

Agnes Alexander

Opening the Pacific to the Bahá'í Faith

Arthur Lyon Dahl



(miss) Agnes B. Alexander
1911

Agnes Baldwin Alexander

- Born in Hawai'i on 21 July 1875 into two families of Protestant missionaries
- Bahá'í declaration in Rome on 26 November 1900
- Taught by May Bolles in Paris in 1901
- Opened Hawai'i to the Faith on 26 December 1901
- First Bahá'í to visit Alaska in 1905
- Pioneer to Japan 1914-1937 and 1950-1967
- Opened Korea to the Faith 1921
- Named Hand of the Cause of God in March 1957
- Passed away in Honolulu on 1 January 1971



Agnes Alexander 1900



Agnes Alexander with her parents 1900s

Discovers the Faith in 1900

- Sails to Europe 5 May 1900
- Meets Mrs. Charlotte Dixon and her two daughters in Rome, on their return from 'Akka
- Receives a Bahá'í prayer
- Convinced that Christ has returned to this Earth
- Letter of declaration to 'Abdu'l-Bahá on 26 November 1900
- Travels to Paris in Spring 1901 to see May Bolles
- Three and a half months in the Bahá'í group in Paris
- Returns to Hawai'i via London, Greenacre, San Francisco on 26 December 1901

Tablet from the Master June 1901

To Miss Alexander, the servant of God, through Miss Bolles.

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.

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 the moths hasten to the lamp and thus illumine that distant country by the Light of God.

Upon thee be salutations and praise.

First Baha'is in Hawai'i

- Clarence Smith (already in Paris)
- Elizabeth Muther (Governess of the Smiths)
- Kawanichi Yamamoto
- Mme Otis (soloist at Central Union Church)
- Dr. George Jacob Augur (Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Baha) and Mrs Augur (sister of Mrs Otis)
pioneers to Japan 1914-1919
- Mme Katherine Baldwin (sister of Clarence Smith)



First Bahá'ís in Hawai'i 1909

Japan

"One night, in Honolulu, I had gone to hear a lady speak on her efforts to raise money for a school for girls in Japan and this tremendous feeling came to me. I went to the library and began to take notes and study about Japan. My father asked what I was doing. I said I was going to Japan. My father immediately put money in the bank for me to go to Japan when the time came."

[Agnes Alexander, about 1911]

Preparation

- Passing of her parents, February-April 1913
- Departure of her sister to California

“Torn from the home I loved, the only desire I had left in life was to serve His Cause. I had read words of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá spoken in England in which He said, ‘*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.*’ The words rang in my ears and I supplicated that His lamp might find me.”

- October 1913 leaves Honolulu for a month with May Maxwell in Montréal. Inspired to learn Esperanto.
- Winter of 1913-1914 with the Bahá'ís in Brooklyn, New York. Studies Esperanto.
- Receives a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Baha

Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá 1914

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 by the lamp of thy heart must become more brilliant day by day and shed its light to all parts. Therefore, if thou travelest toward Japan unquestionably divine confirmations shall descend upon thee . . .

Departure to Japan 1914

- Invitation to visit her aunt in Milan
- Voyage New York-Genoa in May 1914
- Writes to 'Abdu'l-Bahá for permission to visit
- 1 July leaves for Locarno (Mme Forni, Baha'i)
- August 1914, at the beginning of the war and without money, Agnes goes to Geneva; trunks in Stuttgart, money in London
- Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá received on 22 August 1914

Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá 1914

O thou my dear daughter! Thy letter was received. It imparted great happiness. Praise be to God 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. . . . 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 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 a realm conquering army and a farmer, therefore thy voyage to Japan is preferred to everything else. Still thou art perfectly free.

Mont Carmel, Haifa, 4 August 1914

Departure for Japan 1914

- Despite the war, she takes a train to Marseilles with her baggage
- No space on ships sailing for Japan
- Leaves the next day on a ship to Japan
- German cruiser *Emden* sinks 5 ships in the Indian Ocean
- Traveling companion becomes a Baha'i
- 1 November 1914 Agnes Alexander arrives at Kobe

Arrival in Japan 1914

"I was then in Geneva but I went to Marseilles and took a steamer for Tokyo. I was on it one month without any news at all. When I arrived at the port of Yokohama in Japan, there was a letter from my sister, saying that she was so worried because there had been no word. In Tokyo, I had friends from Honolulu who were teachers, and very broadminded. They arranged for me to come there and live in a boarding house beside their house. They had a meeting Sunday night and deeply believed that all religions were true. I arrived in Tokyo on a Friday, so in two days I was able to attend their meeting. After the meeting, I found myself surrounded by some Japanese men and I told them I was a Baha'i. The next morning one came to see me, wanting to know more about the Faith. That was the beginning."



Vasily Eroshenko and Agnes Alexander 1915



with Martha Root, Tokyo 18 July 1915



with Rabindranath Tagore 1916

Tokyo 1916





Tokyo, October 1916

Return to America 1917-1919

- 27 July 1917 leaves Yokohama for Honolulu
- Visits John and Louise Bosch in California
- National Convention 1918 in Chicago
- Esperanto convention in Greenacre, Summer 1918
- New Jersey 1918-1919

Agnes Alexander
and her aunt
Victoria Bedikian

Montclair, New Jersey
1918



Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá 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 capacity. 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.

Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá 1918

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 of 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.

1919

- In Montréal with May Maxwell
- Message from 'Abdu'l-Bahá to go to the convention, which will make her happy
- 11th Bahá'í Convention in New York 26-30 April 1919, presentation of the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Tablets of the Divine Plan

Consider ye, that Miss Agnes Alexander, the daughter of the Kingdom, the beloved maidservant of the Blessed Perfection, traveled alone to the Hawaiian Islands, to the Island of Honolulu, and now she is gaining spiritual victories in Japan! Reflect ye how this daughter was confirmed in the Hawaiian Islands. She became the cause of the guidance of a gathering of people.

O that I could travel, even though on foot and in the utmost poverty, to these regions, and, raising the call of “Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá” in cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans, promote the divine teachings! This, alas, I cannot do. How intensely I deplore it! Please God, ye may achieve it.

At this time, in the Hawaiian Islands, through the efforts of Miss Alexander, a number of souls have reached the shore of the sea of faith! Consider ye, what happiness, what joy is this! I declare by the Lord of Hosts that had this respected daughter founded an empire, that empire would not have been so great! For this sovereignty is eternal sovereignty and this glory is everlasting glory.

Return to Japan 1919

- Toronto 10 days with May Maxwell
- Chicago, prayers at the site of the temple
- Honolulu for a month ('Abdu'l-Baha: *“Remain for some days in Honolulu”* received later in Japan)
- 9 August 1919 leaves Honolulu for Japan
- Loss of all her affairs and tablets on 28 December 1919 in a fire at her hotel



Agnes Alexander with students 1920s



Children from her neighborhood in Tokyo 1920



First Baha'is of Korea 1921



1922



Chinese in Tokyo 1922



Great Tokyo earthquake 1923



with surviving children 1923



after the earthquake, Tokyo 1923



Martha Root, Agnes Alexander, Mrs Finch 1923



Agnes Alexander, Martha Root, Keio University 1923



Agnes Alexander in Nagoya 1923



Esperanto Congress, Tokyo 1924

China

Agnes Alexander and Martha Root
travel in China in 1924

Meeting with Sun Yat-Sen
President of the Republic of China
to give him two Bahá'í books



Esperanto group 1929



Agnes Alexander with the Tsu family 1929



Agnes Alexander and Yasakuni 1929



School for the blind 1930



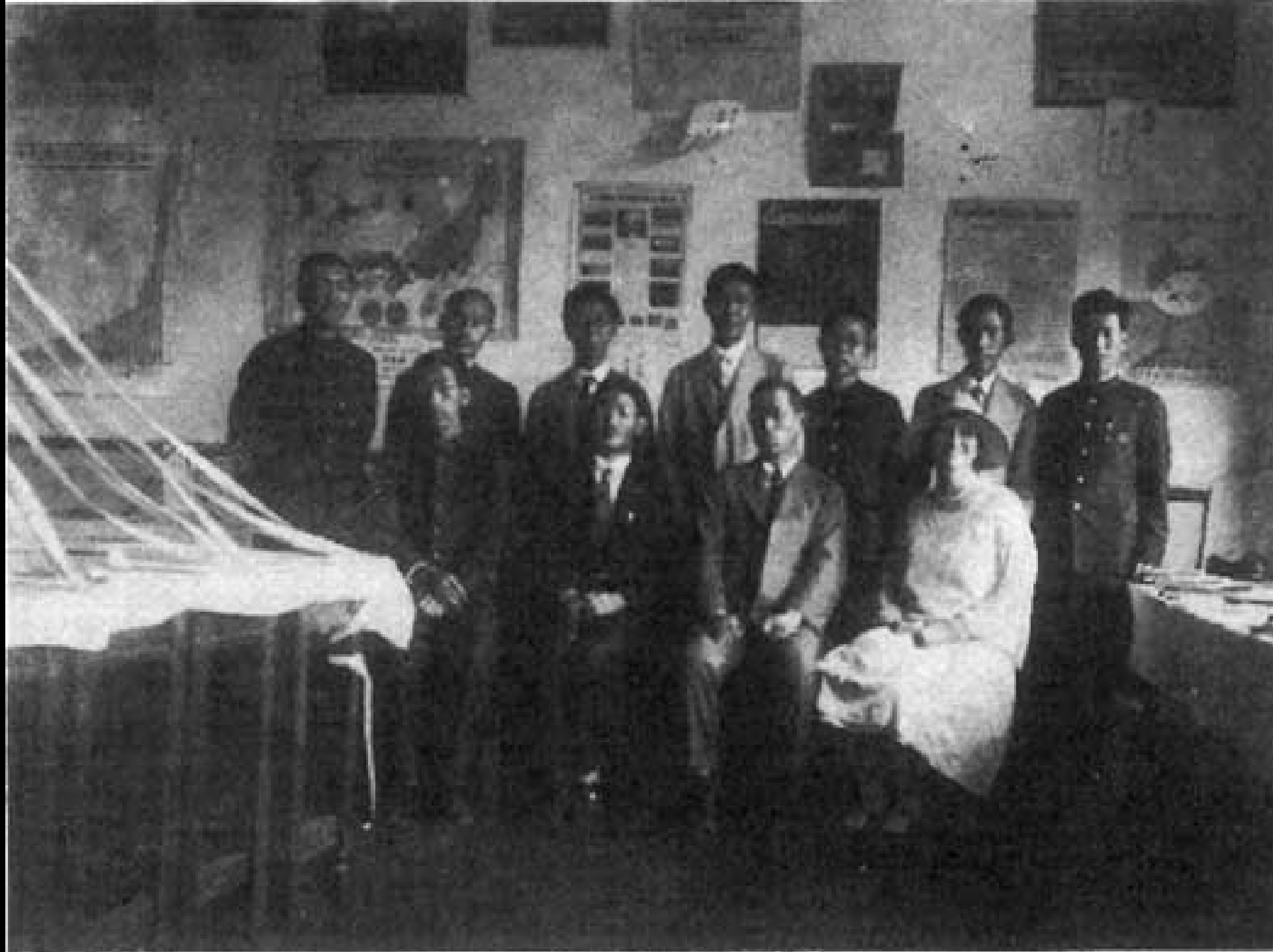
Esperantists at Kanazawa 1930



Agnes Alexander in Nagasaki 1930



Seikei 1930



The faculty at Seikei 1930



Tokyo 1930

Agnes Alexander
And
Martha Root

1930



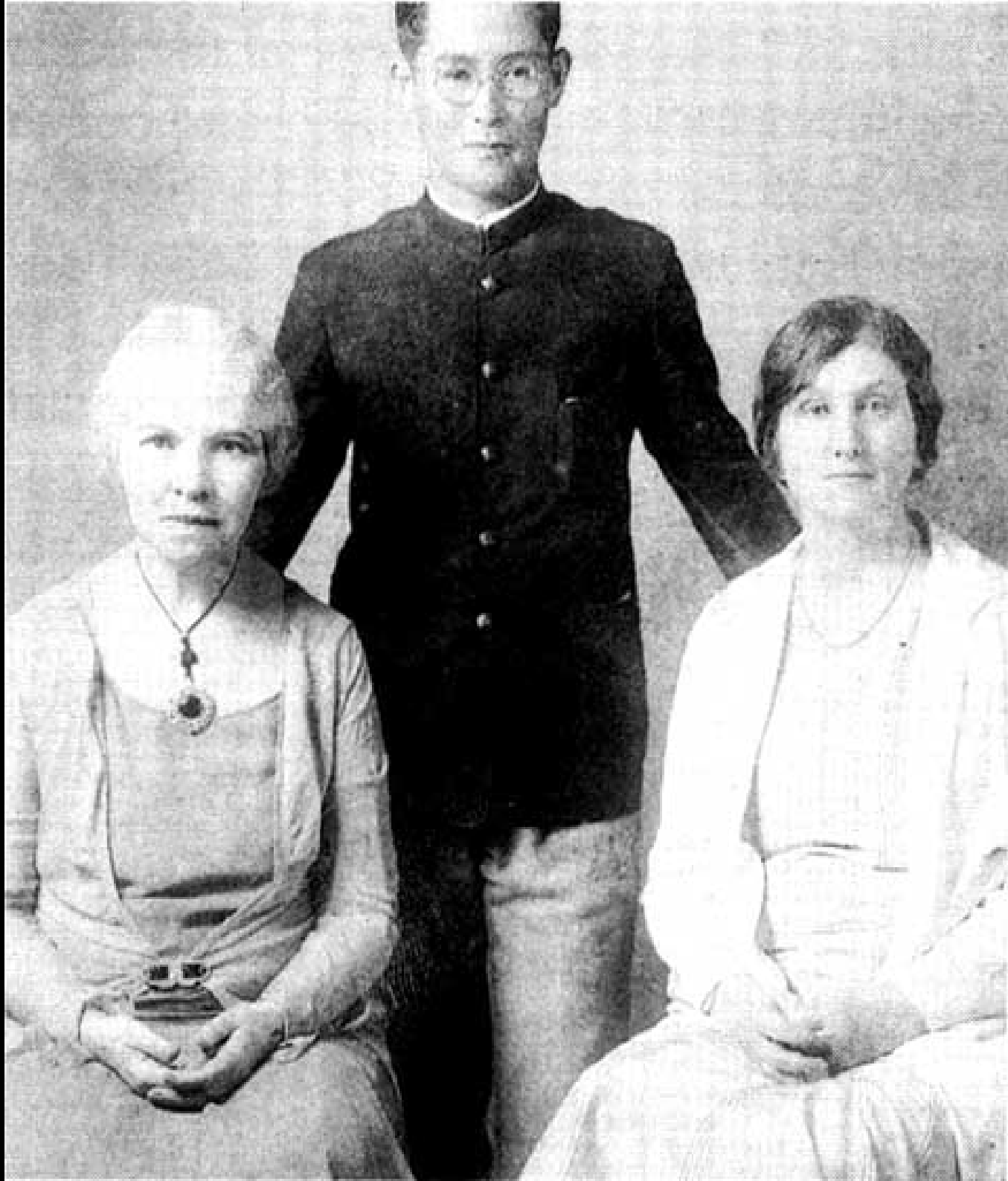
Visit to a
Buddhist temple

1931



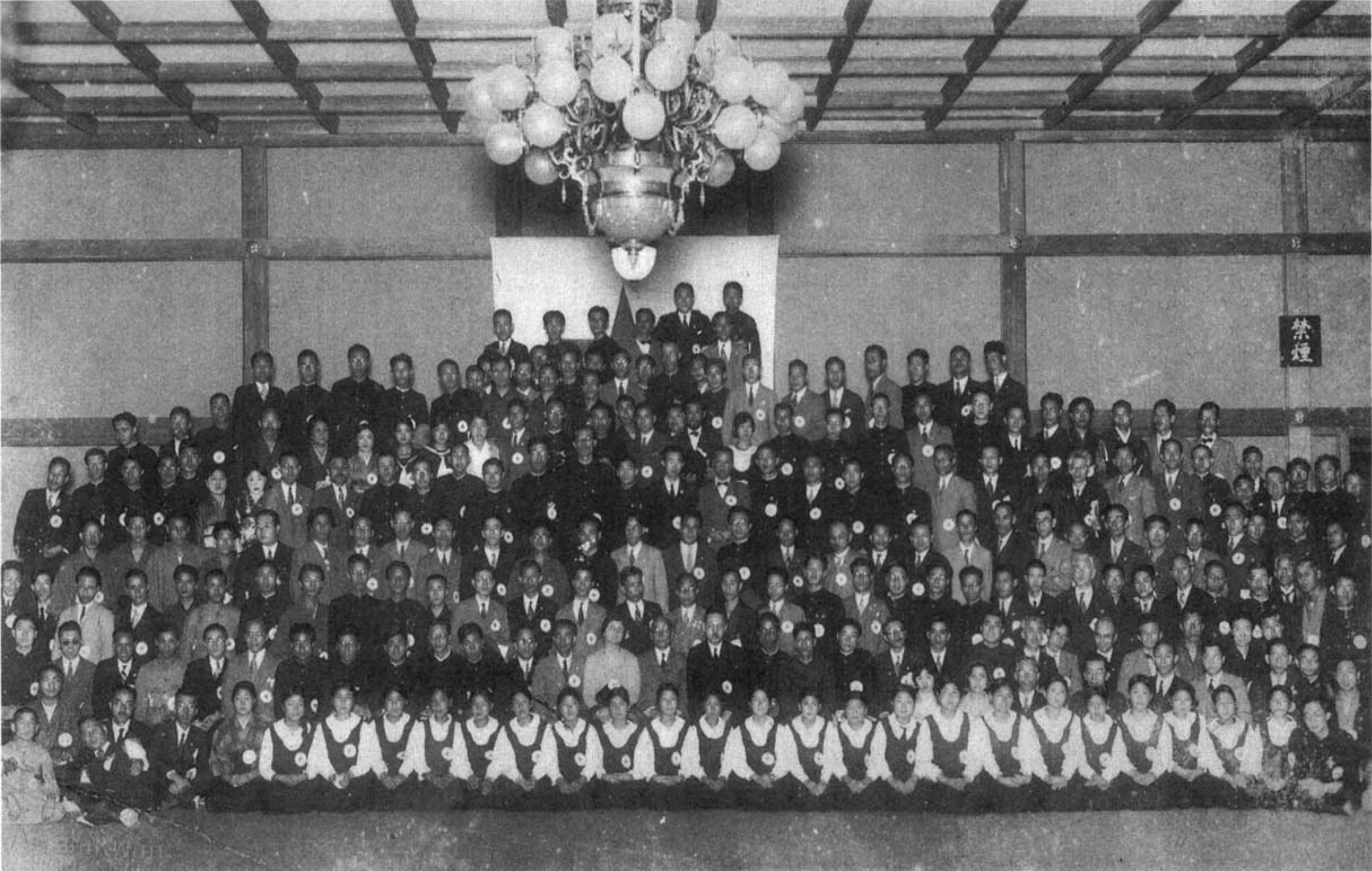
Keith
Ransom-Kehler
and
Agnes
Alexander

1931

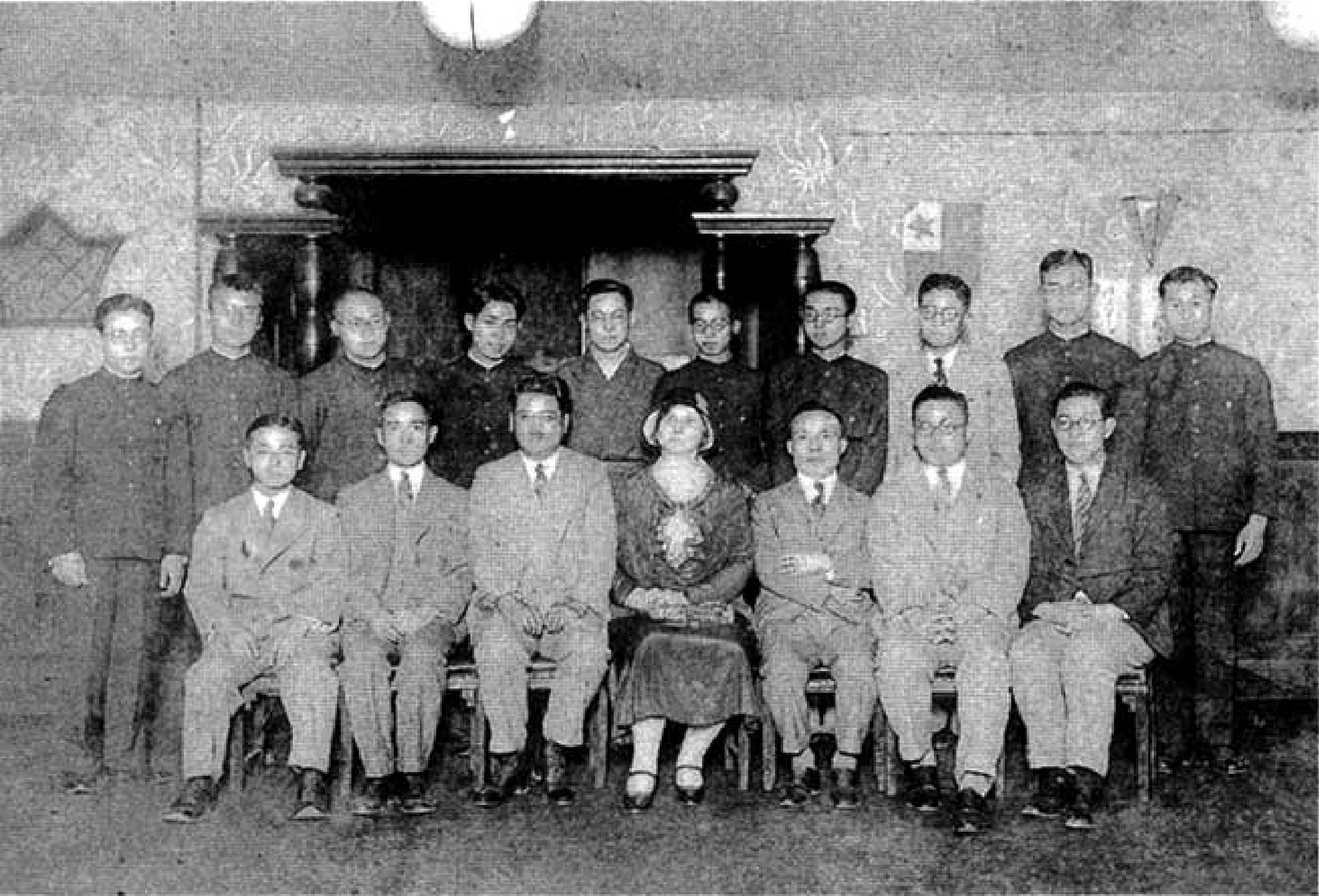




Keith Ransom-Kehler and Agnes Alexander
at a Buddhist Temple 1931



Agnes Alexander at an Esperanto Congress 1931



at Keio University 1931

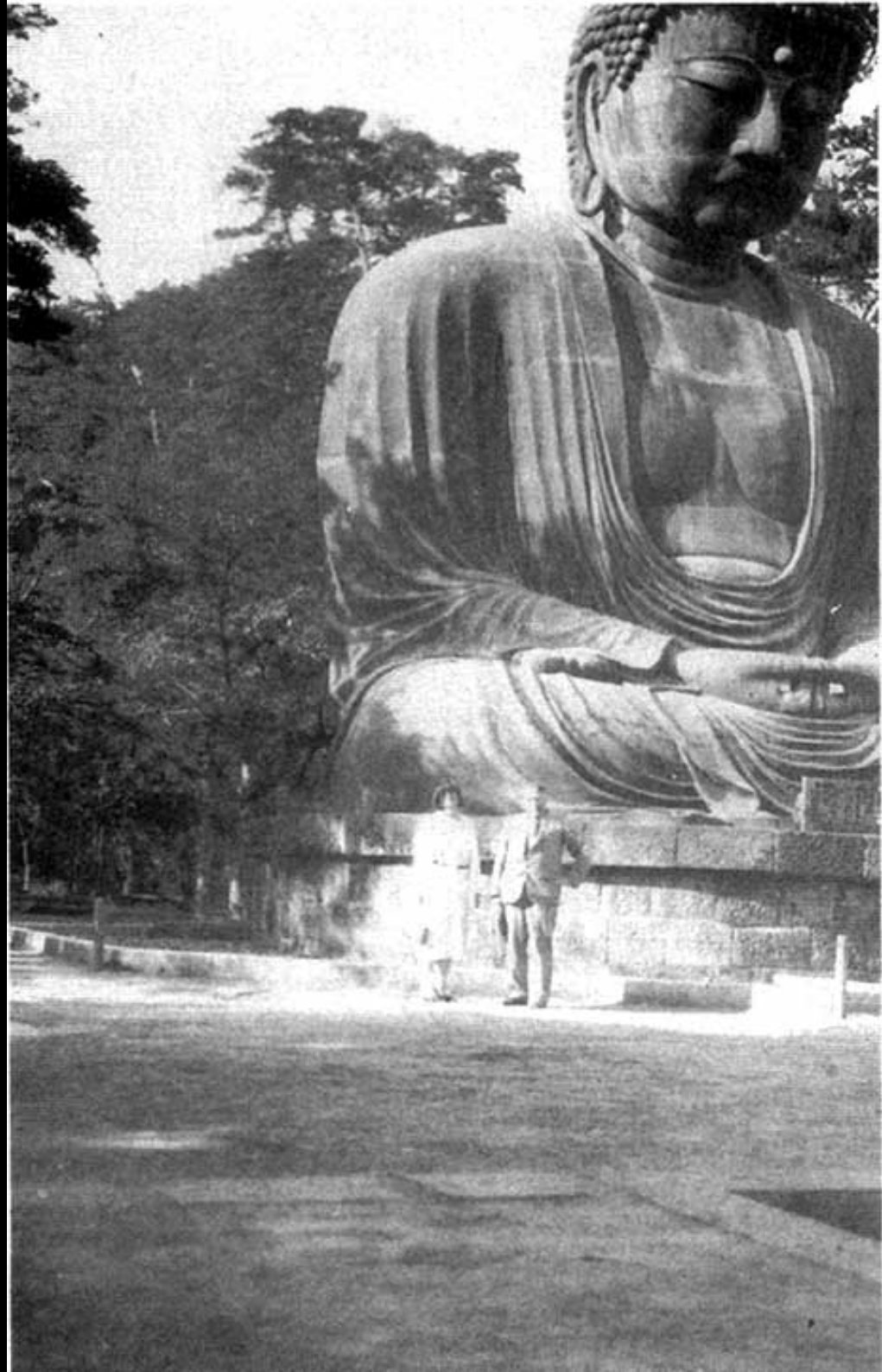


Feast of Naw-Ruz 1931

1932

- First Local Spiritual Assembly of Tokyo
- 19 Baha'is in Japan

Agnes Alexander
and
Mr. Touty
at
Kamakura
1932





Esperanto Congress 1932



Esperanto group, Hokkaido 1932



Esperantists on Hokkaido 1932



Feast of Naw-Ruz 1932



Sakurai 1932

Visit to Hawai'i 1933-35

- Departure from Japan on 30 May 1933, arrives in Honolulu on 8 June 1933
- Visits May Maxwell 1934
- 9 May 1935 leaves Honolulu for Japan



on the ship for a visit home to Hawai'i 1933-35

Letter from Shoghi Effendi

8 June 1933

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. The Guardian is fully confident that your journey to the Hawaiian Islands will be a great benefit to the friends there and it will stimulate them to pursue with refreshed zeal their Bahá'í activities....

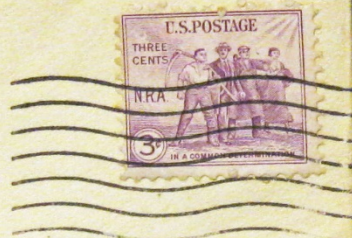
Dear and valued co-worker:

I immensely appreciate your outstanding services in those faraway 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 Effendi



Miss Joyce Lyons
c/o Mrs. George Kuhlman
811 Alpine Ave.
Burlingame
Calif.



2570 Cedar St. Berkeley
Sept. 25/34

My dear Baha'i sister,

I have a request from Mrs. Marian Haney for the Baha'i Magazine, asking me to ask you if you could contribute the lovely talk which you gave at the Summer School on, "The Collective Center" for our Magazine.

I hope that you can do so, for I am sure it would be very appropriate.

On the 28th, I am sailing for Honolulu, but the dear friends I have met here and at Geyserville will never be forgotten.

Alla-u-Abha

In His love

Agnes S. Alexander

Letter from Shoghi Effendi

October 1934

Concerning your plan to leave for Japan after your visit to Honolulu, Shoghi Effendi fully approves of your intention to re-visit our Japanese friends, and to resume your pioneering work with them. His best wishes for the success of your plans will surely be with you all through this long journey, and it is hoped that as in the past you will be effectively guided and assisted in attracting and converting new souls to the Faith.

May the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh illumine your path, cheer your heart and reinforce your efforts for the continuation and expansion of your historic services and may He protect you, and enable you to achieve your heart's cherished desire, Shoghi



Agnes Alexander and Mr. Uskuli 1935



at Meiji University 1935



Shiba 1935



Agnes Alexander at home in Tokyo 1936



Agnes Alexander with Fujita's family 1936

*La memfotografajo de la adicnado
de la Angla Literatura Societo de P. E. K. al F-ino. Root
La 23^{on} de Novembro 37*



Agnes Alexander and Martha Root in Peking 1937



at Meiji University 1937

Letter from Shoghi Effendi

24 January 1937

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 fulfilment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's glorious promises. Your reward is unimaginably great, and the success that awaits your labours certain.

With the assurance of my deepfelt and abiding appreciation of your wholehearted and touching response to my request, and wishing you success and happiness from the depths of my heart, Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi

Absence during the war

- Departure from Japan March 1937
- First pilgrimage April-May 1937
- Visits Baha'is in Germany, Paris, London
- Summer schools in U.S.A.
- Returns to Hawai'i December 1938
- Returns to Japan in 1950
- LSA of Tokyo reestablished 1951



Geyserville Summer School, California
Valera Allen, ?, Louise Bosch, Agnes Alexander



Fudan, 23 May 1950 with Robert Imagire and Fujita



Summer school at Amagasaki, June 1954

Bahá'í community in Japan

- 1954: 52 Baha'is including 10 Americans and 13 Persians
- Agnes Alexander named Auxiliary Board Member
- 1956: 8 Local Spiritual Assemblies
- 1957 first National Spiritual Assembly of North-East Asia



Summer school at Amagasaki 1955



Conference at Nikko 1955



Agnes Alexander, Conference in Nikko 1955



First LSA in Kyoto 1956



National Teaching Conference, Kyoto 1956



at a wedding 1956

Agnes Alexander

1957



Hand of the Cause of God

27 March 1957

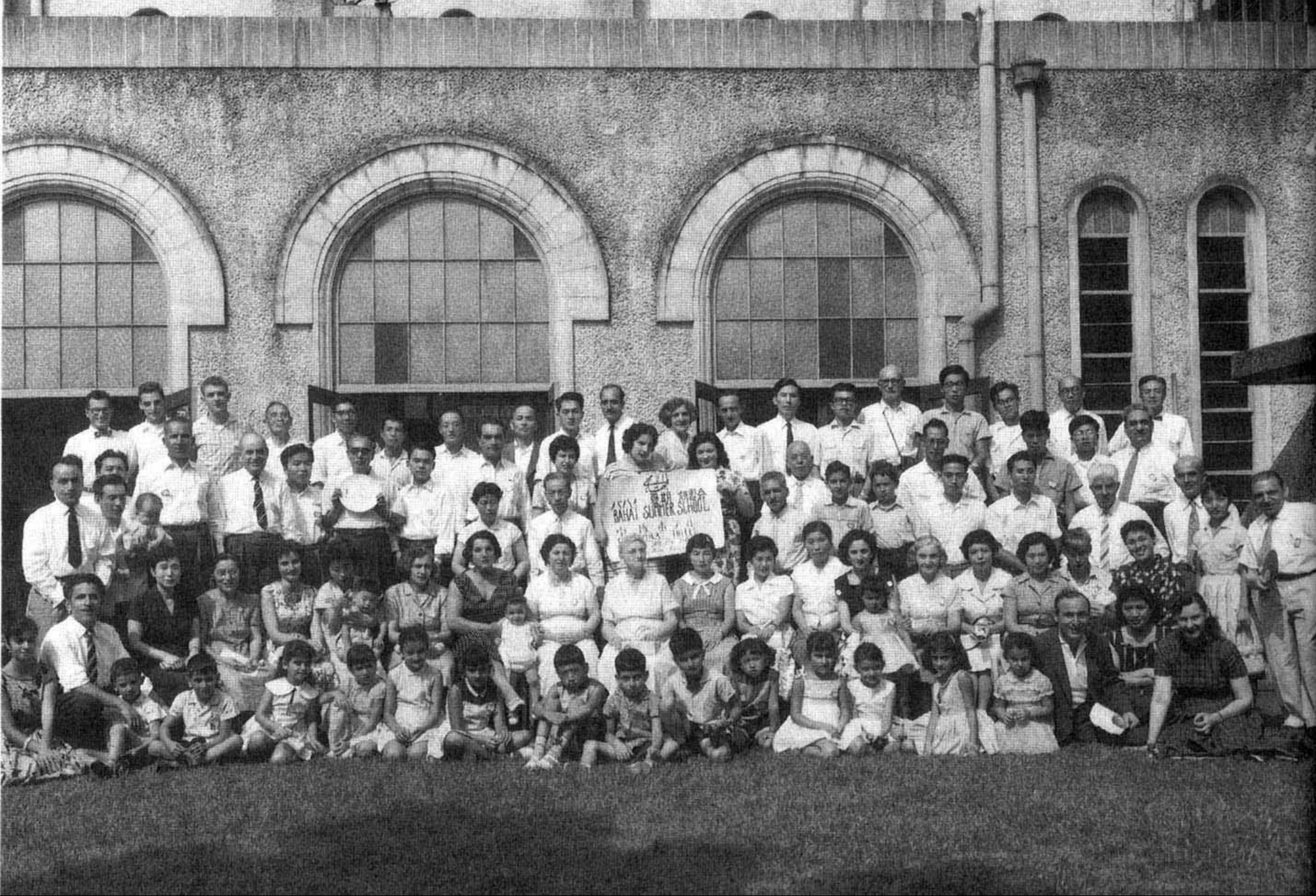
AGNES ALEXANDER DISTINGUISHED
PIONEER FAITH ELEVATED RANK HAND
CAUSE CONFIDENT APPOINTMENT WILL
SPIRITUALLY REINFORCE TEACHING
CAMPAIGN NORTH SOUTH HEART
PACIFIC



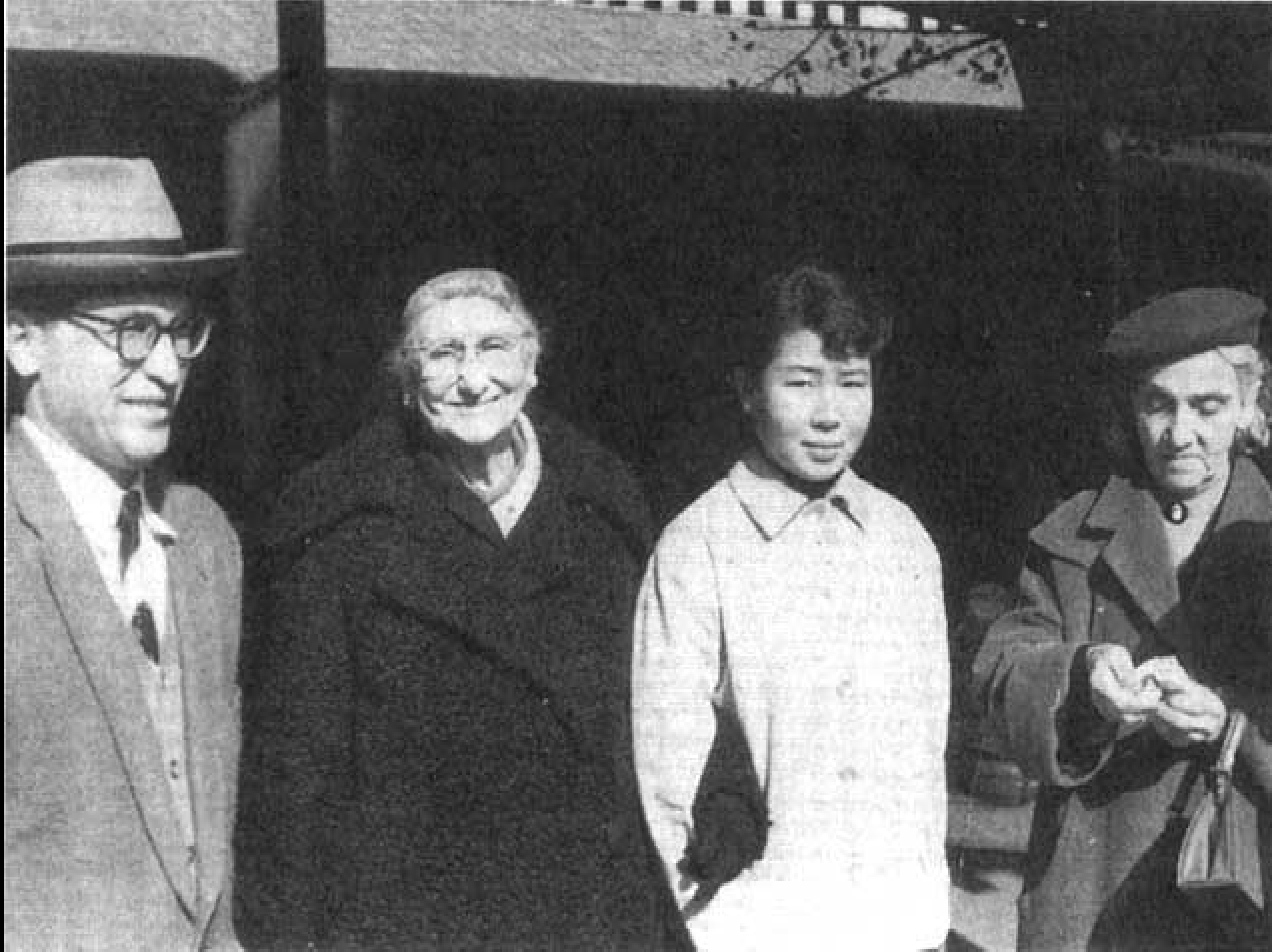
Convention of North-East Asia 1957



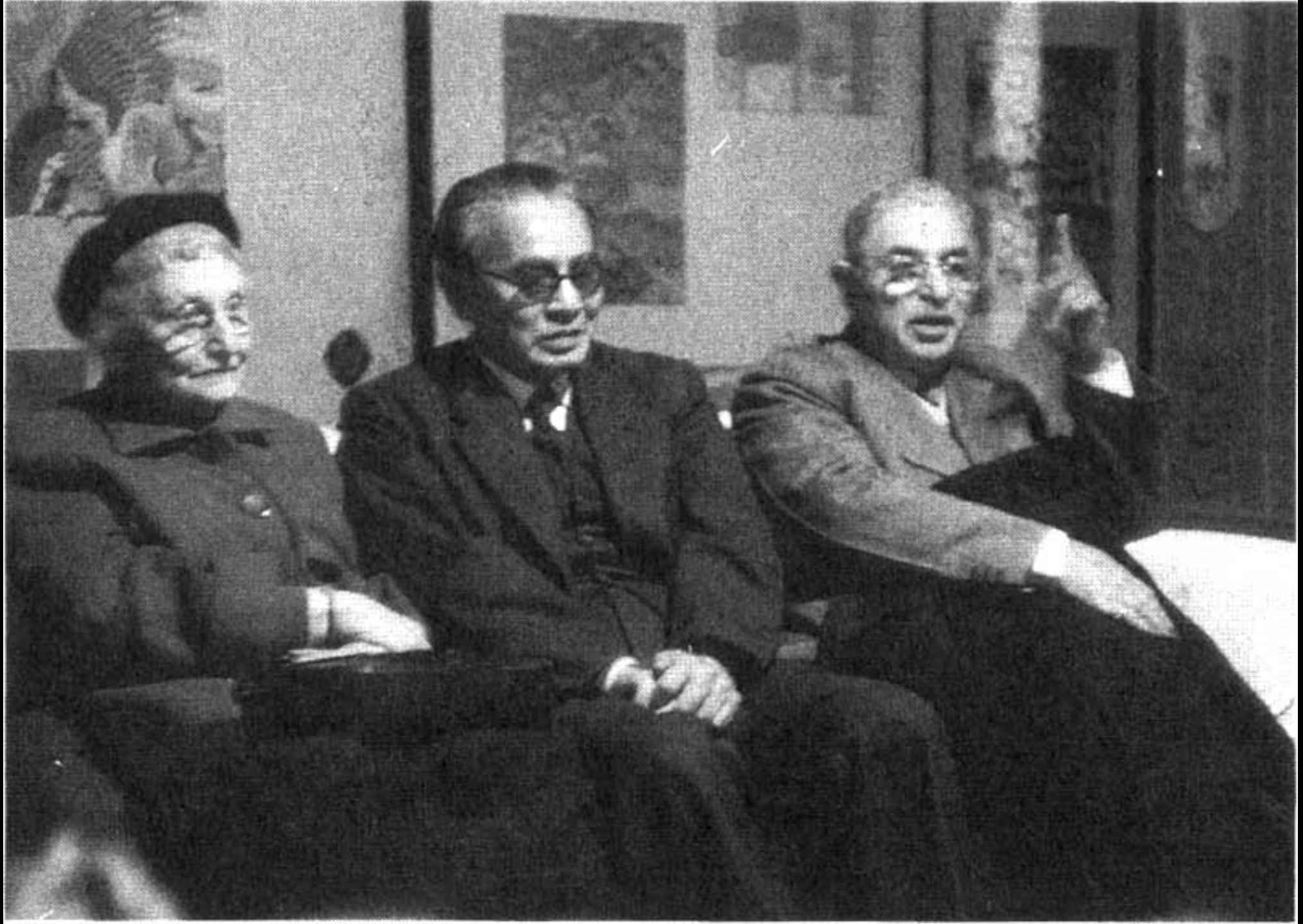
First NSA of North-East Asia 1957



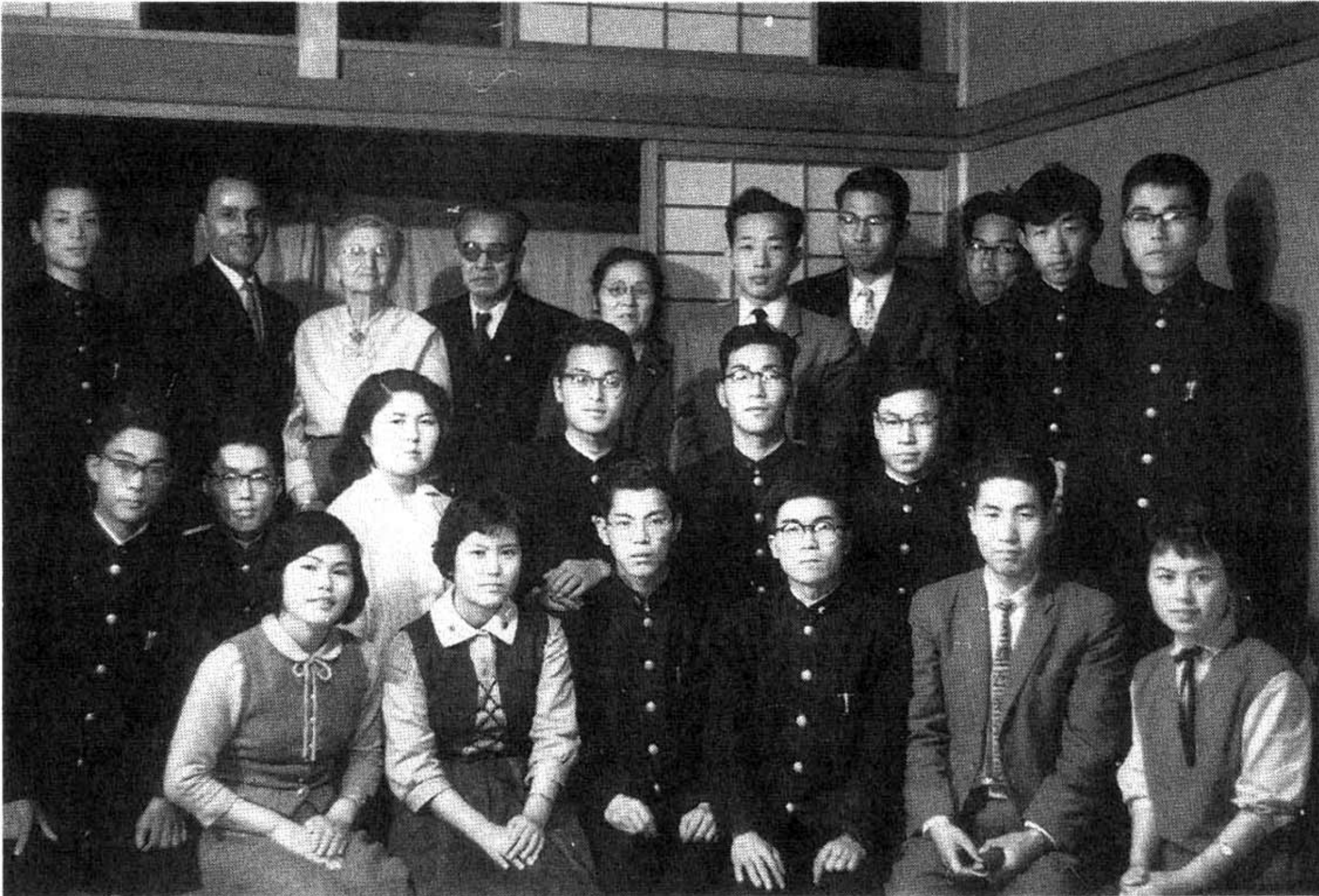
Summer School 1957



Agnes Alexander in Hiroshima 1958



Agnes Alexander and General Ala'i 1959



at Matsue 1959



at the Tokyo Bahá'í Center 1960



Osaka 1960s

Agnes
Alexander's
Birthday

21 July 1963
88 years old

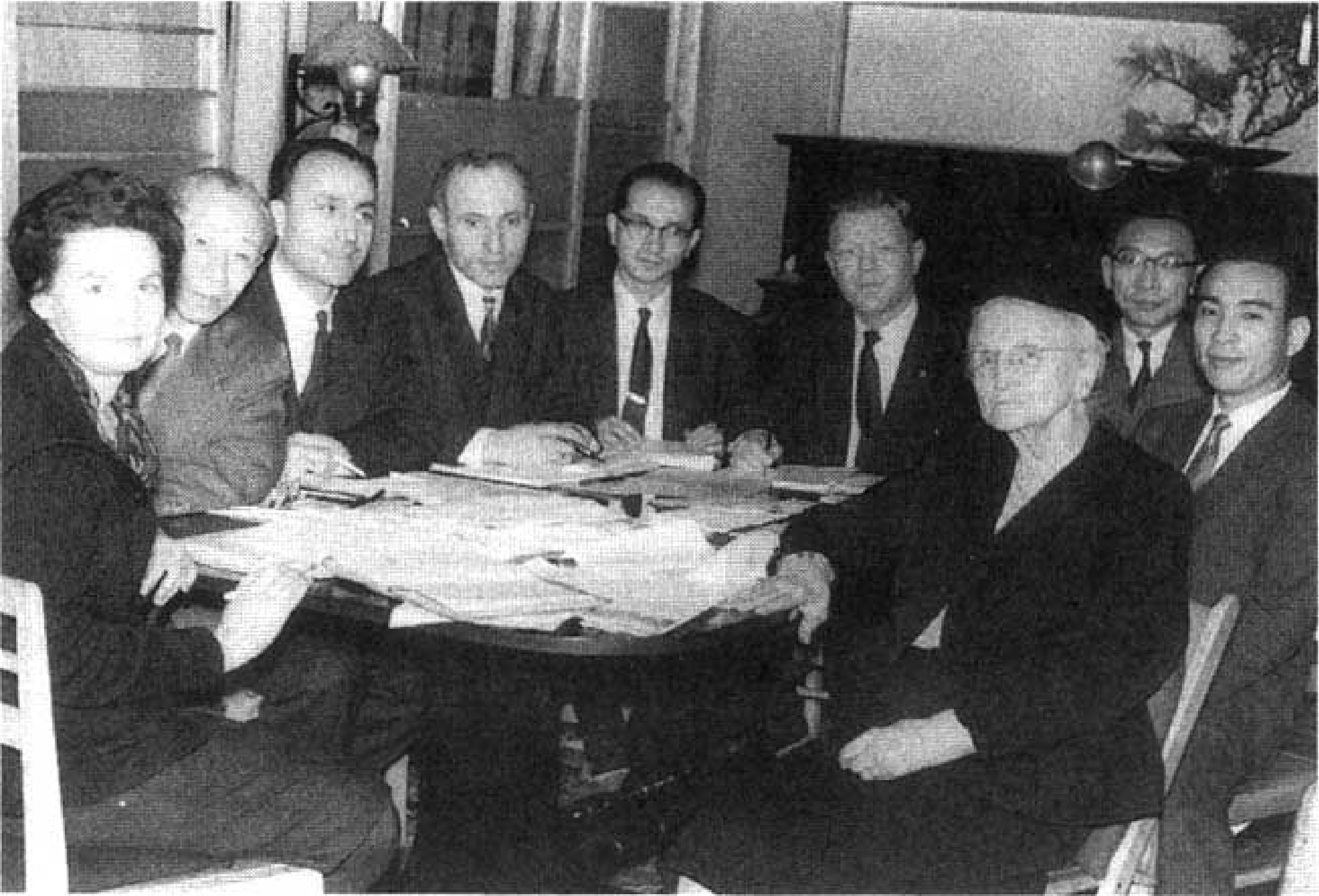




Agnes Alexander's birthday 21 July 1963



Agnes Alexander's birthday, Osaka 1963



NSA of Japan 1963



Agnes Alexander in Hokkaido 1964

Bernard Leach
Agnes Alexander
M. Moritaki
(1st Ainuu Bahá'í)

Hokkaido 1964





Ainu village, Hokkaido 1964



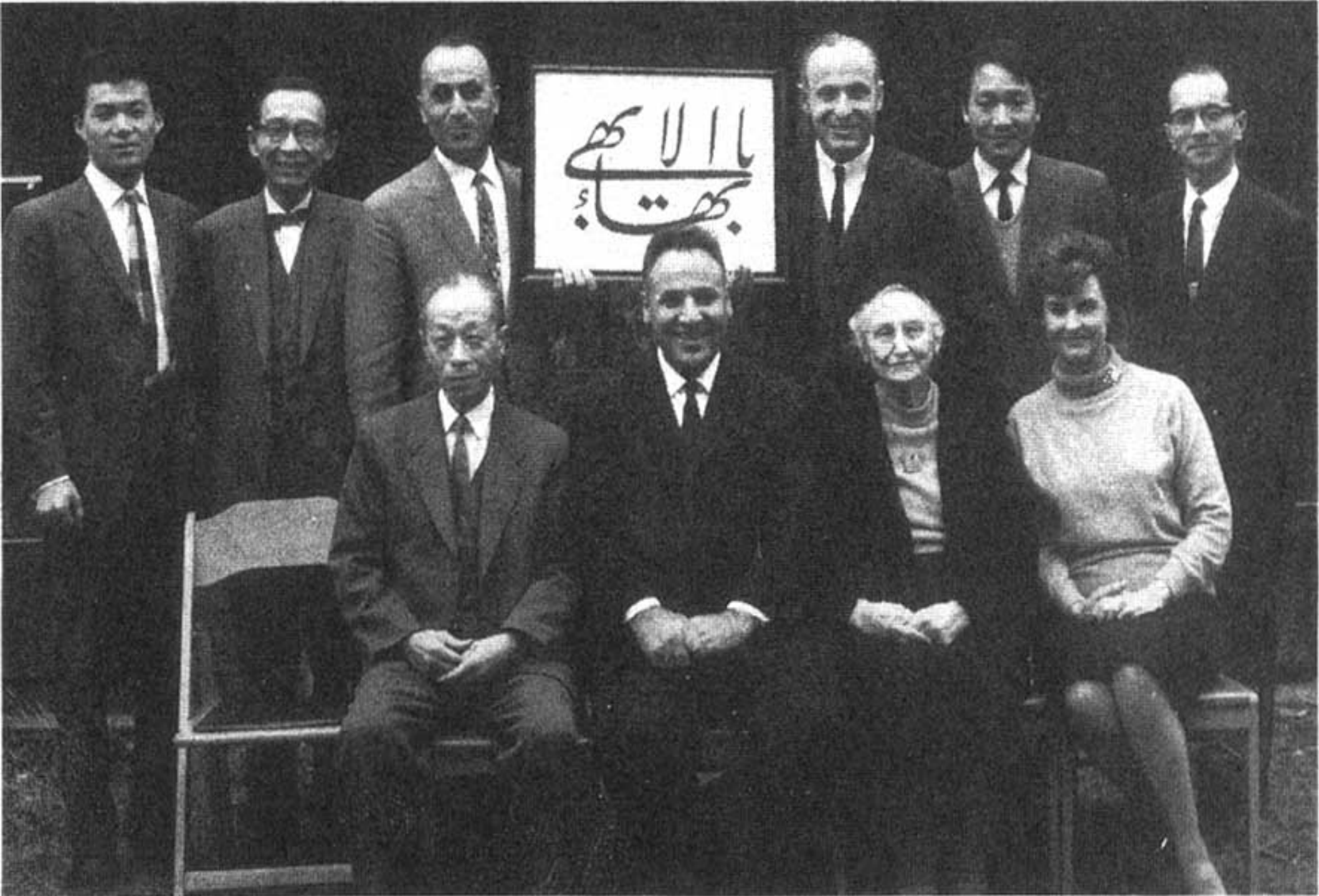
Teaching Conference, Hokkaido 1964



Dr. Muhajir and Agnes Alexander 1964



Agnes Alexander and Dr. Muhajir, Naw-Ruz 1964



NSA of Japan, Dr.Muhajir, Agnes Alexander 1964



Summer school, Japan 1964

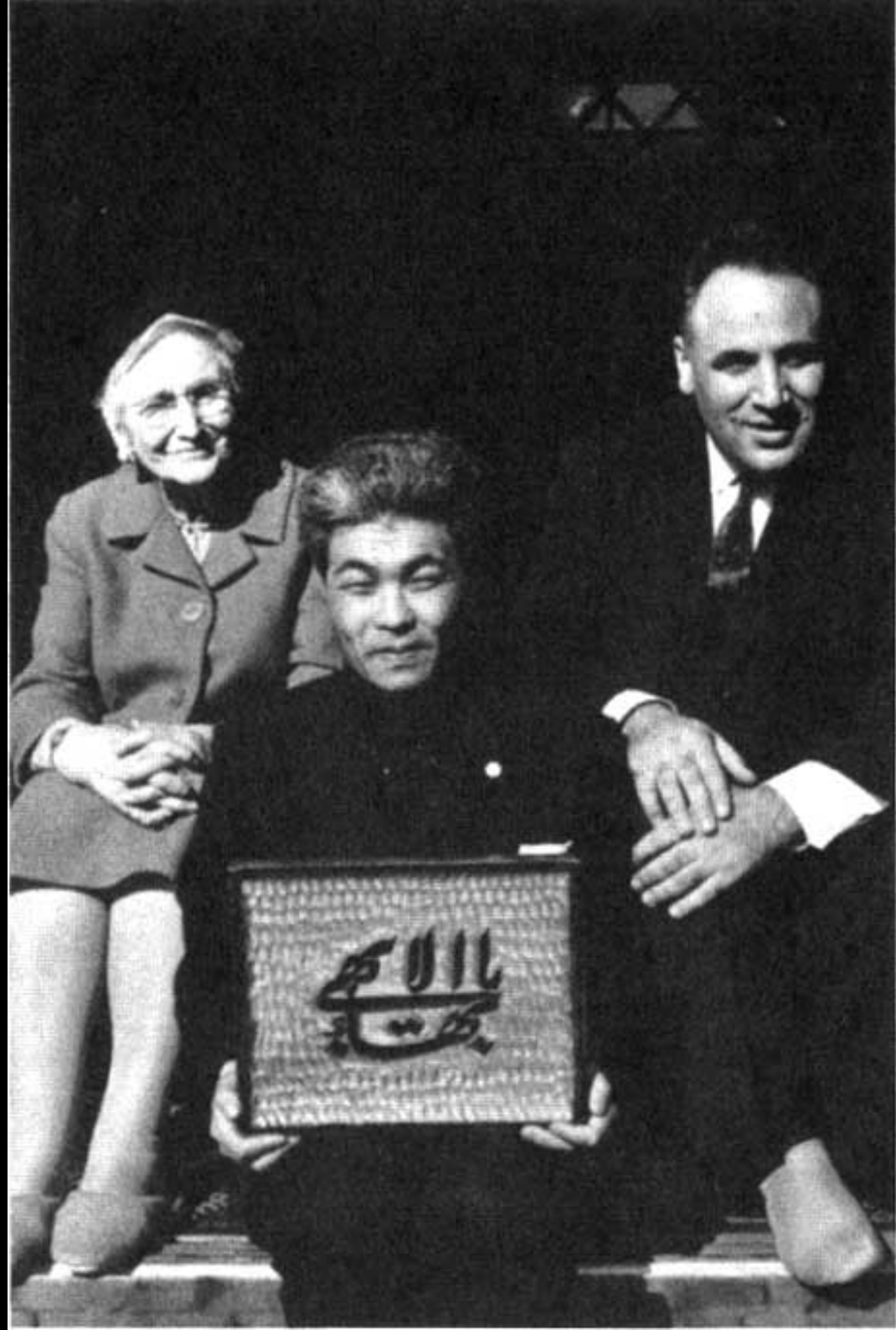
Agnes Alexander

1965



Agnes Alexander
M. Umegai, ABM
Dr. Muhajir

1965





Agnes Alexander and Yamazaki family 1965



National Convention 1965 (with Collis Featherstone)

Esperanto Congress 1965

last event for
Agnes
Alexander



Dr. Muhajir
and
Agnes Alexander

1965





NSA with Agnes Alexander in hospital 1965

91st
birthday of
Agnes
Alexander

1966





Oh, God, make me
a hollow reed, from
which the pith of
self hath been
blown so that I may
become as a clear
channel through
which Thy Love
may flow to others.

[rose petal from Adrianople, gift
of Agnes Alexander, 1966]



Agnes Alexander in her apartment 1967
before her return to Hawai'i

Agnes Alexander

Hand of the
Cause of God



Universal House of Justice

4 January 1971

PROFOUNDLY GRIEVE PASSING ILLUMINED SOUL HAND CAUSE
AGNES ALEXANDER LONGSTANDING PILLAR CAUSE FAR EAST
FIRST BRING FAITH HAWAIIAN ISLANDS STOP HER LONG
DEDICATED EXEMPLARY LIFE SERVICE DEVOTION CAUSE GOD
ANTICIPATED BY CENTRE COVENANT SELECTING HER SHARE MAY
MAXWELL IMPERISHABLE HONOUR MENTION TABLETS DIVINE PLAN
STOP HER UNRESTRAINED UNCEASING PURSUIT TEACHING
OBEDIENCE COMMAND BAHAUULLAH EXHORTATIONS MASTER
GUIDANCE BELOVED GUARDIAN SHINING EXAMPLE ALL
FOLLOWERS FAITH STOP HER PASSING SEVERS ONE MORE LINK
HEROIC AGE STOP ASSURE FAMILY FRIENDS ARDENT PRAYERS
HOLIEST SHRINE PROGRESS RADIANT SOUL REQUEST ALL
NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES HOLD MEMORIAL MEETINGS
AND THOSE RESPONSIBLE HOLD SERVICES MOTHER TEMPLES

AGNES BALDWIN
ALEXANDER

JULY 21, 1875

JANUARY 1, 1971

HAND OF THE CAUSE OF GOD

"LIGHT AND GLORY, GREETING AND PRAISE
BE UPON THE HANDS OF HIS CAUSE."

— BAHÁ'U'LLAH

Agnes Alexander, Hand of the Cause of God
Buried in Honolulu, Hawaii

