his loving greetings to each and every one of the friends in Japan. He greatly values their devotion and sacrifice for the Faith, and the noble manner in which they are arising to spread the Teachings in that land.

He feels the future of Japan is very great. The hearts and minds of the Japanese people are awakened; and if the teaching work is carried on very actively and audaciously, many souls will be attracted by the Divine Fragrances.

The beloved Guardian is so confident that the Faith will spread rapidly in Japan, and the believers will firmly establish the institutions of the Cause, that he has chosen to send to them for ultimate display in their National Haziratu'l-Quds in Tokyo one of the very precious relics from the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. He has entrusted with our dear brother, Hiroyasu Takano, a very precious brocade, which has rested immediately over the remains of Bahá'u'lláh in His glorious Shrine. It is very precious and very sacred.

The Guardian is sending this to the Spiritual Assembly of Tokyo as a gift. The friends may wish to have it carefully and beautifully framed for display in the Hazira, when it is acquired. Ultimately of course it is to be hung in the Hazira of the National Assembly, when that great goal has been achieved by the Japanese believers.

The beloved Guardian assures each and every one of you of his prayers in your behalf.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(March 2, 1954)

[Letter of May 29, 1954]

The beloved Guardian was pleased to see the manner in which the Assembly has undertaken its responsibility of enthusing the believers to carry on teaching work throughout Japan in an aggressive manner.

The keynote of activity during the second year of the Ten-Year Crusade is the multiplication of Assemblies, groups and isolated centers. The Guardian feels the time is ripe for the active spread of the Faith throughout Japan; and if pioneers and settlers will go to additional cities and very actively teach the Faith, they will find that the Cause will grow and develop in each of these new areas.

You should not overlook the fact that one of the goals of the Ten-Year Crusade is the establishment of a National Assembly in Japan. This can be brought about more quickly if the friends set aside all other considerations and actively teach the Faith.

The sacred gift which the Guardian sent to the Japanese Bahá'ís through Mr. Takano is of course for the Hazira as soon as it is procured. It is one of the very sacred relics, and the Guardian hopes it will be a source of inspiration to the friends to redouble their efforts in the teaching field.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(May 29, 1954)

[Letter of June 7, 1954]

The beloved Guardian sends his loving greetings to each and every one of you. He is praying for the success of your teaching work. He feels the time is ripe for a rapid expansion of the Faith in Japan; and that if everyone will arise with renewed effort, they will be surprised at the spiritual victories which they will achieve.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(June 7, 1954)

[Letter of June 8, 1954]

Please refer to our previous correspondence with regard to the purchase of a Haziratu'l-Quds in Tokyo. The beloved Guardian feels this is a matter of great importance, and should be accomplished during the present year.

He has written to the American N.S.A. in detail concerning the matter, instructing them to proceed at once with the development of this project, so that it may be concluded during the present year, if at all possible.

The beloved Guardian is sending a contribution of £500. As you know, a Haziratu'l-Quds was given by Mr. Momtazi in Mukonoso, Hyogo-ken. The Guardian would see no objection to this Haziratu'l-Quds being sold, and the fund received thereby being used to defray the cost of the Haziratu'l-Quds in Tokyo. It is far more important that a Hazira be established in Tokyo, which is the seat of the future National Assembly, than in Mukonoso, Hyogo-ken. Of course this can only be done in case Mr. Momtazi is entirely agreeable.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(June 8, 1954)

[Letter of July 19, 1954]

Your loving letter ... has just come to hand, telling of the funds which you have available now, since the generous gift of Mr. N. Momtazi, for the Haziratu'l-Quds in Tokyo.

You have in mind that the Hazira need not be an elaborate place. It should be a building which you own, and which can be used now as the Haziratu'l-Quds for the Local Tokyo Assembly, to be utilized later as the National Haziratu'l-Quds for the National Spiritual Assembly when it is formed.

The important thing is that this piece of property should be acquired for as reasonable a price as possible.

The Guardian will await with expectation, advice from you as to the acquisition of this important piece of property³⁶.

The Guardian sends each one his loving greetings.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(July 19, 1954)

[Letter of September 26, 1955]

Your loving letter ... has come to hand, giving the latest information concerning the International Teaching Conference which was to be held at Nikko, September 23, 24, and 25.

From the word we have received, the Conference must have been a great success with so many being present, and representing so many different countries. As I understand it, there were representatives of nine different nations.

The Guardian has attached the greatest importance to this Conference, as it is the first to be held in Japan, and is therefore a great historic event. Let us hope the teaching work will develop rapidly in Japan, so that there may be a large number of Assemblies and groups established who may take part in the election of the National Assembly.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(September 26, 1955)

[Letter of April 24, 1956]

It was a great pleasure to have some of the friends from Japan here, and particularly to get dear Fujita back again.

The Guardian is particularly happy over the news conveyed by Mr. Momtazi for the formation of seven new Assemblies. This is a great step forward in the progress of the work, not only in Japan, but in the Pacific area; and augurs well for the formation of the Regional National Assembly with Japan as the hub, which is to be elected next Ridván.

The Japanese believers are often in his thoughts and prayers, and he is proud of their achievements, and cherishes great hopes for their future. He will pray that your Assembly may be instrumental in bringing in many new souls during the coming year.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

May the Almighty, whose Cause you serve so devotedly, aid you to extend continually the scope of your valued activities, and enable you to win great victories in the days to come.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(April 24, 1956)

[Letter of June 11, 1956]

He (the Guardian) was very happy to receive the copies of the Japanese Geppo. They are historic, marking the first Bahá'í Newsletters to be published in that country. He hopes its scope will gradually widen, and it become a most effective means of stimulating the friends in Japan in service to the Cause of God.

Great victories have been won by the friends in Japan. He hopes during the short period between now, and when the new National Assembly is formed, the friends will treble their efforts, so many many souls may find eternal life, through the teaching services of the true servants of God.

As Bahá'u'lláh has stated, true victory is winning the hearts of men to the Cause of God. The Guardian is praying for many more such glorious victories, so the Faith may be firmly established in that far off land, which has such a bright and promising future.

The Guardian will pray for the friends, for the success of their work. He sends his loving greetings.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(June 11, 1956)

[Letter of April 19, 1957]

The various materials which you sent to the Guardian he has read with great interest—the pamphlet on the recent Congress of Religions held in Tokyo, the English summaries of the important Bahá'í News Geppo, and your report of the progress of the Faith in that promising country.

The Guardian is looking forward with keen anticipation to the forthcoming Ridván period, as it marks the establishment of thirteen new National Assemblies; the most important of which are in the Pacific area; the one centered in Tokyo, the one in Djakarta, and the third in New Zealand.

The Guardian is well pleased with the teaching work in Japan. He hopes this branch of your service will be greatly reinforced and stimulated by the establishment of the new National Assembly.

He will pray for the friends, for Japan, and for the success of the labors of the Faithful.

He sends his loving greetings.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(April 19, 1957)

To the Local Spiritual Assembly of Hyogo-ken (prefecture]

[Letter of January 2, 1956]

It is indeed a great privilege for the Bahá'ís of Japan, so remote from the Holy Land, to have two of their most devoted teachers come to Haifa on pilgrimage; and he (the Guardian) feels sure that they will carry back to the work in that important Center in the Pacific area a fresh impetus and a new inspiration.

It is also a source of great satisfaction to him that dear Fujita has returned to serve here. It brings the Japanese believers even closer to the International Center to have a representative of their nation working for the Cause at its World Center.

He assures you all that he will pray for the success, not only of the work in Hyogo-ken, but throughout Japan, and urges you and your co-workers to persevere in the face of every obstacle.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

May the Almighty remove all obstacles from your path, enable you to lend a great impetus to the onward march of His Faith, and contribute to the consolidation of His institutions.

Your true brother, Shoghi

(January 2, 1956)

[Photograph with the following caption:]

The first International Teaching Conference in Nikko, Japan, 1955. Mr. Fujita is holding the frame containing the "Greatest Name". Hand of the Cause Mr. Khádem, who was the Guardian's representative, is behind Mr. Fujita. Miss Alexander is holding the picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This conference marked a turning point in the Bahá'í Faith in Asia, especially in Japan.

13: Letters to Individuals

Excerpts from letters to Japanese believers, 1947-1957

[Letter of October 15, 1947]

To Mr. Saichiro Fujita

After so many years of silence our beloved Guardian was very happy to receive your postcard.

He is very glad to see you are not only safe after all these terrible years of war and privation, but that you are seeking to establish a center of the Faith where you live. He assures you he will pray that your efforts may be successful, and that you may become the father of the first spiritual assembly there.

Your long services in Haifa are not forgotten, and the Guardian sends you his greetings.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(October 15, 1947)

[Letter of October 6, 1950]

The excellent progress the Cause is making is a delight to his (the Guardian's) heart, and he feels very close to the Japanese believers.

Now that our dear Agnes Alexander is with you again out there (in Japan), he feels still greater progress will be made. You and she, both old and tried believers, must devote particular attention to strengthening the faith of the new souls, and giving them a firm foundation in the Covenant. You are often affectionately remembered here.

(signed by "Ruhyyih")

(October 6, 1950)

[Letter of March 21, 1952]

To Mrs. Kyoko Hongo

He (the Guardian) is very happy to hear that you and your husband have become declared Bahá'ís; and he will ardently pray in the Holy Shrines that each of you may become an active and devoted servant of Bahá'u'lláh, and may be assisted in bringing many souls in that land to the light of this great Faith, and carry on the work nobly started by the dear Davenports.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(March 21, 1952)

[Letter of April 22, 1952]

To Mr. Tameo Hongo

It brings him (the Guardian) great joy to realize that we see before our eyes the promises of

Bahá'u'lláh being fulfilled, and the peoples of East and West embracing as lovers, and united in the service of God and of man.

He feels that the Japanese people, so sensitive to every form of beauty both spiritual and material, will have a deep appreciation of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, not only because of their truth and justice, but because of the great beauty which permeates them, a beauty which will gradually, through the fulfillment of His prophecies and the practice of His Laws and Principles, permeate the life of mankind, and create a society such as has never been dreamed of before.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(April 22, 1952)

[Letter of October 5, 1953]

To Mr. Michitoshi Zenimoto

Your letter has been received by the beloved Guardian and he has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

Bahá'u'lláh wrote, many, many years ago: "The vitality of men's belief in God is dying out in every land; nothing short of His wholesome medicine can ever restore it. The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society; what else but the Elixir of His potent Revelation can cleanse and revive it?"

This is the ebb of the tide. The Bahá'ís know that the tide will turn and come in, after mankind has suffered, with mighty waves of faith and devotion. The people will enter the Cause of God in troops, and the whole condition will change. The Bahá'ís see this new condition which will take place, as one on the mountain-top sees the first glimpse of the dawn, before others are aware of it; and it is toward that that the Bahá'ís must work.

The Guardian will pray that you may be instrumental in bringing many of your fellow-youth into the Faith. He sends you his loving greetings.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(October 5, 1953)

[Letter of December 30, 1955]

To Miss Yoshiko Morita

The photograph of the Japanese Bahá'ís, who attended the conference recently held in Nikko, brought great joy to his (the Guardian's) heart.

Although the American and Persian friends are helping greatly the spread of the Faith in Japan, the main object of their presence in that country is to attract Japanese people to the Cause of God. Only when the Faith is firmly rooted in the hearts of the people of that country can we feel that true progress has been made; and therefore to see there are so many Japanese believers, active and devoted in different places in Japan, has been a great comfort and joy to our Guardian.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(December 30, 1955)

[Letter of September 19, 1957]

To Mrs. Masao Konishi

The time is too short to spend years preparing yourself to teach by the indirect approach. The world is ready for the direct Message, and it would be much better to equip yourself to do direct Bahá'í teaching.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(September 19, 1957)

The following excerpts are from letters to pioneers to Japan and Korea, 1948-1957

[Letter of January 21, 1948]

To Mr. Robert Imagine

He (the Guardian) notices in your last letter that you sound discouraged. But he feels you should look on the bright side of the work in Japan, and realize that, after so many, many years of complete inertia, the old Bahá'ís have been found—at least some of them—and contacts reestablished. You are able to serve there, new people are hearing of the Faith, and the prospects for the future work there are promising. It is a great pity that a pioneer effort, organized and financed, cannot be carried out there. But the present Seven Year Plan takes all the American Bahá'í resources, and at present Japan must depend on volunteer teachers like your dear self, who of course are not as free as a full time pioneer would be.

In regard to the various questions in your last letter; because of the difficult conditions under which you are serving there and the state of the country and immaturity of the believers you should not be too rigid. You should try and meet on the proper Feast day, but if it is not possible meet as close to the date as you can. Likewise, it would be desirable to observe the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master, etc., at the correct times, but it is not essential to do so. With such a small group of Bahá'ís who have no proper literature except the Esslemont book, and need to deepen in the Teachings, you should be very patient and not ask them to do things before they see the wisdom of it.

Membership for Bahá'ís should be based on their understanding the station of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Guardian and the function of the Administrative Order. To do this it is not necessary for people to first read the Will and Testament and the Dispensation. The essentials can be explained to them, and the rest is a question of faith; if they believe, they can be accepted as Bahá'ís. It is premature now to say any "laws" of the Aqdas must be followed. But the Bahá'ís should be encouraged to keep the Fast, use an obligatory prayer, obtain the consent of parents for marriage, and live up to the Teachings in general.

He certainly feels one of your first duties is to deepen the understanding of the Faith in the minds of the believers there.

You should certainly try to make new contacts but until you have a nucleus of active believers there he feels a lot of publicity is premature.

As to translations, this is certainly very important, but he would not suggest that at present with the limited facilities at your disposal, that you translate whole books. Make selections of subjects that will interest the Japanese; some prayers, some of the chapters from "Some Answered Questions" on things of general interest rather than the purely Christian topics; some of the excerpts from "Gleanings". In other words try and get together a selection from our Teachings that covers a wide range of subjects and is representative of our beliefs, and translate these at first. Whole books can be undertaken in the future.

He feels the teaching and translating work can go hand in hand as you teach with new material translated.

Your services are very deeply valued by our beloved Guardian, and he assures you he will pray for you and all the Japanese Bahá'ís in the Holy Shrines.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

The zeal, devotion and courage which you exhibit in your activities in the service of the Cause in Japan are truly meritorious and evoke my deepest admiration. Your mission is indeed historic, and your pioneer achievements an example to the rising generation. Persevere in your high endeavors, and rest assured that the Beloved will bless your exertions and will aid you to fulfil your heart's desire.

Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi

(January 21, 1948)

[Letter of October 16, 1948]

He (the Guardian) is delighted over the progress the Faith is making in Japan, and feels greatly attracted to the Japanese believers, who show a spirit of sincerity and faith which augurs well for the future development of the work there.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Dear and valued co-worker:

Your outstanding pioneer services are indeed worthy of the highest praise, and I am deeply grateful to you for the work you have accomplished. The firm establishment of a spiritual assembly in Japan and its consolidation, as well as the formation of small groups and isolated centers, will no doubt act as a magnet that will draw the inestimable blessings of Bahá'u'lláh. Persevere in your historic task and rest assured and be happy.

Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi

(October 16, 1948)

[Letter of December 20, 1949]

To Mrs. Barbara Davenport

He (the Guardian) urges you to encourage the friends (in Japan) to observe our Bahá'í laws and ordinances, deepen themselves in the administration, and realize they are followers of a Faith—not a mere movement.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(December 20, 1949)

[Letter of September 17, 1950]

To Mr. Robert Imagire

He (the Guardian) is so pleased to have dear Miss Alexander there. Her devotion and loyalty, her love and knowledge of the teachings will be a comfort and inspiration to the believers there (in Japan).

The Guardian was also very happy to see eight Japanese names on the Tokyo Assembly. Although the help and advice of American believers is of great importance, it is excellent that the majority are Japanese and are assuming responsibility for the affairs of the Cause in their native land.

He feels great strides forward have been made, and trusts still greater progress lies ahead. He was delighted to hear the Japanese friends and particularly the women, are actively teaching and giving lectures.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Dear and valued co-worker:

The services you are rendering the Faith in Japan are indeed remarkable and unforgettable. I am filled with admiration for the spirit that animates you and for your splendid accomplishments. Persevere in your historic tasks, and rest assured that the Beloved is well pleased with you. I will continue to supplicate in your behalf the Master's richest blessings, that He may fulfill your heart's desire in His service.

Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi

(September 17, 1950)

[Letter of February 27, 1951]

The news of the progress being made by the Japanese Bahá'ís in teaching and in reaching people of importance, pleased him (the Guardian) greatly; and he urges you all to persevere, and never lose heart. In his visits to the Shrines, he will supplicate that Bahá'u'lláh may confirm your efforts, and enlarge the scope of your activities.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(February 27, 1951)

[Letter of September 21, 1951]

He (the Guardian) feels by all means you should plan to remain in Japan and buy a home, if possible. Your presence there has marked a turning point in the work in that country.

It will interest you to know that there are Bahá'ís now in Formosa and Indochina, and we hope an English believer will be able to go out to Hong Kong later. Lights are going on in Asia.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(September 21, 1951)

[Letter of November 12, 1952]

He (the Guardian) was most happy to hear of the progress being made in Japan, particularly in the new centers being opened to the Faith, such as Yokohama and Kofu. He was also very happy to know that Miss Alexander is now teaching in Kyoto.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(November 12, 1952)

[Letter of May 25, 1953]

To Mr. and Mrs. Donald Witzel

He (the Guardian) was deeply touched by the two letters by the two new believers of Korea, and the spirit of loving devotion which they portray. He wishes you to assure them of his prayers in their behalf. He hopes they will be inspired to intensify their teaching efforts, so others may be quickened by the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh, and an Assembly be formed in Korea.

He wishes you and the friends in Tokyo to keep in close touch with the friends in Korea. In fact, he wishes the Tokyo Assembly to undertake, as one of their direct responsibilities, the assistance of the work in Korea, sending if possible one or two pioneers to Korea. This will keep the Center in Korea, (and even enable it to develop into an Assembly), until such time as more American pioneers are sent to Korea.

The Guardian greatly values the services of the friends in Japan. He hopes they will now treble their efforts in the teaching field. Now that the Ten Year Crusade has been so auspiciously launched, the divine confirmations are descending; and the friends should seize this opportunity to spread the Faith to all corners of the globe. Especial opportunity devolves on the Japanese Bahá'ís and pioneers, as one of the goals of the Crusade is the establishment of a National Assembly for Japan.

The Guardian will pray for the success of the teaching efforts of the friends in Japan; also for the services and development of the Faith in Korea.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(May 25, 1953)

[Letter of July 10, 1954]

To Mr. Nouredin Momtazi

The Guardian is deeply appreciative of your devotion and sacrifices for the Faith. The gift which you have made of \$3,000 toward the purchase of the Hazira in Tokyo is a further sign of the dynamic spirit which animates you in all of your services.

The Guardian attaches the utmost importance to the Hazira of Tokyo, as this is to become the Headquarters of the National Assembly when it is elected.

The Guardian feels the time is now ripe for the Faith to spread very rapidly throughout Japan, and he wishes that all of the preliminary steps be taken for the development of the Faith as it goes forward. Thus he is anxious that the Hazira be purchased this year if possible.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(July 10, 1954)

[Letter of October 19, 1955]

To Mr. William Maxwell

The Guardian has received very glowing reports of the wonderful accomplishments of the Conference³⁷ in Japan. He feels that this conference marked a new point of development of the Faith in Japan, as well as the entire general area. The spirit of confirmation is reaching all those who arise to serve the Faith; and he is sure divine blessings will come upon everyone who attended the Conference and took part in its deliberations, and who will now go forth to win new victories.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(October 19, 1955)

[Letter of November 23, 1955]

To Mrs. Carolyn Dary

He (the Guardian) urges you to make a special effort to visit the friends in other places where you stop, no matter how short the time, as the news of the progress of the Faith in general will encourage and hearten them. Especially in places such as Japan, the friends need to be urged to persevere with their teaching efforts, so as to have more Spiritual Assemblies in the future to support their National Body, when the time comes for its formation.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(November 23, 1955)

[Letter of May 3, 1956]

The recent news from Japan is most heartening—eight Assemblies in all. Even though our dear Bahá'í sister, Miss Alexander may be exhausted from years of labour, the harvest is so rich that it compensates for any inconvenience or suffering.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(May 3, 1956)

[Letter of March 18, 1957]

To Mr. John McHenry III

He (the Guardian) is very happy that you can arrange your affairs so as to return to Korea... The phenomenal progress the Cause has made in that area (Korea) is practically exclusively due to the services of the young American Bahá'ís who are in the Armed Forces. Indeed, it is a great victory won by Bahá'í youth.

(signed by R. Rabbani)

(March 18, 1957)

[Letter of August 18, 1957]

To Mr. William Maxwell

The Guardian was happy to learn that you are still in Korea and that you are able to continue in the teaching work of that important country. He knows that wherever you are you will carry forward the pressing requirements of the Faith with vigor and enthusiasm but he feels that Korea and even Japan particularly need the help of yourself and other American pioneers at this time.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(August 18, 1957)

[Letter of October 18, 1957]

To Mr. Eugene Schreiber

The Master was most hopeful of the spread of the Faith in Japan. Now that His Promises are being fulfilled, the friends must be very happy. Likewise this happiness must translate itself into renewed devotion so that the Call of God may be raised in all parts of that important country.

The Guardian is praying for the success of the teaching work in Japan.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(October 18, 1957)

14: Shoghi Effendi Writes to Emperor Showa of Japan

Emperor Showa (Hirohito) of Japan had the longest reign (December 25, 1926 to January 7, 1989) of any reigning sovereign in Japan. He was respected as a scholar; being an eminent marine biologist, and he was beloved by his people.

Following the custom in Japan, the reign of a new emperor is given a specially selected name. After that emperor dies he takes on the name of the reign. Consequently, Emperor Hirohito, as he was known during his reign, is now known as Emperor Showa.

At the time of his coronation in the fall of 1928 seven specially bound Bahá'í books were presented to His Majesty. The books which were sent in the name of two American Bahá'ís were presented by Dr. Rokuichiro Masujima, who was a friend of Miss Alexander and who was close to the Faith. He had access to the Imperial Household.

Shoghi Effendi was asked to write something to be sent with the books. The message sent to accompany the books was "May the perusal of Bahá'í literature enable Your Imperial Majesty to appreciate the sublimity and penetrative power of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and inspire you on this auspicious occasion to arise for its worldwide recognition and triumph."

The books arrived after the coronation ceremonies so the presentation was delayed. On May 22 of the following year Dr. Masujima received a letter from the Minister of the Imperial Household that the seven books had been presented to the Emperor that day.

During World War II the palace did not suffer destruction so undoubtedly the books and message are still there with the other coronation gifts.

In 1930 the great Bahá'í teacher Miss Martha Root visited Japan. She sent two gifts to the Emperor; a small Persian rug and a sheet of Holy Writings written in Persian script in the form of a beautiful bird. Accompanying the gifts was a cable from Shoghi Effendi: "Martha Root care American Embassy Tokyo. Kindly transmit His Imperial Majesty, Tokyo, Japan on behalf of myself and Bahá'ís world over, expression of our deepest love as well as assurance of heartfelt prayers for his well-being and prosperity of his ancient realm."

Japan, after recovery from the devastation of World War II, shows the prosperity that the Guardian prayed for, and the Emperor, active and healthy until the end had a very long and fruitful reign.

15: Message from the Universal House of Justice to the North Pacific Oceanic Conference, Sapporo, Japan, September, 1971

To the Friends of God Assembled in the Conference of the North Pacific Ocean.

Dearly-loved Friends,

On the eve of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the opening of the Formative Age of our Faith we call to mind the high hopes often expressed by the beloved Master for the spread of the Cause in this region. His mention in the Tablets of the Divine Plan of many of the territories represented in this Conference, and the faithful and devoted services of that maid-servant of Bahá'u'lláh, the Hand of the Cause Agnes Alexander, who brought the Teachings to these shores in the early years of this century.

In these days we are witnessing an unprecedented acceleration of the teaching work in almost every part of the globe. In the North Pacific Ocean area great strides have been made in the advancement of the Cause since that historic Asia Regional Teaching Conference in Nikko just sixteen years ago. The next two years witnessed the formation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska and of the Regional National Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia. To the Convention in Tokyo at Ridván 1957 the Guardian addressed these prophetic words:

“This auspicious event, which posterity will regard as the culmination of a process initiated, half a century ago, in the capital city of Japan ... marks the opening of the second chapter in the history of the evolution of His Faith in the North Pacific area. Such a consummation cannot fail to lend a tremendous impetus to its onward march in the entire Pacific Ocean...”

Since that time National Spiritual Assemblies have also been firmly established in Korea and Taiwan.

Hokkaido, the site of this Conference, first heard of the Teachings less than fifteen years ago, and the first aboriginal peoples of this land accepted Bahá'u'lláh just over a decade ago. Now you are the witnesses to the beginnings of a rapid increase in the number of believers. Peoples in other islands and lands of the North Pacific, including the Ryukyus, Guam, the Trust Territories, the western shores of Canada and Alaska and the Aleutians are also enrolling under the banner of the Most Great Name, and next Ridván yet another pillar of the Universal House of Justice is to be raised in Micronesia. We are heartened at the prospect that from indigenous peoples of this vast oceanic area, the Ainu, the Japanese, the Chinese, the Koreans, the Okinawans, the Micronesians, the American Indians, the Eskimos, and the Aleuts vast numbers will soon enter the Faith.

The final hours of the Nine Year Plan are fast fleeting. Praised be to God that you have gathered to consult on ways and means of assuring complete victory so that from these outposts the Teachings may spread to those nearby lands where teeming millions have not as yet heard of the advent of this Most Great Dispensation.

The sweet perfume of victory is in the air, and we must hasten to achieve it while there is yet time. Vital goals, particularly on the homefronts of Taiwan and Japan, remain to be won, and everywhere the roots of the faith of the believers must sink deeper and deeper into the firm earth of the Teachings lest tempests and trials as yet unforeseen shake or uproot the tender plants so lovingly raised in the islands of this great Ocean and the land surrounding it.

As you and the friends in the sister Conference in Reykjavik bring this series of eight Oceanic and Continental Conferences to a triumphant close, our prayers for the success of your deliberations ascend at the Holy Threshold. May God grant you the resources, the strength, and the determination to attain your highest hopes and enable you to open a new and glorious chapter in the evolution of His Faith in the North Pacific area.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice

Afterword

The first printing of this book was done in 1974. As it contained new material, that is, Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and letters of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, many of which had never been published, and because its theme was Japan, it proved to be a successful addition to the Bahá'í literature throughout the Bahá'í world. It was translated into Japanese and has been one of the standard books in that language.

The Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Japan regularly has requests for the English edition although it has been out of print since the late 1970s.

When the compiler considered a second edition she decided to refer back to the original material for possible changes, to add new material, and also add more details such as the names of translators (when available), thereby hoping to increase the historical value. Very little of the original has been eliminated.

All of the Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Miss Alexander and to Bahá'ís in Japan have been included. Only some of the Tablets written to Japanese, who, at the time, were living in the United States have been included. It was difficult to choose which of Shoghi Effendi's letters to Miss Alexander should be included.

The Guardian had requested that she write to him often so their correspondence was extensive. She actually received many more letters than are printed here.

Most of Shoghi Effendi's letters (which, of course, also means those written on his behalf) to the early Bahá'ís of Japan and to the institutions of the Faith in Japan are printed here.

It was felt that certain communications from the Universal House of Justice would add to this important subject, hence the expansion to later years.

Footnotes

- [1.](#) Mr. McNutt, Mr. Wilhelm and Mr. Randall were staunch and devoted American Bahá'ís who tried to help the Faith in Japan as it was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wish.
- [2.](#) Mr. Struven was designated as Herald of the Kingdom by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
- [3.](#) Mr. McNutt, Mr. Wilhelm and Mr. Randall were staunch and devoted American Bahá'ís who tried to help the Faith in Japan as it was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wish.
- [4.](#) Mr. Shiroshi Nasu, a professor of Tokyo Imperial University, was a friend of Mr. Wilhelm.
- [5.](#) Mr. McNutt, Mr. Wilhelm and Mr. Randall were staunch and devoted American Bahá'ís who tried to help the Faith in Japan as it was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wish.
- [6.](#) Mr. Roh, a Korean, had studied in the West. Returning to Korea by way of Palestine, he met some Bahá'ís on the ship who told him of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He met 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Tiberius and was allowed several interviews by Him. Miss Alexander met Mr. Roh in Korea. He was teaching at the Christian College and told some of his students of the Bahá'í Faith, but he could not commit himself to the Faith.
- [7.](#) Bahá'í World Vol. III, p. 84.
- [8.](#) In the early days sometimes spelled Kwanichi.
- [9.](#) Hyacinth—the flower of knowledge.
- [10.](#) Comparing those near at hand who disobeyed the command of Bahá'u'lláh with the recipient of this Tablet, a Japanese.
- [11.](#) Infinite in regard to imagination, for without the mind there would be no imagination.
- [12.](#) Mr. Kikutaro Fukuta

- [13.](#) Mr. Tokujiro Torii
- [14.](#) Mr. Daiun Inouye, a Buddhist priest became a Bahá'í and gave up the priesthood.
- [15.](#) Mr. Sensui Saiki, a writer, was greatly attracted to the Faith and assisted Miss Alexander by translating literature into Japanese.
- [16.](#) The son of Mr. and Mrs. Torii. His name, Akira, means 'shining light' which the mother saw before his birth March 11, 1918.
- [17.](#) Accompanying this Tablet was a Japanese translation made by Mr. Saichiro Fujita at the command of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
- [18.](#) Mr. Noto was blind.
- [19.](#) A school girl of 17 years.
- [20.](#) Mr. Ono was blind.
- [21.](#) Addressed to Ahmad Sohrab.
- [22.](#) Japanese Foreign Office records list Viscount Minoji Arakawa as being Ambassador of Spain at that time. Spelling of the last name differs in the original text.
- [23.](#) The Great Kanto Earthquake of September 1923.
- [24.](#) Dr. Augur passed away the previous month.
- [25.](#) Mr. Aibara, a vibrant Bahá'í with leadership qualities, died suddenly at age 32.
- [26.](#) Akira Torii, the only second-generation Baha'i in Japan at that time died at age 17.
- [27.](#) Dr. Rokuichiro Masujima was a good friend of the Faith but he could not commit himself to becoming a Bahá'í.
- [28.](#) The Guardian had asked Miss Alexander to visit Mr. Fujita's mother, who lay ill in Yanai, Yamaguchi Prefecture. At that time it was an 18-hour train trip from Tokyo.
- [29.](#) The Guardian had asked Miss Alexander to visit Mr. Fujita's mother, who lay ill in Yanai, Yamaguchi Prefecture. At that time it was an 18-hour train trip from Tokyo.
- [30.](#) Mr. Tsuto Mori, at that time lay critically ill in the hospital and not expected to live. He declared his Faith shortly after, just before he died.
- [31.](#) Mr. Seto, the first Chinese-American Bahá'í, died while he was in Japan attending the first Convention. He is buried in the Yamate-machi Foreign Cemetery in Yokohama.
- [32.](#) On occasion of first summer school in Japan.
- [33.](#) International Bahá'í Teaching Conference, Nikko, Japan, September 1955.
- [34.](#) National Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia, with its seat in Tokyo, Japan.
- [35.](#) Australia.
- [36.](#) The purchase of the Tokyo Hazira was accomplished that year. It was not necessary to sell the Mukonoso property as Mr. Momtazi contributed a like amount toward the purchase of the Tokyo Hazira. When the Guardian was informed of the purchase, he cabled "Delighted loving prayers" to the Tokyo Local Spiritual Assembly.
- [37.](#) The International Teaching Conference at Nikko.

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