

SHINING LAMP

A Bahá'í who served humanity with radiance

Saichiro Fujita (1886–1976)



When 'Abdu'l-Bahá's train pulled into the Chicago station in September 1912, he saw an unusual sight: a man was eagerly perched on a lamppost high above the crowd. 'Abdu'l-Bahá called out to him and invited him to share a meal. The man was Saichiro Fujita, and it was the start of a long and loving friendship.

Travel Companions

Fujita, as he was known, was born in 1886 in Japan. His family was wealthy, and he moved to the U.S. for school. Fujita enjoyed the excitement of going to parties and the theater. But his interests changed when he learned about the Bahá'í Faith while living in California. He became a Bahá'í at about age 19. 'Abdu'l-Bahá expressed the hope that Fujita would serve humanity with a "perceiving eye, attentive ear, eloquent tongue and radiant face . . ."

Fujita was excited to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá in person at the Chicago train station. 'Abdu'l-Bahá enjoyed his company so much, he invited Fujita to join him on his journey to the western states. After two months, Fujita asked if he could return with him to Haifa (now in Israel). 'Abdu'l-Bahá agreed, but encouraged Fujita to finish his degree in engineering and horticulture first.

Cherished Friendship

In Haifa, Fujita helped in every way he could. He installed electric wiring, fixed and drove 'Abdu'l-Bahá's car, and tended gardens. He often

helped visitors, since he spoke English and had a warm and welcoming personality. He translated letters to and from Bahá'ís in Japan. Mostly, Fujita loved to be near 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

'Abdu'l-Bahá took great comfort in Fujita's pure spirit and joyful manner. He often invited Fujita to eat breakfast and lunch with him, and the meals were full of laughter. Fujita made 'Abdu'l-Bahá laugh by hiding his cat, then releasing it to race across the room to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Fujita said, "'Abdu'l-Bahá was very, very kind to me. We had many trips, many jokes."

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá passed away on November 28, 1921, Fujita was heartbroken. He wept as he traveled to 'Akká to share the sad news with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's friends and family. He also wrote to inform the Bahá'ís in Japan.

Fujita remained in Haifa and helped Shoghi Effendi, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's grandson and the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. But in 1938, as World War II approached, Shoghi Effendi grew concerned about Fujita's safety. He urged Fujita to return to his family in Japan. Fujita stayed in Japan for 17 years, then moved back to Haifa, where he lived until he passed away at age 90. The Universal House of Justice, the international governing body for Bahá'ís, praised Fujita's tireless service, calling him a "SHINING EXAMPLE" to future generations of Japanese Bahá'ís.

Before Fujita's passing, a friend asked him how he had helped 'Abdu'l-Bahá for all those years. Fujita humbly replied, "I never felt that I could do very much for 'Abdu'l-Bahá. One thing I did was perhaps acceptable—sometimes, I made him laugh."