

## Barbara Sims made contributions to Bahá'í Scholarship in Asia, Pacific

After steadfastly serving at her pioneer post in Tokyo, Japan, since the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade (1953), Barbara Rutledge Sims ascended to the Abhá Kingdom on 24 April 2002, at the age of 84. At that time she was the National Bahá'í Archivist and had just published her personal memoir, *In the Light of the Rising Sun: Memoirs of A Bahá'í Pioneer to Japan*.

The Universal House of Justice wrote the following tribute to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Japan:

"We were deeply distressed to learn of the passing of dearly-loved Barbara Rutledge Sims, whose devoted services to the Cause over a period of more than five decades will long be remembered. The distinguished record of her many contributions to the development of the Japanese Bahá'í community since her arrival in 1953 can well be a source of inspiration to the friends in Japan.

"Among its outstanding features was her membership of the National Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia, and subsequently that of Japan, for a total of 36 years, including an extensive period of service as Secretary. She authored several books setting out the history of the Faith in Japan, Macau, Korea and Taiwan, culminating in the publication of her memoirs early in 2002. She was well known for her devotion to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and her unswerving commitment to the promotion of its interests.

"Kindly convey to her family and friends our condolences and the assurance of our prayers in the Holy Shrines for the progress of her luminous soul in the worlds beyond. You are advised to hold memorial gather-

ings in her name in your principal Bahá'í Centres. —The Universal House of Justice."

Mrs. Sims's books on the history of the Faith in Asia are widely read and have been placed on the World Wide Web at <[www.bahai-library.org/east-asia](http://www.bahai-library.org/east-asia)>, where they are among the most downloaded material on this site.

When no funds were available, she published the books at her own expense after approval by the National Spiritual Assembly of Japan, then donated copies to the countries discussed.

In addition to her personal memoir, her publications include: *History of the Bahá'í Faith in Japan 1914–1938* by Agnes R. Alexander (edited by Barbara Sims; Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Japan, 1977); *Traces that Remain: A Pictorial History of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Faith among the Japanese* (Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Japan, 1989); *The Macau Bahá'í Community in the Early Years*. (Tokyo, 1991); *Japan Will Turn Ablaze: Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Letters of Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice, and Historical Notes about Japan* (compiler; Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Japan, 1992); *The Taiwan Bahá'í Chronicle: A Historical Record of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Faith in Taiwan* (Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Taiwan, 1994); *Selected Communications from the Universal House of Justice Concerning the North East Asian Area Including Japan* (compiler; Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Japan, 1994); *Raising the Banner in Korea: An Early Bahá'í History* (Tokyo, 1996); and *Unfurling the Divine Flag in Tokyo: An Early Bahá'í History* (Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Japan, 1998).



Barbara Rutledge Sims

Mrs. Sims was also an active supporter of the Associations for Bahá'í Studies and presented papers at conferences in both Japan and North America.

She gave three presentations at the annual conferences of the Association for Bahá'í Studies–North America. In 1995 (San Francisco) she spoke on "Hand of the Cause, Miss Agnes Alexander (1875–1971)" and in 1996 (Edmonton) on "Early Ainu Believers of Japan."

In 1997 (Washington, D.C.) she participated in a special colloquium consisting of two panels discussing the Spiritual Axis in Asia/Pacific, presenting on "The Significance of the Spiritual Axis and the Development of the Bahá'í Faith in the Asia-Pacific Region." This paper was her final presentation.

During a visit to Japan, Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánúm, who frequently corresponded with Mrs. Sims and gave her little gifts, joked lovingly about Mrs. Sims's steadfastness: "Barbara is just like Mount Fuji—always here!" she said.

Although no longer with us physically, her spirit will continue to inspire us through her many contributions to Bahá'í scholarship in Asia/Pacific.

—Sandra Sims Fotos