

JAPAN -- December 15 - 22, 1972

After a month in the South and Central Pacific, the transition to the cold climate and urbanization of Japan was rather sudden. On my arrival I was met by American pioneer Tim Mauldin (I think from Hawaii) and I stayed in the Tokyo center with U.S. pioneer Tom Mandeville. Both are making efforts to stay enthusiastic in the relatively dampening Baha'i atmosphere of Tokyo. Nothing specific had been planned in advance for my four day stay in Tokyo, and in general I was disappointed to find that the Japanese friends, with all their potential for good administration, are still not well organized and depend too much on their pioneers. Language barriers are very difficult and often I heard the believers complain that the Baha'i meetings are lifeless. Youthful enthusiasm and music are almost lacking and I had the feeling that an injection of such enthusiasm would transform the Japanese community. Recent mass teaching/consolidation efforts in the south of Japan had terminated shortly before my arrival due to Aux. Bd. member Toni Mantel's visa expiring, Sandra Sims Strean becoming ill, and lack of a constructive sense of unity in the group, whose third member was a Japanese youth Makoto Yasuda recently returned from two years in the States.

My presence in Tokyo generated a certain amount of activity. After the friends discovered I could sing, tapes were made and a special fireside at the home of the Schwerin's was held, with about ten attending. Kimiko Schwerin and Makoto Yasuda are the most musical of the Japanese Baha'is from what I saw, and they have a few nice songs in Japanese. John Schwerin and a Persian pioneer, Mehrban Jam, are on a newly appointed and struggling Nat'l A-V Committee which represents both talent and enthusiasm and should be a great boon to the Japanese if supported. I tried to encourage them as much as possible.

During my stay the U.S. singing group England Dan (Jimmy Seals' brother) and John Ford ~~is~~ Coley, managed by Marcia Day, were in Japan and unprecedented publicity resulted.

On Tuesday Dec. 19th I flew to Osaka as per my original schedule and was the guest of the Katirai's. Pleasant times were spent in their home. The only noteworthy event was a meeting scheduled by the NTC at the home of the Vahdat's, on the 20th, at which about 40 attended, mostly youth. The program consisted of group singing, short talks, and viewing of my slides, with two declarations of Faith resulting. The friends said such youth attendance and spirit were unprecedented in Nishinomiya and the Osaka area. I wish the Japanese youth would arise and inject more such spirit in their community!

Another and low-key meeting was held with English language students during dinner in Himeji, with little result.

While I was in Osaka discussions were held with Counsellor Mumtazi about the possibilities for forming an international Baha'i travelling music group composed principally of Asian youth. I was asked to informally investigate the possibilities as I travelled through N.E. Asia, and to make recommendations based on my experiences in Europe and the U.S. This I have done, and I find the potential for success very great and exciting. Certainly in Japan, as well as in Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines and Hong Kong, such a group could light many fires.

KOREA — December 22 - 29, 1973

Aux. Bd. member Toni Mantel proceeded with me to Seoul where we were the guests of Capt. and Mrs. Kelley of the U.S. Navy. Toni became ill and rested during the week and I too was slightly affected. Three meetings were held in Seoul, two at the Nat'l Center and one at the home of Counsellor John McHenry, with attendance varying from 15 to 35. The smaller meeting was devoted entirely to learning songs which I understand the friends are now singing there. There are at least three good guitarists among the youth in Seoul but their talents are insufficiently utilized, and most unfortunately they sing mostly English language Baha'i songs. I hope they begin to compose songs in Korean.

The 23rd through the 26th was spent with Counsellor McHenry in the southern part of Korea, in and near Young Chun and Gyeong-Ju (Kyong-Ju), attending a teacher training institute held in a village school, teaching in the villages, and visiting with the Regional and Area teaching committees in the Baha'i Institute in Gyeong-Ju. I was much impressed by the spiritual receptivity of the Korean farming ~~the~~ people and by the spirit and depth of some of the Baha'is, most notably the Aux. Bd. members Mr. Suh and Mr. Yang, so different and yet both highly effective. But it is clear that the effort so far is woefully inadequate to the task of deepening the more than 8,500 Baha'is (whose addresses are known, out of more than 13,000 on the list) and reaching the countless villages as yet unopened. The situation reminds me of that of Bolivia when I was there in 1967. Armies of teachers are needed. And yet paid teachers of the past have not been satisfactory, and emphasis is being placed now on volunteer effort directed by teaching committees. The three teaching institutes (two new) are underutilized.

It seemed to me while there that Korea would benefit greatly if better teaching materials could be developed, either printed (pictures, etc.) or filmstrips with battery projectors and perhaps cassette narration. Resources are few at the moment for developing such materials but the need is very great. At present they have effectively only one pamphlet, in color (nicely printed) and with return business reply card, and no other materials.

I was also most impressed with Counsellor John McHenry. Evidently there has been some disunity in the past between the Bd. members and the NSA, and John's retiring but gently persistent manner is well suited to the cultivation of positive cooperation.

TAIWAN — December 29 - January 5, 1973

Toni Mantel and I again proceeded together to Taiwan, where we were joined by Philip Marangella of Hong Kong. My stay was initially marred by some illness. Accommodations were in the International House, where Mr. Olson (of Guam) is staying.

Two meetings were held in Taipei, one of the subject of Baha'i economics, with about 10 attending, and a 19-Day Feast at which we sang songs and the spirit was brighter. Enthusiastic spirit in Taipei seems to be limited more or less to two or three youth, especially two girls.

On January 2 Phil Marangella, Toni Mantel and I went by train to Kaohsiung, southern Taiwan, where Canadian pioneer Nancye Becker

lives. I was much impressed with her radiant spirit in a lonely post. We had a small but warm meeting in her little apartment. The next day she accompanied us by bus to Tainan, where the Suleimani's have been pioneering since Oct. 1954. They also are beautiful and delightful Baha'is, and we had a very pleasant meeting at the Center (their home) with about 20 attending. At most meetings I show slides and sing songs, with good effect.

These ~~xxxx~~ pioneers, together with Victor Tom (whom we met in Taipei), form the real backbone of the Taiwan Baha'i community, at least from what I could see in one week. The spirit of the Faith has not yet caught on to the extent that we enjoy in other places. Greater enthusiasm and more youth teaching are needed to in turn attract more youth and greater enthusiasm. As in Korea, there are a significant proportion of young Baha'is and even some musical talent but these resources have not been much used for the teaching work nor are the youth organizing many activities of their own. One hears the complaint that efforts have been made but all are busy and it is hard to achieve participation.

Travellers to Taiwan should not expect hospitality since it is not easy for the believers to accomodate guests. Hotels can be easily found for US\$2.50 to 5.00 and meals run about US \$1.00 each.

HONG KONG -- January 5 - 9, 1973

Phil Marangella proceeded with me to Hong Kong, where the friends are very active and well organized relatively speaking and my time was much used. The Mockons (from the Philippines) and Charles Duncan, pioneers in Macao, came over for a day. Highlights of my stay were an afternoon spent in one of the parks, where we formed ourselves into a singing group and the Hong Kong friends were inspired to see the success of this method of teaching; and a public meeting in the Center in Kowloon attended by about 50, mostly new faces, with one young man declaring.

Two young pioneers from Malaysia have injected enthusiasm into the Hong Kong community, which, combined with the talents of the Hong Kong believers in organization, produce a fine basis for activities. If the Malaysian youth return to Malaysia at the end of the Plan there may be some lessening of activity. There is fine musical ability in Hong Kong and I hope they will form a Baha'i group and rehearse together as this will lend great impetus to their youth teaching. I might also mention that David Mockon in Macao has composed some very impressive songs which I recorded and have sent to key singers in Europe and the U.S. Wonderful talent now among Baha'is!

PHILIPPINES -- January 9 - 19, 1973

My visit to the Philippines has been very full. My first day was spent very educationally with a leading industrialist, advisor to President Marcos on agrarian reform, and friends of Baha'is, Eligio Tavanlar. On the 11th I flew to Davao, Mindanao, for four nights, where 11 meetings were scheduled and a total of over 2600 attended, mostly in the University of Mindanao. The schedule also included a visit to ~~the~~ Kidapawan, three hours ~~xxxx~~ distant by jeep, and a barrio area, a further hour away. The spirit among the pioneers in Davao is exemplary and their confirmation astoundingly abundant. Perhaps these are some of the fruits from the soil so

recently watered with martyrs' blood.

Highlight of a visit filled with highlights was a songfest at U. of Mindanao attended by some 600 or 800 high school and college students and teachers. Many Baha'i songs were sung, including a simple round "World, World, Why do you reject your Lord? When will you receive your savior, Baha'u'llah" Several days later pioneer Dale Eng heard a classroom of high school students singing this round for 15 minutes while waiting for their teacher to arrive. Such is the power of song!

On the 15th and 16th I visited Cebu, where there are seven Iranian students and a few native believers. A public meeting was held with about 10 non-Baha'is attending. Following this I appeared on TV with two of the Iranian students for a very friendly 20 minute interview. Unfortunately the spirit of teaching is not as strong as it should be in Cebu, and organization is deficient, even after many years of pioneers there. I understand the NSA is thinking of settling new pioneers there when possible.

The evening of the 17th a public meeting was held in the Nat'l Center in Manila with about 30 attending, including some interested seekers. Again the Manila community has many Iranian students, and the spirit of teaching could be much greater. Even though Filipinos are musical people I miss hearing Baha'is singing here. Surely music can be used here with great effect if some of the young believers, especially, would arise to learn, compose, and teach songs in the various communities.

Tonight, the 18th, a meeting is scheduled in Los Baños, one hour distant by bus from Manila. Tomorrow morning at 4:00 A.M. I shall proceed, God willing, to Djakarta.

cc: U.S. Int'l Goals Committee
Continental Pioneer Committee, Asia
Universal House of Justice

INDONESIA -- January 19 - 21, 1973

Only two days were spent in Indonesia, in Djakarta, and I left earlier than originally scheduled for Singapore, since relatively little can be done in Djakarta. Mrs. Samimi was my gracious hostess, and most of my time was spent with the Peymans. A meeting was held in their home one evening with about a dozen attending, and my slides and songs were very well received.

Two pioneers from the States, "Red" Hubbard and his wife, had very recently arrived and were looking for an apartment and job. A young Australian Baha'i girl was also travelling through.

The Faith has been banned in Indonesia by the Moslem government, and the once active rural teaching has halted. The Minister of ~~Exxi~~ Religion seems to be the chief opponent of the Baha'is, since other ministers and Soeharto are either neutral or friendly, but efforts at achieving recognition of the Faith have failed.

SINGAPORE -- January 21 - 27, 1973

Singapore is a modern, prosperous, clean, racially diverse and highly materialistic little country. The new NSA seems to struggle with its own inexperience and a lack of unified enthusiasm such as one finds in most large cities. Although I didn't see signs of outright disunity among the Baha'is I saw, the absence of positive unity was obvious and as a result little organizational things took an inordinate amount of time, sapping energy needed for the teaching work. In time, I'm sure, the atmosphere there will change and the friends will rise above the details of life to generate a greater spirit of love and teaching.

Singapore was my 17th country and the first in which the friends were not at the airport to meet me. They had intended to be there but the time passed unnoticed. Lena and Freddie Tan were my ~~kni~~ kind hosts, as they are for Govindan (pioneer from Malaysia) and other travellers.

During my stay we were blessed with the presence of Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone, who was called upon to dedicate the new Nat'l Center at 4 Cooling Close, Serangoon ~~xxxx~~ Garden, Sing. 19 (near the Tan's). The new phone is 886140. It was also arranged for me to speak at the ~~Rix~~ Polytechnic University, where 50 students came to the ~~p~~ optional meeting resulting in one new believer from Malaysia. And a further meeting was arranged at the International School, a secondary school attended by a young Baha'i. Several spontaneous meetings with the Baha'is were also held for learning new songs, and I showed slides late in the evening after the dedication of the new center.

In general the people of Singapore seem singularly unhappy despite their relatively beautiful surroundings, and this generally negative atmosphere combined with the ~~flig~~ fledgling condition of Baha'i administration and the insufferable tropical heat and humidity were somewhat depressing. Travellers be forewarned!

MALAYSIA -- January 27 - 30, 1973

Malaysia is justly famous among Baha'is for its progressive activities and youthful enthusiasm. Although by oversight the CPC/Asia had not informed the NSA of my coming and neither had I until just a few days prior, delightful and useful activities were arranged. In Kuala Lumpur I was taken to photograph the temple site, some several miles from the city,

and then was driven to the nearby town of Petaling Jaya where a dozen or more Baha'i youth and their friends were waiting. We had a pleasant meeting of songs and stories. After supper with some of the friends they put me on the night train to Penang, where I was the guest of Shantha Sundram. Almost continuous meetings were held there and in that area during the 36 hours of my visit, with some youth coming from other places as well to share songs, tell stories, and see slides. I was most impressed with the range of musical talent in Penang, and hope that sometime soon the Malaysian youth can organize into a really effective travelling music team which could visit Singapore, Thailand and other neighboring countries (when the time is right) and stimulate the friends. Could an Asian Fiona Dunn be found to organize such groups?

VIETNAM -- January 30 - February 3, 1973

Although the ceasefire was nominally in effect, fighting continued near Saigon while I was there and I was therefore confined to the city. Fortunately Dr. Doug Gibson, American oral surgeon in Saigon, offered me the use of his house, so I could avoid the high prices and unpleasant condition of the Saigon hotels. War has definitely taken its toll on what I'm told was once a beautiful city.

Because my visit coincided inadvertently with Tet, little could be arranged for me to do. A meeting had been scheduled in the Center on the last evening of my stay for Dr. Soraya, who was expected, and invitations sent to the friends. Dr. Soraya was unable, as it turned out, to enter Vietnam so I showed slides, sang songs and talked with the dozen or so Baha'is who came on Tet eve--mostly NSA or national committee members.

Several talks with Aux. Bd. member Van Loi were the most interesting part of my visit. After the recent removal by the House of four NSA members, there is a temporary vacuum of leadership in Vietnam. The Center is in unfortunate condition and the NSA chairman Mr. Sang (who lives there) together with Van Loi seem to be the only ones doing any cleaning. The secretary (or chairman?) of the Nat'l Youth Committee told me that his committee had submitted various plans to the NSA a couple of months previous and was still awaiting a response, while meanwhile activities had ceased. And the NSA has not met for some weeks nor was it planning a meeting soon until Van Loi requested one in mid-February to deal with the need for a new national treasurer. One would hope that the new NSA will soon grow into its maturity and assume its heavy responsibilities.

Mr. Van Loi, from the few discussions we had, impressed me as did Mesese Hokafonu in Tenga. Both live next to and work closely with NSA's that have problems, and both seem, to a passing observer, to be succeeding well at staying removed from NSA decision-making while yet offering encouragement, advice and counsel. Theirs is a difficult position to be in.

KHMER REPUBLIC -- February 3 - 4, 1973

Upon arrival in Phnom Penh I was met, to my surprise, at the airport by a messenger thoughtfully provided by Dempsey Morgan, and taken to the Morgans' home. A full and eventful day was spent with them and Kem Saroeun, one of the believers who was jailed under terrible conditions in 1966 when Sihanouk moved against the Baha'is. Recognition has not yet been granted by the new government, principally it seems because of corrupt conditions of government rather than fundamental objections, so little can be done. The Morgans have few visitors and I'm sure more would be welcome. Fresh and mature pioneers should be sent as soon as recognition is granted.

cc: U.S. IGC / CPC Asia / Universal House of Justice

THAILAND -- February 4-6 and 9-12, 1973

My visits to Thailand were less fruitful than anticipated due to a lack of purposeful organizing by the NSA. I missed the Feast at which they had planned to have me meet the friends, because of the side trip to Laos recommended by Cousellor Payman and Hand of the Cause Featherstone. The only other meeting was held on my last evening with about 35 attending, mostly youth, so we learned some songs together and I showed slides, with a nice spirit of unity prevailing by the end of the meeting. Dr. Muhajir was also present. Plans had been made by the NSA for me to go with a Persian pioneer to do some unstructured teaching in nearby towns, but these plans did not materialize.

Since I saw so little of the Baha'i activities in Bangkok and since there have been many more qualified and recent visitors, I shall refrain from general comments. The few Thais I talked with while travelling were rather unreceptive to the Faith and it may be that more focus on rural teaching is needed.

At present, simple accomodation for Baha'i visitors is offered at the National Center. A room at the Tracadero Hotel, downtown, arranged through Badi Travel Service there, costs about \$6.00 US.

LAOS -- February 7-9, 1973

From Bangkok I travelled by bus to Vientiane, which is inexpensive but more than a twelve hour trip involving several changes and a ferry. In Vientiane two meetings were arranged for my two evenings there, with the Baha'is and two or three seekers. A projector was obtained so we were able to view slides. Most of the pioneers and teachers were out in other areas teaching so no visits to villages could be arranged for me nor did I get any feeling of the condition of the Baha'is in general, other than the obviously good sign that people were not in the city. Firouz Aghdacy and his wife provided simple hospitality.

Visitors to Vientiane should come prepared with good directions. Only one Baha'i can be reached by phone, at his office, and when I arrived he was not at work and the phones were not functioning. But taxis can take you to the Center which is in the Wat Tai Noi area of town, one block over, one block down and opposite from the Citroen dealer. Once found, the Baha'is are very helpful and can organize activities on short notice. (My advance letter had not been opened and my cable arrived after I did but this made little difference.)

BURMA -- February 12-18, 1973

Burma is an absolutely fascinating and extremely beautiful country, and the Baha'is there are a delight. For some 15 or 20 years the country has been almost completely isolated from the rest of the world by its communist government, so the once grand and cosmopolitan British colonial city of Rangoon is now the picture of decay. But the people still carry themselves erect and are eager to know of world affairs. The Baha'is are sincere and serious students of the Faith, and because of their isolation, visitors receive an enthusiastic welcome and provide a great service. According to the NSA Secretary there are now about 7,000 Baha'is in Burma (of whom about 1,500 live in the Baha'i village of Daidanaw) and 76 ISA's. More inspiration for teaching needs to be generated.

A visit to Daidanaw was arranged for me, and it was certainly one of the more rewarding and happy days I am likely to spend. The countryside, villages, and village people are beautiful in every way,

and being with them brings a certain peace to the soul which is wonderful and difficult to describe. Afternoon and evening meetings were held there at which I spoke, sang songs, and shared recordings of Baha'is singing in many countries. The evening meeting attracted as many as 300 despite the harvests. On the return a small meeting was held in Twante where the Baha'is have a local center.

In Rangoon four meetings were held in the national Hazira with 15 to 20 attending each meeting. It was not possible to show slides because the brand new projector donated by the Baha'is of Singapore is missing a bulb, and such things are not available in Burma. A typical example of the handicaps they suffer.

Travellers wishing to visit Daidanaw must be staying at the President Hotel at the time they apply, since only the local authority there is familiar with the procedures. Since tours book at the President advance booking is recommended. Single rooms run about \$6.00 US depending on the current rate of exchange (fixed by the government). A private room is available at the YMCA most any time for less than US \$2.50, but accomodation there is only adequate.

INDIA (Calcutta) -- February 18-21, 1973

Calcutta is a materially impoverished and spiritually sick city. Decent accomodations are expensive and hard to find, as is clean food. Communications and transport are also difficult (none of the Baha'is have phones and houses are hard to find). With all these problems it is not surprising that although the Faith is very old in Calcutta, the spirit does not match that in other places.

After some difficulty I located the Baha'is, who had been notified only the day before by their NSA of my arrival. It happened that the weekly Sunday night meeting at their center was being held that evening, so I was able to meet about ten Baha'i friends. A very fruitful meeting was held the following evening with ISA and State Teaching Committee members, at which we discussed youth activities, and directives from the House of Justice regarding teaching and deepening methods. The third evening a fireside at Aux. Bd. member Mr. Chatterjee's house was attended by about ten friends, but the spirit was disappointing.

BANGLADESH -- February 21-23, 1973

As suggested by Dr. Muhajir in Bangkok, I made arrangements for a short visit to Dacca before proceeding to Nepal. According to the friends in Dacca I was their fourth visitor since before the war, and all of us were very happy with my two day visit. Delightful accomodation was provided at the National Center, which is I think the largest and perhaps most pleasant I have seen anywhere. Mr. and Mrs. Muqaddas, beautiful and energetic pioneers living there, were my hosts.

Following the winter school held in January, a few of the Baha'i youth have become enthusiastic, bringing a powerful new resource to the teaching work. These ~~thru~~ youths are radiant and sincere and are already putting together small dramas for teaching, as well as taking frequent teaching trips despite the appalling conditions of travel in the new country. I hope future institutes or schools can be attended by foreign visitors as this will add greatly to the spirit and understanding of these youth.

Activities during my two day stay included a meeting with the local Baha'is with about 20 attending; a visit to a college and a school to meet informally with teachers; and an unplanned visit to Dacca University. Although other schools have been successfully approached

this was the first Baha'i teaching effort at the University, and we were all very much excited by the teaching potential there. No sooner had we entered one of the residential buildings than we were surrounded by students interested in meeting the foreigners (Mr. Muqaddas and myself), which led to a fireside with eager and highly intelligent students whose response was 100% positive and enthusiastic. A newspaper interview was arranged on the spot and a photo of myself provided the next day for publication. Preliminary arrangements were also made for a public meeting at some future date, and several students were eager to come to the Baha'i Center to learn more. Rarely have I seen such open response among such talented and educated youths. And the response was entirely to the Message since we did no singing and used no teaching materials.

This openness at Dacca University presents an important and undoubtedly temporary opportunity for the Baha'is which must not be lost. Having just concluded a war with Muslim Pakistan, Bangladesh youths, though professing Islam, are uncommitted and open to new teachings. If, however, the new nation faces a struggle with Hindu India or some other country, the fanatic strains in Islam may again emerge closing many doors to the Baha'is. It was also apparent to me that some of the students we talked with are obvious leaders whose energy and abilities have already been proven during the war, and shortly they will be in important positions in their country. Now is the time to expose them to the Baha'i teachings. A youthful foreign visitor knowledgeable in the Teachings is the ideal catalyst for this effort. Foreign visitors attract intense and favorable attention at the University at present, judging from my short impromptu visit and the more than enthusiastic reception there, and thus can do far more than Mr. Muqaddas and the Bengali Baha'i youth alone. If a young European or American Baha'i could stay in Dacca for perhaps a month and devote himself to teaching in the University, surely the results would be very great especially for the long term future of the Faith in that fast-changing country.

NEPAL -- February 23 - March 1, 1973

Nepal is also a country of great opportunities and rising spirit among the Baha'i youth, though the Faith is at once more firmly established and more restricted by the government than in Dacca. The first deepening institute in Nepal, lasting three days and attended by some 15 young Baha'is from different parts of the country, was arranged for my visit. It was held in the new National Center, a very presentable, newly completed building registered in the name of individual Baha'is (since the Faith is not recognized). The spirit of these Nepalese believers, so young in the Faith, may be seen by their immediate response in writing two Baha'i songs in Nepalese after I had suggested this possibility to them. The young NSA seems quite capable and unified, though inexperienced, and surely they will sponsor or encourage ISAs to sponsor regular deepening institutes so that the full resource of their lovely Baha'i youth can be developed and utilized.

Other activities included a song-fest with the Baha'is, a fireside (or rather two firesides) at which slides and tapes were shared, a public talk at USIS on the Environment, and a visit to the Baha'is of Bhaktapur, where there are many active youth and a new rented Baha'i Center with capacity of 100 (costing US\$5.00 per month!).

Hospitality was provided by my old friend from California, Dawn Edwards. I should mention here her remarkable project here, the Unity Restaurant and Unity General Store. With basically no

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experience she has created from scratch in only six months a very presentable and business-like restaurant providing wholesome food at Western standards and reasonable prices to capacity crowds of foreign residents and visitors in Kathmandu. Her twenty employees have all become Baha'is and the day begins with Baha'i prayers. Income from the business has put a number of these Baha'is on their feet, in a country where traffic policemen and common laborers earn US\$8 to 10 a month, and some are going to school while others study reading and writing in the corner between orders. There is a lovely happy spirit among the Unity workers which seems to be based on good service honestly performed, and the restaurant is an interesting example of what pioneering ingenuity can accomplish.

I should also mention that there are other Baha'is families here who provide a good foundation for the otherwise young and immature Baha'i community. Noteworthy are Bharat Dutta Koirala (pronounced Kwerala), Associate Editor of the English-language newspaper and himself a Nepalese, and his Persian wife Mahsheed, educated in the Philippines and India, and a great organizer. Also Aux. Bd. member Mr. Munje and his wife, pioneers from India. So the Nepalese Baha'i community seems to be maturing rapidly, with all the ingredients for a healthy and rapidly growing community. God willing, that growth can continue unimpeded by the government, which has taken a position against religions proselytizing and conversion.

cc: Universal House of Justice
CPC/Asia
U.S. IGC

INDIA -- March 1 - 17, 1973

Activities for me in India were arranged by the NSA, but I was rather disappointed that only a few places could be visited due to the slowness of surface travel and the prohibitive expense of air tickets. After a couple of days in New Delhi and consultations with NSA Secretary Mr. Shah I proceeded to Pilani in Rajasthan, where Mrs. Gloria Paizi was conducting a deepening course for the Baha'i students at Birla Institute of Technology and Science, a well-known technical university. A highly successful public meeting was held at the university with 125 attending, and the study class was also effective with about a dozen regulars. After three days I left for Jaipur, capital of Rajasthan, where a 15 minute radio interview on All India Radio (local) was arranged and a small meeting with the friends was held during my three day visit. It was also important there that I could encourage the Iranian pioneers who steadfastly face a discouraging teaching field.

The next stop, after three days of travel by bus and train, was the New Era School in Panchgani, near Poona and Bombay. The school enjoys a delightful mountain location and the Baha'i spirit and enthusiasm is most refreshing. Since I arrived late in the evening and had to depart at noon the next day, only two meetings could be arranged, one with the older students and one with the Baha'is. My songs and stories were most warmly received, and I was happy to see an energetic, optimistic and constructive atmosphere among the friends. No doubt the Johnsons, and to some extent the Grovers (newly arrived), are largely responsible.

Dick Grover accompanied me to Poona where an evening meeting was held with the youthful Baha'i community. Rarely have I seen a group more ready to sing, learn songs, see slides, hear stories, etc. I tried to encourage them to share their talents and enthusiasm with other parts of India through organizing a travelling teaching team, but since they are most all English-speaking in Poona there are language problems. The next morning Dick, Ruhl Behl (Chairman of the Nat'l Youth Committee) and I proceeded to Bombay where an evening meeting with the Baha'is was held at the Baha'i Center, with about twenty attending. The spirit of the friends was rather more sombre and depressing than in other places. A brief session with a quorum of the National Youth Committee was held after the meeting to discuss the travelling Baha'i shows (singing groups) that have been so successful on other continents, and the possible application of this idea in India. The Committee agreed that such an effort would have great effect in India and that the resources are probably available, but for some reason they seemed neither enthusiastic nor optimistic. I had the same feeling from Mr. Shah when discussing this idea, and I later learned that Dwight Allen also had discussed this with Mr. Shah though Mr. Shah did not mention it.

From these brief experiences in Calcutta (previous report), Delhi, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra, and from talking with Baha'is in these places, it seems that the Baha'is face many challenges in India. It is a general characteristic of Hindus that they will readily agree with the truth of Baha'u'llah's Coming and His Teachings, but this does not imply to them that they must leave behind their Hindu traditions or allegiance to gurus or other leaders. Thus wholehearted dedication to the Faith is unusual except among the pioneers and a handful of travel teachers.

I also found an absence of the teaching spirit and the sense that being a Baha'i is both fun and important, which usually characterized Baha'i youth around the world. Perhaps in the South, where Malaysian youth pioneers have been active, this spirit can be found more than in the North. To make matters more discouraging, youth in

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India find it difficult to attend conferences, where such spirit is usually generated, and inspiring news of activities and successes is poorly disseminated. It is for these reasons that I was hoping to inspire some interest in a travelling show which could ignite enthusiasm and the teaching spirit in the universities and other youthful communities throughout India. Of course, such a show should not imitate the Western model, but should rather utilize the talents of a diverse group of Indians singing primarily in Indian style and perhaps using drama as well (since this is a popular medium in India). These and other aspects were discussed with the Nat'l Youth Comm.

One other thought occurred to me which I would like to present here. It seems that the Master made a number of emphatic statements in His Tablets about the future of India. One example is the Tablet quoted by Hand of the Cause Mr. Faizi in London, May 2, 1963. But these Tablets are not available to the friends in authenticated, printed form. Perhaps if some of these references could be provided to the Indians through their youth magazine or other medium, it would serve to inspire them, and especially the youth among them, to arise and fulfill their destiny. Certainly the Americans would have accomplished little without the Tablets of the Divine Plan, and I would think the same principle would apply in a lesser way to India.

For the benefit of other Westerners travelling through India, some final remarks about travel here might be helpful. Distances are great and air tickets expensive, but alternative travel has its drawbacks. Busses go to almost every village and are easy to get and very cheap, but travel is slow, noisy, dusty and very bouncy. Fast and clean trains exist between major cities but seats must be booked weeks in advance. For me with one week's notice only third class "three tier" accommodations could be obtained on crowded trains with wooden seats and berths, no blankets or cushions provided, and requiring twice the travel time of the fastest trains. Thus travellers should specifically request the NSA to book comfortable passage considerably in advance, except the adventuresome youthful traveller who may wish to experience India more directly, and who is equipped with a blanket and a strong constitution.

Visitors travelling by land should also be prepared to spend most of their time travelling. The ordinary train to Bombay from Delhi, for instance, takes some 30 hours, and the bus to nearby Pilani (crow-flight distance about 100 miles) some 7 hours. Thus to visit six cities took me nine days of travel out of fifteen available to me. Only careful advance planning, which cannot be expected from the NSA, could reduce this time requirement.

cc: The Universal House of Justice
CPC/Asia
Counsellor Shirin Bowman
U.S. ICC

AFGHANISTAN -- March 18-19, 1973

Upon arrival in Kabul I telephoned Mr. Rashidi, whose number had been given me by Dr. Salmanpour in New Delhi. It seemed that my letter to Mr. Akhavan had not been received since that gentleman was travelling, but Mr. Rashidi nevertheless came to meet me at the airport, rising from sickbed. A note of introduction from Dr. Salmanpour was presented and Mr. Rashidi settled me in a modest hotel.

After sightseeing with Mr. Rashidi's son, I was invited with them to take lunch with a three-star general who I was told is second in command in the Army. This invitation had been arranged previously for Mr. Rashidi and I was included as his friend. No mention was made of the Faith.

In the evening there was a similar invitation to the home of Dr. Javid, President of the university in Kabul. Here, also, no mention was made of the Faith.

On the second day Mr. Mahboobi, a pioneer employed by Mr. Rashidi in his import business, came to get me and took me to his home, which is the unmarked Hazirat'u'l-Quds. After lunch there we picked up two young Afghan believers who were familiar with the Temple property, and proceeded there. Pictures were taken of this property and, earlier, of the Hazira. On the way to the Temple site these believers gave me a paperback copy of Baha'u'llah and the New Era and left me off near the University Library, asking me to present the book to the librarian, which I did. He seemed to be the chief librarian, and commented that this was the first book they had about the Faith.

That evening a meeting was held at the home of ~~the~~ one of the native believers, with about 25 Baha'is attending including many young men. I showed slides and sang songs, and the spirit was very cordial. In general I was impressed with the radiance and apparent capacity of some of these believers, though of course with language barriers and in such a short time this was but an impression.

The following morning I departed for Tehran.

Some time was spent with both Mr. Rashidi and Mr. Mahboobi, including tearful goodbyes at the airport. Both appear to be dedicated servants working under severe restrictions. Mr. Rashidi especially regretted being unable to attend the international Convention and other international gatherings of Baha'is.

Although I was watching and alert, there seemed to be no unusual attention attracted by my visit to Afghanistan or to the Baha'i properties there. I trust that nothing undue has happened since my departure.

IRAN -- March 20-April 7, 1973

In Iran my schedule had been put at the disposal of the East and West Committee, and four meetings were arranged for me in and near Tehran by that committee, including a fireside for foreigners and a meeting for Baha'i villagers south of the city. Slides were shown at these gatherings and songs sung. I also provided songs at a number of other gatherings both large and small. A studio recording was made by the Music Committee in their new facility in the Hazirat'u'l-Quds, for distribution as a cassette to the friends.

I also made arrangements to visit Shiraz and Isfahan, and besides ~~seeing~~ seeing and photographing the Holy Places, a meeting was held in each city for youth. In Isfahan this gathering was particularly successful, with about 45 attending and a very pleasant spirit pervading. At this meeting a young man named Suhayl Safa'i, member of a new music group in the Tehran area, shared some of his compositions about the Faith. These I found very exciting as the harbinger of a new spirit among the Iranian youth.

In general I found my stay in Iran taxing and frustrating, mostly due to complicated and difficult organizational problems. There was usually confusion about schedules, and the air of secrecy made it difficult to find the proper channels or persons responsible. The Naw-Ruz holiday compounded these problems. Of course, the visits to the Holy Places and meetings with the friends were very rewarding.

I should like to suggest that the National Assembly of Iran prepare a small fact sheet for mailing to foreign visitors, describing in a general way the areas

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of the country the Baha'i visitor might want to visit, the types and expense of travel to these areas and the time involved, the services provided and not provided by the various welcoming committees, and the Iranian holidays when special considerations might apply. Weather could also be mentioned, since I saw cases there of travellers arriving poorly clad. The actual addresses or telephone numbers of the friends in different places could of course be omitted, and supplied upon arrival as at present. With such a general manual in hand, travellers will be much better able to plan their time and make their personal arrangements for ~~fmxx~~ taking full advantage of their visit in Iran. Mr. Mansour's considerable burden of correspondence to visitors might also be lessened.

cc: The Universal House of Justice