

Perseverance amid Paradox: The Struggle of the LDS Church in Japan Today

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The growth of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has recently slowed in Japan, as elsewhere, adding to the decades-long challenge for the Church of a low activity rate within the country. Latter-day Saints often say that conversion is more of a process than a one-time event. The same is true with LDS enculturation, or acceptance of this American-based church by other cultures as a legitimate part of their societies. Both conversion and enculturation require that people get to know something new and accept it as part of their personal being or their society's character. As such, both processes are types of internalization, one at the individual level and one at the societal level.

Ideally, both internalization processes proceed smoothly and steadily over time. In reality, however, unexpected complications and setbacks often mingle with advances. The Church's current struggles in Japan demonstrate such challenges. Perseverance and paradox characterize the experience of the Church and its members. This essay outlines the shifting fortunes of the LDS Church in Japan historically and offers illustrations and explanations of the two types of internalization processes for the Church in contemporary Japan. By doing so, it updates the thoughts I have offered on the Church in Japan in the pages of *Dialogue*.¹

Mormonism's History in Japan

The Earliest Missionary Efforts, 1901-24

The early mission to Japan was not very successful. Perhaps LDS

polygamy was simply too foreign for the Japanese to countenance. Japanese newspapers, for example, sensing the 1890s continuation of polygamy, treated the arrival of Mormon missionaries in 1901 with clear rejection, or, at least, a very cautious tone.² A typical article referred to the LDS Church as “a strange religion which still practices polygamy” and worried that accepting this religion would give disgraceful Japanese men an excuse to keep mistresses.³ The admonition of another Tokyo newspaper, *Niroku-shimpo*, to “first welcome [the Mormons] and see what message they have” was a minority position.⁴ More common was rejection, a comprehensible reaction in view of the strong trailing note of polygamy.⁵ In the early twentieth century, Japan was endeavoring to join with the West in its “civilized society”; the Meiji Restoration had included the abolition of the custom of keeping mistresses and strong encouragement for the establishment of monogamy. The sterile results of the Church’s next twenty-three years in Japan suggest that the Japanese on the whole strongly rejected Mormonism. The period was characterized by indifference from the Japanese and an inability of LDS missionaries to get the Japanese to see past the stereotype of polygamy.⁶

Lack of Japanese language abilities and literature in Japanese, the small number of missionaries, and the vast difference between American and Japanese cultures certainly contributed to the mission’s futility. More generally, however, the mood at the turn of the twentieth century was not welcoming to Christianity as a whole in Japan. Yasuo Furuya, a Princeton D.D. and a former professor at International Christian University, observes that this period was one of narrow nationalism. The Meiji Constitution (1889) and the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890) both firmly established the emperor’s absolute rule. In this context in 1891 occurred a notable scandal. Kanzo Uchimura was a well-known Japanese Christian who had joined the Methodist Church in 1878 while attending Sapporo Agricultural School. After studying theology in the United States, he returned to Japan to become a teacher at First High Secondary School. However, he refused to bow down before “Kyoiku-chokugo” or the Imperial Rescript on Education at its reading ceremony. He was forced to resign from his post, was severely ostracized, and was charged with defaming the Imperial House. *Lèse-majesté* was a crime before World War II. In short, the Japanese frowned upon Christianity and viewed it with hostility,⁷ so Mormon missionaries came to Japan at a very difficult time.

The Post-World War II Flowering of the Church

The climate for foreign cultural influences within Japan changed drastically after World War II.⁸ Narrow nationalism gave way to the internationalism endorsed by the military occupiers of Japan, which included support for Christian missions. Furuya calls this a "Christianity boom," culminating in a minister's being invited to the Imperial Court to lecture the emperor on the Bible.⁹ The United States exerted a particularly strong influence during this period, and Japan experienced rapid "Americanization" politically, socially, and culturally. The United States imposed much of this process, but the Japanese also genuinely participated. The United States mandated a U. S. military presence in Japan, for example, as well as a military alliance between the two countries. The Japanese sought to follow American patterns in industry and constitutional politics. Furthermore, American cultural products became intensely fascinating to the Japanese.

In this climate the LDS Church prospered as a recognizably American organization.¹⁰ Within three years of the war's end, it reopened its mission in Tokyo, building on the proselytizing success of the post-war months. Many people, mostly in humble material and spiritual conditions, thronged to the missionaries' roadside preaching and attended church meetings. Few traces of polygamy remained relevant. Newspapers during the 1950s described missionaries doing street preaching "enthusiastically," "in a polite manner," and "at their own expense."¹¹ In the 1960s some papers printed a photograph of the Salt Lake Temple as a sacred place of world historical interest.¹² Newspapers featured two U.S. cabinet ministers, George Romney and David Kennedy, as "devout" and "pious" Mormons.¹³ The participation of the Church in Exposition '70 in Osaka drew much positive attention, as did famous Mormons such as Ezra Taft Benson, Billy Casper, Johnny Miller, and Jack Anderson.¹⁴

Most LDS references concerned American Latter-day Saints. Unsurprisingly, *Shukan-Yomiuri*, a weekly magazine, termed Mormonism an "American" church in October 1975.¹⁵ During this period, the Japanese showed fresh interest in and welcome for American Mormons.

Struggles and Successes in Contemporary Mormonism

The years after 1980 constitute a period of mixed success for Mormonism in Japan. During the 1980s, the media, for example, continued

to use modifiers such as “devout” and “earnest” to describe American TV actors Kent Gilbert and Kent Delicutt, both former LDS missionaries to Japan, appearing on Japanese entertainment TV.¹⁶ Generally positive descriptors as “diligent,” “healthy,” “low cancer rate,” and “long-lived” also characterized Mormons. However, news of a critical or negative nature—both internally and externally—also caught the media’s attention.¹⁷ Such episodes included the Church’s position on the Equal Rights Amendment in 1982, the Mark Hofmann murders in 1985, a scandal over a real estate deal by the Tokyo Church administration office in 1986,¹⁸ and gossip about an extramarital affair by an LDS actress in 1991. Then came the Salt Lake City Olympic bid scandal in 1998.

This shift toward ambivalence refers to the minority of Japanese who pay attention to Mormonism. Of course, most Japanese increasingly know about and take for granted the most visible facets of Mormonism: helmet-wearing missionaries on bicycles, English conversation classes taught at meeting houses, and members’ rigid observance of the Word of Wisdom. In addition, countless members of the Church represent LDS ideals well and visibly among acquaintances.¹⁹ Some Japanese tourists have visited LDS communities abroad, and students who study at Church-run institutions of higher education also bring back knowledge of Mormonism. Nevertheless, vast numbers of Japanese know little or nothing about Mormonism beyond the most basic stereotypes, and indifference remains dominant.

However, the move toward ambivalence reflects more than simply Japan’s attitude toward Mormonism *per se*.²⁰ After the second World War, the nation struggled through a long process of regaining self confidence. Despite economic and population slowdowns, such confidence has blossomed in the past couple of decades. Japan is one of the most secular and modern nations in the world. With the world’s second largest economy, people live in affluence, and many disregard religion. Terrorism by Aum Shinri-kyo in 1995,²¹ among other things, made the nation distrust religion as a whole. Japan’s other-directed, relational, social and cultural expectations work against the demands of systems (such as Mormonism) that prize individualistic and exclusivist attitudes toward faith, lifestyle, and transgression.²² Participation in a globalized economy is occurring simultaneously with a widespread movement toward nationalist conservatism.²³ Materialism, secularization, estrangement from religion, and growing nationalism are all adverse factors that weigh

against Christianity, including Mormonism. The recent U.S. unilateral foreign policy actions (especially warfare) have not played well in pacifist Japan.²⁴ The Church, which most Japanese still regard as American, invariably suffers by association. LDS growth rates reflect this changed climate: a slowdown from almost 3 percent per year between 1982 and 1996 to about 1 percent between 1997 and 2004.²⁵

The Social Level: Japan's Intercultural Paradox

The historically changing fortunes of Japanese society noted above help contextualize challenges to Church growth in Japan. In this section I point out Japan's *intercultural* paradox, which has influenced these struggles. Similar dynamics affect societies other than Japan to greater or lesser degrees, but the paradox seems particularly inherent to Japanese culture.

Scholarly observers of Japan, both foreign and Japanese, have long been fascinated by Japanese receptiveness toward foreigners and foreign culture. Books such as Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946), Karel van Wolfrén's *The Enigma of Japanese Power* (1988), and Yoshio Sugimoto's *An Introduction to Japanese Society* (1997) attest to this interest. The historical Japanese embrace of Chinese religion, thought, and technology, as well as its rapid adoption of western science and technology after the Meiji Restoration (1868) and World War II, has led many scholars to argue that Japanese culture is uniquely hospitable to things foreign. Japanese culture incorporates these outside elements into Japanese society, makes them its own, and subsequently improves on them. Accounts of Japan's post-World War II economic "miracle" often used this theme, especially during the heyday of Japanese economic power during the 1980s and early 1990s. Scholars also explained the LDS Church's rapid growth in Japan through the 1980s by this argument. Even Sterling M. McMurrin, that often prescient observer of the LDS scene, grounded his optimism for continued LDS growth in Japan in this manner: "I must recognize that some native peoples have had an almost unbelievable capacity for cultural adaptation. The Japanese are the prime exhibit of this, not only in the profound transformation of their society since the outset of the Meiji era, but even more recently since the War and the American occupation."²⁶

However, this explanation's popularity waned somewhat after the prolonged Japanese economic slump began. Scholars recognized that ac-

counts of Japanese receptiveness toward things foreign needed additional nuance. And actually many already understood that Japanese cultural adaptation did not operate simplistically. Instead, it incorporated a paradox.

Perhaps this paradox is best introduced through a saying we Japanese often hear from foreigners: "We were welcome as outsiders, but rejected when we came inside." Dave Spector, a TV talent who has lived in Japan since 1983, puts it this way: "Japanese are fond of 'foreign countries,' but do not ask for 'foreign countries' within the country." A foreigner who speaks Japanese fluently, which used to be unexpected, is sometimes referred to as a *hen-na gaijin* ("strange foreigner") and faces the mixed reception of friendliness and puzzlement. More often than not, while Japanese usually welcome a guest or traveler with very warm hospitality, a person from another country who tries to settle down in Japan faces suspicion and even rejection.

Recently a Japanese scholar with a long residency in Europe has explained this phenomenon as Japan's "intercultural paradox." Toshiaki Kozakai's observations, published in 1991 as *Les Japonais: Sont-ils des Occidentaux? Sociologie d'une Acculturation Volontaire*, derive from ten years of research on the topic and fifteen years of living outside of Japan, and observing intercultural issues relating to the Japanese:

The word "gaijin" (literally an "outside person," an equivalent of "foreigner"), which is used mostly for the Westerners, is disliked the most by those of them who reside in Japan. As guests they surely will be very warmly received, but they would be marked "outside person," as with a branding iron, however long they have lived in Japan, however many generations go by after obtaining citizenship, or even after they have come to behave just like Japanese by speaking flawless Japanese and acquiring the conventions of the society. The day would perhaps be remote when they would be accepted as genuinely Japanese in this closed island community.²⁷

Though attitudes are changing slowly, this situation by and large still predominates.

Visitors to Japan quickly notice that television and magazine advertisements overflow with translated loan words of Western origin, as well as with Caucasian models. Kozakai suggests the coexistence of two important attitudes. The Japanese take in the West, on the one hand, through linguistic Westernization, aesthetic Caucasianization, and the desire to acquire the status of honorary Caucasian; but on the other

hand, they reject real Westerners. To illustrate, a young Japanese woman says she feels drawn to *gaijin* as boyfriends, but prefers to marry a Japanese man. Kozakai argues that two vectors are functioning: one is to take in a foreign object, and the other is to keep it away when the circumstances become very real. Masao Maruyama, a political thinker, dubbed Japan “both [a] closed and open society.” To account for this apparent contradiction, Kozakai maintains that “taking a foreign object in is easy and possible when the foreigner is kept outside.” Kozakai uses the sheer scarcity of foreign residents in the country, as well as the island country’s geographical isolation, to support his view.²⁸ Even when the Japanese take in a new element from a foreign culture, that element will go through mutation, reinterpretation, reinvention, and refraction. Kozakai aptly calls these processes “detoxification” and refers to a system of “immunization.”²⁹

Kozakai’s formulation suggests that foreign elements in Japan face initial enthusiastic welcome while they are still seen as foreign but become subject to suspicion and/or “detoxification” and “immunization” if they attempt to gain a foothold in the country. I believe this formulation applies to the LDS Church and the gospel. Japanese fascination with foreign elements showed itself most remarkably in the post-World War II period. The Church grew steadily from nearly zero to around 50,000 members in 1980. But when a foreign thing comes “inside,” when it appears to be more than a surface phenomenon, the reverse motion of keeping it away begins. LDS growth rates reflected the paradox only by the 1990s, but other evidence shows a movement away from the earlier embrace of things Mormon. Each piece of evidence is admittedly anecdotal and may have additional, more proximate explanations, but taken altogether, and along with the growth and retention difficulties,³⁰ they point to a pattern of Japanese respecting Mormons and Mormonism abroad but manifesting indifference when they come close and stay there.

One piece of evidence is the disappearance of “Mormonism” entries from dictionaries of philosophy since the late 1950s. I found in libraries four dictionaries of philosophy that were published in Japan before 1955. Each listed Mormonism. But of the fourteen such dictionaries published after 1955, only two listed Mormonism. Another example is the gradual exclusion of the LDS Church by the Christian world of Japan from its *Christian Yearbook* starting in 1976 after having listed LDS statistics for more than twenty years previously.³¹ I can also point to the

Nihon Hosō Kyōkai's (Japan Broadcasting Company's) apparent discontinuance of occasional broadcasts of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. I remember listening to the Tabernacle Choir on NHK radio several times, but more than thirty years ago. I almost never hear the choir on the radio these days, either locally or nationally. Japan Columbia Record Company, now renamed Columbia Music Entertainment, a major Japanese CD audio company, used to have a contract with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir to sell records, but it no longer markets the choir's records or CDs.

The Individual Level: Church History on the Internet

The struggles of the Church in Japan can also be seen at the individual level, as many members persevere (or do not) through unexpected challenges to internalize Mormonism. Here I recount, as a member and personal observer of the Church in Japan, a minor crisis that developed for Japanese Mormons because of the internet.³² The internet is an increasingly important source of information in Japan. The Japanese surfer will find that a majority of websites and bulletin boards on Mormonism are either critical or antagonistic toward the Church, giving historical information on Mormonism unfamiliar to most members.

Physical distance and language barriers have kept most Japanese Church members, including those who are academically inclined, from knowledge of scholarly research on Mormon history. A small number of members subscribe to *Dialogue*, *Sunstone*, and the like, and certain controversial aspects do become known through personal networks. For example, although the Church itself said virtually nothing about the priesthood racial ban before 1978, most Japanese members had some knowledge of it. Nevertheless, non-standard Church history has generally been very dimly known by most Church members. It was only around 1997 that Mormon history, other than the "standard Church history" carefully provided by the Church, became easily accessible in Japan. The accessibility was largely due to the rapid development and spread of the internet.³³

Prior to the internet, the quantity of Church literature on LDS history was quite limited, aside from lesson manuals. Older members, converted after the war, recall two books: *What of the Mormons?* by Gordon B. Hinckley, written and translated into Japanese in 1958; and William E. Berrett's *The Restored Church* (translated 1975), a large book with many

illustrations that had been originally developed as a text for U.S. seminary students. Very few members now possess these books, let alone refer to them. Then came two booklets devoted to Church history: *The Restored Truth* (1980, 1996)—an excerpt from *What of the Mormons?*—and *Our Heritage* (1996). These latter two works are still the chief sources of history for the general membership. The four books aim at members generally and comprise material positive in nature, plain to understand, devoid of complex and sensitive elements, and often featuring moving anecdotes of faith and sacrifice. The literature might be compared to a textbook of any nation's history for the middle-school level. For instance, the books lack concrete descriptions of the polygamy practiced by Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, the direct and immediate causes of Joseph Smith's death at Carthage, and the dissension that resulted in schismatic movements and the creation of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Community of Christ) in 1860.

More recently, in 1998, the Church Education System published its latest textbook, *Church History in the Fulness of Times*. This is the only publication by the Church in Japanese which comments on the Mountain Meadows Massacre or on the Mark Hofmann case. Both descriptions are worded very carefully, presumably so as not to damage the image of the Church. The list of the twelve documents Hofmann forged is mentioned in a footnote, the first time the documents had been printed in a Japanese publication since the 1980s, when four of them were introduced in the *Seito-no-michi*, the Japanese Church magazine.³⁴ These examples illustrate the scarcity of information in Japan provided from within Mormonism.

Encyclopedias had been the most easily available sources of information outside of Mormonism on Church history. The descriptions therein were very brief and the tone was usually not critical, though they cannot be called friendly. Some inquisitive members might have glanced through other books on religion, but most had similarly short and general treatments of Mormonism. Robert Mullen's *Mormons* was translated in 1970 when Japan hosted Expo '70. The book, published by a major publishing house with the title *The Search for Happiness*, was well written and quite friendly to the Church, but it was not non-standard Mormon history. Of course, very antagonistic anti-Mormon literature could be found at Christian bookstores, but most members avoided these works or disregarded their claims as anti-Mormon.

The internet changed the scene radically. Soon after the internet began to be accessible, a member of the Church accessed American anti-Mormon sites and stumbled over problems with the Book of Abraham. He read other aspects of nonstandard Church history and, in 1997, started a website of his own in Japanese called "The Truth about the Mormon Church." It caused a great shock, as he was a respected bishop at the time. He was excommunicated soon thereafter. He renamed the site "Uninformed Saints" in 1998.³⁵ The following year, members who had left the Church created a website, "Group of Courage and Truth." That same year, another defector started a website called "Is the Mormon Church Worth Believing?" In 2000 a member who remains in the Church introduced "The Study of Mormonism" to give viewers an "objective" perspective.

Thus, in just a few years, different versions and interpretations of Church history and doctrine became accessible in Japanese. As a result, a number of members—perhaps dozens—became disturbed and left the Church. The phenomenon was not very conspicuous, but it was observed here and there. They felt perplexed that Joseph Smith undertook polygamy secretly before the doctrine's public announcement, they puzzled over the supposed connection between the endowment ceremony and Masonic ritual, they grew suspicious of the Book of Mormon's historicity, and they wondered about other issues. Since many Japanese converts are honest-minded and sober, many dissenters felt disappointed and betrayed by the Church. Among those who left the Church were a convert from another Christian church who had been mission leader of a district in western Japan, a very active returned missionary in the Tokyo area, a core member of an Osaka ward, a few Relief Society sisters in one branch, and many other rank-and-file members. Since then, various websites, both apologetic and antagonistic, have been set up, including the official webpage of the Church in Japanese. The tone of the antagonists is still angry, sarcastic, and hostile.

Most who dissented from the Church because of alternative histories,³⁶ I have observed, returned to their former atheistic lives, though a certain number turned to Protestant churches. Some of those who became atheistic apparently lapsed into moral degradation, launched extramarital relations, neglected their families, and divorced their spouses, just as higher criticism of the Bible and modernism may cause some Christians to lose confidence, recognize no authority, and follow their

own moral instincts. Though it would be virtually impossible to prove, the slowing conversion rate might also result partly from the existence of these secular resources. I have heard anecdotal reports of investigators discontinuing missionary lessons or changing their minds about baptism after reading antagonistic webpages.

At the 1983 conference of the Mormon History Association, Martin E. Marty introduced a distinction between two equally valid but intellectually different levels of religious faith: "primitive naivete" and "secondary naivete."³⁷ Here primitive naivete refers to accepting a religion more or less without question, while secondary naivete means staying in the faith even after critically scrutinizing Church history and adapting one's faith to more nuanced and sophisticated demands. The passage from the primitive to the secondary level, which often happens as individuals mature, is a difficult process for many, sometimes even occasioning a personal crisis. Members may feel betrayed, disappointed, and indignant when exposed to material that contradicts cherished ideas. They struggle to restructure and reestablish their faith and philosophy of life. Those who succeed grow stronger in the faith than they were before, but some do not succeed.

One might suggest that most members need only primitive naivete; that is, they are content with simple, standard, and positive forms of Church history. And it may be true that many members thrive under such circumstances. The Church in Japan, however, will not grow if it keeps only those with primitive naivete and is unable to retain those who leave that stage and launch more complex explorations of their faith. Nor will an LDS culture that fosters only primitive naivete ever become fully internalized in a society as complex as Japan's. A system of thought from the outside that will not engage a society's most rigorous minds will always remain peripheral. In Japan, those at the first stage of naivete stayed in the Church while many of the rest, including members with complex views, left or drifted into inactivity. Those who leave tend to be inquisitive and intelligent; thus, the Church in Japan has been losing significant human resources.

Conclusion: Coping with the Challenges

In Japan, as everywhere else, the reception of the Church and the gospel varies greatly among individuals. To some, indeed to most Japanese, the Church and the gospel bear unmistakable marks of a foreign en-

tity. To others, those who have been deeply converted, the Church and the gospel are simply the truth. The gospel, like science (which was successfully "taken in" by a modernizing Japan), claims universal truth, beyond cultural particularities. Given an estimate of about 25,000 active LDS in Japan—out of more than 120,000 members,³⁸ which in turn is about one in every 1,000 Japanese—those holding that the gospel carries truths independent of culture are not insignificant in number, but neither do they appreciably impact views toward Mormonism in the larger society. Most Japanese, in the long term, will continue to regard Mormonism as fundamentally foreign.³⁹ If the intercultural paradox operates in the manner I have suggested, the Church will probably continue to face severe challenges of growth and retention in Japan. For Latter-day Saints, true conversion among individuals requires, among other things, spiritual persuasion that the essential church transcends its places of origin. As I have argued elsewhere, true conversion often fails to occur for many Japanese in the process leading to baptism. Many converts join for reasons other than deep internal belief. Church leaders must continue to attend to the conversion process after baptism.⁴⁰

From my observation of LDS-related bulletin boards and other trends in Japan, I do not believe that the swaying and/or defection of members from the Church is as common now as it was during the early years of internet access. This situation parallels members' attitudes toward anti-Mormon literature in the past. Once active members become aware of the nature of antagonistic websites, they avoid viewing them. Yet it is still the case that members may be exposed to such information more easily and innocently than in pre-internet days. Thus, Church teachers and leaders in Japan must, at least indirectly, confront this new accessibility to nonofficial Church history and criticism.

The intercultural paradox and the mini-crisis over the internet involve a similar process: enthusiastic curiosity for new phenomena from the outside, replaced by disillusionment and a repelling of those phenomena once greater familiarity sets in. One of the Church's key challenges in Japan is to ensure that familiarity does not breed contempt. Familiarization should draw members closer. We should give members more tools to recognize Church teachings and history—even amid the controversies—as universally and personally applicable, rather than foreign.

A new type of Church member who is informed about academic Mormon history may be slowly emerging in Japan. I personally know

many such members: a few at the bishopric level, a few college professors, a physician who is in a district presidency, a Gospel Doctrine teacher, an Institute teacher (not a CES employee), and others. These members could be regarded as Mormon intellectuals who have made the passage from Marty's primitive to secondary naivete or from belief before criticism to belief through criticism and interpretation.

What would help knowledgeable Japanese members pass to the secondary stage of faith? First, the leadership of the Church in the country should understand historical issues in the Church. With such knowledge, they will be able to deal better with members who are encountering such questions and difficult issues for the first time. Second, the Church in Japan should release as much information concerning Church history as possible. Finally, there should be neutral resources available. With these conditions satisfied, the Church in Japan will become more mature, stable, and better able to weather future crises. It might even simultaneously lay the groundwork for the long process of overcoming the intercultural paradox.

Notes

1. See, most recently, Jiro Numano, "Mormonism in Modern Japan," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 223-35.

2. Two foreign newspapers, *Japan Herald* and *Japan Mail*, preceded the Japanese papers in reporting and arguing about the arrival of the Mormon missionaries. Alma O. Taylor, one of the first four LDS missionaries in Japan, wrote in his journal on August 20, 1901, "In reading the papers for the last two or three days I find that the subject of Mormonism is being advertised extensively and that the different papers have taken sides and a heavy war is raging. . . . [M]any of the articles written concerning us are very severe and slanderous." Reid L. Neilson, "The Japanese Missionary Journals of Elder Alma O. Taylor, 1901-10" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 2001), 40. Frederick R. Brady, "The Japanese Reaction to Mormonism and the Translation of Mormon Scripture into Japanese" (M.A. thesis, Sophia University, Tokyo, 1979), first researched the archives of Japanese newspapers and assembled a list of articles on Mormonism. The most detailed treatise on this topic is Shinji Takagi, "Mormons in the Press: Reactions to the 1901 Opening of the Japan Mission," *BYU Studies* 40, no. 1 (2000): 141-75.

3. *Jiji-Shimpo* (Tokyo), "On the Arrival of Mormonism," August 20, 1901, 2; all translations from Japanese are mine.

4. *Niroku-shimpo* (Tokyo), "Mormon" (editorial), August 22, 1901, 2.

5. I first put this point of view in my "Reaction of Japanese Press at the Arrival of Mormon Church," (Japanese) *Mormon Forum*, no. 17 (Fall 1996): 14.

6. Shinji Takagi and William McIntire, *Japanese Latter-Day Saint History* (Japanese) (Kobe: Bihaibu Shuppan, 1996), 117–19. The number of members when the mission was closed in 1924 was 166. The LDS First Presidency gave the main reason for closing as the mission's "almost negligible results." *Deseret Evening News*, June 12, 1924, quoted in R. Lanier Britsch, "The Closing of the Early Japan Mission," *BYU Studies* 15, no. 2 (Winter 1975): 173.

7. Yasuo Furuya, *On Japan Proselytizing* (Japanese) (Tokyo: Kyo-bunkan, 1995), 76–77.

8. Between 1924 and 1948, the Church continued to operate in Japan as best it could with its few available local leaders. See J. Christopher Conklin, "Members without a Church: Japanese Members in Japan from 1924 to 1948," *BYU Studies* 15 (Winter 1975): 191–214.

9. Furuya, *On Japan Proselytizing*, 79–80.

10. Shinji Takagi, "The Eagle and the Scattered Flock: LDS Church Beginnings in Occupied Japan, 1945–49," *Journal of Mormon History* 28, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 104–39; Takagi, "Riding on Eagles' Wings: The Japanese Mission under American Occupation, 1948–52," *Journal of Mormon History* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 200–32.

11. *Asahikawa Journal* (Asahikawa, Hokkaido), May 25, 1959.

12. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 18, 1961; *Nikkei Shimbun*, October 21, 1966.

13. *Mainichi Daily News*, November 30, 1965; *Asahi Shimbun*, December 13, 1968.

14. *Mainichi Shimbun*, April 26, 1969, 3; *Weekly Asahi Golf*, December 1, 1971; *Asahi Shimbun*, January 7, 1972.

15. Quoted in Seiji Katanuma, "The Church in Japan," in *Mormonism: A Faith for All Cultures*, edited by F. LaMond Tullis (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), 170. Katanuma had aptly argued a few years earlier: "Internationalization of the Church necessitates nationalization of the Church" in each country, suggesting that "it means that our church in Japan becomes the church for the Japanese" by paying attention to the needs, desires, and hopes of his fellow countrymen. Seiji Katanuma, "The Church in Japan," *BYU Studies* 14, no. 1 (Autumn 1973): 26. Jiro Numano, "How International Is the Church in Japan?" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*

13, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 85–91, also regarded the Church as an American organization.

16. The very common use of the adjective “devout” (*keiken-na*) does not necessarily represent the individual reporter’s choice of words but is conventional wording, reflecting the common image of society toward Mormons.

17. Some of this mixed media message paralleled American media coverage of the LDS Church. Jan Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 98–123.

18. *Uwasa no Shinso* (*Truth of Rumors*, a monthly journal), 8, no. 11 (November 1986): 62–65. An employee charged that a collusive relationship existed between dealers and the office.

19. For example, Teiji Ebara, a Catholic theologian, writes, “I have wonderful Mormon friends who value their families very much. They refrain from stimulants, work hard, and are morally clean.” *Catholicism and the Mormon Church* (Japanese) (Tokyo: San-yo Press, 1993), 104.

20. See Numano, “Mormonism in Modern Japan.”

21. The religious group Aum Shinri-kyo released sarin gas on a Tokyo subway on March 20, 1995, killing twelve people and injuring 5,510.

22. Numano, “Mormonism in Modern Japan,” 226–28.

23. Kosaku Yoshino, *Sociology of Cultural Nationalism* (Japanese) (Nagoya: Nagoya University Press, 1997), 238–39, says that the *shido-yoryo* (the course of study) directed by the Ministry of Education in 1989 clearly reflects a shift toward nationalism. Masachi Ohsawa, *Imperial Nationalism* (Japanese) (Tokyo: Seido-sha, 2004), 208, also observes the reemergence of nationalism since the 1990s. The most outstanding sign was the movement to revise history textbooks. Those Japanese who try to rewrite the nation’s history prefer a sympathetic, reassuring history that points to the nation’s nobility and glory—a nationalist viewpoint. Others acknowledge the criticism of Japanese imperialism made by the country’s neighbors. The first group appears to have become a sweeping force in recent years.

24. According to the U.S.-Japan joint opinion poll by Gallup pollsters and Yomiuri Newspaper in November 2004 (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, December 26, 2004), 53 percent of Japanese respondents replied they did not trust the United States. That figure is the highest of the last five years. Seventy-five percent were displeased with the U.S. occupation of Iraq, and 61 percent did not regard the reelection of George W. Bush with favor.

25. LDS membership in Japan increased from 75,155 in 1982, to

111,525 in 1996, to 120,842 in 2004. The statistics are based on a letter to me from the Tokyo Japan Administration Office of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, March 30, 2005. A sharp increase between 1980 and 1982 was due to an unusually hasty baptism policy begun in 1979. For more explanation of these baptismal policies and a general discussion of Church growth through the mid-1990s, see Numano, "Mormonism in Modern Japan," 224–25.

26. Sterling M. McMurrin, "Problems in Universalizing Mormonism," *Sunstone* 17, no. 18 (December 1979): 15.

27. Toshiaki Kozakai, *Intercultural Paradox* (Japanese) (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1996), a revised and updated version of his *Les Japonais: Sont-ils des Occidentaux? Sociologie d'une Acculturation Volontaire* (*The Japanese: Are They Westerners? Sociology of a Voluntary Acculturation*) (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1991), 90.

28. *Ibid.*, 158, 159, 215. Kozakai points out that Western residents did not account for more than 0.1 percent of the population in 1990; the majority of Japanese are exposed to foreign cultures only indirectly.

29. *Ibid.*, 80, 194, 211.

30. According to the graph, "Church Activity in Japan" prepared by the Church's Research Information Division, the percentage of members attending sacrament meeting stood a little lower than 30 percent in the second half of the 1970s, then declined to a little over 20 percent in the 1980s and 1990s. Cyril I. A. Figuerres, *The Ammon Project: Establishing "Real Growth" and the "First Generation Church" in Japan* (Salt Lake City: LDS Research Information Division, 1994). Japan's activity rate is low by LDS Church standards, but not uniquely so; and short of studying Japanese retention through sophisticated methodologies of social psychology, it may not be possible to suggest the particular contribution that the intercultural paradox makes to levels of activity. Nevertheless, the conceptual logic seems sound: When the teachings of the Church—still a foreign element to many members—press hard with demands that an individual Japanese reform himself or herself, that person often draws back, failing to accommodate himself or herself to it or fully integrate it within his or her own existent frame of thought.

31. In 1976, Japan's Evangelical Association proposed excluding the Unification Church, LDS Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Christian Scientists from the Christian Yearbook "on the ground of the heretical nature of these sects." *Christian Shimbun* (Tokyo), December 19, 1976. After

twenty years of successively diminishing the space allotted to these four religions, the *Yearbook* eventually excluded all of them from its 1996 edition.

32. Here again I am not claiming that the Church's experiences are completely unique to Japan, just that these experiences are necessary to understand the particular struggles of Mormonism in Japan.

33. The percentage of Japanese households with internet access soared from 6.4 percent in 1997 to 88.1 percent in 2003.

34. In 1988 I reported the list of Hofmann's forged documents in the first issue of an independent journal, *Mormon Forum*, three years after Hofmann's arrest. This bi-annual journal, with a circulation of 400, lasted until 2000.

35. "Uninformed Saints" is a translation of *Seito-no-michi* (*michi* means "unknown"), a pun on the former name of the monthly LDS Church magazine in Japan, *Seito-no-michi* (*michi* means "way"), or *The Way of the Saints*.

36. A similar wave of defections occurred in Bremen, Germany, in 1997, although the article reporting it does not say whether the medium conveying the non-standard history was on the internet or in print format. Jorg Dittberner, "One Hundred Eighteen Years of Attitude: The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Free and Hanseatic City of Bremen," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 67-68. Many branch members were disillusioned by the Utah Lighthouse Ministry's revelation of certain, apparently unsavory episodes in early LDS history and by the Church's failure to respond to those disclosures in ways that satisfied local members. Eventually thirty previously stalwart members defected, including two former bishops and a branch president. In a comparable case, Japanese members would probably have responded less precipitously and perhaps with more patience, but the nature of the disillusionment would have been similar.

37. Martin E. Marty draws the phrase from Paul Ricoeur. Marty, "Two Integrities: An Address to the Crisis in Mormon Historiography," *Journal of Mormon History* 10 (1983): 3-19, reprinted in George D. Smith, ed., *Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 181; see also Louis Midgley, "The Acids of Modernity and the Crisis in Mormon Historiography," in *ibid.*, 189ff., and Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), cited in Marty, "Two Integrities," 187 note 2.

38. For the reasoning behind this estimate, see Numano, "Mormonism in Modern Japan," 224-25.

39. *Ibid.*, 230-32. Little has changed in this regard during the ten years

since I last wrote of the need for Mormonism to take root in the soil of Japanese society.

40. *Ibid.*, 227.