

## REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL TEACHING TEAM TO THE FAR EAST

November 15 to December 1 1987

*Unable to find this in the Writings.*

"Blessed are they that travel in groups..." "O that I could travel, though in the utmost poverty, to carry the Word of God ... how deeply I deplore my inability... please God ye may attain..." *Tablets of the Divine Plan p39*

In response to the impact of these words 36 Baha'is left the U.S.A. on November 15th 1987 and travelled to 5 countries in the far East to show by their actions the depth of their love for Baha'u'llah and for all mankind.

It also seemed that we were seeking to unite our intellectual western approach with the spiritual one of the Orient. Some of the Eastern blessings soon became apparent in the relaxed, patient and friendly reception we all received in our first 5 days which were spent in Taiwan. From the airport we went into Taipei, the capital, by special tour bus and first visited the Lung Shan Buddhist temple, the largest and most famous in Taiwan. Here crowds of workers and housewives carrying incense sticks bowed to various shrines, then knelt to pray with great earnestness. Astonishingly we were told that photography was an accepted as natural. We walked amongst them and found that this close contact with the people was a warm experience, in spite of our embarrassment at mixing cameras with worshippers. It seemed that it was an indication that if motives were for the good of all, then such a mixture can be harmonious. Our interest was for spiritual treasure, not material ones.

Our breakfast at the hotel each day was in our own dining room where we also had prayers, readings and consultations for 2 hrs. The second day 5 National Spiritual Assembly members joined us. Sal'd Kadivian, their chairman, very warmly welcomed us and told how desperately we are needed. He jovially appointed us all to the "Extension Travel Teaching Committee". They have had nearly 900 new believers recently and 70% of these were educated youth. He told us how when the House of Justice had announced new persecutions, they had replied with "We have just had 300 new believers!" This was no card-signing exercise, he said but true acceptance. The Fund also increased 70%.

Jean Bellows, a pioneer, gave a fine slide show on the teaching that is going on in Taiwan. She told us of a dream she had of the whole west coast of Taiwan opening up and its people flooding onto the mainland of China.

Sal'd Kadivian appealed to us to return here again and help teach the masses. They need at least 17 more travelling teachers. Also, please teach the Chinese everywhere in the U.S.A.

He told us of the ambitious goals of their Publishing Trust, especially the creation of their own kind of pamphlets, not just translations of the American ones. Emphasis is to be placed on pamphlets which use the creative Words of God. "Intone, O My servants, the Words of God...!"

Part of our sightseeing took us to the Memorial of Chiang Kai Shek and Dr. Sun Yat Sen. Martha Root had spoken with him.

It was interesting to find that the basis of the New Chinese Republic, founded by Dr. Sun Yat Sen, is the Three People's Principles; " of the people, by the people and for the people."

Next morning, after our breakfast session, we headed in our special bus to the town of Tsao Tung, about three hours distance. The entire way was spent in discussions and entertainment over the amplifier as Tony Lease, our tour director, drew from each of us some of our Baha'i experiences. Sugar, a vivacious Chinese Baha'i, taught us a Baha'i song, in Chinese which went like this: (my own alliteration)~

Wa I nee (I love you)

La nee I wa (and you love me)

Dal chee chow see see (I am Baha'i)

At Tsao Tun we all had lunch with some of the local pioneers and others at a very modern cafe. They told us that most new Baha'is are really attracted by the Spirit of the Faith, even though they know little about the administration.

Clothing here is very cheap but no use for Americans (unless it is especially tailored) because they do not make clothes in the larger sizes we need.

We were frequently reminded not to start pushing the Faith here, for it is a big enough happening for the local people to suddenly see 36 Americans appear together. We should just be natural, friendly and caring. We visited the modest Baha'i center here in this village, said prayers and had a group picture taken with an

elderly Chinese gentleman who had been a Baha'i only a very short time.

One evening we went to a fireside at the Taipei Center and the place was filled to overflowing. After some prayers talks were given by two or three persons. Our group nearly depleted the supply of special books, calendars and other materials printed in Taiwan. Every one felt the warmth and unity during the fellowship and refreshment time. We all felt it a great bounty to share our prayers and experiences. A young lady at our hotel had become interested in the Faith through contact with some of us. She attended a fireside and declared that evening.

In our consultations we learned that the Chinese are not familiar with the Christian idea of Prophets, so we should RATHER MANIFEST THE SPIRIT. At no time should we do anything to upset the local teaching work but synchronize at all times with the local and the National. Just our travelling here in such a large group has a big teaching effect.

Breakfast at the hotel, Asla World, the next morning was a spiritual as well as material feast. One pioneer joined us after rising at 5 AM to get here from the next town. He was Mansour Kheradmandam from Chung Li. The rest of the day was spent going out to the markets and shops and mingling joyfully with the people.

Our last evening in Taipei was a celebration dinner with the local Baha'i guests. Victor Tom, known to many of us was there

and gave a short talk. Another inspiring talk was given by Jack Davis who with Kenton Dunbar and other pioneers started the teaching here, which has accelerated now into mass conversion. We were reminded of the letter of the Universal House of Justice which has given great importance to the teaching work in Taiwan. In view of this we should remind the American community of how much their help is needed by sending teachers and also teaching the Chinese in the U.S.A.

We sent joyful cables to the Universal House of Justice and to the Hand of the Cause Bill Sears.

The next day we flew to Hong Kong, changed planes and arrived in Bangkok late evening. What a wonderful surprise awaited us. We were greeted by about 30 Baha'is carrying a large banner. Bangkok gave us a true Baha'i welcome.

SUNDAY, Nov. 22nd We all visited the Royal Museum and then the chief Buddhist shrine in all the world. His Holiness the Buddha is enshrined here, in an all golden building known the world over for its magnificence. We removed our shoes and entered to pray with crowds of others. Then we toured the enormous building complex, perhaps the most ornate in the world, at every step a new wonder of beauty greeted us. Every inch is decorated for here resides the Emerald Buddha, now in winter dress.

That evening we attended the local Baha'i Feast. Maybe the saying is "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet.." but at that Feast this was no longer so. It was

here that the warmth and unity of Spirit melded the twain! During the consultation period 4 of the Americans gave a 10 min. talk, each on a different aspect of the Faith. The social part of the Feast filled with Joyous song and wonderful fruits and sweets. The place was crowded to overflowing.

MONDAY NOV. 23RD We arose at 5:30 AM for breakfast, prayers and discussions. At 8:30 we boarded a long narrow fast boat for a trip on the Chao Payee (River Payee, sometimes called the River of the Kings). How can I describe that experience? Imagine a very broad river flowing past the hotel and swarming with boats, ocean going vessels, great barges and boats of every size for the tourist. Many of the tour boats were long and narrow with a truck engine mounted on a swivel at the rear, from this extended a 12 foot propeller shaft. At full throttle the boat almost leaps out of the water and the passengers hang on for dear life while an ever nonchalant boatman skillfully steers them through the traffic. We had a larger, slower version and were constantly passed by these while we leisurely enjoyed every inch of this strange, wonderful trip along the river and klongs, (canals) of this incredible city.

Our guide, Sam is the local representative of Tony Lease Tours and was a constant source of information and joy. He referred affectionately to the speeding boats as our "Local Kamakazis". It was along these canals, or klongs, we saw how the poor, and not so poor, people lived. Some of the very poorest looking buildings

were the river residence and business site of persons who had homes elsewhere. We saw the dally routine of many of the river people from bathing and washing their teeth while standing waist deep in the river, washing clothes, loading boats, and cooking the family's meal. This was a timely experience for us, tourists from the luxury Shangra La Hotel.

Along the way we saw well kept patches of water plants grown for food and other uses. Tropical fruits, orchids and other brilliant flowers flourished. Through these narrow canals the kamazis kept roaring past us making high tidal waves which everyone took good naturedly. Soon we reached our destination, the floating market of Bangkok, the tourist haven. So many boats were tied up to the pier while their passengers ransacked the multitude of stalls for bargains, that some of the passengers had to walk across two or three boats to get to their own. We were among the bargain hunters but so well was it all organized, however, by "our great leader", as Sam referred to Tony Lease, that we lost not a single person and all were present when we gathered back at the boat an hour later. We returned to the main river with its scurrying boats, enormous grain barges going down to the sea and ferries crisscrossing between them all. Often we passed beautiful well kept temples but none could compare with the Temple of Dawn, a massive complex of incredible shrines, temples, and market stalls. Everything was in living technicolor. As the cameras came out, so did the sun from the early morning overcast and we were able to get pictures to our hearts content.