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Title “Strange Characters and Expressions”: Three Japanese Translations of the Book of Mormon

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Abstract The complete Book of Mormon has been translated into Japanese no fewer than three times. The first translation was done by a young American missionary, Alma O. Taylor, the second by Satō Tatsui, the first native Japanese person to undertake the challenge, and the third after World War II by a committee appointed by the First Presidency. The challenges of translating concepts such as *God*, *Spirit*, or *atonement* into a language that shares no linguistic or cultural commonalities with the language of the inspired translation of the Book of Mormon are overwhelming. When attempting to communicate in a culture that does not acknowledge supreme deity or the kinship connection between God and man or life after death, a simple concept such as *damnation* can be challenging to convey. In addition, dramatic changes have occurred in the Japanese language over past century. The written Japanese language has changed with a rapidity that is unfathomable in English.

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“Strange
Characters
&
Expressions”

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THREE
JAPANESE
TRANSLATIONS
OF THE BOOK OF
MORMON

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VAN C. GESSEL

LANGUAGE, LIKE RICHES, can be a slippery commodity. However much we may think we are engaged in pure communication with others through the medium of words, human speech or writing is at best an attempt to approximate the thoughts and feelings of the speaker or writer's heart. Both literary and linguistic theorists concur that whatever the intention of the speaker or writer as thoughts are transformed into words, the hearer or reader has no choice but to process those communicative acts through the filter of personal experience, individual interpretation of the meaning of words, and a multitude of other influences that invariably impinge on the communication act. Little wonder that modern critics use such phrases as "the prison-house of language."¹

Of all translators in this dispensation, the Prophet Joseph Smith was surely the most fortunate and the most enviable: those who do literary translation would give anything for just the briefest moment of divine assistance in the process. It is sufficient challenge to render an English text into a Romance language, such as Italian or French, in which common roots and multiple cognates can help make the transformation flow more smoothly. But when the translation is into a "Truly Foreign Language,"² such as Japanese, that shares no linguistic or cultural commonalities with the language of Joseph Smith's inspired translation of the Book of Mormon, issues of interpretation that might not even occur to the casual reader can cause tremendous agonizing for translators. Cultures that share some basic, common understandings (however subtly different in nuance) of such core Christian terminology as *God*, *spirit*, *atonement*, and so on may be able to achieve a high level of communicability in translated form. But in a non-Christian nation such as Japan, virtually untouched by the entire Judeo-Christian philosophical tradition, even the most fundamental religious vocabulary may elicit entirely different images in the mind of the hearer.

Over the course of the 20th century, corresponding to the 100-year period of labors by Latter-day Saint missionaries in Japan, the complete Book of Mormon has been translated into Japanese no fewer than three times. The history of the translation process is in a sense a microcosmic view of the progress of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Japan, replicating the shift from foreign to native administration of church affairs. The first



First four missionaries to Japan at a missionary benefit dinner in Salt Lake City in summer 1901. Standing (left to right): Horace S. Ensign, Alma O. Taylor. Seated (left to right): Heber J. Grant, Louis A. Kelsch. Courtesy of the Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



Louis A. Kelsch, Alma O. Taylor, and Heber J. Grant at the site in Yokohama where the nation of Japan was dedicated for the preaching of the gospel in 1901. Photograph by Horace S. Ensign courtesy of John W. Welch.

translation was done by a young American missionary who stood at the side of Elder Heber J. Grant when the apostle dedicated the nation of Japan for the preaching of the gospel in 1901. After the calamities of World War II had brought Japan to its



Alma O. Taylor (left), Heber J. Grant (center), and others enjoying a traditional Japanese dinner. Photograph courtesy of John W. Welch.



Alma O. Taylor. Courtesy of the Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

knees, a small but dedicated group of individuals joined the church; one of them would shortly be charged with producing a new translation of the sacred text. Finally, as the church grew in membership in Japan and became fully organized, the First Presidency commissioned a committee in the mid-1980s to create yet another revision.

The initial translation, started in 1904 and completed five years later, was largely the work of Alma O. Taylor, a remarkable young American missionary who, when he received the call to undertake the translation, prayed

for the assistance of the Holy Spirit & gift of interpretation & translation that I may be successful in writing for the Japanese in their own tongue the great truths & powerful testimonies of the Book of Mormon. While my heart throbs with gratitu[d]e unspeakable for the honor conferred upon me yet every time I contemplate the magnitude and importance [of] the work before me and the responsibility it places upon me, I fear & tremble from head to foot and sense a weakness such as I have never before known.

O God, remember thy young servant. Magnify him in his new calling. Cause that his mind shall be lit up by the direct inspiration of Heaven that the task which now lies before him might be successfully accomplished by him in the time which Thou hast allotted and make Thine allotted time not too far distant. . . . In this time, when that sacred record is to be written in a language made up of strange characters & expressions like unto the . . . strangeness of the Egyptian writings & language found on the Gold Plates, again open the windows of heaven and pour forth upon Thy young servant, Alma, the gift of tongues & translation to such [an] extent that the purity of the Book of Mormon may in no wise be lost, the clearness in no wise obscured, and the spirit and testimony that always accompanies it in no wise impaired.³

Heartened by a letter from the First Presidency in which they expressed both their gratitude for his success in learning the difficult language and their full support and confidence in his capabilities, Taylor moved efficiently forward in his labors, writing in roman letters to speed the process (since the Japanese writing system, consisting of thousands of complex Chinese characters and two phonetic scripts, is one of the most cumbersome written languages in the world). In his journal he occasionally noted his struggles to find appropriate words to translate the doctrinal concepts in the text. He seemed to encounter his first great difficulty in the 12th and 13th chapters of Alma, where Alma teaches Zeezrom about spiritual death, the mortal

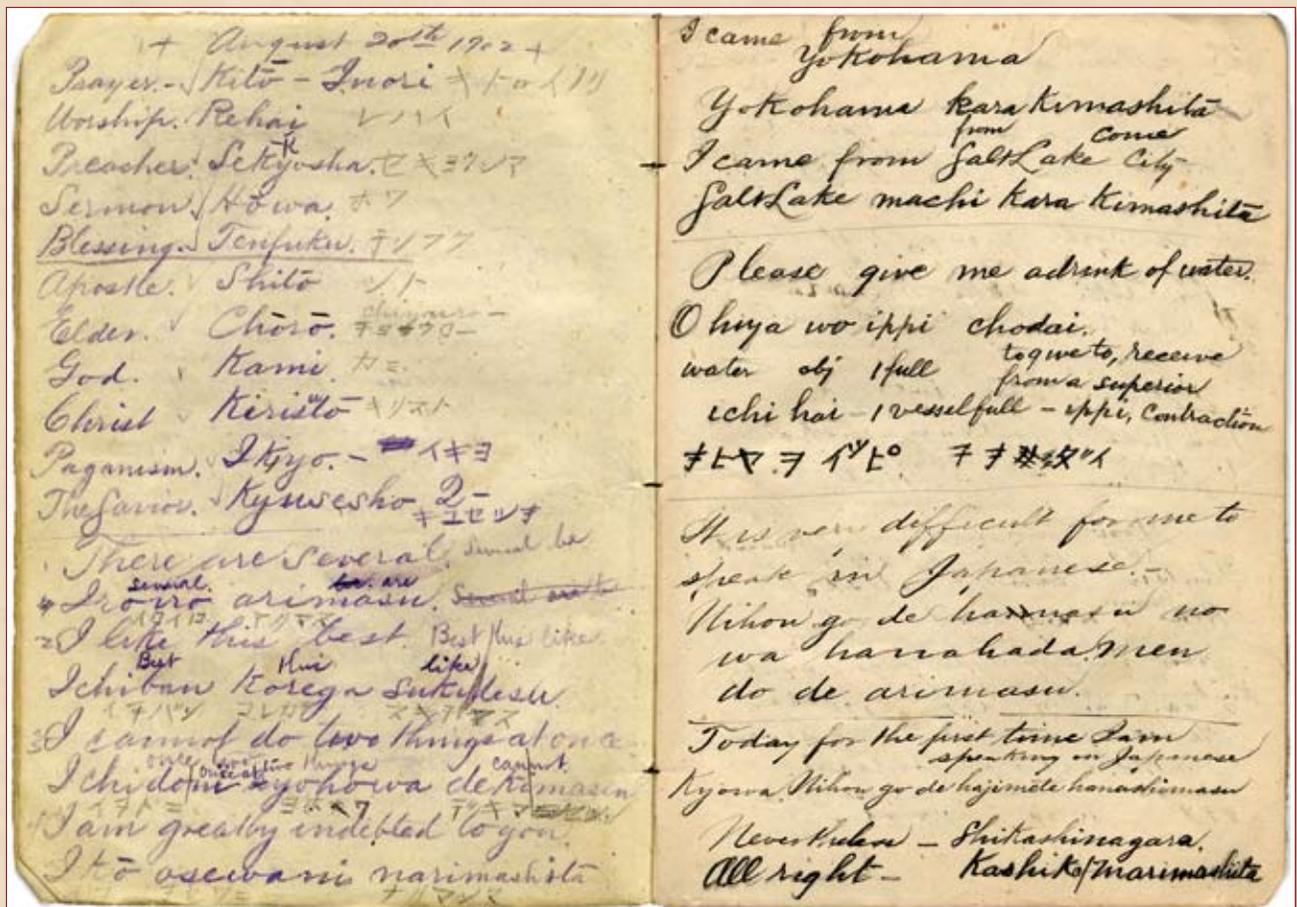
probation, the plan of redemption, and the nature of the priesthood. Those portions, he noted, contained “many expressions in English the equivalents of which if indeed there are any in Japanese I am as yet unfamiliar with.”⁴

Taylor had worked through his translation as far as the book of Alma by the summer of 1905, when he received word that President Ensign, the current mission president, was to be released and that he would be called as the new mission president. This news frustrated Taylor, for he realized that he would lose the ability to focus the vast majority of his time on the translation. Within a month he had extended a call to Elder Fred A. Caine to assist him in copying his roman letters into *kanji*, the Chinese characters used to write in Japanese. Caine proved an invaluable companion throughout the rest of the process; in 1906 he was called to read the first draft of the completed

translation, provide suggestions and criticisms, and compare the English version with the translation to catch any omissions or careless renderings. In October of 1907 Caine was released as mission secretary so he could devote all his time to this labor.

Because the entire project took five years, it was inevitable that Taylor would look back at some point and realize that his skill in Japanese as he began the translation was not as good as he then thought it was. In March of 1906 he mused: “When I began the translation I did not know as much about the language as I do now therefore I am aware of many places in the first of this translation which I can improve myself. . . . It is my earnest prayer that the way will be opened up for the entire translation to be carefully and well corrected and revised.”⁵

In a letter written to Elder George Reynolds of the First Council of the Seventy in January 1906, Taylor reported: “God has been a faithful friend



Excerpts from Heber J. Grant's Japanese notebook. Courtesy of the Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



Alma O. Taylor (center) and Louis A. Kelsch (right) in kimonos meet with a friend. Courtesy of John W. Welch.



Japanese members and investigators standing outside an early Church meetinghouse. Courtesy of John W. Welch.

to me in this labor and I have not prayed to Him in vain about many, at first, perplexing questions which have arisen.”⁶

After a series of consultations about the translation with various Japanese people, including some native church members, Taylor was startled and disappointed by an oft-repeated suggestion that his translation into the contemporary colloquial language was ill suited to a text considered by its adherents to be a sacred book of revelation straight from God. His native informants encouraged him to have his translation rewritten into the more formal literary language. Taylor had hoped to avoid this more difficult form of the language, but the inclination of his fellow missionaries was that the



Missionaries visit the Nikko Shrine, circa early 1900s. Courtesy of John W. Welch.

literary style was preferable. Taylor finally concurred, though he was no doubt saddened to think that so much of his own work would have to be altered.

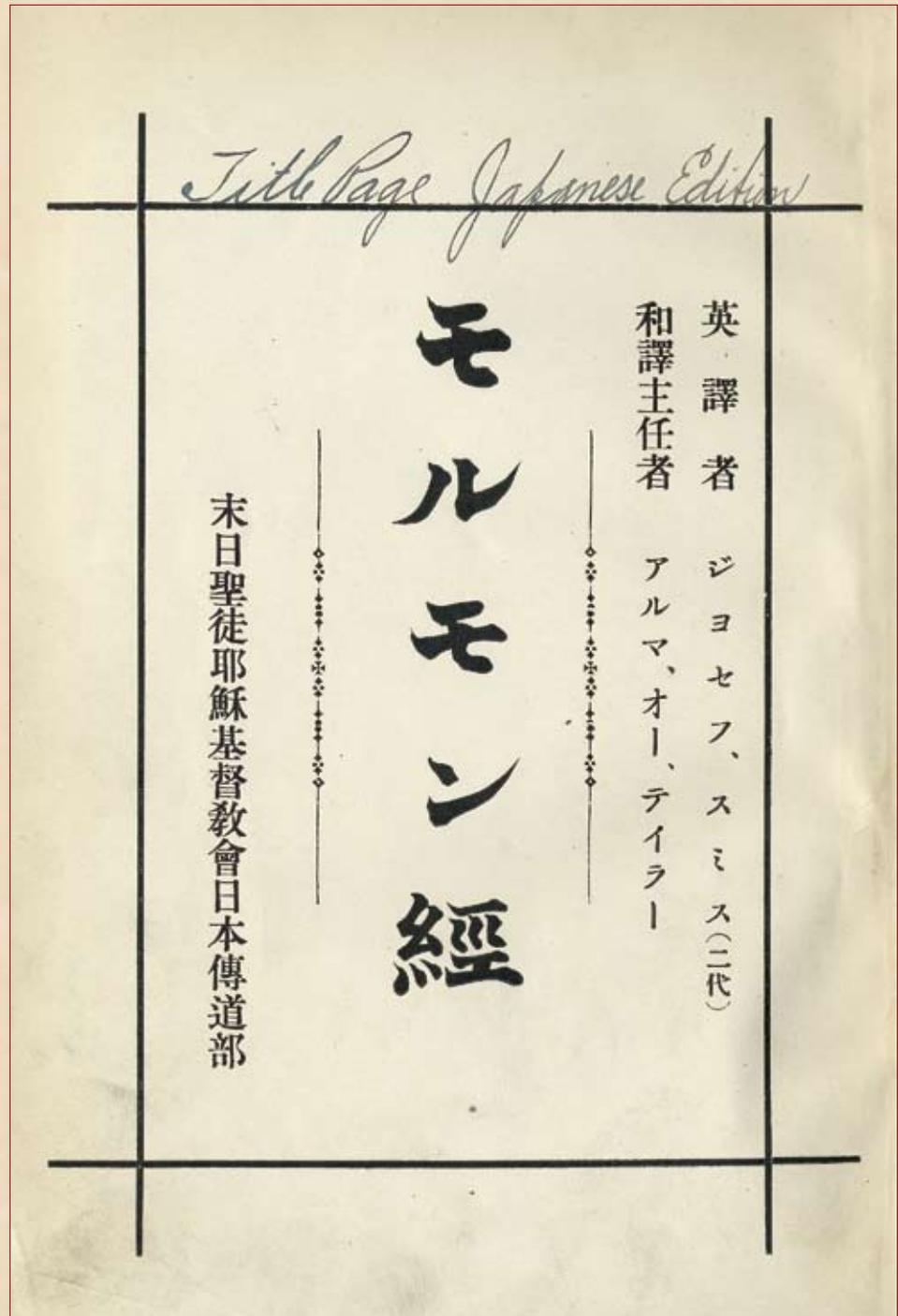
Taylor approached and hired several Japanese people to undertake the stylistic transformation, and they refashioned a goodly portion of the book. But perhaps because he was less confident in his own ability to critique and feel comfortable with the more difficult grammatical usages in the literary language, Taylor decided to have a man of solid literary reputation examine the revised translation. He ended up calling on two of the most important figures in the development of modern Japanese literature: Tsubouchi Shōyō, a critic, novelist, playwright, and

translator of the complete plays of Shakespeare; and Natsume Sōseki, the first truly world-class novelist to emerge in 20th-century Japan. Neither Shōyō nor Sōseki had the time or the interest to become involved in the project,⁷ but Sōseki introduced Taylor to one of his bright young disciples, Ikuta Chōkō, who was more than willing to undertake the revisions. Before he was fully confident in Ikuta's abilities, Taylor tested him and then showed the work to Shōyō, who gave it high marks. Thereafter Taylor entrusted the entire work to Ikuta and often sat in conversation with him over points of interpretation.⁸

As the work of rewriting progressed, Taylor was delighted with the result and his confidence in Ikuta mounted. In August of 1908 he recorded:

It looks good to see the translation in its completed garb and the feelings that pass through my heart when I look upon this translation feeling satisfied that it is well done, are undiscrivable. The joy is just a taste of what I hope it will be when the whole labor is finished. . . .

Mr. Ikuta is a gentleman. He is quick and frank in acknowledging his errors. He gives respectful ear to my side of the questions discussed and thus we get along well and rapidly.⁹



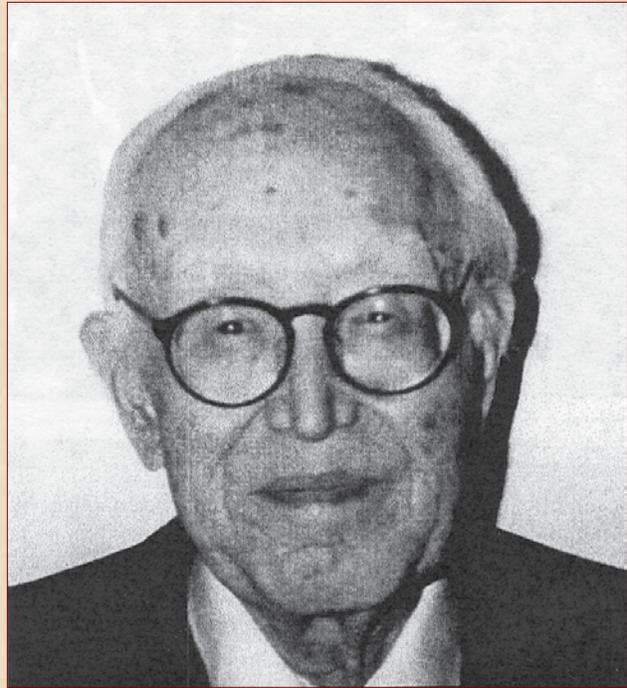
Title page of the Japanese edition of the Book of Mormon, 1909. Courtesy of the Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Taylor completed the final revisions and rewrites of the translation on 10 June 1909; three months later, when he laid down his pen after correcting the final proof sheets, Taylor wrote:

This then, so far as my work is concerned, is the grand finale. My feelings of joy, my gratitude, my satisfaction at being permitted to attain this day and see the successful close of this colossal labor cannot be described. It is a day I have hoped, prayed and walked [worked?] hard for, and I must acknowledge that the work has been so arduous, and confining, requiring the concentration of all my physical and mental power for such long stretches at a time, that in taking a retrospective view of the last 5 years and 9 months, I consider my physical and mental endurance almost a miracle—at any rate a direct answer to fervent appeals to God for strength to hold out to the end. And if the Lord sees fit to recognize the fruit of this labor performed in weakness as worthy of his benediction, and commissions the Holy Spirit to companion the Japanese Book of Mormon in its travels in Japan or wherever it goes, then will my most earnest and ultimate hope in regard to the work be realized, and all my toils and anxiety become my ever-joyful memories. I praise the Lord with all my might mind and strength. . . . The Lord also has raised up in time of need sufficient Japanese help thus making it possible to eliminate most if not all the grammatical and rethorical blunders in my manuscript.¹⁰

The first 1,000 of 5,000 copies ordered from the printer were delivered to the mission office on 11 October 1909. Arrangements were made to have copies specially bound in “deep cardinal red and deep violet morocco” with cover lettering in gold and silver for presentation to the Meiji emperor and his empress, along with limited-edition copies for the crown prince and princess and various government officials. Less than three months after the book was published, Elders Taylor and Caine, having completed the work the Lord had sent them to Japan to do, were released from their missions. Looking today at the translation they produced, and even factoring in the many layers of assistance provided them, it is sobering and inspiring to see what two young Americans (Taylor was 19 when he first arrived in Japan) were able to accomplish in making the Book of Mormon available for the first time in the Japanese language.

The second pioneer translator was the first native Japanese person to undertake a rendering of the



Satō Tatsui. Picture from *Boyd K. Packer: A Watchman on the Tower*, by Lucile C. Tate. Used by permission.

sacred book. Brother Satō Tatsui was baptized only 11 months after Japan’s unconditional surrender, the first Japanese person to join the church in some 20 years. He received the Melchizedek Priesthood and was ordained to the office of elder by Apostle Matthew Cowley, who told Brother Satō in the blessing that he would spend his life translating and interpreting for his people. Not long after that blessing, Brother Satō undertook the work of retranslating the Book of Mormon text while simultaneously translating the complete Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price for the first time into Japanese. His labors spanned the tenure of three mission presidents and included some brief but direct interaction regarding doctrinal questions with Elder Joseph Fielding Smith. His translation was published on 30 May 1957.

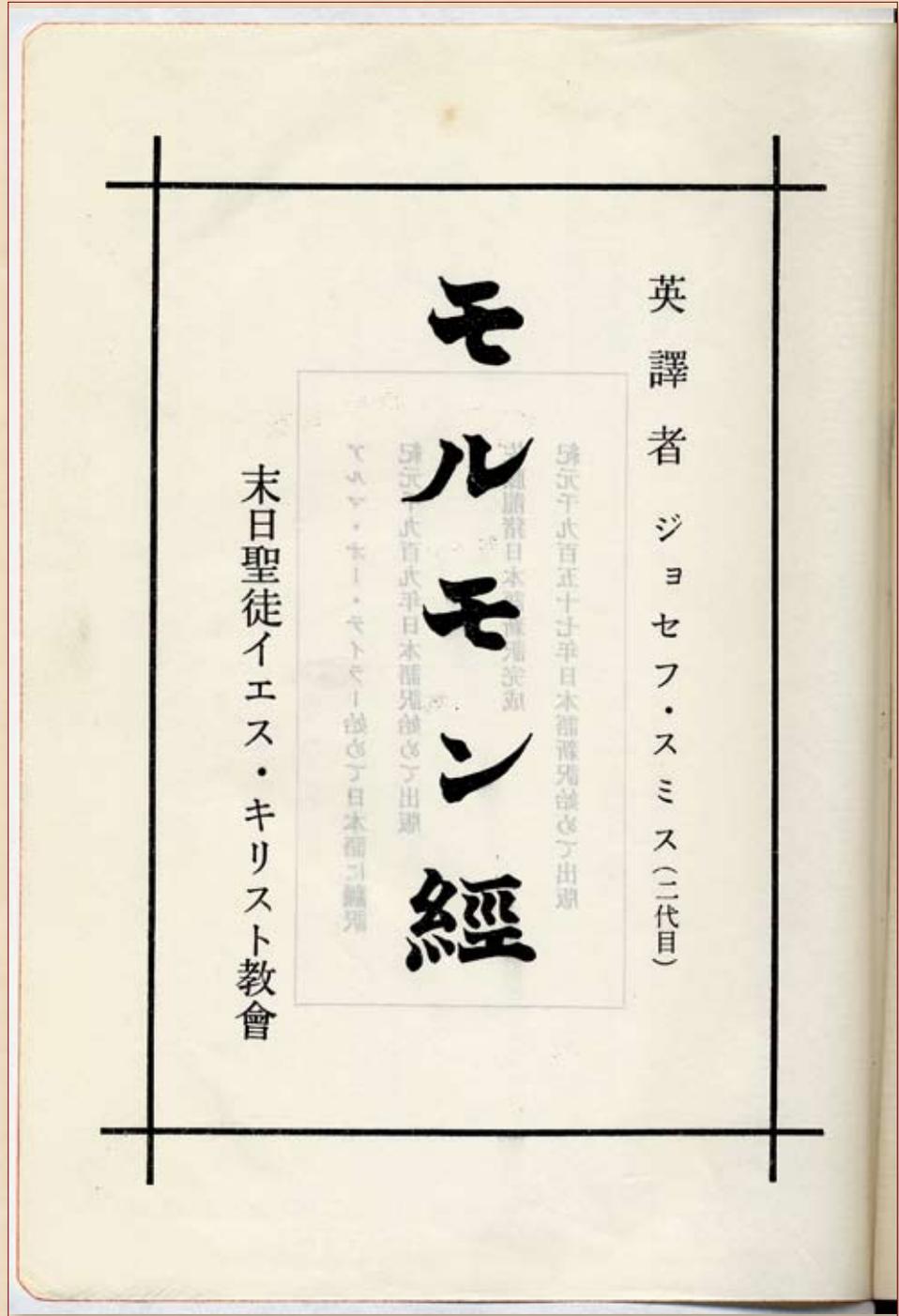
One of the unique characteristics of the saga of translation of the Book of Mormon into Japanese lies in the motivation behind creating new translations within a mere 40 or 50 years of one another. Most of the new translations of the text into the major languages of the world have been inspired by a desire to correct the wording of a previous translation in order to make it more doctrinally correct.

While one cannot overlook the likelihood that such was also part of the motivation in Japan, it appears to be largely the case that dramatic changes in the Japanese language, not concerns over accuracy, motivated the revisions.

Brother Satō was undoubtedly one of the most humble men of genius ever to tackle a project such as the Book of Mormon translation; I think it must be an expression of his own unassuming nature that his translation of the eighth article of faith literally means: “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon (in English) to be the word of God.” Of the reasons motivating the second translation, Brother Satō stated:

When we began to translate this amended version of the Book of Mormon, President Clissold asked that we “translate it into simple Japanese so that many people will be able to understand the Gospel.” It was not because of imperfections in the earlier Book of Mormon translation that a new rendition was planned. As I retranslated the book, I frequently opened the older translation. It made me realize how truly superb that translation is. But more than forty years have elapsed since that translation was published in 1909, and social conditions in Japan have

changed dramatically in that interval. In the postwar period in particular, a multitude of changes have come in Japanese education and culture. I used a special method in translat-



Title page of the Japanese edition of the Book of Mormon, 1957. Courtesy of the Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

ing the book. I produced the main passages in colloquial language, while revelations and the words of the Lord are translated in the formal written style. But my intention was to stay as close as possible to the style of the earlier translation.¹¹

As Brother Satō suggests, the written Japanese language in particular has changed over the past century with a rapidity that is unfathomable in English, even considering how quickly our own language is mutating. I think it is safe to say that a 20-year-old, educated Japanese person today would have a *very* difficult time grasping what is going on in Alma Taylor's translation. It would be like asking a young American student to gain profound spiritual insights from reading an unannotated text of *Beowulf*.

Brother Satō calculated, for example, that the total number of kanji (including numerous repetitions of the same characters) that he eliminated from the Taylor translation came to an amazing 41,000!

Brother Satō has written about the challenges that faced him as he evaluated the first translation. The older literary language into which Ikuta revised Taylor's translation was no longer taught as one of the critical core subjects in Japanese schools in the postwar period. Governmental regulations issued in 1946 regarding the use of kanji had significantly reduced the number of kanji used in publications and had modernized the phonetic syllabary. As a result, postwar readers were educated to read far smaller numbers of characters. Brother Satō calculated, for example, that the total number of kanji (including numerous repetitions of the same characters) that he eliminated from the Taylor translation came to an amazing 41,000!¹²

When I arrived in Japan in 1970—only 13 years after Satō's translation was published—young American missionaries had for some time been calling for yet another new translation of the Book of Mormon because they were having a hard time understanding some of the outdated verb forms and vocabulary employed in the Satō version. We really shouldn't give too much weight to linguistic judg-

ments passed by 20-year-old American missionaries who have largely learned Japanese by mimicking what they hear on the street, but the fact is that with each passing generation of Japanese people, familiarity with the older forms of the language is diluted, and contemporary writers in Japan seem to be using fewer kanji. Consequently, I think it is fair to say that the Satō translation to today's younger generation in Japan seems a little quaint and dated and is, in fact, in some ways less accessible than the standard colloquial Japanese translation of the Bible in current usage.

By the mid-1980s, these linguistic changes and other factors were of sufficient concern that the church authorized the creation of a committee of translators to produce yet another version to replace the Satō version, considered by some "too classic."¹³ The First Presidency charged the committee not

only to make the language of the scripture more comprehensible but also to emphasize literal accuracy in order to preserve the purity of the doctrine taught by the book. A very helpful "Guide to the Scriptures" (now available on lds.org) was translated for this edition, providing explication of many terms and concepts unique to Latter-day Saint doctrine and lacking simple correlative terminology in Japanese. The fact that such a guide was considered essential is but one indication that it is a daunting, often frustrating task to find suitable words to explain Christian doctrine in a country where just barely 1 percent of the population claims affiliation with any Christian church.

A Japanese high school student affirmed that the recent translation is more accessible when he "said he used to read the old translation of the Book of Mormon, but had trouble understanding it and gaining a testimony. However, when he got a copy of the new translation, he read and re-read it, understood it and could visualize the scenes described in the book." Eugene M. Kitamura, Asia North Area director of temporal affairs and supervisor of

the translation committee that produced the book, commented that this young man “said at this time he got a testimony that the book was true. . . . And I have heard that kind of testimony from many others of the younger generation. They have received many blessings from this updated scripture. . . . The new translation of the Book of Mormon is easier for investigators to read and understand.”¹⁴

The changes that have come to the Japanese language are problematic for a number of reasons,

not the least of which is that levels of respect in the language play such a significant role in distinguishing the status of the narrator vis-à-vis the reader. The most obvious example, encountered repeatedly by the Japanese Saints, is the translation of the sacrament prayer. Below is a line-by-line reproduction of the three different translations to facilitate comparison:

Translations of Sacrament Prayers on Bread	
TAYLOR	LITERAL TRANSLATION
Eien no tempu naru Kami yo,	O God, the Eternal Father,
Warera Onko Iesu Kirisuto no mina ni yorite negaitatematuraku wa,	That which we ask in the name of Thy Son Jesus Christ,
Subete kono pan o azukari kurau hitobito ga,	Is that all people who receive and eat this bread
Onko no karada no kinen ni kore o kurau koto o uru yō,	So that they may eat it in remembrance of Thy Son's body,
Mata tsuneni Onko no mitama o onorera to tomo ni arashimen tame,	And in order that the Spirit of Thy Son may always be with them,
Onko no mina o amanji ukete	Willingly taking upon them the name of Thy Son
Tsuneni Onko o kinen shi,	Always remembering Thy Son,
Sono kudashitamaishi imashime o mamoru o Nanji ni seiyaku suru koto o uru yō,	So that they may take upon themselves a covenant with Thee to obey His commandments,
Kono pan o karera no kokoro no tame ni iwaikiyometamawan koto o	We pray Thou wilt bless and sanctify this bread for the benefit of their hearts.
Amen.	
SATŌ	
Eien no chichi naru Kami yo,	O God, the Eternal Father,
Warera Onko Iesu Kirisuto no mina ni yorite negaitatematsuru.	We humbly ask Thee in the name of Thy Son, Jesus Christ,
Koko ni kono pan o itadaku subete no hitobito ga,	That all of the people who partake here of this bread
Onko no karada no kinen ni kore o itadaku yō,	So that they may partake of it in remembrance of the body of Thy Son,
Mata yorokobite Onko no mina o uke,	And gladly receive the name of Thy Son,
Onko o tsuneni wasurezu,	Never forgetting Him,
Mata sono kudashitamaeru imashime o mamoru koto o	And that they will keep the commandments which He has given them,
Eien no chichi naru Kami no onmae ni shōmei shi,	They witness before Thee, O God the Eternal Father,
Kakushite Onko no “Mitama” tsuneni ichidō to tomo ni mashimasu yō,	So that they will always have the “Spirit” of Thy Son with them,
Kono pan o iwaikiyometamae.	We implore thee to bless and sanctify this bread.
Amen.	
CURRENT	
Eien no chichi naru Kami yo,	O God, the Eternal Father,
Watashitachi wa Onko Iesu Kirisuto no mina ni yotte Anata ni negaimotomemasu.	We ask You in the name of Thy Son, Jesus Christ,
Kono pan wo itadaku subete no hitobito ga,	That all of the people who partake of this bread,
Onko no karada no kinen ni kore o itadakeru yō ni,	So that they may partake of it in remembrance of the body of Thy Son,
Mata, susunde Onko no mina o uke,	And willingly taken upon them the name of Thy Son,
Itsumo Onko o oboe,	Always remembering Thy Son,
Onko ga ataete kudasatta imashime o mamoru koto o	To keep the commandments which Thy Son has given them,
Eien no chichi naru Kami yo, anata ni shōmei shite,	They witness unto You, O God the Eternal Father,
Itsumo Onko no mitama o ukerareru yō ni,	So that they may always receive Thy Son's spirit,
Kono pan o shukufuku shi, kiyomete kudasai.	Please bless and sanctify this bread.
Amen. ¹⁵	

In the new translation we move away from the attempt in the first two, where every verb used to address God is in a deeply humble form and where not a single pronoun is used to address or refer to the Father. By way of contrast, in the most recent revision of the sacrament prayers, God is twice referred to as *anata*. The usage of *anata* is admittedly complex and fluid over the centuries, but one of the most authoritative dictionaries of the Japanese language opines: “At present, ‘*anata*’ is used with peers and inferiors; in addition, it is the pronoun most commonly used by wives to address their husbands.”¹⁶ Small wonder, then, that some members in Japan were startled by the introduction of this pronoun into the sacrament prayer!¹⁷

the capability to speak through imperfect words with perfect, persuasive clarity. So the comments that follow should be regarded as considerations of diverse cultural challenges, not as a critique of the consecrated labors of individuals far more gifted than me.

The first key scriptural passage that leaped out at me as I began comparing the translations was Mosiah 3:19: “For the natural man is an enemy to God.” This is an interesting example of the first and third translations being in agreement, while Satō differs from them. The translation for “natural man” in Taylor’s version is *umarenagara no sei*, literally meaning “the nature with which one is born; one’s inherent nature.” The 1995 translation varies

**My goal is to suggest that each of these translations,
in its own way, is a work of inspired brilliance, reflecting the
language and religious climate of its era and serving as the best possible
means of conveying the teachings found in the ancient
American record to the people of Japan.**

It is educational to examine the many differences—as well as the similarities—in the ways Latter-day Saint religious vocabulary has been translated into Japanese over the past century. What intrigues me most as I compare the three Book of Mormon translations into Japanese is both the ways they are very much the same in their essential explication of the gospel in a non-Christian language and the ways in which they differ. It is categorically *not* my intention here to criticize or belittle any of these translators; having done a bit of secular translation myself, I have personal knowledge of how daunting the task is. My goal is to suggest that each of these translations, in its own way, is a work of inspired brilliance, reflecting the language and religious climate of its era and serving as the best possible means of conveying the teachings found in the ancient American record to the people of Japan. Such faults or shortcomings that might exist in the choice of words or interpretations can, I am persuaded, be laid at the feet of contemporary circumstances, and I do not for a moment doubt that the Spirit has

only in changing *sei* to *hito*, literally making it “a person in the state he was born.” We could ponder the implications of this translation in light of our understanding of original sin and so forth, and there is, I think, a risk of misunderstanding when the verse seems to indicate that we are enemies to God in the state in which we are born, but if we become like a little child we’ll be okay. But that is beyond my purposes here. It is interesting that Satō chooses to be much more interpretive in his rendition of this verse. He translates “natural man” as *nikuyoku ni shitagau hito*, literally a “person who follows the lusts of the flesh.” It is difficult to argue with his interpretation, but it is likewise difficult to imagine how his version could be retranslated back into English and end up as “natural.” And yet there is something comfortably attractive and—how shall I say it?—*natural* about the way he comes right out and defines what the phrase means to him. I might point out here that the Greek term for “natural” translated in Paul’s sermon on the “natural man” in 1 Corinthians 2 is *psuchikos*, defined as “the

sensuous nature with its subjection to appetite and passion,”¹⁸ which affirms the accuracy of Satō’s rendition.

When attempting to communicate in a culture that does not acknowledge supreme deity or the kinship connection between God and man or life after death, a simple concept such as damnation can be challenging to convey. All three translations render “damned” (as in Alma 14:21, where Alma and Amulek’s persecutors revile them and cry, “How shall we look when we are damned?”) as “punishment after death” (*shigo no batsu*). In other locations where “damned” appears in English, the same sorts of circumlocutions are employed, including one in Mosiah 3:25, “therefore they have drunk damnation to their own souls,” where Satō resorts to “cannot be saved in either body or spirit” (*mi mo rei mo sukuwarezaru nari*).

Which leads me to yet another fascinating conundrum. Taylor caught on to it as he translated, and none of his successors has yet come up with a persuasive solution to the problem. In a letter of 15 April 1908 addressed to the First Presidency, Taylor writes:

Your kind letter answering my questions on the Book of Mormon has been carefully read. All of your suggestions are perfectly clear. With but one exception I am very happy over them. The exception is on the rendition of the word “soul.” In the first place the Japanese Bible (because of the limitations made by the language) is no criterion on any difficult question like this. There is no word in Japanese for “soul” which could possibly be stretched to include both body and spirit. It must be straight “spirit” or “heart” or “body.” The Japanese Bible always uses the words meaning “spirit” or “heart.” In the great majority of cases these words may do for our “soul” but, for example, in II Nephi 9:13. The word “spirit” as well as the word “body” are used in their true, distinct meaning while “soul” refers to the two united. There, I may change “soul” to “being” or “person,” but, so said, there is a decided weakness, as the same word in Japanese also means “thing.”¹⁹

Second Nephi 9:13 reads, in part: “The spirit and the body is restored to itself again, and all men become incorruptible, and immortal, and they are living souls.” As Taylor indicates, this scripture

seems to teach precisely what is taught in Doctrine and Covenants 88:15, that when the spirit and the body are restored to one another, the result is “living souls.” For “living souls,” Taylor gives *sude ni ikeru hito* (already living persons), Satō, *ikeru hito*, basically the same notion of a “living person,” and the committee, *ikeru mono*, returning to the word Taylor ultimately decided to avoid that refers both to “person” and “thing.”²⁰ To underscore the insoluble challenge here, let me cite the two Japanese translations of Doctrine and Covenants 88:15: Satō’s says literally: “man is made up of a spirit and a body” (*ningen wa rei to tai to yori naru*); the current translation reads: “the spirit and the body comprise man” (*rei to karada ga hito o nasu*).

In the 19th chapter of Alma, when Ammon is describing the spiritual transformation occurring within King Lamoni, the English translation from the plates reads: “Yea, he knew that this [meaning “the light of everlasting life”] had overcome his natural frame, and he was carried away in God” (Alma 19:6). We have already touched on the problem of translating “natural”; my interest here is in the phrase “carried away in God.” I do not pretend to know precisely what this means; unfortunately, that unheralded soul known as the translator must make a decision regarding meaning. Taylor says that because of the light “his body became weak, and he communed with the God of his spirit” (*kore ga tame sonoshintai yowarite sono reikon no kami to aitsuzuru*). Satō offers this: “his body became weak, and he was led away by God” (*kore ga tame ni sonoshintai ga yowatte ō wa kami ni tsurerarete itta*). And the current translation suggests that the light “won out over the king’s body, and through God the king had lost consciousness” (*kore ga ō no nikutai ni uchikatte, ō ga kami ni yotte ishiki o ushinatte ita*).

Words such as “temporal” are variously rendered by the translators as *nikutai*, as in *nikutai no shi* (temporal death; literally “the death of the body”) or *gense* (the present world). I find myself not fully satisfied with any of the renderings of Alma 38:12: “See that ye bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love.”²¹ In the Taylor-made version, we are provided with: “In order that you may be filled with love, control all of your lusts” (*ai o motte mitasaruru yō, issai no yoku o osaeyo*). Satō says: “Control all of your lusts and be filled with love” (*issai no yoku o osaete ai ni michiyo*). Our contemporary interpreters give: “Restrain all of

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Title page of the Japanese edition of the Book of Mormon, 1990. Courtesy of the Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

your violent emotions, and make sure you are filled with love” (*mata, gekijō o subete sei shi, ai de mitasareru yō ni shinasai*). Notice that two translators use *yoku* (lusts or passions), while the third uses

Japanese context. By and large, *tsumi* is a violation of the laws of society. Since Japanese religions are devoid of the notion of accountability to a Supreme Being who is our Father and Creator, it is a stretch

gekijō, which can mean “passions” but has the primary sense of “violent emotions.” The notion of restraint is twice rendered as *osaeru*, which literally means “to push down” and can go so far as to mean “put a stop to,” though that nuance is not essential. The most recent verb, *seisuru*, seems most successful at suggesting some kind of control that does not totally wipe out the object being controlled. Taylor appears to me to do the best job of providing the critical link between bridling of passions and being filled with love, providing a “so that” phrase to create a sense of cause and effect. The two subsequent translations seem to lose that connection.

It is food for thought to ponder how difficult it is to come up with suitable translations for some of the most fundamental principles of the gospel. We can thank missionaries of other denominations from earlier centuries for coming up with the Japanese word *tsumi* to translate “sin.” But we could have a very long and inconclusive discussion about the nuances of the term *tsumi* in the

to assume that the term is automatically interpreted by a typical Japanese person as the violation of the spiritual contract between man and God. Instead, *tsumi* can often be an offense against one's peers, and even when it is an act of rebellion against a superior power, that power is the law of the land or a feudal master or a political ruler. In the indigenous Shintō religion, *tsumi* is a physical defilement removed through washing or confinement. For all intents and purposes, *tsumi* could more correctly be translated as "crime"; in fact, the Japanese title of Dostoevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment* is *Tsumi to batsu*.

Similar problems attend the attempt to translate descriptions of the law of chastity. I confess I have nothing but painful memories of my attempts to teach this law over 30 years ago as a missionary. The lesson plan directed us to have our investigators read from the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The modern translation of the Bible reads: *Kan'in shite wa naranai*. Using the word *kan'in* to a Japanese person born after World War II would be roughly equivalent—but even more puzzling—to teaching the seventh commandment in English as: "Thou shalt avoid all concupiscence." It

dictionaries, finding words that brought shrieks of horror from native missionaries and even earned one elder in my mission a slap across the face. It is my duty here to report that the obscure archaic term *kan'in* is employed throughout all three Japanese translations of the Book of Mormon.

Another key gospel term is, of course, "baptism." The Japanese term created early on to be an equivalent was *senrei*, literally the "ordinance of washing." The late 19th- and early 20th-century Protestant translations of the Bible, however, rejected that term, perhaps because it was too firmly associated with the Catholic practice of "sprinkling," and instead they phoneticized the English term and produced the foreign-looking and foreign-sounding term *baputesuma*. There are, I hasten to emphasize, some real problems attending decisions to make Christianity seem even more foreign to the Japanese than it already is by suggesting to them that the religion itself is and will always be alien. I must also reemphasize that there are perhaps equal dangers in trying to *approximate* gospel terminology in a foreign language in ways that lend themselves primarily to confusion with indigenous concepts.

It can be challenging to talk about the finer points of theology when one struggles with how to name even the central object of worship.

is not a turn of phrase that trips easily off the Japanese tongue. In fact, because of all the homonyms in the Japanese language, a young person in particular hearing this phrase might believe she was being told: "You must never become a government official," or even "You shouldn't be too cunning." I exaggerate slightly, but the simple fact is that the vast majority of those to whom I taught that discussion had no clue what I was talking about. And a little knowledge is, I'm told, a dangerous thing. Picture a 19-year-old American missionary, scarcely able to ask directions to the post office, attempting to respond to a young, say, female Japanese investigator's question about the meaning of *kan'in*. Not being smart enough to ask an actual Japanese member, many of us resorted to our pocket English-Japanese

Alma Taylor seems to have sensed that using the Catholic term for the washing ordinance would not be a proper approximation for the revealed doctrine of immersion. So he used the term *shinrei* in his Book of Mormon translation, since it means an "ordinance of immersion." The two later translations, however, return to the use of *baputesuma*.

Taylor was not the first religious translator to encounter difficulties rendering Christian terms into Japanese. The problem goes back all the way to the very first Catholic missionary, Francis Xavier, who arrived in Japan in 1549 and promptly declared the Japanese the finest people he had yet encountered. But once the initial words of greeting and praise had passed his lips, Xavier experienced increasing difficulty making anything else he said

understood by his hosts. He quickly discovered, as so many subsequent missionaries have discovered over the interceding four and a half centuries, that the Judeo-Christian concept of God has no comfortable equivalent—or even clumsy counterpart—in the history of Japanese spiritual experience. The Japanese term *kami* (translated as lowercase “gods”) refers to a spiritual essence that is an equal-opportunity inhabitant of man and beast, wind and rain, tree and flower, the living and their ancestors, making no distinctions of rank between the realm of man and the realm of nature and not allowing for the notion of a Supreme Being who has created man as His own offspring, placed him a little lower than the angels, and given him dominion over all the earth. As the Japanese Christian novelist Endō Shūsaku has a Catholic missionary in his novel *The Samurai* declare:

“The Japanese basically lack a sensitivity to anything that is absolute, to anything that transcends the human level, to the existence of anything beyond the realm of Nature: what we would call the supernatural. . . . They abhor the idea of making clear distinctions between man and God. To them, even if there should be something greater than man, it is something which man himself can one day become. . . .

“Within the realm of Nature their sensibilities are remarkably delicate and subtle, but those sensibilities are unable to grasp anything on a higher plane. That is why the Japanese cannot conceive of our God, who dwells on a separate plane from man.”²²

Consequently Xavier, wise enough to try to meet the Japanese at their level of spiritual understanding and then move forward from there, consulted a number of friendly Buddhist priests for help in coming up with an appropriate Japanese name to describe his concept of God. What they gave him was the closest equivalent of which they could conceive: the Buddhist deity *Dainichi*, the “Great Sun Buddha,” who is the mystical cosmic illuminator of the universe. Once he realized his mistake, however, Xavier turned on his Buddhist informants, declared their deities devils and thereafter resorted to using the Latin term *Deus* to describe what he was trying to teach. Sadly, the Japanese rendition, *Deusu*, was too easy to toy with, and the Buddhists in retaliation began calling the god

of Catholicism *Daiuso*, meaning “the Great Lie.”²³ Subsequent Catholic missionaries in Japan opted for the term coined in the China mission by the Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci, *Tenshu*, which means “the Lord of Heaven.” *Tenshu* is in fact the word that Alma Taylor decided to use to translate each appearance of “Lord” in the Book of Mormon.

By the postwar period when Brother Satō began his translation, *Tenshu* had become virtually synonymous with the Catholic Church, which was known until more recently as *Tenshukyō*. Consequently, Satō and the later translators followed the lead of the Protestants in using the simple *shu* (“Lord” or “lord”). But from the outset, the word “God” has posed difficulties. The ultimate compromise adopted universally among Christians in Japan, including all three editions of the Book of Mormon, has been to add an honorific ending to the indigenous Japanese term *kami*, giving us something that might, with a great stretch of the imagination, be rendered, “the honorable gods that dwell in all manifestations of natural phenomena.” It can be challenging to talk about the finer points of theology when one struggles with how to name even the central object of worship.

I shall not belabor the point any further, the point being that the role of the translator, in any age and for any purpose, is a complex and challenging one. When the work being translated is a sacred text, the difficulties multiply. Such a translator must be a linguistic expert in *two* languages, a deft and careful doctrinal arbitrator, a creative circumlocutionist, a cautious and thorough editor, and a person sensitive to the tutorials of the Spirit that will expand his or her natural capacities. It is a thankless task, unless of course one takes into consideration the largely unspoken gratitude of tens of thousands of Japanese people who have, despite any possible “weakness in writing” (Ether 12:23), discovered that the Spirit is able to penetrate linguistic walls and convey the message of the book with even greater clarity than any word could express. As a sometime translator myself, I am filled with admiration, respect, and gratitude for all who dedicated themselves, body, mind, and spirit, to the arduous task of transforming that “most correct book” into, at the very least, “a marvelous work and a wonder” in Japanese. ■

60. Compare page 22 of Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, with pages 152 and 188. David's statement that the Eight Witnesses handled the plates is essentially another John Whitmer interview, since the brothers certainly discussed each other's experiences.
61. *Deseret News*, 6 August 1878; also in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:247–49. This interview agrees with the above Turley report concerning engravings on both sides of each leaf and with Mary Whitmer's report of seeing the plates joined at the side with "D rings" (see Anderson, *Investigating*, 31). See the last section of this article for another "D ring" report.
62. Perhaps John Whitmer originally said that the Eight Witnesses were composed mainly of two groups, meaning the four Whitmer brothers and the three Smiths, with Hiram Page not included in the general comment. Two sets of witnesses might have been mistaken for two separate viewings of the plates.
63. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:465, with a redundant to removed.
64. Compare Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:465n2, 467–68 with 5:238, 245, 250–51.
65. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:466.
66. Lyman Wight, manuscript journal, in Joseph Smith III and Heman C. Smith, *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Lamoni, IA: Board of Publication, 1897), 1:153. See 1:151n40 for source note.
67. *Saints' Herald* 26 (15 December 1879): 370.
68. *Messenger and Advocate* 3 (1836): 426. See Anderson, *Investigating*, p. 127 for context.
69. *Times and Seasons* 5 (1 August 1844): 607, obituary by John Taylor, who had known Samuel for over six years. Emphasis in the original.
70. "Notes Written on 'Chambers' Life of Joseph Smith,'" 15, my transcription, with underlining in the original; also in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:485.
71. William E. McLellin (signed "McLellan") to James T. Cobb, 14 August 1880, New York Public Library manuscript; also in Larry C. Porter, "William E. McLellan's Testimony of the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10/4 (Summer 1970): 486.
72. William E. McLellin journal, 19 August 1831, in Jan Shippo and John W. Welch, *The Journals of William E. McLellin, 1831–1836* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies and Brigham Young University, 1994), 33.
73. *Huron Reflector* (Norwalk, OH), 31 October 1831, article titled "From the [Jacksonville] Illinois Patriot, Sept. 16." The article reports a Mormon sermon "last Saturday" by a recent convert who traveled to Independence to investigate Mormonism. The day and its events correspond with the McLellin journal for Saturday, 10 September.
74. Vogel, *Joseph Smith*, 468. This is one of Vogel's terms for his nonphysical conception of how both sets of witnesses saw the plates.
75. Hiram Page to "Bro. William [McLellin]," 30 May 1847, *Ensign of Liberty* 1 (January 1848): 63; partially reproduced in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:255. The Book of Mormon section of the letter is reproduced in Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Personal Writings of the Book of Mormon Witnesses," in Noel B. Reynolds, ed., *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1997), 53.
76. See Vogel, "Validity," 99, indicating Page "only testified that he saw the plates." Palmer misses the point of Page's reaffirmation, claiming he mentions "neither handling or seeing the plates" (*Insider's View*, 205). Palmer springs to that conclusion by not quoting the part of Page's 1847 statement that said his 1830 testimony was still true. The concept of not forgetting "what I saw" immediately follows and refers back to Page's 1830 experience. But Palmer artificially connects "what I saw" to Page's personal vision of angels, mentioned six lines down in the published letter. See Steven Harper's comment and comparison of the original with the fractionated quotation in "Trustworthy History?" 303–5 (see n. 13 above for full citation).
77. "Mr. J. B. Newhall's Lecture," signed by "A Hearer," *Salem Advertiser and Argus*, 12 April 1843, an extract correctly reported in *Times and Seasons* 4 (15 June 1843): 234–35; emphasis in the original.
78. First-person note of visit on 18 February 1875, courtesy of Community of Christ Library–Archives; also in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:250.
79. See the discussion and footnotes in the last paragraph of the Turley interview section above.
80. Palmer, *Insider's View*, 204; Vogel, "Validity," 97.
81. Earlier English *shewn* appears in the printer's manuscript and early editions.
82. See text at note 31, and the citation in that note.
83. See text at note 32, and the citation in that note.
84. See text at note 46, and the citation in that note.
85. See text at note 75, and the citation in that note.
86. Letter of 5 March 1876, addressed to "Mark H. Forest," courtesy of Community of Christ Library–Archives; also in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:243.
87. Smith and Smith, *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 1:57n6; copied from the original that was in Heman Smith's possession (now unlocated), with italics used for the whole sentence in the first printing.
88. Letter to J. R. Lambert, 6 May 1877, copied from the original that was in Joseph Lambert's possession, attested by Joseph R. Lambert in a letter to E. L. Kelley, 29 January 1884, Community of Christ–Archives reference no. P13, f311.

"Strange Characters and Expressions": Three Japanese Translations of the Book of Mormon

Van C. Gessel

1. See Fredric Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).
2. Some in the foreign language teaching community in the United States actually use this term to designate the languages classified by the State Department as the most difficult for Americans to learn: Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and Arabic. See Eleanor H. Jorden, "Japanese Language Training over the Years: A Personal Observation," in *Japanese Studies: Over the Past Century & New Directions for the 21st Century*, ed. Masakazu Watabe (Provo, UT: BYU Press, 2000), 73–82.
3. Reid L. Neilson, *The Japanese Missionary Journals of Elder Alma O. Taylor, 1901–10* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies and the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, 2001), 16 July 1904, 214. Original spellings have been retained in all citations.
4. Neilson, *Japanese Missionary Journals*, 28 April 1905, 243.
5. Neilson, *Japanese Missionary Journals*, 21 March 1906, 270.
6. Alma O. Taylor to George Reynolds, January 1906, Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter Church Archives).
7. Though there is no way to determine the reasons for Sōseki's refusal to become involved, it is interesting to speculate on whether the negative experiences he had had with overbearing Christians on his sea voyage to London in 1900, as well as the unpleasant experience of being coerced into reading the Bible by some British ladies at a tea party in 1902, might have made Sōseki less receptive to Taylor's petition. See Van C. Gessel, *Three Modern Novelists: Sōseki, Tanizaki, Kawabata* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1993), 39–42, 47–48.
8. Alma O. Taylor to George Reynolds, 6 January 1906, Church Archives.
9. Neilson, *Japanese Missionary Journals*, 18 August and 27 August 1908, 380–81.
10. Neilson, *Japanese Missionary Journals*, 30 September 1909, 409–10.
11. Quoted in "Morumon Sho no hensen," part 11 of "Shashin de miru Nihon kyō kai 100-nenshi," *Liahona* 3, September 2001, 15, author's translation.
12. Satō Tatsui, "Shin'yaku Morumon Kei ni tsuite," *Seito no michi*, October 1957, 5, author's translation.
13. See the brief discussion in R. Lanier Britsch, *From the East: The History of the Latter-day Saints in Asia, 1851–1996* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998), 156–57.
14. "New Translation Brings New Day," *Church News*, 25 January 1997, 6.
15. Literal translation by author.
16. *Kokugo Daijiten* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1981), 61, s.v. "anata," translation by author.
17. What are we to make, for instance, of the contrast between

- the familiar *anata* to refer to God and the honorific *onko* to refer to the Son? *Anata no onko* simply does not work in Japanese. An interesting study of linguistic problems, extralinguistic problems, and problems caused by Hebraisms in the English Book of Mormon with reference to the first two translations may be found in Jiro Numano, "The Japanese Translation of the Book of Mormon: A Study in the Theory and Practice of Translation" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976).
18. "Thayer and Smith's King James Version New Testament Greek Lexicon," s.v. "psuchikos," <http://www.crosswalk.com> (accessed 10 December 2004).
 19. Alma O. Taylor to the First Presidency, 15 April 1908, Church Archives.
 20. Although the Japanese language uses different characters for *mono* depending on whether it means "person" or "thing," very often the term is written only with phonetic characters that make no such distinction.
 21. I am grateful to Wade Fillmore for drawing my attention to the translations of this verse.
 22. Shūsaku Endō, *The Samurai*, trans. Van C. Gessel (New York: Harper & Row and Kodansha International, 1980), 163.
 23. Summarized in Neil S. Fujita, *Japan's Encounter With Christianity: The Catholic Mission in Pre-Modern Japan* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 28–31.
- Treaties and Covenants: Ancient Near Eastern Legal Terminology in the Book of Mormon**
RoseAnn Benson Stephen D. Ricks
1. Herbert B. Huffmon, "The Treaty Background of Hebrew *YĀDAʿ*," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 181 (February 1966): 31. See Herbert B. Huffmon and Simon B. Parker, "A Further Note on the Treaty Background of Hebrew *YĀDAʿ*," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 184 (December 1966): 36.
 2. Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), 123.
 3. See John A. Widtsoe, *A Rational Theology, as Taught by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1965), 125. See also David J. Whittaker, "A Covenant People," in *Seventh Annual Sydney B. Sperry Symposium* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 1979), 196–97.
 4. See *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, s.v. "*yādaʿ*." See also Gesenius's *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, trans. Samuel P. Tregelles (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1882), s.v. "*yādaʿ*," 333–34.
 5. William Wilson, *Old Testament Word Studies*, s.v. "*yādaʿ*."
 6. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, s.v. "*yādaʿ*." The quoted text is from *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George A. Bultrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), s.v. "Knowledge." An additional implication is to "know" sexually." (See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, s.v. "*yādaʿ*.")
 7. See Claude J. Peifer, "The Marriage Theme in Hosea," *The Bible Today* 20/3 (1982): 139; and P. A. Kruger, "Israel, the Harlot (Hos. 2:4–9)," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 11 (1983): 107.
 8. Most commentators believe that the marriage and births represent actual events in Hosea's life because the nature of prophetic symbolism required that the divine message be represented in actual events (see James Luther Mays, *Hosea: A Commentary* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969], 23). Thus demands to renounce adulterous behavior apply literally to Hosea's wife, Gomer, and figuratively to the nation of Israel (see Kruger, "Israel, the Harlot," 110–11; see also Peifer, "Marriage Theme in Hosea," 140).
 9. Hosea's metaphor called for not only right actions but also reciprocal feelings between the parties of the covenant, with no separation between mind and heart or thought and emotion. Furthermore, God's expectations for covenant relationships are much deeper and more profound than those of earthly kings regarding treaty arrangements. See Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 59–60.
 10. See Huffmon, "Treaty Background of Hebrew *YĀDAʿ*," 31, 33.
 11. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea*, 122.
 12. See Huffmon, "Treaty Background of Hebrew *YĀDAʿ*," 31.
 13. See McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 10.
 14. Huffmon, "Treaty Background of Hebrew *YĀDAʿ*," 31; emphasis added.
 15. Although ancient Near Eastern treaties predate current biblical manuscripts, God made covenants with the great patriarchs beginning with Adam. The word *know* is not preserved in this context in the biblical manuscripts currently available; however, it is found in the Book of Moses. For example, Cain questioned why he should "know" the Lord (see Moses 5:16); Cain and those who followed him entered into a "secret combination" (Satan's version of covenant) and recognized other covenant members (see Moses 5:49, 51); knowledge of God, meaning how to know God, was given to Adam in the Garden of Eden (see Moses 7:32); and Adam participated in initiation rites, indicating his acknowledgment of their covenant relationship (see Moses 6:64–68). Other phrases also indicate a covenant relationship. For example, the expressions "The Lord God commanded the man" (Genesis 2:16) and "Adam hearkened unto the voice of God" (Moses 6:1) indicate a suzerain/vassal relationship, with God commanding and Adam obeying. Hence, the model for the ancient Near Eastern treaty pattern had its beginning in the relationship between God and Adam and not in another manner. See Doctrine and Covenants 107:40–52; and Robert J. Matthews, "Our Covenants with the Lord," *Ensign*, December 1980, 33–34.
 16. See Mark J. Morrise, "Simile Curses in the Ancient Near East, Old Testament, and Book of Mormon," *JBMS* 2/1 (1993): 137.
 17. See the Bible dictionary in the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James version of the Bible, s.v. "Covenant."
 18. Ze'ev W. Falk, *Hebrew Law in Biblical Times*, 2nd ed. (Provo, UT: BYU Press, and Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 31. See 1 Samuel 9:27; 10:1; 16:13.
 19. In the Old Testament examples, all of the words translated as "know" or "knowledge" derive from the root *יָדָע* (*yādaʿ*).
 20. Huffmon, "Treaty Background of Hebrew *YĀDAʿ*," 31–32; emphasis added. The bracketed phrase *a designation for the Hittite king* is our insertion; all other bracketed words are from Huffmon.
 21. The prophet Ezekiel used this phrase 62 times in prophesying both cursing and blessing on Israel for breaking or keeping her covenants with God. For example, when prophesying of the Babylonian captivity, Ezekiel said, "They shall *know that I am the Lord*, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries" (Ezekiel 12:15; emphasis added). Foreseeing the last days, Ezekiel promised, "The tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall *know that I am the Lord*, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them" (Ezekiel 34:27; emphasis added).
 22. See Huffmon, "Treaty Background of Hebrew *YĀDAʿ*," 34–35.
 23. See Genesis 18:19; Exodus 33:12; Jeremiah 1:5; 24:7.
 24. Huffmon, "Treaty Background of Hebrew *YĀDAʿ*," 32; emphasis added. The bracketed *me* is our insertion, all other bracketed words are from Huffmon.
 25. Huffmon, "Treaty Background of Hebrew *YĀDAʿ*," 32–33; emphasis added. The bracketed *loyal* is our insertion.
 26. Related to protection is the Hebrew word *כָּפַר*, *kāphar*, which means covering, and also literally "a close and intimate embrace." Thus God's promised protection refers not only to temporal protection, but also to eternal redemption. See Hugh Nibley, "The Meaning of the Atonement," in his *Approaching Zion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 566–67.
 27. Huffmon, "Treaty Background of Hebrew *YĀDAʿ*," 33; emphasis added.
 28. *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. "Knowledge."
 29. In response to Joseph Smith's query concerning "which of all the sects was right," God repeated words similar to Isaiah 29:13: "They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Joseph Smith—History 1:18–19). Thus a major responsibility of Joseph Smith was to restore true covenant "knowing," meaning a heartfelt relationship with God. See also Whittaker, "Covenant People," 196 (see note 4 herein for full citation).