

INTRODUCTION

I kept a journal during my LDS mission to Japan and never missed a single day. The whole thing is documented. Thanks to the advent of the Internet, rather than having it sit on my bookshelf gathering dust, I can now put it to work by sharing it with you here.

I am no longer a believer in Mormonism, so this journal contains many, many sentiments I no longer agree with. It does, however, accurately represent how I thought and felt at the time, so perhaps it can be of some use from a sociological point of view. If you're a believer in Mormonism, who knows, maybe you'll even find it faith-promoting. :-)

Details about my motivation for serving a mission, biographical sketches, etc. will unfold as this journal progresses. Clarifications and retrospective commentary by me are in **[boldfacing and brackets]**. Beyond that, I'm going to include *every word*, the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Enjoy!

Wednesday, January 03, 1990—Day 001

I'm determined to write every day in here. I want every day of my mission to be documented, for it's the only two years I've got.

Today started off pretty slow. I was up at 8:00, and sat around counting the hours. I was all packed and everything.

Theressa **[my girlfriend at the time]** came over at 11:00. Today was the final reckoning. We'd spent as much time together as was humanly possible in the month and a half that we've known each other, so we sat around taking in the fact that it was all over for two years. Since I've known her, I've loved her as much as I could possibly love another human being.

At 12:30 we met with the Stake President and I was set apart. I was really impressed with the blessing. We picked up my little brother Grant from school and dropped off our videos from the night before (Top Secret **[also Stand By Me]**).

At 1:30 we headed to the M.T.C., the four of us. I could barely keep from crying during the orientation. I had dropped off two friends here in months previously, but this time it was my turn.

My companions are Elders Gibson and Van Cleave (we're a threesome). We attended a bunch of orientation meetings, etc., but I had a hard time taking my mind of Theressa. It's getting easier, even now. "He that seeketh shall find," they say. I want to have my mind on my work so I can be an effective servant in the Lord's hands, but I love Theressa still. I'm sure it will be okay before long.

Already I'm seeing the difference between missionaries—and already I've been complimented on my attitude. **[I'd been through Marine Corps boot camp and School of Infantry before all this, so I was used to being separated from my family and perhaps had a "can-do" attitude that showed through. Who knows.]**

I'm the oldest guy in the Branch—the next oldest guy is almost 20. **[I was over 20 and a half when I began my mission—long story, but it had to do with finances (or lack thereof).]** This same guy is one of our assistant District Leaders.

Everyone liked my shirt stays, too. **["Shirt stays" are four adjustable elastic bands resembling mattress holders that clip to the bottom of your shirt and the tops of your socks. This keeps your shirt perfectly tucked in, perpetually. I'd gotten these as part of my Marine Corps uniform.]**

At night, people were being pretty casual. It was interesting, for I've had this mission on a pedestal for

years.

I feel pretty good already. I hope I can be a good missionary!

Thursday, January 04, 1990—Day 002

My first full day at the M.T.C.

Around 1:30 ~ 2:00, 24 hours from when I said goodbye to Theresa, I felt really depressed. One elder who's 21 asked me at lunch if this was really easy since I've been through the Marines.

If I didn't have a girlfriend, it would be! I hated admitting that. So much for being Joe tough stud.

We got our first taste of Japanese today—what an experience. We have five elders and four sisters in our district—and it's a great district. Already we've gotten more than a few compliments. It will be nice once we settle into the routine for good—and really nice once the language clicks.

I hope I can get over Theresa fully and love her when I get back. Aw, heck—right now she's at The Palace **[a local dance club, now defunct]** a few blocks away for country night dancing with a bunch of other guys! **[She loved country dancing and went every week. I went with her once and felt like a fish out of water.]**

Friday, January 05, 1990—Day 003

Two guys in our district (nine people) hadn't gotten their endowments, so we got to go to the temple. We had a mini P-day after that and got our clothes washed. I wrote a letter to Theresa, too. She's not much of a letter writer, so I hope she writes back. She said she'd make exceptions for me.

I'm getting over missing her a lot better now. Now I just feel good about the future. This is my life. Nothing is more important than this work. We don't have a lot of time for in-depth scripture study, so it's not always the big spiritual experience I was expecting. It's a lot of work, too.

I don't blame other elders for getting a bit crazy anymore. I'm discovering that you have to just to ease the tension!

This M.T.C. experience seems like it'll take so long—but after eight weeks (the length of Army boot camp) it'll be over. I guess the time will fly faster once we start seeing English missionaries come and go (three weeks for them).

I love Theresa, but I'll still be able to do this and enjoy my mission. The Lord answers prayers.

Saturday, January 06, 1990—Day 004

We had a really spiritual L.G.M. (Large Group Meeting) about Christ. They showed a good movie, but it was my third time seeing it, so I fell asleep. Darn it!

During afternoon class, we looked over and became somewhat familiar with the discussions. Wow, that was great. I can't wait 'till I know the language enough to bear my testimony with power and authority. **[I had always been somewhat envious of missionaries in English-speaking areas since they could be effective, and not just a "body," right from their very first day. I'm sure I elaborate on this later, however.]**

Sadly, we're getting adjusted. **[Looking back, I have no idea why I made that comment. Perhaps I meant that we were beginning to take things for granted?]**

About easing the tension—in class we elders joked around and stuff a little too much. One of the sisters

[Sister Soifua—from Samoa and one of the most deeply spiritual people I've ever met] said, "We're joking around too much. Couldn't we leave the world behind?" or something to that effect. It was pretty humbling. I'm glad we have four sisters **[in our "district;" a district attends all the same classes and has the same schedule]**, for they set the standards and keep us in line. They're always studying.

We've determined that we'd tone it way down in class. We have to remember why we're here. We need all the help we can get, and the Holy Ghost or the Lord are the only ones who can help us. Of ourselves we could never learn this language so soon. We need to obey the rules as much as possible so we can be worthy of His help. At least we learned this lesson now, so soon, and not later. We're going to make honest efforts (the other four elders and I).

Sunday, January 07, 1990—Day 005

We had lots of meetings today. Now I'm more determined than ever to live and conduct myself as a representative of Jesus Christ should.

I'm kind of afraid of becoming a total "square," though.

Today during our Branch President's interview I admitted all the sin (petting, etc.) that I'd done since I received my mission call. I didn't go into a lot of detail about it in my other journal, like Theresa did in hers, but when our first petting/oral sex transgressions took place I felt really low, down in the dumps **[after the fact, ha ha]**. She and I determined to do better. **["Do better" = "commit less sin," NOT "do better" = "commit sin more skillfully!"]**

But one thing led to another and after I received my endowments it all happened again. By this time my conscience was so overworked that it almost quit working. I'm still a virgin, however. In fact, I had done a lot of extremely heavy petting the night before I got here!

Anyhow, I admitted all and it looks like I'm going to have to call the Stake President **[from my home stake]**. It also looks as though I'll get to stay on my mission, too.

My companions' attitudes about a lot of things have changed totally around in the few short days they've been here. This is certainly the place for it.

You know, I daresay it was almost easier to feel the spirit outside the M.T.C. Around here you're always trying to learn the language, always with a companion, etc. You can't really do a lot of things at your own pace. With a bunch of elders around, it's easy to degenerate and screw around. So I see now that the effort will be ongoing.

Our district got another compliment from some guys who have been here a while. They're impressed with our attitudes. It's great! We've got an outstanding district; I really lucked out. The other two elders are Elder Proctor (from American Fork) and Elder Madsen.

I love Theresa, no doubt. I wish she was more gospel-oriented, though, for that's what matters most! **[Ouch. That seems like a cheap shot in retrospect, for she had flashes of sincere spirituality from time to time, but looking back I think she just had a better balance (than I did) between real life and religion.]**

Monday, January 08, 1990—Day 006

Today is the two-year anniversary of the worst day of my life. That was our last day of RFTD **[Recruit Field Training Depot, i.e. the week's worth of infantry training]** during Boot Camp. This is a missionary journal, though, so I'll detail that a couple of years from now, if at all **[I never did get around to detailing it, and here it is over 18 and a half years later. I'm such a procrastinator! And even though that day was over half my life ago, it still holds the honor as the worst day of my life, by far]**.

Today I was called in to President Pinegar's office to resolve my morality problem. What a nice guy! Everyone loves President Pinegar. He wasn't judgmental at all. He had to call my Stake President and have me talk to him, but it worked out.

Sheesh! I guess the Lord needs missionaries, for they pretty much slapped my hand and sent me on my way. **[Here's a peek at the man behind the curtain: When I originally confessed my sins to my Branch President, he took out a form and started making checkmarks. On the form were listed questions such as, "Did the transgression take place before or after the mission call?" Then boxes to check "before" or "after." The questions continued: "Did the transgression take place before or after receiving endowments?" After that, there was a category called something like "Nature of the Transgression" with checkboxes for "Petting," "Oral Sex," and "Intercourse." I was shocked and amazed: Up 'till that point I thought I was some kind of degenerate freak for having touched girls' breasts and private parts before going on a mission, so I was shocked and amazed that it happens so often that they have a form letter for it that they have to make copies of and give to the Branch Presidents to use!]** I guess declaring the Word is too important to mess around with.

My Japanese clicked far better today. I'm going to be very careful to always thank the Lord for His help, for I'll really need it!

Our district is pretty good. I think that since we have good attitudes, the Lord has blessed us.

It's tough to decide between English and foreign missions. With English there will be no language barrier, so you can bear your testimony with power.

But with a foreign mission you learn to rely on the Lord for His help more. Heaven knows, with a language, you need it! **[Why did I keep repeating myself?]**

Mom sent me a package; some vitamins, a letter, some pens and a bunch of brownies. My 2nd or 3rd day **[at the M.T.C.]** I got a card from her. She's really supportive of me. It's too bad I can't write back until P-day.

Tuesday, January 09, 1990—Day 007

Our schedule has now become regular. It's nice. One week ago now I was watching Top Secret! curled up in Theresa's arms on my couch. Sheesh, it seems like just yesterday. **[I could've sworn we also watched Stand By Me. I can't believe this is the second time I've failed to mention it. So is my memory failing now, or did it fail me then? Never mind, I don't want to know!]**

Our teachers and tutors say we're doing really good. That's surprising. Others have gone before us and now speak fluent Japanese, so hopefully we'll be okay, with the Lord's help.

Today I got a letter from Lori Hinckley, a girl from work. How nice! Our attitudes weren't in synch a lot of the time, so it's surprising. She had to have done some research to get my address! I really appreciate the effort. She said a lot of really nice things to me. Heck, she wrote to me before Theresa did! Wow!

Tonight L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve spoke. 'Twas cool.

Wednesday, January 10, 1990—Day 008

I got here one week ago today.

It was interesting seeing newer people than us. It also brought back painful memories of leaving Theresa behind. But only for a while, though.

We were slammed with a lot of stuff during morning class. Ugh.

This morning during gym I met a Marine. He's on my floor and he's been here a week or two longer. He went through Boot Camp **[in]** January of last year. He's in the Forced Recon unit in Hawaii.

We had to move down a floor in order to be with our branch. So that happened today, too.

Our nighttime teacher has a way of speaking really fast that's rather funny. He said a couple of things while talking to Sister Gage **[Sister Soifua's companion]** that made me crack up, and my companions pointed out to me that she probably thought I was laughing at her. Now I feel really bad. I'll have to apologize tomorrow. By the way, our evening teacher, Elder Miles, was pretty impressed with my attitude. **[Oh geez, why can't I give that one a rest??]** It was pretty nice. Right now I'm really feeling the good effects that Boot Camp gave me.

Thursday, January 11, 1990—Day 009

Sister Gage wasn't offended after all.

I have a hard time staying awake during large group meetings. I didn't get any mail today, either. I felt a little bit down today 'cause I try really hard to never give anyone a hard time or make fun of them, yet unfortunately my companions don't do the same for me. **[I know I was talking about my infamously immature companion Elder Gibson, who had only graduated from High School the previous May or June.]**

Friday, January 12, 1990—Day 010

Today was P-day, but I didn't get a lot done. Everyone insists on going to the temple, which takes time.

The highlight of my stay so far:

Today I got three letters from Theresa! She wrote them different days, but she mailed them all yesterday. **[If any of you can figure out why, then you're way ahead of me!]**

She really does love me. And I love her, too. I hope I still can when I get home, i.e., still have the ability after having been broken of the habit so long. Love conquers all, right?

So, needless to say, I wrote her a long letter back. Gosh, I love her. She's great.

I wrote Lori, too. I'll have to break a few more rules in order to get all my letters written.

Theresa's letters motivated me. Now I know for sure that I can love Theresa and still dig in and be a good missionary.

Saturday, January 13, 1990—Day 011

I got a letter from Theresa. 'Twas sweet. I was up way too late last night talking. So I'll have to write all my letters tomorrow.

A couple of days ago we switched our afternoon teacher from **[Elder]** Huey to Sister Wheeler. She's good at motivating you about the gospel. Now I'm determined to be the best missionary possible, regardless of my situation. **[I don't know what I meant by "my situation." Was I referring to my morality problem? Or did I mean, "no matter what conditions I found myself thrust into?" I don't remember.]**

Sunday, January 14, 1990—Day 012

Sundays here are nice and lax. I wrote six letters today (to Rhonda **[a 25-year old convert with whom I**

would've had a serious relationship (I met her before I met Theresa) were it not for the fact that I was about to start a mission (didn't stop Theresa though. Go figure). She came to my homecoming and was looking really fine. Things might've started back up between us, but I got my wires crossed and mistakenly assumed she wasn't interested in me. I later found out she was just nervous around me since I was finally home. Since I misread her, I stayed away, so she interpreted it as rejection and then married some other guy]], Rikki [a co-worker of mine who I thought hated me, but fortunately I was wrong and we became friends. She met some fellow soldier in Saudi Arabia and later married him, so I never saw her again. I found out all this stuff from her mother, who lamented Rikki having married this guy and wished that Rikki had hooked up with me instead], Dan [one of my two best friends. We had known each other since junior high. He was tragically killed in a motorcycle accident just over six years later, leaving behind a wife and a small daughter], Daren [my other best friend. He's the one who originally got me interested in the military. Although I joined the Marines, he joined the Army. He made a career out of the military and is now a full-fledged Green Beret, fought in the Second Gulf War, etc.], Mom, and Theresa.) [Keep these people in mind; you'll be hearing a *lot* more about them as this journal progresses.]

It sucks. The other guys act all lax and profess to be on a spiritual cloud nine, while I obey all the rules I possibly can and have a rotten time [an observation which would continue to haunt me throughout my mission. You'll see.]

I lost track of the other two [in my companionship] coming out of a Large Group Meeting (LGM). So I just came back here and wrote a letter. It was nice getting to be by myself for once.

Oh well. I guess that all this dedication will pay off before too long. I'm here to serve the Lord, not to get a lot of blessings. I've been "set apart," so I know I can forget myself for two years.

Now when I say that I am dedicated, I say that with a grain of salt, 'cause I know that I've committed many sins and I'm still a "natural man." I know that I can never ever be proud of myself for my spirituality. Spirituality is a gift from God.

I also know, however, that this will only get better from here on out. It'll get better the better I learn the language and the more used to the routine I get.

Frankly, of myself, I'm a little disappointed. I daresay it's easier to feel the spirit outside the M.T.C., 'cause at home I could be by myself without interruption and study the scriptures as much and as often as I pleased. It's too bad that your schedule's so tight that there's no room for personal scripture study.

Monday, January 15, 1990—Day 013

Today was a much better day. Our district is like a family. It's great. Now I realize that I love my companions, regardless of our differences. I'm not stressed out about the language, 'cause I know that if the Lord wants me to serve in Japan, he'll help me to do it effectively. Where someone's conversion is at stake, I know I'll be able to say what needs to be said.

I know that there's nowhere else I should be. To the Lord, this work is of utmost importance.

Today I got a big package of goodies from Theresa and co. Jeremy, Theresa's quick semi-fling before me, helped out too since they're all friends. [Boy was I wrong—and probably more than a touch naïve. Apparently Jeremy was much more serious than Theresa was and was quite hurt when she stopped seeing him in favor of me. As you'll later find out, once Theresa and I were on the (temporary) outs, Jeremy started asking her out again. She gave him a chance, but was later informed by a concerned outsider that his only intent was "to get the bitch back."] How cool! [Actually, it probably wasn't cool, if the above is any indication.]

Just so you know how things work—

We have three classes a day, three teachers at three hours each. All Japanese-speakers **[i.e., they'd all gone on missions to Japan]**. They mix gospel study in every few classes.

The people in our district **[arranged by companionship]**:

Elders Van Cleave, Gibson, and myself,
Elders Proctor and Madsen,
Sisters Woodward and Cordner,
Sisters Soifua and Gage.

Elder Proctor is from American Fork, and Sister Cordner is from Orem **[the town in which I lived before departing on my mission—I'd been living there since Sixth Grade]**, of all places. I'd never seen her before in my life **[Of course, she was a year or so older than me, and there were two high schools there at the time, so I shouldn't have been so surprised, perhaps.]**

All are Caucasian Americans, except for Sister Soifua who's Samoan. There, that's my story.

You know, being here at the M.T.C. is nice, 'cause you can give free reign to every righteous desire. You don't have those social pressures telling you that spirituality is uncool.

Also—I think I can still laugh and be a good missionary at the same time. **[I think I was being somewhat tongue-in-cheek at the time, but if not, what sort of screwed-up mindset must I have adopted to make me think that?]**

Tuesday, January 16, 1990—Day 014

I've had an easier time now that I've lightened up. **[Funny, I don't remember ever lightening up. At least, not without getting neurotic about it.]** I should've remembered the words at my setting apart—that the Spirit doesn't work well under pressure.

Tonight Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve spoke.

I love Theresa—I know that. I just hope we can progress in the same direction. **[Oh man that comment is funny in retrospect!]** I hope she'll love the gospel as much as I will after two years. We're perfectly compatible in every other way, so that's the only thing I can see that may cause problems later on. Hopefully she'll be uplifted by my letters and be motivated to love the gospel more. **[Yeah, I know what you're thinking. I hereby refuse to be held accountable for statements I made when I was only a naïve twenty-year old.]**

Wednesday, January 17, 1990—Day 015

I got three letters today, two from Theresa and one from Lori. **[Lori was another co-worker. Nothing happened between us, but we ran into each other in college after my mission once and chatted for a bit.]** Apparently my letter to Lori really made her feel better.

Good ol' Theresa. She loves me. What a doll. I love her, too. Today it's been two weeks and I miss her. I'm already 1/4 of the way done here. Holy cow! Kirk from work was right. The days go slow, but the weeks go fast. Oh well.

She **[Theresa]** writes about how she's practicing for a dance competition with Jeremy, whom she dropped for me and never had any feelings for anyway. But I still can't help feeling jealous!

There are a lot of cute sisters here, and Woodward (from Hollywood) and Cordner are pretty cute. Thus, a lot of guys come over to our apartment getting all buddy-buddy with us 'cause they're **[i.e., Sisters Woodward and Cordner are]** in our district and we have access to them **[i.e., we have social access to**

Sisters Woodward and Corder]. A couple (three, to be exact) of guys on our floor are real jerks and I wish they'd stay out of our room.

Thursday, January 18, 1990—Day 016

Three letters today—One from Rhonda and one from Theresa and one from Rikki. Rhonda sent me a card and a couple of pictures. She's so cool. She's an awesome person, and she invited me over to her place for dinner on January 10, 1992 **[the Friday night after my mission was due to end]**. She's even going to cook! Apparently one of the reasons she didn't pursue dating me is because she says she'd "die once I left." She also told me that I treated her better than any other guy ever has. Can you imagine?

Theresa's letter really motivated me. Gosh I love her! And she loves me too! Ah, it's great!! Let me tell you, it's good to be loved.

It's interesting. They say that if a girl's too ugly to get married, then she'll go on a mission. **[Although that may be what "they say," I never bought into it, thankfully.]** Such is not the case, for there are plenty of cute sisters here.

What thrills me is how Theresa is so dead set on our being married. She's made plans and everything. She's wonderful. Oh, how I want for us to be together!

Friday, January 19, 1990—Day 017

I love Theresa! We **[our district]** went to the temple early, so I was able to write lots of letters. Seven total.

Japanese is coming along quite well. From what I hear, we all know a lot more than we think we do. Already we've passed a two-year level. **[Yet another comment that's utterly hilarious in hindsight.]**

Saturday, January 20, 1990—Day 018

Maybe I don't know Japanese as well as I thought I did. **[Perhaps the most sensible statement I've made yet!]** Everyone else seems to be remembering stuff a lot better than I am.

Today was a pretty down day. The root of the problem is, I think, that everyone else says that this place is so great, while to me it's only O.K. Maybe it's 'cause I've tried to do what's right and I'm just used to the Spirit; there are no surprises for me.

Y'know, it kind of sucks 'cause there are so many attractive sisters. It is tough to keep your mind on the straight and narrow and not to get all hung-up over someone. It's hard to not think of myself. Am I an unprofitable servant, or what?

Sunday, January 21, 1990—Day 019

I took a couple of naps today, the first since I've been here.

I really want to do what's right, but I curse myself for being so human. I so easily slip into worldly thoughts, I'm so quick to do evil, so slow to remember the Lord, etc. It's staggering how unprofitable a servant I am.

Why can't I be righteous? Why can't I be quick to remember the Lord my God and do what's right, regardless of personal convenience? This mission is a tremendous responsibility, teaching others of God's children, and I hope and pray that somehow the Lord will see fit to have me do my job effectively.

It amazes me the love Jesus Christ must have for us, considering how easily He forgives such weak and carnal individuals as ourselves. That he would be willing to suffer so much, just for us, is stunning.

I'm beginning to realize the joy that can come into one's life by serving and helping others. I hope I can be in the position to bless others' lives by helping them time and time again during my mortal probation.

Monday, January 22, 1990—Day 020

There are a lot of cute sisters here. It sucks. Makes it tough to concentrate. I'm not here for me, so I'd like it a lot better if this place were segregated. It's not that I mind admiring their beauty or anything, it's just so stressful knowing that you can't do anything about it and you have to keep your thoughts clean at the same time.

I got a great letter from Theresa. Let me tell you, it's great knowing I have something to look forward to after my mission. Not just something, but marriage! So much nicer to look forward to than just jobs and college. **[I hadn't been to college at all at that point.]** Marriage to the woman I love—what a reward!!!

Tuesday, January 23, 1990—Day 021

I really want to repent effectively to remove all barriers to my spiritual progress. But as far as morality goes, we all have that desire **[for sex, etc.]** put into us, so how can we effectively, sincerely forsake those sins? **[A question I never did resolve throughout my stint as a believing Mormon.]**

Argh! I'm sick of there being so many cute sisters around. Too many mental distractions. But then I think of Theresa in sister missionary attire and it makes it all better. **[Exactly how, I no longer remember.]** If Theresa were going here now too, oh, what Heaven. (And what a distraction!) It's soooo nice knowing you get along with another human being so well. I love Theresa.

Wednesday, January 24, 1990—Day 022

The days are moving faster. Rhonda gave me great letter with a kiss mark on the back and some cookies, too. I miss Theresa, but I don't feel a whole lot of sorrow in connection with it. I really wish I could be with her, but I have such hope for the future that I can't help but feel good! Two years is going to go by one way or another, and the reward at the end is extremely enticing. Wow—what could be better? Plus, I don't feel so bad, knowing that this is the last time we'll have to be separated. After this, we'll be together forever. It's also very comforting, for I can tell by her letters that she's just as determined as I am, if not more so. And I'm determined!!!

Thursday, January 25, 1990—Day 023

It was my goal in the USMC to never cry, and I accomplished that goal. That's not my goal here, so I ended up crying in evening class. Luckily no one noticed except Elder Miles, the teacher. The stress just got to me. It was everything all at once. I know what an unprofitable servant I am, and I know that no matter how spiritual I get, I'll always have my heart set on worldly things. I try to follow the rules, yet I feel the Spirit less than the ones who don't **[follow the rules]**, I'm having an O.K. time instead of a great time like everyone else does, so that makes me wonder what I'm missing, then I realize that I'm being self-centered by expecting a lot and that I've been blessed enough, then I decide to do what the Lord wants and that's it and never care about myself, then I wonder if I'm doing it all wrong and if I'm under some kind of condemnation for not being happy, etc. AAH! What do I do? **[And thus you see the vicious cycle at work.]** I should've enjoyed the Corps while it lasted. At least there, I was working with stuff I could see. I could do everything on my own power, could depend on my own self.

But here, you have to deal with the Spirit and the angels and a whole other nether-realm that we can't even see and that we have no control over.

HERE'S THE DEAL: All I want is to be an effective servant of the Lord, but I know full well how weak and unprofitable a servant I am, and that I'll always be imperfect, and never what the Lord deserves. You see? Even now, all I can think about is myself.

Oh, I love Theresa. I always will. I can see her, can do things for her. She's tangible. She's real. Oh, how I want to be with her, for I can trust and depend on her. I'm not forced to deal with her. I can love her unrestrainedly. **[Is that a word?]**

I can't help it. It's a lot easier to love and strive for the things you can see!

Friday, January 26, 1990—Day 024

I skipped the temple this morning and wrote a 9½ page letter to Theresa. It felt soooooooo good! I said a lot of things that I was wanting to say, like how I feel for her, etc. I can't wait for her to reply to this one.

We went and did sealings for the dead this afternoon. Wow, what an experience. I can't wait to see Theresa across the altar. The girls in our district looked so good in temple clothes, I can't wait until I'm up there for real.

[Elders] Gibson and Proctor went to the mall today. (Today is P-day.) They saw Theresa at B-Dalton, where she works, and she saw them. When I heard this, I missed her so bad! If I had been there, I wouldn't've been able to handle it. I love her—that's for sure.

I hate writing so small in here. I hope you can read this. **[Of course, now that it's being transcribed electronically, that's no longer an issue and this paragraph is moot.]**

Just now they gave me some Japanese candy—dried guppies. They were pretty good. Oh, I can't wait 'till I get to see Theresa at the airport. I love her!

Saturday, January 27, 1990—Day 025

I'm not too impressed with the M.T.C. I would figure that my mission would get better once I knew the language and was teaching people, but everyone says this is the best part. What a bummer. But this M.T.C. **[experience]** is only a drop in the bucket, luckily. For all I know, there are a lot of growing experiences waiting for me in Japan. Maybe there's a lot I'm meant to learn. I'm definitely going to finish what I start, even if it kills me. **[There's the ol' "do or die" Marine Corps attitude showing through again.]**

Sunday, January 28, 1990—Day 026

Gibson was sick, so I missed a couple of meetings and wrote letters and read the Ensign. I hope I can love Theresa and still be a good missionary. I want a good LDS family so bad! Love at home—that's my goal.

Monday, January 29, 1990—Day 027

[From Theresa] I got a package of cookies, a red balloon that says "I Love You" that popped a few hours later **[my companions said, "That's probably an omen," but I distinctly remember not adding that detail in the original journal since I thought it would be bad luck]**, and a few envelopes chock-full of letters—12~15 pages worth. That really lifted me out of my semi-depressed state like you wouldn't believe. From now on, I'm going to refer to this as "our" mission. I'll at least think of it that way.

Mom also sent me a plate of gooey half-done cupcakes. I couldn't bring myself to eat them.

Today we started doing discussions in Japanese.

Tonight Elder Miles, our evening teacher, cornered me and asked me why I was having such a hard time. (He had seen me crying, remember.) I told him how bad I wanted to be the kind of missionary the Lord

deserved, and how I never would be due to the fact that I am so human. He gave me a few words of support to help me out. They should work.

Tuesday, January 30, 1990—Day 028

Why, why, oh why do they send 19 year old kids on missions? I'm getting sick of these kids. Man, I tell you, threesomes really suck!! To have come this far, only to have my mission ruined by companions! I will do my best to do all I can to counteract this. But I personally—

Never mind. We just had a long talk about how we can get along better. Elder Van Cleave had the guts to bring it up, and I admire him for that. We all got out our faults and told each other what bothered us about each other and said what we'd do to improve. I've got a feeling that this companionship will work well from now on. Thank goodness, 'cause I love these guys.

There's a girl named Sister Leigh whom I know from my missionary prep. class. She has a really hard time with the Elders in her district; she doesn't get along with them at all. I feel bad for her.

Got a letter from Dan today—he's a great friend. I love him, too **[in a purely Platonic way, of course]**. I really wish I could do a better job losing myself in the work. Truly, I'm going to need the Lord's help. I learned an important lesson today—If I ever become a good missionary, it will largely be due to my companions, as well as myself and the Lord. I love the Lord.

Wednesday, January 31, 1990—Day 029

I'll have to find some way to deal with my missing Theresa or I'll be miserable for two years. I love her so much!

I have to admit, though, there's a girl who's going to Nagoya, Sister Chandler, who's mighty fine. Oh, why can't I do a better job of keeping my eye single to the glory of God!? I figured out why she's so attractive—She reminds me of Theresa and is a lot like her.

We ate with chopsticks during all our meals today. Tonight we taught a real Japanese guy the first discussion. Oh boy, have I got a lot to learn!

Speaking of learning, I think I'm learning how not to nail myself to the cross for every little thing. I didn't want to admit it, but I'm sure that a mission is good preparation for marriage. If I can get along with my companions and get out our problems, etc., I can certainly communicate well and get along with Theresa, whom I love and am a lot like anyhow. I'm looking forward to progressing quite a bit. A mission is the perfect environment for that, that's for sure.

PHOTOS 001



Front row, L-R (with their backs to us): Sister Gage, Sister Cordner.
Middle row, L-R: Sister Woodward (with her back to us), Sister Soifua.
Back row, L-R: Gibson, Van Cleave, me, Madsen, and Proctor.



L-R: Me in the background, Elder Proctor, Elder Graff (seated), and Elder Ludlow (seated).



Front row, L-R: Madsen, Me.

Middle row, L-R: Van Cleave, Sister Woodward.

Back row, L-R: Sister Gage, Sister Soifua, Gibson, Sister Cordner, Proctor.

Partially hidden: Elder Evans, our morning teacher.



L-R: Madsen, me behind his left shoulder, Elder Miles, our evening teacher (he was here this afternoon as an exception); Sister Gage almost completely hidden behind him, Sister Soifua, Sister Woodward, Proctor nearly hidden

behind her, Sister Cordner facing away, and Van Cleave nearly hidden behind her.



L-R: Gibson, me wearing the overcoat I'd gotten from the Marines, Sister Soifua, Elder Miles, Sister Gage, Van Cleave, Madsen, and Proctor.

Thursday, February 01, 1990—Day 030

I'm wondering if I can still have a girlfriend and be effective **[as a missionary]** at the same time. I love Theresa, but I'm afraid of totally letting go, 'cause I don't want her to think I don't love her. How does she feel about my being on a mission and loving her? Before I left she was really concerned about my doing a good job, but now she writes and tells me she loves me regardless. **[Like I said, she had a better balance between religion and real life than I did.]** That's okay, though, because I love her too and love hearing it and writing it.

I suppose I should let results speak for themselves. I'm just as far ahead as anyone, and I'm doing as well **[as anyone]**. Oh well, time will tell. We'll see how things work out. I'm still learning lots.

Friday, February 02, 1990—Day 031

We started P-day at 4:00 a.m. and were at the temple at 5:00 **[a.m.]** to do a sealing session. The officiator kept messing up on the pronunciation of the names **[I remember that they were very long, old-fashioned Dutch names]**, so I had a hard time keeping from laughing. I found out that Elder Van Cleave had said a prayer so that I wouldn't laugh. No wonder I didn't.

I wrote a letter to Theresa today in which I said some very inappropriate (for lack of a better word) things. Perverted stuff with the intent to turn her on. What a mistake! I hope she can forgive me. Something happened later that made me really regret it.

Today she gave me a brand-new book (from where she works, I assume,) about the USMC in the Pacific. Bless hear soul! That was so thoughtful of her! Problem is, I'll never have time to read it. I'll have to give it back to my mom at the airport.

I'm not having a bad time here anymore. I've learned my lesson. I found out that I have to be teachable in order to feel the Spirit. I've learned to never compare myself to other missionaries. **[Too bad I didn't**

actually remember that lesson.] I thought I had it down, but that wasn't the case. I had always known it, but now I truly, fully realize that it's the Spirit that matters most. **[That had been the topic of my missionary farewell, too.]** Tonight we taught discussions in Japanese. We hardly knew what we were saying and we made tons of mistakes, but the Spirit was there—and it was one of our best lessons ever.

Sister Gage broke down and cried due to frustration halfway through **[by this time, our district had been joined by a bilingual native Japanese missionary, Elder Yamaura, who was only there to learn the lessons. He got to skip the first half of the M.T.C. since he already knew the language, of course. During some teaching exercise or other he was speaking Japanese to Sister Gage rapid-fire, and her complete inability to understand anything he was saying—none of the rest of us could understand a word if it, either—caused her to break down from the stress.]**—and Elder Gibson went out of the room after a while to where she was and he and Elder Miles, the evening teacher, gave her a blessing.

When they all came back in, Miles Sensei (Japanese for "teacher") had tears in his eyes and told us how confident he was that we'd do a good job due to our testimony. After that we just had an impromptu testimony meeting.

I couldn't hold back. I had to go first. I bore my testimony like never before on how fortunate I felt to have been born in this day and age where the fullness of the gospel is here. Never had I felt the Spirit so strongly. I could barely talk. I was crying full force. I couldn't stop shaking for minutes afterwards. I also spoke of the Gift of the Holy Ghost and how it leads men **[and women]** to do good and how thankful I was for its influence.

People thanked me for my testimony later. Me of all people! A couple of people told me they saw a new side of me. That was humbling. I thought I had it down before, but now I know it's the Spirit that gives faith—not any personal diligence or what not.

Everyone has their talent or gift—and it's neat to make them work together. We as human beings can profit from each other. It's a wonderful thing. We have so much we can learn from each other!

After feeling the Spirit so strongly during what might have changed my life, I regret writing what I did to Theresa.

We're getting more spiritually sensitive, almost without our knowing it. Reading the cover of the book she gave me and how it talked all about war and guts etc. really affected me. I wouldn't've cared before; now I can feel it.

Before I forget—tonight, while bearing my testimony, I almost couldn't control myself. That's how strong it was. (Is that correct doctrine?)

Saturday, February 03, 1990—Day 032

[My one month anniversary of becoming a missionary and entering the M.T.C. I'm surprised I didn't note it in my journal.] Japanese is getting pretty frustrating. We all had a serious case of brain fry this evening.

Missionaries are expected to and do keep high standards, but we're human, too. We have weaknesses.

I got another letter from Rhonda today. We've got a date set up for Jan. 10, 1992. She wrote "kiss, kiss" on the back of the envelope and tells me how much she misses me.

What do I do? She's really cool and all, but I love Theresa. I've never told Rhonda I love her, and I don't plan to. I'm not too worried, though, for she turns 26 on Thursday and I'll bet anything she'll be married by the time I get back. **[I was wrong. She was still single when I returned.]** I bet I'll just be a fun memory. **[Actually, she still liked me.]**

I've got a good feeling about Theresa, though. I'm afraid to write about it for fear of invoking bad luck, but I bet this'll work out—I really do!

Today in the lunch line Sister Chandler greeted me warmly and called me her friend in Japanese! Being called a friend by her really meant a lot. I feel good.

Denise, a friend from my ward whom I met Theresa through, is dating Brian **[another friend from my High School days]** and wrote to me that they're getting married in the S.L.C. temple. At first I didn't know what to say, but now I know I have to write her and encourage Brian to go on his mission. He needs these experiences to make him a better husband and put life in perspective. Heck, I need them, too! **[How condescending! It turned out that Brian married someone else, and even though he never served a mission he wound up being easily ten times a better husband and father than I could ever be. He can't have biological kids of his own, so he and his wife adopted four children, all from bad situations, and one of them with special needs. Pretty Christ-like if you ask me.]**

In addition to the language, etc., I'm learning lots of little nuance lessons of life. My perspective is changing drastically.

PHOTOS 002



L-R: Me, Van Cleave, Gibson.

Sunday, February 04, 1990—Day 033

I wrote Denise telling her in no uncertain terms that Brian must serve a mission.

In my **[weekly and mandatory]** letter to the Branch President I asked if a missionary could have a girlfriend and still be effective. I didn't mean it to be any big deal, but they called me in for an interview. Pres. Robbins, the Second Counselor (a World War II veteran) talked to me. He congratulated me on my attitude, and tears came to his eyes when he told me how much he liked me and was thankful for my character and good influence! He gave me a big, sincere hug. Walking to the classroom for the interview, I had to leave my companions, and he said he'd be my companion. And of all people to be a companion with, he said in no uncertain terms that he'd choose me! Wow—I must finally be catching on

to this. Tears—over me! I still wonder if I'm not totally mistaken. But I know I heard the things he said.

I got a chance to talk to Sister Chandler again! We had a friendly little conversation before the fireside. She commented that we'd probably be leaving on the same plane, and that's not an obvious thing, 'cause even our district will probably leave on a different day from each other. **[I was wrong; Sister Chandler, her companions, and the Elders in our district all flew out the same day and on the same flight.]** She seemed pretty excited that we might be travelling together, but that's probably no big deal. I might have misinterpreted it.

I'm getting the spirit of this place, at long last. I'm getting really excited to do the Lord's work and I'm really feeling the Spirit. I anticipate having a great time from here on out. I hope I have the opportunity to listen to and bless someone's life.

Monday, February 05, 1990—Day 034

Two years ago today I graduated as a United States Marine. That seems like so long ago! Man, this two years will go by so slow! Ouch! But the memories are so vivid that it seems like just yesterday. Who knows, I'll probably be so busy that the two years will go by fast. I hope so, 'cause that means I'll be home free to Theresa.

Did I ever mention Sister Phillips? Well, she left a week ago and was extremely cute. I'm glad she's gone, 'cause now I can keep my mind on the straight and narrow.

This language is getting tough. The more I learn, the more I realize how much I don't know.

Prayer works. I asked to have more love and patience for my companions, and today I never got mad and was able to overlook things a whole lot better. **[I'm surprised I didn't spend more time on this, but Elder Gibson was a very painful thorn in the side of Elder Van Cleave and I. His immaturity was constantly pissing both of us off. It was like a dark cloud that was always hanging over my M.T.C. experience. Perhaps I begin giving more details later.]**

Tuesday, February 06, 1990—Day 035

This morning I received a card and a couple of letters from Theresa. On the outside of the card it said, "Having you in my life is my greatest joy and blessing" and inside it had the most outstanding poem you've ever read. Boy, I was on cloud nine this morning.

But I really wonder. This is starting to look like another "Heather and Jason" waiting through Boot Camp story. **[As you can surmise, Heather was my girlfriend as I went through Boot Camp.]** But everything is the opposite here. I couldn't communicate with Heather, I can with Theresa. **[By "communicate," I mean "interpersonal communication," not stuff such as letter writing, etc.]** Heather and I took a while to develop, Theresa and I took right off. The USMC means nothing in the eternal scheme of things, a mission definitely does. Heather was young and naïve, Theresa knows her way around. Heather and I had absolutely no foundation financially, Theresa and I will. **[And how did I know that?]** I threw away all of Heather's letters, I'm keeping all of Theresa's. During the whole time waiting before I never had a doubt about Heather, I sometimes have my doubts about Theresa. With Heather it was all a fairy tale, with Theresa it's realistic. With Heather I could never be myself, with Theresa I can be. Heather's wait was only five months, this will be two years.

I don't know. With Heather I learned that you can fall out of love as easily as you can fall into it, so I've got my guard up (with Heather I never did).

But the bottom line is this: With Heather things didn't work out. And what's the opposite of "didn't" work out?

Theresa was with me during the fundamental points in my life, i.e. setting apart, seeing me off, etc.

Heather was never with me during my major turning points.

My perspective is changing, though. **[That seems to happen a lot, doesn't it?]** I hope it doesn't blur Theresa out of the picture.

But what kind of person would I want out of life for a wife? Answer: Theresa.

I also realize that anything that would prevent us from being together would be my fault, not hers. **[This turned out to be very prophetic.]** It's up to me to keep my head screwed on straight.

I want us to be together. I'm going to work for that. But I also realize that the only reason I'm talking like this is because she's not here. I've been away a while. With her around there'd be no doubt. I hope it's like that once I'm back.

Heck. I've been set apart. It's not my duty to worry about that **[i.e., the situation vis-a-vis Theresa]** now. I'll just see what happens when the time comes.

One thing's for sure, though. Once this is over, if we do work it all out okay, we'll definitely have earned it. Frankly, I'd be a stupid idiot to let her go.

Gibson has been acting like a little kid lately. People got on his case about this Japanese speaking game we were playing, and he couldn't handle it, turned red, and cried. (He's the District Leader, by the way.) He ended up sulking all day. The problem is, he'll make fun of everyone else, but when it comes to him he's an off target, etc. If you can't take it, don't dish it out. Cut and dry. I can't wait for this **[M.T.C. stint]** to end. Time heals all wounds, they say. I hope so.

Wednesday, February 07, 1990—Day 036

What a day!

Before going to breakfast, our whole district sat down and talked over our problems and frustrations with each other and got them resolved.

I can't believe how much I'm learning. *Vive la différence!* It's great to be enriched by others' strengths. From now on, I'm not going to strive for everyone to be like me. I'm going to strive to be understanding. One man's strengths are another man's weaknesses, and vice-versa. I want to be more Christlike; the problem is, I get shot down easily if people reject my kindness and my attempts to reach out.

A worker in the lunchroom recognized me. He went to Orem High and was a sophomore when I was a senior. He remembered that I was the cameraman **[for our High School's sporting events]**, etc. Wow! That was a long time ago. He said it was hard to miss me, 'cause I was all over the place. It's true, all right.

This evening we taught Japanese folks. They come down every Wednesday night and are taught by the senior missionaries.

In our district is an elder named Elder Yamaura, who's in a different district but goes to our class to learn the discussions. He's Japanese, and totally fluent, of course. Luckily we were paired as companions to teach.

The girl we taught was a non-member. Day 36, my first time actually teaching! I was stressing out really bad, 'cause someone's eternal salvation may have been at stake. **[I still don't know how much of that mindset was laid on me by the church vs. how much of it I merely laid on myself.]** Luckily Elder Yamaura was able to answer her questions. I forgot everything, I felt like. Major frustration. But the bottom line is, she understood.

After our feedback time, they opened up the time for testimonies.

Sister Chandler urged me to go up and bear mine. Somebody heard her, and soon the whole room was looking me in the face, urging me on.

So I got up there and in very halting Japanese testified that the gospel was important, that Joseph Smith was a prophet, and that I loved Jesus Christ.

Sure, it was halting, but I received lots of congratulations. They said that what I lacked in speech, I made up for with the Spirit. Wow. And now more than ever, I know that it's the Spirit that counts. **[Why can't I give that one a rest? I'm starting to sound like a broken record!]** We're not out to appeal to the brain; we're out to appeal to the heart.

Thursday, February 08, 1990—Day 037

Today during my interview with Wheeler Sensei she thanked me for my obedience capacity. She cited how I always did what I was told, even when I didn't know why. One of my USMC traits, again. Plus, I never argue with the voice of experience.

By the way, I found out that my investigator wasn't real after all.

Boy, holding my tongue and trying to have charity regardless is really tough. I got ragged on by Gibson about the military and I got pretty ticked off. **[Didn't we already resolve this, what, twice already so far? With Elder Gibson, it never stuck.]**

Tonight during branch meeting I was called as Branch Executive Secretary. It's not too big, 'cause everyone else got calls, too. Of all the calls to get, I got the one I would have wanted most. It was a total surprise. It's interesting, for everyone got calls that applied to them most. Van Cleave loves music and got called as the music leader. I'm always writing and am organized, etc. The branch presidency had no idea about this stuff!

Friday, February 09, 1990—Day 038

I was fairly sick today, so I sat in the temple foyer and wrote letters while my companions went through a session. Today was profitable, for I got all my letters written—seven total.

Two years is such a long time. As much as I love Theresa, the month and a half I spent with her won't add up to much compared to the two years I'll be gone. We'll have to make good use of our trial period once I'm home, for sure. **[Here's what I mean by "trial period:" Before I entered the M.T.C., Theresa and I made a pact that no matter what happened during the course of my mission, we'd give our relationship a "trial period" after it was over to see if the spark was really gone or could be resurrected. Incidentally, after my mission was over, we made good on that pact.]** It'll take effort to keep our love alive. I'm glad, however, that girls tend to be far more loyal than guys. **[Is that actually true, or is it merely a stereotype?]**

Sisters Chandler, Fisher, and Uptagrove (all going to Nagoya) are cool, dang it! **[The three of them were in a threesome companionship of their own. They were in a different district, of course, but they went to our mission. Although I didn't quite know what to make of Sister Uptagrove at first, we wound up getting along swimmingly and even corresponded after our missions were over. I thought things were going well until she abruptly stopped writing. Well, it turned out that the reason she quit writing cold turkey was because she met and married some other guy. Yep, the same ol' story played out yet again.]**

Saturday, February 10, 1990—Day 039

We received our travel plans today. I go through L.A. I'd rather have gone through Seattle, 'cause I'd

have gotten to see my dad and his folks **[because they live in the area, of course]**.

I travel with Chandler, Fisher, and Upthagrove. They go **[to Japan]** with all the males in our district. (All eight of us are going to Nagoya.) The males in their district are travelling with our sisters to Tokyo North the day after we leave.

Gibson is starting to drive us both up the wall. We try really hard on our relationship to get along better, but he's full of pride still. He hasn't been out of high school long enough. He tried to prove a stupid point this morning, which ticked us all off, and I made fun of his family and he brought up how bad this ticks him off. I brought up the fact that if I'm not supposed to talk about his family, he can't talk about the USMC. **[Believe it or not, this worked. He never brought up the military after that.]** Yesterday he talked about the military in a way that didn't go over too well with me. His fuse is way too short for me, while he'll go on and on to one of us. He can dish it out, but he can't take it. Plus, he brags too much. All we hear about is Las Vegas (his home).

The M.T.C. would be about perfect were it not for him.

Tonight we had a group discussion practice, and I went last. The whole room was cracking up when I got done, including Wheeler Sensei. They all complimented me on my way of doing things, saying there was something about me that eased the tension or whatever, I can't explain it. Wheeler Sensei said she'd love to have me for a companion, 'cause I'm always coming up with unexpected things. **[Elder]** Madsen affirmed this, which meant a lot.

From now on, I won't suppress my personality. I'll do good and have fun without forcing it.

Sunday, February 11, 1990—Day 040

I'm looking forward to seeing Theresa at the airport, yet I wonder what it'll be like. Will I feel the same way about her after my mission as I do now? I'd hate to disappoint her after two long years of waiting and hoping. If, of course, she's still around when I get back.

The longer I think about it, the better I feel. However, I'm sure that we'll both be broken of the habit by then, but who's to say we won't be able to recapture the magic after our trial period? Sure, I've met a lot of awesome sisters, but to this day I haven't met anyone whose personality fits me so well. Theresa's got it all.

Last night I dreamt in Japanese. Good sign.

Monday, February 12, 1990—Day 041

This morning Van Cleave and Gibson got into another argument. Gibson is still trying to prove his stupid points. It's tough to be Christlike when others won't cooperate.

During class we did splits with the Tokyo district. Madsen and I were taught the First Discussion by none other than Chandler, Fisher, and Upthagrove! A memorable (and lovely) experience indeed.

Today was Miles Sensei's B-day. He's 22.

This afternoon we were interviewed by an M.T.C. applicant. The purpose was for us to get to know him, for we have to evaluate him tomorrow. During our conversation, we talked about some stuff that Miles Sensei talked about later. I've learned that we have to laugh and have fun or else we'll die of the stress. So, like I said, from now on I'll try hard and be myself at the same time.

Tuesday, February 13, 1990—Day 042

Gibson was sick this morning, so I had to stay back with him and got some extra sleep. It was nice.

[Here's the deal about sleep: In the M.T.C., everyone has an hour or so for gym. Our district's hour just so happened to be the first one of the day, at some God-awful hour like 5:30 a.m. or something. After that hour, we had some time to go back, shower, and change; after which was breakfast. Then our first class of the day started at 8:00 a.m. or something like that. I had no interest in gym anyway, and there was plenty of food during lunch and dinner that I could easily skip breakfast. So, I figured we could easily sleep in 'till 7:30, shower, then get to our first class. But no, my companions would have none of it. Our schedule dictated gym at 5:30, etc., so by God that was God's plan for us and what God Himself wanted us to do. Knowing then what I know now, though, I should've just slept in anyway and let them go to gym and breakfast.]

Sister Woodward, while coming out of an LGM, told me that during morning class everyone was talking about me and saying that I was cool or whatever, and more importantly the observation was made that I never say anything bad about anyone. I'm glad, for it looks as though my efforts aren't completely unnoticed after all.

James E. Faust of the Quorum of the Twelve spoke tonight and used scriptures a lot. I should be more diligent, but I like it better when they relate experiences and give advice. **[I was being polite here. I was singularly unimpressed with Elder Faust, since pretty much all he did was have us turn to scripture after scripture telling us to mark them all. Yeah, like it really takes a prophet, seer, and revelator to tell us that.]** So far we've heard four apostles—L. Tom Perry, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Russell M. Ballard, and James E. Faust.

I received an X-mas gift (I wonder too,) from my Uncle Lynn. It is a **[pocket-sized]** world atlas book that's really fun.

Valentine's Day, 1990—Day 043

This morning Gibson tried to prove a point to Proctor, who's now D.L. **[i.e., "District Leader." Remember, Gibson used to be the D.L., but all the callings got reshuffled recently.]** Gibson says he took a lot of crud from Proctor when he was D.L., so he tried to throw it back in his face when Proctor showed up late to Gospel study this morning. He said a few things to push Proctor too far, then said he was only joking. All but Gibson and I left the room (the girls weren't there yet). **[I wasn't on Gibson's side—not by a long shot—but I had the compulsion to stick with him, at least temporarily, since abandoning your companion is strictly taboo for missionaries, especially in the M.T.C.]**

Proctor and Van Cleave and I **[later]** went to breakfast and got out all our frustrations about him **[i.e., about Gibson]**. It felt good.

Apparently, during her interview with Miles Sensei, Sister Gage was told that she and her companion (Sister Soifua) were giving me too hard of a time.

They called me over to apologize, but I had taken no offense. I knew they had given me hard times out of fun every once in a while, so I told them there was no offense taken. Sister Gage then told me over and over, in no uncertain terms, that I was a cool guy and that they didn't want to offend me. Wow—She thinks I'm cool! "Really neat" were the words used. I'm glad, for once again it seems as though my efforts are paying off. I'm not going to let it go to my head, though.

Tonight we taught the Japanese **[folks]** again. My Japanese was a quantum leap better than last time, but there was still a lot I didn't understand. I suppose I'm improving, but I just don't notice it.

I can't believe it—today's Valentine's Day and I didn't get anything from Theresa. She said last letter that she had a card picked out for me. Oh well, my letter was sent to her late, so I guess that's what I get. I'll see tomorrow.

You should have seen the area around the mail room. **[It was]** a complete madhouse.

Van Cleave tells me I have a lot of patience—which is a joke, 'cause I'm really impatient; I just do a good job of hiding it.

Thursday, February 15, 1990—Day 044

I should've said this, but last night we were teaching the Japanese **[people]** and I ripped one. I was so embarrassed! We were teaching a girl, too, to make matters worse. Luckily, Proctor and Madsen, with whom I was teaching, didn't crack up.

Today Madsen misspelled a Japanese word **[on the chalkboard in front of everyone]** and it came out to be a swear word in English. **[The word in question was the 'Base-TE' form of the word "suru," to do, which is supposed to be spelled "shite." He left off the 'e' on accident.]** He was pretty embarrassed, so later I brought up my mistake **[of passing gas]** so he wouldn't feel so bad. Apparently Gibson and Van Cleave had heard about it **[my mistake, not Madsen's]**, for they both started laughing about it. The sisters were wondering what was going on, so we told them what I had done. **[Sadly, this wouldn't be the last time it happened.]** Now the whole district knows. I must know these people really well, for even though they're **[i.e., four of them are]** girls, I don't care.

Today during preparation time I got to reading the Bible Dictionary. It's great; I hope to read it all someday. **[I would eventually do so.]**

There's another Marine on our floor now. I met him tonight, Elder Lester—from Company C, LAVs **[an acronym for "Light Armored Vehicles," eight-wheeled infantry fighting vehicles with a small troop-transport capacity]** here in Utah. **[i.e., he was from the other USMC reserve unit based in Tooele, Utah. I ran into Elder Lester again over three years later when we both transferred into the same unit of the Utah National Guard.]**

I finally got a letter and card from Theresa tonight. She wrote it on brown paper bags, so it's interesting. Man, now more than ever, I really love you!!! **[Don't get the wrong idea; I was writing by proxy to Theresa.]** (By the way, Theresa got my letter Saturday, after all.)

Friday, February 16, 1990—Day 045

I decided to write letters in the temple lobby instead of attending a session. Coming back, they wanted me to explain why I didn't care about attending the temple, and Gibson said, "You've got a lot of praying to do." This pissed me off worse than anything. What gives him or anyone else the right to tell me my spiritual state of being? What makes him the expert on the gospel and what's right or wrong? Truly, he has a lot of growing up to do. Plus he does a lot of things that are rather childish that I outgrew ages ago.

I got to rap with the Nagoya sisters today at lunch. 'Twas fun. They explained that **[Cap'n Crunch's]** Crunch Berries taste like cough syrup—now I'm turned off of Crunch Berries for life. They're totally cool—it's awesome that they're going to Nagoya (Fisher, Chandler, and Uthagrove).

I'm getting excited about Japanese. Imagine—bilingualism!

Plus, today I got the first haircut since I've been here. It was a month old when I first got here **[I had just been in the Marine Reserves, remember]**—so I was long overdue.

Saturday, February 17, 1990—Day 046

Wheeler Sensei usually hugs the sisters goodbye and shakes the elders' hands. Today she hugged two sisters in a row, so I figured she'd be in the habit and I opened my arms for a hug. She almost went for it and backed off just in time. It got a few laughs.

I also taught a couple of people how to squeeze their hands together to make "noise," like I sometimes do. **[What I meant was that I taught a couple of people how to make fart sounds by interlocking]**

their hands the right way and squeezing the air out—a proud specialty of mine.] Tonight we watched "The First Vision" dubbed in Japanese, and I didn't catch a whole lot. Truly I have a long way to go. We had a talk about chastity, too. Other than that, today was pretty uneventful.

PHOTOS 003



Front row, L-R: Sister Gage, Sister Soifua, Van Cleave, me.

Back row, L-R: Sister Cordner, Sister Woodward, Elder Yamaura partially hidden behind Sister Soifua, Gibson, Proctor partially hidden behind me, Madsen.

Sunday, February 18, 1990—Day 047

Frankly, I'm worried—considering how I feel now, which is that I'm wondering if we're really right for each other **[Theresa and I, of course]**. I know I love her, but she's so set on our being married by saving money for us, etc., that I'm afraid of getting a "no" answer to our prayer on whether we should be married or not. I'd really hate to see all this preparation go to waste. I care about her feelings too much.

Today was Daren's farewell.

I wrote a letter to Sister Larson, who's here at the M.T.C. in my branch (going to Nagoya), because she never gets letters from her family and so she asked me to write her one.

I got a lot of sleep today, too. **[Since no classes are taught on Sundays, and they don't serve breakfast on Sundays, they try to keep you busy with devotionals and firesides scattered throughout the day. Even so, there's inevitably some "down time" between Sunday meetings, so back at the dorm room one or more of us would sometimes succumb to the urge to take a nap.]** A pretty uneventful day.

Monday, February 19, 1990—Day 048

We went over the last three principles today **[of which discussion—first or second—I forget]**. Lots of work.

Today I wrote down an advanced prayer in Japanese and I read it when everyone had their heads down **[and eyes closed]**. They were pretty impressed 'till they found out I had written it. Proctor looked up at me halfway through and almost couldn't keep from laughing.

I got to work with Sister Gage a lot tonight on the lesson plan. Out of all the girls in our district, I get along with her best (more my type of person).

I was also interviewed by Miles Sensei. I no longer kill myself for being human, and he likened it to "smelling the roses along the way," rather than rushing to the objective.

Proctor and Van Cleave and I had a talk tonight about the pitfalls of immorality. If what happened between Theresa and I hadn't happened, I'd still be relying and boasting in my own strength. Now, however, I know that I am nothing. **[Is that a healthy mindset, or an unhealthy one?]**

(The building RA just caught me here in the bathroom **[writing in this journal—what did you think he caught me doing?]**. It's after hours, but he said he's proud of me for always writing in my journal.)

Tuesday, February 20, 1990—Day 049

Today in an LGM (Large Group Meeting) we did an exercise where we tried to decide on five items to take on a survival outing in Siberia after a plane crash, and we all had labels attached to our foreheads saying "Laugh at me," "Agree with me," etc. Mine said "Argue with me." It was fun trying to get things done with everyone reacting to you a certain way, which you had no control over (we couldn't see what our own labels said). **[I assume the point of this exercise was to demonstrate how important it is to strip aside pre-existing judgments when trying to cooperate with others?]**

Wednesday, February 21, 1990—Day 050

Daren got here this afternoon. Tonight there was a letter from him that said only two words: "I'm here!" I haven't seen him yet, however. English**[-speaking]** missionaries' schedules are staggered from ours—so I may never see him.

This afternoon we taught a friend of Miles Sensei's. She's from Japan and was a real investigator. It was her first discussion, too. Lots of responsibility on our part. **[Something funny (in retrospect) happened during this discussion that I'm surprised I didn't mention: The elders in the classroom above us were making a lot of noise, making it difficult for us to concentrate. It turned out that they were throwing quarters against the floor to see who could make theirs bounce the highest. Elder Gibson went upstairs to ask them to stop. When he came back down, he said, "The Spirit was constraining me to kill them" (a reference to 1 Nephi 4:10, of course). LOL!]**

This evening we taught a girl who is a member now and was a former investigator of Wheeler Sensei's. Japanese was better, once again. (Tonight was our official teaching experience, by the way.) **[I don't know what I meant by that—were any of the other ones up 'till that point any less official? For that matter, since it's only the M.T.C. anyway, how can any of them have been "official" in the first place?]**

Thursday, February 22, 1990—Day 051

I saw Daren twice today—both times it was him leaving his apartment and me going to mine. His building is right next to mine. The second time he took off, I got really depressed. I love that guy! **[He's still my best friend, even today.]** I had the urge to get into his car with him and go get pizza or go see a movie. **[He was usually the one who drove.]** It was depressing, not being able to do whatever we wanted. He

was a sudden, tangible reminder of home—when I see him, I attach it to everything at home. Weird, for now that I've seen him I miss him all the more. I look forward to seeing him again.

Tonight after branch meeting, Proctor, Van Cleave, Madsen, and Gibson used their name tags for kazoos. It was funny.

I didn't get a letter from Theresa today, so I was pretty bummed all evening.

Friday, February 23, 1990—Day 052

At the temple I did initiatory work. It was uplifting **[and much, much quicker than a regular endowment session—hence the appeal]**. I only had to write four letters today, for no one really wrote to me except those four. My mom didn't even write! The USMC all over again. I guess the novelty of writing to me is wearing off. I saw someone from my old ward in the lobby—it was good to see one of the old crowd (she was the music director).

I'm glad I'm allowing myself to meet people finally. **[I have no idea what I meant by that, since I don't recall ever not allowing myself to meet people. What would be the point of that?]**

Tonight we taught Miles Sensei's friend **["Tomoko"]** again. It took two hours. It was pretty hard, for she asked several tough questions. She doesn't speak any English. **[For example, Miles Sensei translated a question from her that I'd never considered before, which stumped us all: "If we all get resurrected anyway, why do we need to die?"]**

Theresa finally gave me another batch of letters tonight. She's far from frigid! They really turned me on.

Saturday, February 24, 1990—Day 053

Today I got a letter from my friend Kyle Echols who's **[on a mission]** in Okayama, Japan. I was going to write him while he was in the M.T.C. (he's three months ahead of me), but I never got around to it. That's no excuse, though. It was nice of him to think of me.

Today in class Gibson got upset over something totally stupid. He was playing the investigator and said that he prays to carp (Shintoist, obviously). We laughed, and he said that if we laugh here we'd laugh in front of a real investigator, etc., and he'd have thrown us out. He talked about insulting his beliefs, etc. and got all mad. How immature can you get? How long has he been out of diapers, anyhow? **[To this day, he's the only one I've ever seen get personally offended over beliefs he was only pretending to have!]**

At lunch I got to talk to Sister Evans, who's VaNae Beeston's companion. I've known VaNae since 7th Grade. Sister Evans does her hair really nice (jet black and fair-skinned) and is totally attractive.

Tonight **[while speaking]** in Japanese, Van Cleave said to Gibson, "You are a geek beyond doubt." This pissed him off and so he kept quiet the rest of the night. It was great. I wish we could somehow piss him off every day each morning so he'd be quiet all day. I've been as Christlike as possible for 7 1/2 weeks, and I've had it up to here with him, and so have the rest of us.

Theresa's not here, so it's tougher to resist temptation **[to look at and admire other women]**. I could keep my eye single to her glory if only I could be with her all the time like before.

Sunday, February 25, 1990—Day 054

This morning during my interview with Pres. Robbins I poured out my soul to him about how bad I couldn't stand Gibson anymore. I hated to have to do it, but something's got to be done. Van Cleave went **[into the office for his own interview]** after me. **[We'd both agreed beforehand to lay it all on the line about Gibson in today's interviews.]** I hated having to say all that to Pres. Robbins, whom I

really like **[and whose look of shock at my confession—my specific words were, "I hate Elder Gibson"—is seared into my brain even today]**. I wish I could be more Christlike. He reacted most favorably to me. I hope this works out.

I prayed for the Spirit as I wrote a letter to Shane **[another friend whom I'd known since Junior High, although not one I was especially "tight" with, and a year younger than me]** urging him to come on a mission. I think the Spirit helped me write it, for I think that letter was a work of art. I wish I could've made copies. **[He did eventually go on a Korean-speaking mission to Anaheim, California. He was sent home early for whatever reason—he later told me that that happened to a lot of Elders in his particular mission—though fortunately he didn't allow it ruin his life.]**

I also wrote a letter to Theresa, in reply to her letter that turned me on. I got pretty graphic, and perhaps I shouldn't have. It's all part of finding where to draw the line, I suppose.

We had a gospel study class on the prophet, and it was extremely spiritual. The fireside tonight on the Book of Mormon by Pres. Pinegar was really good, too.

Sister Larsen is really cute and has a fun personality. But when I think of Theresa and how she and I are together it makes me love her all the more all over again. I just had a thought—I bet it'd be a good idea if she prayed for me nightly that I'd have a successful mission. We'd definitely grow together, that's for sure.

Monday, February 26, 1990—Day 055

I had an interview with Sister Wheeler and I warned her about Gibson's attitude (i.e., no respect for women), and during her interview he felt a little uneasy. So much for him. Things were a bit better today, but right now he's talking and trying to prove points, using our words against us. Oh, the words we could use against him!

Van Cleave loves to sing worldly music, like Oingo Boingo and Depeche Mode. I have no problem with it, but him singing is quite a temptation for me. I'm wanting to sing now, dang it.

I shouldn't think so much about the future, but the future's important, too. It's tough to keep one's mind centered on the Gospel and Japanese only. My mind stagnates without variety. So I'll tell you what's on my mind. If Theresa and I end up married, 10 years down the road will I meet someone else and decide she would've been better? I hope not. Prayer is the key before any major decision. I just hope I don't turn out to be a jerk to Theresa after my mission. I hope I'll be able to put myself into her shoes.

Gibson and Van Cleave are having a heart-to-heart talk about Gibson's feelings, but I'm not involved 'cause I can't relate. I think his **[Gibson's]** attitude and position are pretty pathetic. Thank goodness for the Marines. I'm far more toughened up inside than I thought I was.

Tuesday, February 27, 1990—Day 056

What a great day.

Jeanie Hancock **[a church friend from years back]** gave me a letter and a plate of cookies. She was at my farewell, too.

Today, during Celestial Service, I went down an open doorway, down some steps, and explored a few catacombs underneath the M.T.C. I found out where they rig up the soda fountains.

[Here's what "Celestial Service" is: Every district gets some sort of labor assignment while in the M.T.C. (unpaid, of course) to be performed weekly. Most of it is custodial/janitorial in nature, but we lucked out by getting something different: Our particular "Celestial Service" was to set up the chairs, the dais, and the podium for the weekly devotionals and then to put them away again after

it was over.

It was a big job, so there was more than one district assigned to it. They all happened to be districts bound for Japanese missions. Most of the chairs were white, but some of them were red. We'd set them all up so that they formed an enormous Japanese flag when viewed from the podium. We always wondered if any of the elders or sisters "on the ground" ever noticed.]

The other guys wanted to go to choir practice, so Proctor and I did a split and ate on our own. Afterwards we went on a walk twice around the M.T.C. It was refreshing, watching the sunset and all.

Get this—this afternoon some of the folks in my district asked me how I got so many girls! I guess it's 'cause most of the letters I get are from females. Soon they **[the ones who asked me the question]** lost all interest, but Sis. Woodward kept listening, so I told her my secrets I learned from Dale Carnegie ("How to Win Friends and Influence People").

1. Use the person's name.
2. Talk to them about them.

For example, this girl who used to work in the dinner line would always call the elders by their names. I found out what her name was and called her by it from then on ("Janice"). Consequently, she still says "hi" to me even though she's **[now]** a cashier. She even invited me to go through her dinner line when she was substituting. I'll be halfway down the hall and she'll still yell to me. So, I'm a firm believer in using someone's name.

I avoid talking about me, and I think it helps. Tonight I got a really good compliment. There's a girl named Sister Judd who was in my missionary prep. class **[and who was both outgoing and drop-dead gorgeous]**. I danced with her once at one of the dances they **[the Institute]** had. I saw her again tonight, and she immediately told her companion that I was a really great guy and had a "heart of gold." She brought up that dance and said she could tell **[all that stuff about me]** just from that alone. I'm flattered that she remembered from that long ago! That was back in October. I don't remember acting especially out of the ordinary, either.

Two of the sisters in my branch are going to Nagoya too, and they seemed extremely excited about that. They brought up zone conferences, etc. (the only chance we'll get to see each other). One of them, Sister Larsen, told me to come visit her at BYU after my mission is over. I'll do that, she's totally cool. **[Actually, I totally forgot to do that up 'till I read this just now. Do you think it's too late?]** Sister Clark is very good-looking. **[You'll hear much more about Sister Clark as this journal progresses.]** The 3rd one, Sister Seely, isn't going to Nagoya, so she told me to save room in my luggage for her. Oh, boy! I shouldn't be so happy about this, but I like having friends, dang it. One good thing about the M.T.C. is that everyone you meet is quality-guaranteed (for the most part). Temple recommends, dedicated to the Lord, etc.

I don't know if I've said this before, but with Theressa I have my doubts. It's kind of suspicious, for I met her just before just before my mission, when I was at my weakest moment. Maybe this was all Satan's work, designed to hinder my mission and me. **[Yeah, I know, not the most complimentary thing to say about a woman. Hopefully I've grown up since then and no longer think the world revolves around me.]** I wonder. Am I just fooling myself? However, I did give her scriptures for X-mas and we did go to Temple Square three separate times and once I felt the spirit with her really strong there, plus she's got all the qualities I want in a wife and she was there at my most special moments, i.e. **[my]** setting apart and seeing **[me]** off here at the M.T.C., and things are working out really well and it's neat that I have someone to share my whole mission with, etc., so **[but?]** I still wonder. Time will tell. I didn't write that last part to make excuses; I wrote it 'cause for some reason I felt I needed to be fair. I had to write it. I couldn't help it.

Tonight I saw a Marine from my unit. Elder/Lance Corporal Anderton. **[Interesting story about this guy: He was out on medical leave and missed the last few drills before I entered the M.T.C. The**

reason he went on medical leave was because he was wearing his flak jacket when some complete idiot tried to prove that flak jackets were shrapnel-proof by stabbing him in the back with a knife. Unfortunately, his theory was proven wrong and the knife penetrated however deep. The fact that he later showed up at the M.T.C. proved that there was no lasting damage, thank goodness, so I was happy to see that.] Tonight I also got to shake hands with Elder Yoshiku Kikuchi (or however you spell it [his first name is actually spelled "Yoshihiko"]), the member of the First Quorum of Seventy from Japan.

Wednesday, February 28, 1990—Day 057

Tempers flared today. At breakfast I was mad 'cause Gibson was taking so long, and I commented how bored I was. Sister Gage made a remark and I said (to make a long story short), "What's the matter; did what I say go over your head?"

She told me that that was a rude thing to say. A minute later she told my companions she was about to hit me. I tried to sincerely apologize three times before I left, but it wasn't until later that afternoon that we were fully reconciled. I shouldn't've let myself get into such a bad mood.

In morning class Madsen asked Sister Soifua if she was glad that Hawaii was part of the U.S. She said no. Everyone immediately gave her a hard time about this. Gibson said, "Do you feel like a second-class citizen?" It all cooled down, and she kept saying, "I don't think I'm better than you guys, . . ." Later she left the room. She ended up crying in the bathroom. Sister Gage went up to check on her, and came back crying herself.

Evans [Sensei] asked what happened, and someone told him about Gibson's comment without disclosing Gibson's identity. Evans Sensei told whoever it was to go apologize immediately. Gibson just sat there and smiled. Madsen left to go apologize, and Gibson finally left later. It all worked out in the end. Even Evans Sensei apologized for blowing up. It's probably the first time Gibson has said he's sorry since he's been here.

We taught Tomoko-san, Miles Sensei's friend, our last discussion [which would've been the Second Discussion]. She committed to be baptized. Funny, but it was rather anticlimactic.

Thursday, March 01, 1990—Day 058

This morning I made my entry on "the Blues Brothers tape," which is a chain cassette that goes around to all my missionary friends to record their experiences on. I got it a couple of months before I got here, but I wasn't diligent. Ward [a friend from High School one year older than I; yes, "Ward" really was his given name] started it, and six months later he was home, and two months after that he listened to it after my farewell. This evening I mailed it to Spencer [another High School friend, this time a year younger than I] in Argentina [and that was the last I ever saw of it].

I got my check for \$750.00 today. Now it's all in traveler's cheques, ready to go.

This evening I went to Daren's room and we talked about everything. Girls, etc. [Funny thing about that: When I first located his room he was showing his roommates the proper way to flip a butterfly knife. Yes, right there in the M.T.C.! Anyone who knows Daren will say that that's totally him.] Lanita [a friend of Theresa's], the girl we tried to set Daren up with, really likes him, but he's not interested. [Switching subjects now,] His faith level [in the church] isn't as high as he'd like it to be. I'm sure he'll be fine. [Now, all these years later, he's the stalwart member and I'm the apostate. Go figure.]

Shane answered my letter. He's been thinking of a mission after all. He's been going to church and reading the Book of Mormon. I have high hopes.

Our district is going downhill fast. It's nothing like it used to be, and it all has its roots with Gibson.

Friday, March 02, 1990—Day 059

Today was our last official day of class. Wheeler Sensei picked up a new district of two girls, so she hasn't been here the past two days. We had a class on how we should study Japanese once we're out there, and it was really inspiring. They combined the two districts (Tokyo and Nagoya) and we went into one of the chapels for it. I'm excited to be bi-lingual, although it will take a lot of work. I plan on studying the language every day, without fail.

I got quite the steamy letter from Theresa. A few guys in my branch met her and talked to her in the mall **[where she works]**, too. She asked where they were going **[on their missions]**, they told her, and she said, "My boyfriend's going there! Do you know . . . ?" They said yes, and she said, "Tell him I'll see him Monday!"

Strange, but her letter didn't turn me on like her other ones did, even though it was 10 times as graphic. I guess I'm getting more in tune **[with the Spirit]**.

Tonight Miles Sensei read lots of experiences from his journal and was on the verge of tears for a long time. He offered a beautiful prayer afterwards. He's a great teacher.

I should write more spiritual stuff in here. Hopefully things will improve in that respect.

Saturday, March 03, 1990—Day 060

We got all our laundry done early, so it was nice. Gibson and Van Cleave got into a really heated discussion this morning. Gibson was just saying that, essentially, he knew everything about fashion and style. He even threw in a few off-the-wall statements 'cause he couldn't handle losing **[the argument]**. What an idiot.

Today I wrote Theresa a letter that was way out of line **[i.e., sexually explicit]**. I feel terrible. I feel sick. I really should be a better missionary. I'm such a fool!

Tonight we had a testimony meeting with all three of our senseis. It was way cool, **[even though it looked like Evans Sensei wished he could've been somewhere else,]** but I can't help but think of how much more spiritual it would have been if it weren't for all the bad feelings going around.

Did most of my packing today. I'll have extra room in my carry-on, so I'm excited. **[I guess I was easily excitable back then.]**

After Celestial Service, Daren came in and we talked. I even ended up going into his apartment and explaining how Japanese worked, etc.

Then at 10:10 **[p.m.]** Proctor and Van Cleave found me (all the way in the opposite building) and told me that I had been called by the front desk every three minutes for the past while **[i.e., the front desk had paged me in my own building, but I wasn't there and thus didn't respond]**. Those two had searched all four floors of the building for me until they finally found me on the bottom floor.

I called the front desk, and they had a message for me from Jim Reed **[my friend Dan's former boss, a friend of ours who was quite a bit older than us]**, whose address I had lost. They weren't too pleased with me. **[They said, among other things,]** "Been doing a little running around, haven't we?" Boy, did I feel an inch tall. I really inconvenienced Proctor and Van Cleave.

Madsen and I went up front to call Jim as instructed, but he wasn't even home. He had left the message to call ASAP, and I got into a lot of trouble. So much for ASAP. While we were there, a lady at the front desk called security on a guy in the lobby. I saw the security guy take the dude outside to talk with him. From what she was saying, apparently the guy tried to walk down the **[main]** hall, and when she told him

he wasn't allowed he made a snide expression back. Tension ran high. (The guy wasn't a missionary **[and the M.T.C. is definitely what you'd call a "closed campus." No outsiders admitted].**)

At the table we were sitting at at lunch, one guy ran into a girl who used to babysit him. Small world.

Jeff Boyack is here, too. I knew him in 7th Grade. He knows and went to High School with Daren. He's the one who started the "Smurf" nickname, and he laughed when I told him it's stuck all these years.

Before I forget, this is the 2nd time Jim has gotten me in trouble before I leave from somewhere. The first time was when I graduated from Boot Camp and he and Dan wanted to see if I could stay over in Las Vegas **[on my way home; my family and I drove back]**.

People told me that the Series Executive Officer was looking for me, and I set off to find him, for fear I was in trouble. I ran into an officer and cut my salute too soon. I got bawled out really bad for that one. And I never even found the guy **[who was looking for me]**! Las Vegas overnight! A little advance notice would've been nice.

This time he probably just wanted to know why I haven't written to him yet. He **[probably]** just said ASAP 'cause he didn't feel like waiting for a reply. So this is the 2nd time he's gotten me into trouble. I shouldn't've been breaking the rules; but it figures that the 2nd time out of 60 days that I ever did that **[i.e., left my building without a companion]** just so happens to be the day he calls.

Sunday, March 04, 1990—Day 061

Mission conference today **[which was also my last full day at the M.T.C.]**. My old Institute teacher, Brother Branchley, **[who was also the choir director at the M.T.C.,]** was asked to and bore his testimony. He **[unknowingly]** had a lot to do with me getting things **[in my personal life]** back on track.

Our last Sacrament Meeting came and went, and I directed music and had fun with that. Bore my testimony, too.

I started to get really nervous, 'cause I've never been out of the USA before. Now it's not so bad. I signed Sister Larsen's journal, too. It's cool she's going to Nagoya. Had an interview with **[Branch]** President Merrill.

I've got two English and two Japanese Books of Mormon in my carry-on. **[Our instructions were to find people in the airport and on flights to give the books to. Man, they never give missionaries a reprieve!]**

Saw Daren tonight during Celestial Service. We said our final goodbyes. It was sad. I was feeling pretty sentimental tonight.

Sister Duffy, a girl in our branch who's 25, gave me some nice compliments. She said I had a great personality and that I'd do good on my mission. Wow. After giving out so many compliments for so long, it's nice to finally get a few in return.

The guys in our branch warmly saw us off. A lot happened today.

Monday, March 05, 1990—Day 062

I haven't gone to sleep yet, but I figure I'm about over the International Date Line by now. I'm writing now to be consistent.

We were up bright and early (3:30 **[a.m.]**) and on the bus to S.L.C. International Airport at 5:35 **[a.m.]**. I pointed out the lights at my house as we drove by **[my home at the time was visible from the freeway]**.

Sister Fisher lost her passport, and they CB'd the info. back to the M.T.C. It had fallen, somehow, into her friend's bag and it got shuttled up to the airport an hour after we got there. We were sweating for a while. I'm glad I'm not the travel leader. Van Cleave is.

As I was getting my baggage organized outside the bus, a girl behind me said, "Can I help you, sir?" I looked up to see a stewardess-type woman holding a notebook in both hands. I said, "No, thanks" until a second later I recognized her—

Theressa!!!

Oh wow, what a meeting. Her notebook was full of all my letters to her. I'm glad I met up with her right off, for we had the whole time together (two hours). I can't believe how fast our two hours flew. Fastest two hours of my life! Just my luck!

Mom, Ethan, and Grant **[my two younger brothers]** didn't show up until almost 8:00 **[a.m.]**, so I had a long time to talk just her and me. Oh, I love her. Sitting down near the gate I cried twice. She wiped my tears for me. She said that if she was the crying type she'd be doing it too, but when she was with me she couldn't help but be happy, but that she'd probably cry once she got home. I love her.

She looked very beautiful. I told her how the past 5-6 weeks I've been drinking nothing but water in order for my acne to clear up once I saw her at the airport. I almost cried just thinking of how I did all that just for her for two hours. I know I love her. She told me that she didn't care how I looked, that she loved me for me.

I love my folks, too. I'm going to miss them.

I can't believe how fast the M.T.C. flew. I remember when I got there so vividly that it seems like just yesterday. Theressa feels the same way. And if that was only a day **[i.e., if that only feels like a day ago]**, then I've only got 11 days left! 1/12 of my mission is over!

Theressa and I still have it. Things are working out so well! The whole relationship has ran like clockwork and the timing, etc. is exactly perfect. We had just enough time beforehand to fall in love with each other without getting into too much trouble; she's able to work and save money for us; we'll get to share my entire mission; we'll both be the right age once I'm home **[whatever that means]**; and the list goes on. After all that, why would I want to marry anyone else? If we stick out this two years, we'll definitely have earned each other. All it would take is a "yes" answer from the Lord. And why wouldn't He, if we've both got our sights set on gospel targets?

I was one of the last ones to board. We flew to L.A. and almost lost Chandler, Fisher, and Uphagrove **[in L.A. International Airport]**. They made it **[to the gate]** on time, which was nice.

I sat on the window seat of the biggest plane I've ever been on. **[It was one of those JAL—Japan Air Lines—double-decker planes.]** It's weird, seeing the Rising Sun painted on the wing.

On the aisle seat was sitting a Japanese guy who's better at English than Japanese. **[I guess I meant that he had been raised in the United States, not Japan.]** He asked why I was going to Japan and I told him, and it turned out that he's Christian too. I was telling him about the church when Gibson sat between us. He was closer, so he got to be senior companion.

I had no desire to Bible bash **[because in the M.T.C. they teach you not to. Otherwise I definitely would've wanted to bash, since I love that sort of thing]**. This guy subconsciously did, so that he could back up what he was saying. We tried to get him interested in the Book of Mormon, but he couldn't accept that anything but the Bible was true **[thanks to that scripture in the Book of Revelations which says "if anyone tries to add to the words of this book," etc.]**. He claims he's seen God, too. (His first name is Kenichi, also **[Kenichi was a friend of mine who was a foreign exchange student from Japan my senior year of High School].**)

Boy, the sure way to forget yourself is to discuss the gospel. It felt good to act like a missionary. It was exciting. I didn't even pay attention to the take-off, so engrossing was it.

[So, to recap, we were sitting next to a Japanese Guy who was Christian. Sister Fisher, for her part, was in the row in front of us sitting next to an American guy who was Buddhist. Bizarre world, eh? Needless to say, she had about as much success with her guy as we did with ours.]

It's 10:20 [p.m.] back home, and I'd normally be writing in here now. Man, this flight has flown. (Gone by fast.) The sun is still high in the sky. No jet lag yet. We got delayed 20 minutes because of a volcano eruption in the Aleutian Islands throwing stuff into our path.

[Here's another tidbit I remember from this flight: We were served Japanese food and there was some wasabi on the side. I had no idea what it was or what to do with it, so I foolishly mixed a bunch of it into my ramen noodles. Needless to say, after a bit of a shock I determined that I had rendered the noodles inedible.]

This mission isn't a whole lot, it's only a drop in the bucket compared to the rest of my life. I can serve a good mission. Then Theresa and I can be together before long at all. And we'll have our whole lives together.

PHOTOS 004



Me.



Front row, L-R: Ethan, Grant (my younger brothers).
Back row, L-R: Me, my mom.



Me saying goodbye for the last time before entering the gate. Van Cleave is directly in front of me.

Tuesday, March 06, 1990—Day 063

[It was a] pretty short day today.

We had a four-hour layover in Tokyo-Narita airport, and there was some Japanese TV going on right in front of us. **[It was a cartoon about teenagers in some competition at a miniature racetrack, pushing model cars around the track with hockey sticks. Of course, in true manga fashion, the kids were constantly getting pissed at each other and beating each other with the hockey sticks, etc. It was totally bizarre.]**

[We were also so strung out by the journey that we were pretty much lolling in our seats waiting for our connecting flight. I remember sitting next to a slumped-down Sister Upthagrove and leaning over, talking to her face-to-face right on the border of her personal space. She was making direct eye contact, and I wondered if I could've leaned over and kissed her without her protesting, but of course I decided against it. In fact, I still wonder if she would've let me get away with it.]

I started getting serious jet lag (we all did) by the time our flight **[to Nagoya]** left. I sat next to another **[Japanese]** guy who spoke fluent English and **[he]** asked why I was going to Japan, and I explained it to him, but he wasn't interested in religion. I slept the rest of the flight.

Went through customs no problem **[other than the fact that Sister Chandler had her bags searched]**, then met the mission President and his wife, who are from Provo **[I was wrong about that; they were from Holliday, Utah]**. I rode in the van with the A.P.'s on the left side of the road **[which, in Japan, is the correct side]**, and ate ice cream at the mission home. Everyone remembers Elder Boyd, whom I met my last drill **[in the Marine Reserves]**. Apparently he was really good. The President said that if I'm going to be anything like him, then I'm in good shape indeed. You bet.

I've been on the move for 27 hours now.

Wednesday, March 07, 1990—Day 064

The sun rises earlier here. Serious! At 6:30 **[a.m.]** the sun was almost up, while back at home at 6:30 it would still be dark.

Had an interview and blessing from President Smith. I cried, even though he wasn't saying anything spiritual at the time, 'cause I'm finally a missionary **[in the field]**.

When I got downstairs, everyone could see my tearful condition. Madsen wrote me this awesome note of encouragement, 'cause he could tell I felt the Spirit. I'm going to save that note forever. **[And I did. Missionaries have something called a "white handbook," nicknamed "the white Bible," full of standard missionary rules and regulations that they're expected to carry around with them and refer to often. I put Elder Madsen's note inside it and carried it with me throughout my mission. Minus the opening and closing salutations, it said:**

"Just remember what you are feeling right now throughout your mission, and I promise you, you will be the best missionary this mission has ever seen. I love you Elder, and I can't tell you how proud I am of you for the growth I've seen you make."]

Went through alien registration, and afterwards we all went with the staff to a hi-rise and tracted for one hour. **[I was paired with a Japanese missionary. At first, he and I went to a unit where a lady lived to whom he'd given a Book of Mormon earlier. They talked at the door and I didn't understand a word they were saying.]** It was fun, but really cold. My very first missionary work experience met with no success.

After dinner we elders went with one of the staff **[and two of the mission president's sons]** to a public bathhouse. What a cultural experience. I'm worn out from all the hot water. Drank my first soda pop there, too.

I think I'm going to like it here!

Thursday, March 08, 1990—Day 065

After a couple of pep talks from the president and his wife, I met my companion. They were all doing transfers, so the **[mission]** home was pretty packed. I was the first one to leave, and so I waved good-bye to all my M.T.C. mates. I only had a short way to go (still in Nagoya), while a few others had a three hour train ride up North. **[The Nagoya mission extends across the breadth of Honshu, the main island, from the Pacific Ocean to the Sea of Japan. The Japan Alps sort of split it down the middle, with the population—and thus the corresponding missionary areas—also divided into two. These two regions were known to missionaries informally as "Up North" and "Down South." Creative, eh?]** My senior companion's name is Elder Horrocks, from Provo.

[One of the members drove us back to our apartment. I was pretty dazzled, taking in the sights and sounds of urban Japan as we drove. I remember being quite surprised to see Shinto shrines mixed right in among the modern buildings. I'm sure this is because the shrines pre-date nearly everything, and the city sort of grew up around them and they weren't demolished due to a reverence for the past and for tradition.]

Another thing I remember about this ride is that my companion asked the member what he thought of me. I couldn't understand the response, so my companion reported that he said I was "loud, like a typical American." This pissed me off royally! Even so, he was probably right, so I learned to decrease the volume of my voice, a habit which continues to this day.]

I sure did a lot my first day compared to most first day-ers. [This was because Elder Horrocks had had his bike stolen from a train station a few days earlier, whereas I hadn't purchased a bike yet, so we were forced to find alternate means of transportation.] I rode a bus, rode a taxi, ate curry rice at a café [with the aforementioned member on the way to our apartment], and taught at English class. [This English class was a weekly free service missionaries provided. Japanese folks all have to learn English in school, but although they can read and write it quite well, they can't speak it to save their lives—hence our free service. The underlying reason was to meet and find people to listen to the missionary discussions, of course. The Japanese word for "English Conversation" was "Eikaiwa," a word which you'll hear quite often as this journal progresses.

At any rate, that night I "taught" the upper-level class, which consisted of one female church member, and we basically just sat and chatted for practice.] Our bus home after English class didn't take us all the way home, so we walked for a long time then took a taxi the rest of the way. By the way, my apartment is the 2nd worst in the mission [I was told]. I've got my work cut out for me.

Friday, March 09, 1990—Day 066

This morning I used an "o-furo" to get clean. Extremely inconvenient. [An o-furo is Japan's equivalent of a bathtub. It's more square and is much deeper than an American bathtub. It sits in its own tiled room. To use it, you fill it up with cold water (a separate dial for hot water is rare in Japan, or at least rare in missionary apartments) and then turn on the natural gas mechanism of the o-furo to get the water to begin heating. A half hour or so later, the water is warm. Yes, this means that you have to wake up a half hour earlier than you normally would just to ensure that you aren't bathing in ice-cold water.

Anyhow, once the bath water is heated, you sit on a small plastic stool (adjacent to—not inside—the o-furo itself) and take a plastic bowl, dip it into the o-furo's water, and pour it over yourself a few times until you're wet. Then you soap yourself down in the cold air, then once you've gotten sufficiently clean you dip the bowl into the o-furo again and pour the water over yourself a few more times to rinse off. Yes, unlike an American shower, in Japan you have to physically pour the water over yourself with a bowl.

Once you're done with that and are 100% clean, you can sit in the o-furo's remaining water and soak in it 'till you're nice and warm. If you're pressed for time, however, you have to skip that step.

So, needless to say, getting clean in Japan is an inconvenient, bothersome, and time-consuming affair.]

We walked a ways to go to a lady's place for a service project [missionaries are expected to put in four hours of pure humanitarian service per week]. She's got a kid with a problem with moving his arms and legs, and we helped pattern him to learn how to crawl. [I found out later that in his infancy he'd stopped breathing one night for quite some time and suffered damage to his motor skills as a result. "Patterning" consisted of each of us taking a side and moving his arms and legs in a crawling fashion while a parent—usually his mother, since his father worked—moved his head in order for his brain to re-establish the corresponding neurological connections.]

After getting back, I got a little more situated, and we went out and tried streeting and placing Books of Mormon around. It didn't work. We then rode double on a beat-up bike to give the Atsumi family the 2nd Discussion. I got to teach part of it [by merely reading aloud the words on the page], but I tried too

hard to make direct eye contact and screwed up a few times. It was all okay, though.

They had a 15 year old daughter named Yukako whose birthday is the day before mine. They had an obnoxious little dog, too. The dad had been in the hospital before, and lots of people prayed for him and so he got better, now he wants to learn more. They were an awesome family. My first discussion!

[A couple more memorable things about that first teaching experience: First, we all sat Japanese-style in their tiny living room (they lived in one of those enormous apartment complexes with very little square footage), which is sort of like kneeling but sitting down further to the point that all your weight is directly on top of your lower legs. My companion was used to this way of sitting, of course, and stayed in that position the whole time, whereas my legs were screaming in protest at the lack of circulation. It was near-torture.

Second, in the United States, when guests leave a host's house, they say their goodbyes and then walk out the door. In Japan, however, the hosts will accompany you to the door and wave and say their goodbyes over and over again until you're physically no longer in sight. I was unaware of that tradition, so I was a little surprised to see the Atsumi family doing this as we left their apartment.]

Saturday, March 10, 1990—Day 067

We streeted [i.e., "street contacted"] this morning for many an hour with no success. **[This was a lot more strenuous than it sounds, since neither of us had bikes yet and therefore had to walk to and from the downtown area in addition to all the walking around we did street contacting. My feet ached pretty badly.]** We ran into two other missionaries, so it was cool.

A guy named Miura came over this afternoon. He got kicked out of his apartment, and now he's living in a hotel with his girlfriend and all his stuff, big stereo included, has been **[temporarily stored]** here. (Before I forget, we went by this huge Shinto shrine and I saw a couple of people praying to idols for my first time. **[I was shocked to learn that, in the late Twentieth Century, people in an industrialized nation could still be praying to idols, but there it was taking place mere feet away from me. As an aside, I ended up visiting this very same shrine on the last day of my mission, nearly two years later.]**) We taught Miura the 6th Discussion, which he'd heard before. I'd never looked over it before, so I had a tough time.

This guy is trying to be baptized, but can't live some of the rules **[of the church]**. When he was on drugs, he had a vision where Jesus Christ came to him and told him to listen to the missionaries. At church he got hold of the picture of Christ in red robes and said, "That's him!" **[All this was according to my companion.]**

We bought me a nice bike today for real cheap. I lucked out. **[It was a gold-colored 10-speed bike. I later regretted not spending a little more and getting a mountain bike like all the other missionaries had.]**

We went to a meeting at church with the bishop where we tried to correlate inactive member work. A member gave me **[a box of]** donuts **[by just placing them in my hands without saying a word]**, so we and a stake missionary ate them at a park. Another member gave us a big box of food after we got home.

I don't know the language or the ins and outs of missionary work, so I feel very ineffective.

Sunday, March 11, 1990—Day 068

It was neat to be among Japanese people at church who had the same religious disposition as myself for a change, but they were pretty ruthless when they talked to me: Friendly, but fast.

My companion loves little kids. He's always playing with them every chance he gets, which rubs me a little wrong; but I love to pet cats, so I guess it works both ways.

After coming back and planning our week, we went out and housed **[i.e., "tracted"]**, trying to listen to the Spirit **[i.e., instead of hitting every door, we only stopped at the houses that "felt right"]**. We knocked on a couple of doors without success. We chatted with a few folks outside a Lutheran church, one of whom was the minister.

We talked all the way as we walked. My companion is awesome. He says I'm really easy to get along with, which is good. Mission accomplished so far.

Monday, March 12, 1990—Day 069

Today was P-day. I spent as long as I could cleaning up this pig sty.

Eguchi, the guy who drove us over here from the mission home, arranged yesterday to come over and play video games at 11:00 **[a.m.]**. **[In other words, he came by and drove us over to the coin-operated arcade, since PlayStations, etc. hadn't really hit the market yet. In fact, at that point the original game boy had barely come out.]** This pissed me off, 'cause it's our P-day, not his. We've got stuff to do, too.

The video games in Japan are interesting—the displays are sometimes semi-pornographic. I'd rather not deal with video games and stuff if I don't have to. **[This might've been a hypocritical statement, since I gave into temptation and dropped a coin into a mah-jongg game because I was curious as to what sort of video game nudity would show up, if any. I had no idea how to play mah-jongg—I still don't—so I didn't earn any such display reward. Even so, I felt horrifically guilty on the drive back and resolved to never do such a thing again.]**

I also remember that the video games were, in general, noticeably more advanced than the ones in the United States. For example, there was a 3-D Tetris-style game where you looked straight down a tube, giving you a bird's-eye view of the top of the pieces that were dropping. Instead of just rotating the pieces top-over-bottom, you'd have to rotate them left-over-right as well. The pieces were line grids—like the old game Tempest—so you could see through them to the levels below. It was harder than Hell and I couldn't even clear a single row.

There was another game I tried (but again failed miserably) to play called "Top Landing." An extremely simple concept—you're the pilot of a jumbo jet and have to bring it in for a successful landing. It was cool since you sat inside a makeshift cockpit which would rise, fall, bank, etc. according to how you maneuvered the plane. You'd even feel the rumbling of the jet engines and hear the announcements the stewardesses would make on the approach. It's far harder than it sounds, however, since you have to take into account wind shear, inclement weather, your instruments, angle of touchdown, speed of descent, etc. Many moons later, in my final area, I encountered this game again and got good enough to beat it. To this day I really wish they'd import it to America. The technology would hold up nicely even by today's standards.]

It wasn't totally bad, 'cause we made him take us shopping. Afterwards he ate over **[and provided the very first example I ever saw of someone eating sashimi]** and listened to music on Miura's stereo—Miura came over too.

We were going to go out and visit inactives, but Miura wanted to stay and hear more about the gospel **[specifically about prophets. Elder Horrocks did all the teaching while I continued cleaning the apartment]**. I get the impression that he just wanted to hang out with us longer.

Just like in the Marines, I've been told that I look like Richard Gere twice now. Plus, there's no problem being a Marine—everyone thinks it's pretty cool. **[I'd been afraid that I'd have to keep my Marine-hood a secret from the Japanese people I met, since Marines were responsible for a lot of Japanese**

deaths in World War II.]

I've made it a point never to argue with the voice of experience—so I always cooperate with Horrocks, and he really appreciates it.

The church's mission is three-fold:

1. Proclaim the Gospel
2. Perfect the Saints
3. Redeem the Dead

I always thought that our job was to declare the gospel, which it is, but we also do a lot of work with members, so I'm starting to believe that we're not so much ambassadors of the church as we are the church's all-purpose cutting edge.

I never did get any letters written today. **[Missionaries aren't supposed to write letters on any day other than the designated weekly P-day.]** I've got to set aside time and give them complete attention for them to be any good.

Tuesday, March 13, 1990—Day 070

Earlier we had a study session with our district at church **[this was a weekly thing, I found out]**. We've got two other elders and two Japanese sisters in our district. **[One of these sisters I ran into over two years later at the Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawaii. The other met my younger brother about eight years later when he served part of his mission in her home ward.]**

Afterwards we shopped, then made cookies to give out to members and investigators. We got lost trying to find one house, and we asked a lady for directions, and she and her son left her house and walked with us four or five blocks in order to show us the place we were looking for. Japanese people are very polite.

We got lost on the way home, and asked a guy for directions and ended up talking about the gospel and inviting him to English class. I think that the Lord gets missionaries lost so that they can meet certain people they wouldn't have met normally.

I met a guy who spoke a little English who had lost his car key, so while Horrocks was talking to a guy on the street, I helped him look for his key. He thanked me by giving me two boxes of cookies he had won by gambling **[specifically, by playing "Pachinko"]**. Pretty nice, eh?

I've talked about the Marines a couple of times today. Horrocks loves to hear about all my stories, so it's fun.

I want to get this language down worse than anything. I'm trying to study it one hour a day.

Earlier, while riding home, I was about to cross the railroad tracks when the lights started flashing and the poles started coming down. Horrocks was up ahead and told me to hurry, and I almost got my head chopped off by the pole.

Wednesday, March 14, 1990—Day 071

I got a lot of studying in as we waited around for the moving company to deliver Horrocks's bike. **[Some elders in a different district had arranged to deliver an extra bike they had—probably a bike left behind by a guy who had completed his mission and gone home, I'd guess.]**

They didn't come, so we went to Keita's (the two-year old who can't move his arms and legs too well) place for a couple of hours of service. They're Buddhist, and have a really cool shrine in their home.

We spent a couple of hours at home, and Horrocks's bike came. (The moving company spelled his name "Whore Ox." Or was it the elders in Gifu who were sending it that did that? **[It must've been the latter, since Horrocks called them up and asked them what the big idea was spelling his name "whore ox." I still giggle when I think of that!]**)

Miura came over, but we didn't have time for him. We went and visited the Shinodas, a part member family **[the wife was a member]**. They were awesome, and the lady really liked me. **[During either this visit or a later one, she made a really good joke. She showed us a picture of a sumo wrestler and said, "This is me naked. What do you think?"]** I now know that I can have a personality without knowing the language. (Their son spoke English.)

They like missionaries, and have had them over for years. I'm the 53rd one to come through their place.

People don't seem to mind that I'm in the Marines. They think it's pretty cool. **[Yeah, I know you've heard this before.]**

They gave us a couple packages of cupcakes and two large loaves of bread as we left. The guy delivers for a bread company; that's the only way he'd ever be able to afford that. **[Rather a presumptuous statement, I admit. Perhaps I was referencing the high price of food in Japan.]**

I think the Lord's helping me, for I've experienced absolutely no culture shock whatsoever. **[I was having too much fun taking in all the brand-new sights and sounds of a different country.]**

Earlier today I drew a cartoon for the flyer about the upcoming **[multi-ward]** picnic—my first real cartoon in three years. **[I was the cartoonist for my High School newspaper during my senior year.]**

Thursday, March 15, 1990—Day 072

This morning we entered the Twilight Zone—after we got done studying, the clocks all said 9:00 **[a.m.]** instead of 8:00 **[a.m.]**—somewhere in there we lost an hour.

We went streeting without success after Horrocks got his bike fixed by the bike shop.

We met Imamura **[the stake missionary previously mentioned]** at the church; the guy served a mission in Tokyo North, and one of his companions was Elder Chamberlain—a friend of mine that was in the Marines with me. **[He also went to the same Junior High that I did, but we didn't know each other back then.]** He left **[on his mission]** a year before I did.

Tonight was English class—and Elder Mackillop **[the junior companion in the other male companionship in our district]** and I had an 18-year old "triff" (giggly Japanese girl) picking up on us. It made me pretty nervous, being a missionary and all, but she was really funny and I might've had fun with it otherwise. **[Her name was "Junko" (pronounced "June-co"). You'll hear some more about her much later, as she resurfaced toward the end of my mission.]**

Friday, March 16, 1990—Day 073

We talked to a kid who will hopefully come to English class, and later talked to a guy who had read a book about the Bible three weeks ago and now believes it. He's coming over Sunday, so we'll get all our housework done before then. Lots of letters **[to be written]** on P-day.

Visited an English teacher **[nicknamed "Alex"]** who knows the church is true but for some reason won't get baptized. We talked a little about Vance Law, a Mormon from Utah who now plays baseball for the Nagoya Dragons **[and whom I ran into out of the blue one day over a year after my mission was over]**. Hopefully he'll give us a good reputation.

Tonight we went hunting down inactives with varying degrees of success. For example, one lady said her

husband now belonged to another church and told us not to come back, while another 29-year old girl told us that seven years ago she just got too busy, and we could tell that she was a little touched that someone finally cared enough to visit her.

Today was a success.

I suppose I don't write as many thoughts **[in here]** as I used to—In the M.T.C. the events never changed, so all I could write about were my thoughts. Here it's the other way around. I'm in my survival, long-lasting mode now. I love Theresa still, beyond doubt.

Anyhow, the Japanese have been blessed with lots of money, so they feel they don't need God. They think that relying on God shows weakness. Plus, they don't ask questions like, "Who am I? Why am I here?" etc. They just don't care about stuff like that. Plus, they're not a Christian society. Not to mention the fact that they're always hounded by pushy salesmen, giving our line of work a bad reputation. **[Is there some irony in that last sentence?]**

And in addition to all that, the Japan Nagoya Mission is and has been plagued by Class-B missionaries—so with all this in mind, I truly have my work cut out for me. Maybe that's why the Lord sent me here, for I refuse to leave the Japan Nagoya Mission the same as I found it. This mission will bear my mark once I'm through.

Saturday, March 17, 1990—Day 074

Streetered in a new area. After dinner we went looking for inactives, but could find none of them. The addresses here are very hard to find. **[You start out with "ken"s, or prefectures (equivalent to a state), then those break down into to "shi"s, or cities, then "cho"s, portions of cities, then finally to "chome"s, portions of chos. Individual addresses are randomly numbered (my mother says they're numbered according to when the building was erected) within their chomes. There's no way to divine where an address is within a chome; you either have to consult a map or else hunt around for it within the chome itself. When I became a senior companion I always bought a map whenever I went to a new area; I could never understand how some companionships could get along without one.]** I ended up telling Horrocks all about "Back to the Future Part II" **[which I'd seen with Theresa not too long after we started dating]**, and back at the apartment I told him parts of more movies that have come out **[since his own mission started]**. He ended up asking what type of stuff my girlfriend writes to me, and so I told him: Fantasies in explicit detail. I ended up going on and on about **[my]** past sins and mistakes, etc.

I missed Theresa very badly in the M.T.C., but now, like I said, I'm in my "survival mode" and I'm dealing with it a lot better. I used to have bad thoughts and past sins constantly popping into my head in the M.T.C., but now they're virtually gone.

I banged my knee really badly on the door of this store tonight, and I can still feel the pain. Maybe that's my punishment for talking about movies while on the street.

Sunday, March 18, 1990—Day 075

After church (it's embarrassing having two-year old kids that can speak **[Japanese]** better than I can), we went over and visited an inactive guy who was very cooperative. Horrocks was up front with the guy. Apparently this guy had been really active many years previously, and all of a sudden went inactive, and now he has no concept of the nature of God whatsoever. Pretty eerie. **[This man was unmarried and lived with his mother. This isn't too uncommon in Japan; many people continue living with their parents on into adulthood, often until they get married. In fact, the eldest son is generally expected to continue living, along with his wife and kids, with his parents, taking care of them until they die. The trade-off is that he gets the house. And then the cycle continues.]**

At any rate, Elder Horrocks informed me (since I couldn't understand Japanese yet) that the

reason the guy had gone inactive was that, according to him, he was overloaded with too many callings and he eventually caved under the pressure. Elder Horrocks's efforts with him eventually paid off, for I discovered, many months later, that the guy had fully reactivated.]

The guy we met in the park cancelled his appointment. We streeted at night, and ran into a 20-year old kid who was pretty intimidated by us for some reason. From what I hear, a lot of Japanese [people] are a little scared of Americans. **[Japan, a nation which shares no borders with any other country, is notoriously xenophobic.]** We saw some pretty snotty American kids tonight, too.

I found out that Nagoya and L.A. are official sister cities and have been for some time.

Monday, March 19, 1990—Day 076

We did far too much shopping today. I spent way too much money on food. We must've shopped at least three or four times. **[This is a trend which would continue, even on non-P-days. Elder Horrocks had apparently developed an affinity for food by this time.]** We went checking out this "Ozmall" place **[it was a newly-opened outdoor mall within walking distance from our apartment]**, and there was this awesome place that had these big flags. I couldn't decide between the Rising Sun, the **[Japanese]** navy flag with the rays, or a Nazi swastika flag. **[I was (and am) a huge World War II buff, remember, and Axis paraphernalia was almost impossible to get in the States.]** I'll give it a week to decide. **[I eventually went with the Japanese navy flag.]**

We were in this toy store and I had these kids giving us food and following us around trying to talk to us. They love Americans here, especially the kids.

One of Horrocks's friends sent him a tape, so we made one for him. We went and had a couple girls give a self-introduction, then we met up with one of his Japanese friends and drove around in his car looking for something to do. We tried the art museum, then Nagoya Castle, but they were both closed. So we walked around the underground mall.

Before that, we went through an intersection where some guy had dropped a huge box of flyers, and they were flying all over the place. It was sad, but funny. They were all over the place. **[Elder Horrocks was still making the tape for his friend when we encountered this. Horrocks said into the recorder, "We would go out and help the guy, but we don't want to get run over."]**

We went and had dinner and family home evening at a member's house. Sisters Yokoyama and Maruoka, the two sisters in our district, were there too. The kids were fun to play with.

It's fun to be able to talk about someone right in front of their face if they don't speak English. **[I've]** Never been able to talk behind someone's back right in front of them.

I can't wait 'till I can finally speak the language. Then I'll be able to do my job. Right now I'm just filling space.

Japan is my home now. I really like it here.

PHOTOS 005



Me at my desk in my first apartment. Miura's awesome stereo system is in the center of the shot.

Tuesday, March 20, 1990—Day 077

Before leaving **[for the day]**, we dug up one of Horrocks's old tapes that a friend had recorded for him over a year ago. Remember yesterday? Well, we used his words against him in a fake interview where we would ask questions and play back some of his statements and get them recorded to where they sounded really funny.

Had district meeting, then service with Keita. His mom told us that when she and her husband were on their honeymoon, they got into a big fight and didn't say a word to each other all the way back from Hawaii.

Getting back home I struck it rich—Seven letters! From Cheryl **[a girl I dated for a while who eventually dropped me for Shane]**, Elder Yamaura, Uncle Dave, Elder Kyle Echols, Rikki, Dan, and Theresa. Yamaura sent me one of the pictures he took of our district in the M.T.C., and **[according to another letter]** it turns out that Elder Echols and I had the exact same room, the exact same bed!

Theresa wrote me and sent it the very day we parted company—She watched my plane until I disappeared into the clouds. She held back the tears as she walked away.

So, her letter was postmarked the 5th—and I just now got it. Of course, it was forwarded from the mission home, so that might've taken a while. I sent everyone my new address. **[A little about missionary addresses: Some mission presidents are overbearing Gestapo-types who insist that all correspondence be sent through the mission home. You even hear the odd tale about the mission office opening missionaries' mail and inspecting it for whatever reason. Thank goodness**

my mission president wasn't like that—of course, I wouldn't have gone along with such a practice anyway.] I've got a double cycle going with Theresa, Dan, Rikki, and maybe my mom. A double cycle is where both they and I get a letter from each other at the same time—not just back and forth.

Theresa's letter was awesome. She admits she's under the influence of a lot of romance novels in **[i.e., from]** her younger years. For some reason, **[after much badgering on his part,]** I gave in and let Horrocks read it, and I read his girlfriend's letter. After he was done, he said he felt like he'd been beaten up. I love Theresa.

Wednesday, March 21, 1990—Day 078

I rode a subway, then met up with the rest of our ward and a lot of investigators. We rode a train up north to Gifu for a picnic we'd been planning for a long time. We climbed up to Gifu castle, and I saw a lot of cool Japanese relics **[on display inside the castle itself]**. Below it was a squirrel petting zoo where they'd climb up your arms and eat out of your hand. **[The hill also provided a great view of a nearby river in which cormorant fishing still took place.]**

Horrocks doesn't think that staying together is as important as I think it is. We got separated and travelled down each on our own. Luckily we met up at the bottom of the hill.

The bathrooms here are interesting. Often no female/male designation **[i.e., unisex. You could be standing at a urinal (if you're male) only to have women walking around behind you going in or out of a stall]**.

[I also remember this as the day I encountered an extremely strange phenomenon, nearly unthinkable to Americans. Before I tell you about it, you ought to know that in Japan, all the vending machines are outside of the buildings, not inside them. And in Japan, vending machines are everywhere. In addition to a dazzling array of soft drinks, certain vending machines also supply batteries, alcohol, pornographic magazines, etc. Yes, the implications are exactly what you're thinking: In Japan, if a six-year old kid really wants to, he can get his booze and porn fix without anyone stopping him, all thanks to vending machines. Sheer Heaven in the mind of the average American teenager, I'm sure.]

At any rate, on this day I noticed some sort of Coke vending machine that sold the standard-size cans alongside some corresponding miniaturized cans. These miniaturized ones were the same height, but a much narrower width. Yet even though the capacity of the smaller cans was obviously much less, they were the exact same price as the larger cans!

I asked Horrocks what was up with this, and he said that he'd asked some Japanese folks about it in the past and they'd replied, "Well, those cans are for the times you don't want to drink as much." Of course, the average American would ask, "Why not just buy the larger can in case you change your mind and decide that you're still thirsty? Or just buy the larger can anyway and share some with a friend?" But no, Japanese people simply don't think like that.

Yeah, I was shocked, too. After all these years, I still can't figure it out.]

There were a lot of other missionaries there, too **[since it was a multi-ward function]**.

Back at home we gave cookies to a referral. We then went to the church for a Young Men's activity, but only one young man showed up. Four missionaries to one young man. We baked cookies for members.

We've baked at least three batches of cookies so far. I'm getting sick from cookies.

Horrocks admits he's not very energetic anymore. Apparently the strain of missionary work is finally getting to him. **[It certainly got to me, too, eventually. After about a year and a half of constant rejection and the occasional blatant insult, it begins to get old, so I understand Horrocks' point-of-**

view much better now than I did then.] Boy, if only I could speak this language, then I would fly! It would be nice to be senior companion, so then I'd be in control and it'd finally be my mission. I'd set the schedule. I just hope I end up with cooperative junior companions. Of course, there are drawbacks to being senior, so I'm not after it really bad.

Thursday, March 22, 1990—Day 079

I tried to follow the Spirit today, and we ran into a guy in a park who had met the elders before. He was older, and a little off his rocker. It was funny, 'cause we had both listened to the promptings of the Spirit in order to guide us, and we were both getting a lot of the same impressions. Anyhow, we invited the guy to come back to church.

Streeting is hard, 'cause most people we talk to can't talk long 'cause they're so busy. They just don't have the time; they're not rude.

Horrocks says that it's easy to go through your two years here without any spiritual experiences. I'll have to work for some, for that's half the reason I came here.

We went and visited Alex, and he had us help him correct some of the questions on the English part of a college entrance exam. It was way dumb, 'cause they **[i.e., the exam questions]** went off into the stratosphere making the students write stuff that an American would never say, but they made dumb mistakes with "a/an" stuff. One of his students failed the exam, so he gave it to Alex so he could tell him what he did wrong. Alex was stumped. So he had us help out, and he was so grateful that he bought us dinner.

English class was fun. I helped out, and the sisters and MacKillop taught some kids the English translations of various animals and the sounds they make. **[For example, in America, dogs say "woof woof" or "bow wow," whereas in Japan they say "wan wan." Cats in America say "meow," whereas cats in Japan say "niao," etc.]** Afterwards we had refreshments 'cause it's our last time for two weeks. Keita's mom was there.

Sheesh—there are quite a few cute Japanese girls. For instance, Sister Maruoka is extremely cute.

Friday, March 23, 1990—Day 080

While streeting, we talked about ways we could work smarter, not harder. I'm going to have to be creative. Present forms are ineffective. Hard work is designed to make you see results, and if you do that and don't see success, you're still wasting your time. **[Often, however, your schedule is empty and there just isn't anything else to do but work hard, i.e. go housing or streeting.]**

We came home, accidentally fell asleep, then cleaned the apartment. Before doing that, almost as a verifying revelation, we stopped to look at an old jet plane **[mounted]** in front of a building, and even though we were taking a break, we still talked to an older guy—something we hadn't been able to do while we were working hard. Work smarter, not harder. Find a balance.

Did splits with the members to visit inactives, but no one was home.

How I can teach people the gospel, open doors, share the message, etc. is my constant obsession—I'll have no trouble keeping my mind centered on what I'm doing.

Saturday, March 24, 1990—Day 081

Horrocks didn't get his money, so he keeps having to borrow from me. When he gets paid, I'll be rich.

Did a little visiting and a little housing, and it rained on us. We bought Chee-to things and fed them to pigeons in the playground. We threw some food into a concrete pipe, and when a few **[pigeons]** went in

we opened our umbrellas at each end to capture them, but they flew around the edges of the umbrellas. So we fed them some more and left.

My electric blanket got here today. I got it from Mom for X-mas, but didn't have room **[in my luggage]**, so she sent it surface mail. But it's almost summer now; I won't need it for a long time. **[That electric blanket ended up saving my life on a nightly basis over the next two Winters. As I said before, there wasn't any central heating in any of the apartments in which I lived, and you couldn't leave the oil-burning stove on overnight or else you'd die from carbon monoxide poisoning. Not too many other missionaries had electric blankets, and to this day I don't know how they avoided freezing to death.]**

Went with Eguchi to visit inactives. **[He was the same guy who drove us back from the mission home.]** One lady is having problems with her 12-year old girl. We were the first ones she told, which is bad because Eguchi loves to gossip.

I'm going to have to force myself to study more effectively. It would be embarrassing to have Gibson speak **[Japanese]** better than I can next time I see him. He'd rub it in, too. I wonder if his companion hates him yet?

Sunday, March 25, 1990—Day 082

After church, we went to a parade with Keita's folks that we'd been invited to. It's a carry-over of an old Shinto tradition where all the kids in the area and some of their mothers dress up in highly ornate, colorful kimonos and parade down to this newly-built Shinto shrine. It was cool. Afterwards we went to their house with their friends for goodies. **[I think this was the day and place I was first served nigiri sushi. I was unaware that they put wasabi in nigiri sushi, so I got a very shocking surprise. Cleared my sinuses, though.]**

Visited the same inactive guy and it went well. Saw a cool remote controlled plane in action. I ran a red light on my bike on accident and almost got myself killed. Scared a poor lady **[the driver]** half to death.

On the way to the Tsukahara's for dinner, I was almost hit again. Is someone trying to take me out?

PHOTOS 006



Front row, L-R: Masumi (Keita's mother), Keita's cousin (I don't remember her name), Yusuke (Keita's older brother).

Back row, L-R: Keita's paternal grandmother, Keita (in her arms), me, Horrocks, Masumi's brother-in-law, Keita's other cousin (in his arms), Masumi's younger sister.



Front: Keita's cousin.

Back row, L-R: A woman and child whose names I don't remember, Horrocks, me.



Front row, L-R: Keita's cousin, Yusuke (Keita's older brother).
Back row, L-R: Masumi (Keita's mother), me, Masumi's mother-in-law.



Me in front of one of the lion sculptures that adorn the gates of most major Shinto shrines. Most of them are near-ancient, so seeing one like this with the paint still intact is a rarity.



L-R: Me, Yusuke trying to learn the "hang loose" sign but only able to make devil horns, Horrocks trying to teach him.

Monday, March 26, 1990—Day 083

Got up at 4:30 [a.m.] in order to write letters. Wrote nine total.

Continued making cookies at the church. Next we went to the Tsuzuku's for dinner. They fed us homemade pizza—delicious. Later on we gave them a spiritual message, but it was hard with the T.V. on. **[That's another thing about Japanese culture—they're addicted to television. Of course, now that the Internet has made its appearance, I wonder if that's begun to replace the T.V. at all. At any rate, Japanese families will often just leave the T.V. on all day and night. Even if they have guests over, they just leave the T.V. running in the background.]**

I'm glad I'm finally a missionary. It's hard to feel the Spirit, for no one lets you come over so you can share it with them!

Tuesday, March 27, 1990—Day 084

[It was an] eventful day. While MacKillop was passing off the lesson plan to Horrocks, Eliason **[MacKillop's senior companion]** and I did a split and streeted for about 40 minutes. **[Here's what "passing off the lesson plan" means: At the time, junior companions were expected to learn to teach the first two discussions fluently and competently. He would "teach" the district leader the lessons, and the district leader would sign off on something indicating the junior companion had indeed mastered the material.]** He talked to me all about former companions and how missions work and what to expect, etc., and said I was doing really good.

Next MacKillop and I split. We went back to his place for an hour break, then streeted. No one was out; they must've known we were coming. His Japanese is better than he says it is.

We went to the T.V. tower in Sakae **[the name of Nagoya's main hub]**, and a Buddhist minister came up and talked English to us. He had talked to missionaries before, so he wasn't too interested in the Book of Mormon.

Next we met up and went back home with our real companions, and we went and visited Frank Sapp and

his wife, who are the Presbyterian equivalents of missionaries. They've been here 18 years. **[They had a cute miniature poodle, too.]** They know and have had missionaries over before, but they're not at all interested in the church. They seemed to like us, for they invited us back sometime. **[this might've been a naïve assumption; they probably were just starved for contact with native speakers of English.]**

Finally, we had another lesson with the Atsumis. They gave us extra curry rice before we began, and I had to belt it down 'cause we didn't have much time. Ouch. Sitting Japanese-style was hard. I thought I was going to die before I ended up sitting Western-style.

We were supposed to commit them to baptism, but the Spirit told Horrocks not to—they had too many concerns. That was the first time that had ever happened to him—the Spirit saying no. I wanted so bad to be part of the lesson more, but I still couldn't understand anything. I'm sure they know we're going to ask them to be baptized; I just hope they don't think we're beating around the bush.

Wednesday, March 28, 1990—Day 085

The **[portable oil-burning]** heater blew up and singed Horrocks's arm hair. It was weird. Hayashi, this kid from English class, had an appointment with us, and he showed up a half hour early while the apartment was still a mess. We went shopping for food, then Goto, a new member, came over 'cause he wanted to help us out in some way today.

I fell asleep while Horrocks showed pictures, then we cooked sweet and sour rice, then went into the first principle of the first discussion. We gave him a Book of Mormon and he committed to hearing all six discussions. My first pick-up! **[A "pick-up" is when someone commits to hearing the missionary discussions, or "the lessons" as they're sometimes called.]**

Went and got Horrocks's **[previously]** developed pictures, then Miura came over 'cause he was supposed to be baptized but won't make it. Horrocks talked to him while I studied. After that, we rode in the rain to church for a meeting with Imamura.

Today we basically stayed at the apartment, yet it was a successful day because we had a pick-up. I guess a good day isn't gauged by how hard you work, but by how much success you see.

My Japanese is improving, slowly but surely.

Thursday, March 29, 1990—Day 086

Last night Horrocks got a call saying that he was supposed to get a ride from a member up to Gifu for a youth conference. Eliason was supposed to go, too, 'cause he's got o.k. Japanese. Someone had forgotten to tell him earlier, so it took a few phone calls to iron it all out.

We got up early to be at the church at 6:30 **[a.m.]**. It sucked. I had to split with MacKillop, of course, so I went back to his place for studying and breakfast. While I was studying, he fell asleep.

Met Goto at church, and he had to write up a paper for Horrocks and Imamura, but couldn't figure out Horrocks's romaji. **["Romaji" means "Roman characters" in Japanese. In this context it means writing Japanese in Roman letters, i.e. writing in "A.B.C."s instead of their own written language (which has, quite literally, thousands of characters.)]** The reason Horrocks wrote it is 'cause Imamura didn't feel like it. Dumb, huh?

Streetered with minimal effort **[we were both junior companions with the attendant limited speaking skills, remember]**, then went back to church to drop off our excess baggage, and **[saw that]** our companions had gotten back early. They wanted to continue the split until 7:00 **[p.m.]** as planned, 'cause they hadn't worked together in a long time. **[They were both merely watching church-produced movies to evaluate them for their effectiveness as teaching tools—or so Horrocks said. Really**

working hard, eh?]

We went back to MacKillop's for a break, and I read from Jesus the Christ while he fell asleep again.

Streetered some more, then back at church we met a guy who had come there for Eikaiwa [**Remember that this is the Japanese word for "English conversation," referring to the weekly classes we taught**], but it had ended for two weeks. So we ended up talking to the guy. I thought MacKillop was only going to talk about Eikaiwa after we introduced ourselves, but he went into the Book of Mormon.

Sister Morita [**the woman in the advanced class with whom I spoke English during my very first Eikaiwa**] showed up 'cause she forgot Eikaiwa ended, too. So I left the room to talk to her.

MacKillop ended up giving the guy a Book of Mormon and making a return appointment. At first I thought he was crazy for rushing it so fast, but apparently it paid off. I've got a lot to learn, 'cause we made a return and gave him a book.

When we were first at the church, we met the sisters there who were doing some member work. The 2nd time, dropping off our stuff, they were still there, finishing up. The 3rd and last time, they were teaching a lesson. So they were there off and on all day, too.

Today would've been bad for us if it weren't for the guy at the end. All three companionship sets did really well today. Once again, a good day isn't measured by how hard you work, but by how much success you see. Like today, we messed around too much, took too long of a break and talked to almost no one, but it was better than most of the days with Horrocks 'cause of our return at the very very end.

Friday, March 30, 1990—Day 087

We had service at Keita's today, and his mom gave us each doubles of pictures she had taken. Now I've got pictures of me in Japan! [**I had purposefully not taken a camera with me on my mission. This was so I could remain focused on the work itself instead of on taking pictures.**]

We taught Hayashi the 1st Discussion at church. Horrocks went off the beaten path by giving the prescribed sentences in his own words, which we were taught [**in the M.T.C.**] was a big no-no. He had been taught differently; to personalize as much as possible. It'll be interesting to see how other seniors do it.

After getting back, I went on a split with Stratton, the Junior District Leader [**I was mistaken; he was actually the Junior Zone Leader**], whom Lance Corporal Boyd had told me to say Hi to four months earlier. He sure rides his bike fast.

Anyhow, we met up with Sister Morita, the other sister missionaries, and a couple of investigators. We walked through a nearby park for "Sakura," a six-day season when all the cherry blossoms bloom. The whole park was beautiful, and lots of people were camped out in circles under the trees and eating and living it up.

We all drove to a river and walked up and down the banks, where lights were illuminating all the blossoms. We ran into a German guy who was tri-lingual. Sister Yokoyama and I had a talk about how I was trying to "become Japanese" in order to become a better missionary. She was pleased with my efforts.

I'm staying over at Stratton's, and it's a nice, big place. There are four elders total here—one of whom was in Sister Larsen's old ward.

Saturday, March 31, 1990—Day 088

Proselyted with Stratton this morning. He pushed me pretty hard to stop and talk to people. [**I used to**

hate when senior companions—or in this case, missionaries acting in a senior companion's role—would do that. I had only begun studying Japanese less than three months earlier! Yet many senior companions—myself excluded—seemed to revel in forcing their junior companions into situations they weren't capable of handling.] He stopped just about everyone, while Horrocks does it selectively.

We went into Shakey's Pizza for an all-you-can-eat deal, and a guy came up and talked to us who was an investigator in another area. **[Pizza in Japan is a rather bizarre affair. They get really creative with their toppings. They have potato toppings, tomato toppings, corn toppings, seaweed toppings, even squid toppings. The squid pizza wasn't so bad, in all actuality.]** While Stratton was talking (not flirting) to a couple of girls next to us, I had my first reasonably meaningful conversation with a Japanese person. I was quite pleased! **[I was once again mistaken about Elder Stratton. He was flirting. He was definitely an alpha male type (although in a good way; he was outgoing and friendly to everyone), and although he rose through the ranks to A.P., he eventually became somewhat notorious as a flirt.]**

All day today and yesterday it rained pretty bad. Stratton and I gave out a Book of Mormon. Next we met Horrocks back at Stratton's church.

He got permission to buy a Japanese studying book **[why he needed to get permission I don't know; I always just bought the books I wanted,]** so while we were in the bookstore I bought a book full of all the funny Japanized English that you see around. English has a lot of letters and sounds that the Japanese can't say, so when they try to write it, it comes out totally funny. **[I still have the book; it's called Gems of Japanized English. With the advent of the Internet, there's now a website out there with a lot of similar content at engrish.com.]**

We gave a Book of Mormon to a kid on the street. He just happened to be listening to a group that Horrocks had met in a restaurant before, so it gave them something to talk about. **[Yeah, I'm confused too.]** He was down from Tokyo for Spring Break; why he decided to come here he didn't know. Interesting coincidence—did the Lord work this out?

April Fools' Day—Day 089

During Sunday school we had an American visitor whom Horrocks translated for **[actually, he was Canadian]** and his roommate's Brazilian girlfriend whom Sister Yokoyama translated for. A deaf guy was there too **[who ended up joining the church later on]**, so Sister Maruoka did sign language for him. Lots of languages in Sunday school today, right?

While streeting, we talked about a concern of mine. I feel that in order to have our investigators feel the Spirit, it would help if we felt it often too. But it's hard, 'cause our day is structured and it's rather hard to feel it on a moment's notice. I hope you don't blame me too much, but I'm telling you, a mission is no easy business. The Holy Ghost still comes and goes as He pleases.

At the Atsumi's, I got to bear my testimony for real for the first time. I couldn't say much, but they all nodded their heads in agreement when I got done. It must've made a difference. We asked him to be baptized (the mother has wanted to really bad for some time), but he says he doesn't believe enough to be baptized yet. I really don't blame him, 'cause it's no small thing. Joining the church involves a big change of lifestyle. **[This is especially true in Japan, where peer pressure to fit in and be like everyone else is overwhelming no matter what stage of life you're in.]** It must be hard to be very far-sighted at this stage of the game.

I would write more every day and be more spiritual, but by the time nighttime rolls around, I want to get all this out fast. Rest assured, though, that this work and how to do it effectively is my constant obsession.

PHOTOS 007



L-R: Christy, the Brazilian girlfriend of Lon Hall's roommate whom Lon was fellowshipping; then Lon Hall himself. He was from Canada and was in Japan to teach English.

Monday, April 02, 1990—Day 090

Rhonda hasn't written in a long time, so today I wrote her just in case to see what's what.

We and the **[other]** missionaries and a few members and investigators played tennis today. I told a couple of people, Sister Maruoka and a member whose husband is Canadian **[this would be Sister Palmer. Her family and I became good friends and we met up later on in my mission and a few times in America too]**, that I'm not here to make them into Americans, I'm here to become Japanese. They said I had a good attitude and clapped, too.

At night we rode (the sisters and us) to the bishop's house way out there for a mini-barbeque.

It's amazing what looks good when you're on a diet. **[I had put a little "female" symbol in parentheses after this sentence. What I meant was that it was amazing which females looked good when none of them were available.]**

PHOTOS 008



Front row, L-R: Sister Morita (the first person to whom I ever taught Eikaiwa), her daughter Ryoko.

Second row, L-R: Sister Maruoka, Rikki, Sister Yokoyama.

Third row: Hayashi.

Back row, L-R: MacKillop, Eliason, Arata (the investigator MacKillop picked up with me), me, a member whose name I don't remember, Goto.

Tuesday, April 03, 1990—Day 091

Sister Yokoyama got a transfer call today. I'll probably never see her again. **[I was wrong about this—as I said earlier, I ran into her completely by accident at the Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawaii a couple of months after my mission.]** Sister Maruoka's new senior companion is a girl who can't speak any English. I'll meet her later.

I finally got a back basket for my bike. It's nice and big **[the basket, not my bike]**. My bike is awesome—a 12-speed racing bike that has a light on the front. It's so cool; I wish I could take it home with me.

I'm running way low on cash. It's getting scary. **[Our money was sent to us once a month.]** The little Shinto shrine was having some sort of event when we got back home for our break, but they were taking it down by that time. Lots of guys **[Shinto priests]** in their white and blue robes.

Whoops—before getting home we stopped off in a playground to eat some donuts, but before we left, the school next to us got out for recess and soon we were surrounded by little kids. Horrocks talked to the teacher about English class and who we were, while I kept the kids occupied by playing with them and teaching them songs and English words. It was so fun!

Later, we visited an old investigator. He loves the gospel, but he also loves smoking, drinking, and sex **[which is why he refused to be baptized]**.

My 2nd discussion fell out of my basket on the way to church where we taught Hayashi.

Next we visited the Terakoshis, and they fed us some good food—including squid. It was really good. **[You might be noticing a pattern here. This was the genesis of my love of squid which continues to this day.]**

It's my strategy to never judge food by its appearance. It's done me a lot of good so far. **[Here's another tip I learned which also served me well: When eating Japanese food, pay no attention to its texture, just its flavor. This is the way to really begin enjoying sushi and sashimi.]**

Wednesday, April 04, 1990—Day 092

Today I was missing Theresa really bad. Oh, how I love her!

I got a letter from Cheryl Depriest yesterday dated March 26th and one today dated the 30th. The first one was forwarded from the mission home. What a difference the correct address makes!

We picked up my green card today. I was a day late, but the guy was nice to me and let me off without paying a fine. He spoke fair English. Before deciding to let me off, meaning "fined" he said: "You will be punished." **[It]** Sounded pretty ominous **[coming]** from a representative of a foreign government.

It rained miserably today, so we made banana bread at the church with Hayashi for his mom. MacKillop and Eliason were there, and when we picked them up, they had made a Mr. Donut run (or "a donut run")—where you rip off all of Mr. Donut's old donuts from their trash bins. **["Donut runs" were a Nagoya mission tradition. You'll be hearing a lot more about donut runs as this journal progresses.]** The donuts are always still good, the place just wants to keep them **[i.e., their inventory]** fresh.

We had an appointment with the Shinodas. It's their goal, I found out, to keep the missionaries as long as possible. **[Probably their light-hearted way of messing with us, since they know the time constraints missionaries are placed under.]** They kept us until 9:30 **[p.m.]**.

Marrying Theresa would be so much better than the dumb dating game. She and I get along so well together—it's great. I feel like we're best friends. I hope things go as planned. She hasn't written me in a long time—This sucks. I still haven't told Dan about her.

Thursday, April 05, 1990—Day 093

This morning Horrocks laid it on the line about me comparing myself to others **[he was against it]**. I learned that lesson in the M.T.C.; I should've known that it applied here, too. Plus, I think the members are more concerned than I thought—apparently they see me as just observing—which is true. Is there any sin in trying to learn? Anyway, I guess they expect me to try to get involved. I wish they could see it from my point of view, a stranger in a strange land, but oh well. They see missionaries come and go, so they know what's good and what's bad. It's too bad that I have to kiss up to the members, but it's part of being a good missionary. I need to set goals, too.

[And thus you see me learning the lesson that every missionary learns sooner or later—the members, seemingly each and every one of them, consider themselves to be your very own personal mission president. No matter who you are, your proficiency with the language, your time in country, etc., none of it matters—they all expect you to be operating at 100%, 100% of the time, from day one, hour one, minute one, second one. And if you come up in any way short of their idealized view of what a missionary is or should be, trust me, you'll hear about it right away. They won't ever tell you directly, mind you; they'll just send it through the grapevine in passive-aggressive fashion.]

Of course, there is always that minority whose favorite sport is complaining to the mission president about the missionaries. Where they get these people, I'll never know.

(I can't imagine how bad it must be for the missionaries serving in the Provo, Utah mission.)

To all you RMs out there reading this—Am I right about all this, or aren't I?

I needed to practice my introduction, so I tried it out on a guy in the park and got pretty far. We ended up giving him a Book.

Today it was my goal to give out my first Book of Mormon, so I took one of my two special ones that Grant's Primary class had given to me.

I met a guy **[I'm referring to the same guy to whom I gave a Book of Mormon, referenced above]** who spoke fluent English and had stayed for a year in Tacoma, Washington. I used to live in that area, so we had something to talk about. It was in English, so I had it really easy.

I went in and explained the book, and I accidentally kept talking really fast. I guess I was a little nervous. I forgot to give him the book; I kept on explaining more and more. Finally Horrocks cut in and told me to **[just]** give it to him, so I did. He promised to call us back.

Interesting—once I finally set a goal to give a book out, I finally did it. and it worked out so well, too—He spoke English and we had something in common. I'd better learn to set serious goals. But how much is too high or too low? That's why I compare—to find out where to set my sights. It'll be tough getting out of that habit.

Maruoka arranged for the zone to play baseball against a business's team. They beat us by two points. They were all outfitted with nice uniforms, etc. Her new companion's name is Sister Tsukada; her last companion was Sister Fisher. She said they were always quizzing her on vocabulary and her Japanese ability shot way up. Undoubtedly she's far better than I am. **[So much for having learned not to compare myself to others, eh?]** Sister Tsukada did say I was really good **[at Japanese]**, though. Admittedly, I was doing better tonight than usual.

Keita's family happened to be walking by as we played **[baseball]**—so we got to talk to them.

Friday, April 06, 1990—Day 094

Met the same elders we had met before, Leach and Keetch, at Sakae—the center of the city. **[Nagoya, like many, many other Japanese cities, was bombed out during the war, so afterward city planners were able to redesign it with modernized roads, parks, etc. Thus the center of town looks like any other city, whereas on the outskirts is where you get the traditional winding streets, the cramped quarters, etc.]** We talked about some old exploits for a while before parting company.

We tried to have a lesson with Hayashi at the church, but Goto, our fellowshipper, was being a bum and didn't want to teach at first. Then after we started, the phone in the hall kept ringing, so we ended early 'cause the Spirit wasn't there. At first I was irritated at Horrocks for letting Goto run the show, but then I realized that if the Spirit isn't there, it's not there. It's Hayashi's eternal salvation that's at stake, not Goto's, dang it. **[A "fellowshipper" is a member of the ward whom missionaries are instructed to bring along to a lesson if possible. This is for a couple of reasons: First, so the investigator will have ready-made friends and acquaintances if he or she decides to join; Second, so the investigator can see for him or herself that there are non-missionaries who have already joined up.]**

I'm sure pretty much every missionary will agree that fellowshipers are something of a gamble when you bring them along for a lesson. They can enhance the lesson greatly, they can cause it to crash and burn, or anything in between.]

An hour after the lesson began, we had an activity babysitting members' kids. The other missionaries were there. Sister Tsukada said I had a nice necktie.

I got to show her my pictures, and she showed us hers—some from way back. She had one with Sister Fisher in it. She's cute (Sister Tsukada), dang it! One of the Japanese girls in the mission home, before I left it during transfers, said I was handsome (behind my back). I was hoping the Japanese girls wouldn't be enticing so I wouldn't have any temptation, but unfortunately there are a lot of cute ones.

PHOTOS 009



L-R: Sister Kitajima (she was a member from another ward but had run into us on the street that day), Horrocks, me.

Saturday, April 07, 1990—Day 095

Somehow I got a cut in my tire, and my inner tube is sticking through it. I was bummed; still am.

After service at Keita's we waited around for Mr. Suzuki, the guy who told us about them, to show up so we could thank him, but he didn't show up as planned. We ate over and had real, traditional (not Chinese[-derived]) Japanese food (all seafood)—and it was a little tough to swallow, literally.

Miura came over, so I used the time to study. Later we had an appointment with a member over at the other elders' place, and I sat in the corner and read *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* the whole time. [I think this was the night that I was somehow talked into doing a "dog pile." According to the other missionaries, there was some sort of tradition that after such a meeting they'd all play rock-scissors-paper (an unbelievably popular game in Japan), draw straws, or something else in order to decide who would be the victim while everyone dog piled on top of him. Of course, since I was reading, they did the selection without me and determined that I was to be the victim. I of course had no interest whatsoever in such juvenile antics, but they applied the peer pressure until I complied. Knowing then what I know now, I should've just said, "Sorry, but I don't roll around on the floor with other guys." Who's the one coming up with these quasi-homoerotic games, anyway? And how can any straight male think they're a good enough idea to want to try out for themselves? Needless to say, such an idiotic game was never my suggestion.

I think this was also the night I decided to embark on a major project dealing with Japanese

grammar. I decided to go through and look up every Japanese grammatical principle in the entire lesson plan and write it down. You'll hear a lot more about this grammar-listing project as this journal progresses.] Tonight it was raining miserably again.

The church really is amazing, isn't it?

Compared with my other journal **[that I kept irregularly at home]**, I hope the frequency of my entries doesn't decrease the value of each individual one, but that's the way it may be, 'cause it's my goal to document every single day. I hope you still find it interesting!

Sunday, April 08, 1990—Day 096

Hayashi came to church today, and the members tried to get him involved in everything, i.e. Institute, etc. I hope it wasn't too much for him to swallow all at once. Afterwards, he said the meetings were fun. It was cool for me, having our own investigator to church. **[This is always a major milestone in missionary work—getting your investigator to come to church. However, I'm sure I speak for nearly all missionaries when I say that they try to get investigators to church, at least for their first time, on a Sunday other than Fast and Testimony meeting. Missionaries are always afraid that the one or two crazies will scare the investigator off.]**

We visited Kito, the inactive guy, with Brother Tsuzuku—the guy who gave us pizza before. He drove us home, too, 'cause Eguchi had driven us to church on account of the rain and my tire. He **[Brother Tsuzuku]** came up and checked out our apartment, too.

He then dropped us off downtown where we met with a guy we had given a Book of Mormon to earlier. We walked to a park where Horrocks gave him the first three principles (out of six) of the First Discussion. He did it all in his own words, from memory.

We discussed, afterwards on the way home, the different ways of presenting the discussions we each had been taught. We had been taught way differently. He personalizes each sentence as much as possible, but I'll probably stick to the actual lesson plan as I had been taught. We'll see what works. **[I ended up sticking to the lesson plan but making it sound like I was personalizing it. A fine line, but an effective one.]**

Monday, April 09, 1990—Day 097

We had to go play tennis again today. No investigators were there, and only two or so members showed up. I hope we don't have to make this a habit, 'cause I hate having to give up my P-day or any part of it. **[Letter-writing was always my highest priority.]** What a joke.

I wish I had more energy at the end of the day so I wouldn't be so eager to abbreviate each entry. I'm sorry!

We went with Nagae, the guy who loves the church and loves sin also, to a French restaurant—a classy place. Extremely expensive with Jazz in the background, dim lights, etc. Nagae knew the owner of the place, and he came and talked to us too. The owner of the restaurant! **[Nagae himself, for his part, owned a public bathhouse.]** I've never done that in America! Rarely, if ever, have the Lord's missionaries been treated so well, I bet. The guy spent a lot of money on us—¥7,800 for each of us—three total. And right now the exchange rate is ¥145 = \$1. Approximately \$55.00 a plate—\$165.00 total. Wow! **[We ate lobster. Good stuff! Nagae even gave me a disposable camera, so I ended up with more pictures than I otherwise would've had thanks to him.]**

After that, believe it or not, we went over to the Kondo's place—the guy whose wife said I look like Richard Gere (famous actor). They fed us pizza.

Their little baby ripped one, and Brother Kondo said, "Let a fart!" right out loud. He next taught his wife

the word, and while he answered the door, she kept saying, "Fart! Fart!" to us. She has a tiny little voice, so it sounded all the funnier. He is a returned missionary, so he's lived with American missionaries and knows all the slang. **[He showed us his notebook full of English swear words and rude phrases, all courtesy of the time spent on his own mission.]**

Horrocks was holding the kid at the time, so I thought for sure he had done it and just blamed it on the kid. I guess not. **[But now that I think about it again, I wonder. . .]**

[During this visit, they also told me to beware of eating too much instant food. They said that doing so can cause temporary impotence. I wonder if that's true?]

PHOTOS 010



Horrocks, me, and Nagae at the French restaurant.

Tuesday, April 10, 1990—Day 098

I remember Gibson once saying that he was promised in some blessing that if he read his Book of Mormon every day that he'd be able to speak Japanese without **[an]** accent.

Not to be outdone by the likes of him, I decided that that's what I'll do from now on and hope it applies to me, too. **[I didn't always read it every day—at one point I just read an Institute manual about it—but toward the end I was able to speak it without an accent anyway. Or at least that's what some Japanese folks told me. A few times I would answer the phone and people would assume that I'd transferred out and been replaced by a Japanese elder.]** I've been neglecting it lately. I just barely heard that Book of Mormon reading takes priority over language study **[instead of the other way around]**.

Consequently, my Japanese was much better today. I sure hope this works.

Horrocks had some pictures developed and he gave me a few. I bought a little photo album for ¥30 (really cheap), and put all my pictures into it. I can survive without a camera, after all!

Horrocks's girlfriend sent him a copy of "Labor of Love," an LDS film presentation about missionaries and their work. The other elders and Arata, the guy MacKillop picked up, were there when we watched it at

church. They're lucky—Arata's awesome; he wants to be baptized.

Elder Yamaura sent me a picture of him with his Z.L.s, and one of them, Elder Perkins, went to my High School and was in plays [i.e., **High School musicals**] with me. Small world!

This is a tough mission. I wouldn't have it any other way, for if you can succeed here, then you're really doing well!

PHOTOS 011



A picture Horrocks had taken of me to finish off his roll of film. Here I am showing how, in Japan, one drives on the left side of the road.

Wednesday, April 11, 1990—Day 099

I think I've finally figured out how to make my studies more effective. I'll read the Book of Mormon first before anything else for 1/2 hour each day. 'Cause when I did today, I got really motivated to learn the language. Plus, they say that the quickest way to learn Japanese is by studying the lesson plan. **[Elder Horrocks first told me this. It must've been true, because my first junior companion studied it faithfully and was just as fluent as any senior companion.]** The mission is to become fluent, not finish my Japanese books by a certain time. At first I wanted to be effective right off and thought I had to cram in as much Japanese as possible, but now I see that the fastest way to learn it is to learn it one step at a time. That's the way to get better faster.

I wish I had a better diet. I love sweets too much. The right foods influence your moods and your energy level. I wish I were more disciplined in that respect. **[I still do.]**

The other elders and I planned English class, then we had service at Keita's. At night we got a few things done with Imamura back at church. We sure do go there a lot.

What's the deal with Theresa? I guess she figures I won't be back for 21 more months, so she's lost that sense of urgency. She still hasn't written except for that one she wrote the day I left! She's a very poor letter writer (the worst), so I guess I should be thankful for the ones I do get. No matter what happens, though, I'm set.

Thursday, April 12, 1990—Day 100

We had to be up really early in order to be to a baseball game at 6:00 a.m. That sucked. I've still never

hit the ball once yet. I'm no good at baseball **[or any other sport]**.

Things went really slow back at the apartment because we were so tired and Horrocks was sick.

In Sakae we got our pictures taken with some girls that were dressed really weird and had painted faces. I have no idea what it was for.

At English class I helped the sisters with their children's class. I taught them **[the children, not the sisters]** the A.B.C.s and how to spell their names in English. It was a lot of fun. Keita and his brother and mother were there, too.

Afterwards I had a fairly reasonable conversation with a couple of girls. They were amazed that I only started studying Japanese three months ago. I think I'm getting better, thanks in part be to the Book of Mormon. **[That sounds pretty bizarre in retrospect. Reading the Book of Mormon in English helps you speak Japanese better? Chalk it up to the "magical thinking" I displayed in the previous two entries.]**

Spring Break is over, so we once again see lots of students on the street in uniforms after school hours.

Sister Tsukada is sooo cute! Maruoka's more beautiful, but Tsukada has an extremely sweet personality about her that melts my heart. Very soft spoken. She speaks no English, so this is where it ends, but I wonder if "sweetness" could ever be my type. **[Why couldn't it? Better than the alternative, of course.]**

Friday, April 13, 1990—Day 101

Today we rode in the rain to another church for zone conference. We've got a really small zone. President and Sister Smith were there, along with the A.P.s and a couple members of the mission home staff. We had a couple of classes, then they drew names out of a cup to choose people to demonstrate their Book of Mormon introductions. **[In other words, to role-play our method of meeting someone and convincing them to accept a Book of Mormon.]** I was second to go, after Horrocks, and I demonstrated on Elder Durham (whose dad is an officer in the U.S.M.C.) who played the investigator.

I quickly forgot my memorized plan and winged it as best I could. I was enthusiastic, and I made so many mistakes that the whole place was cracking up.

I thought I had destroyed all confidence in me, but everyone, including the president, thought it was good 'cause I was so determined. I admit, I couldn't help but laugh a few times at myself 'cause I was so pathetic.

[Later, for lunch, we had boxed lunches that had been ordered in. For dessert we had donuts that had been provided by the local elders. They had obviously been obtained via "donut run," since no missionary could monetarily afford to hook up an entire zone with donuts. The mission president didn't say anything, thus proving what a cool president he was since he was willing to turn a blind eye to their method of procurement.]

Riding home I had my umbrella blow inside out twice. The handle broke off, too.

Tonight I split with Eliason. We rode to the church to visit inactives with a member in his car. After getting back **[to the church]**, it rained harder on us as we rode back to his place **[i.e., back to Eliason's apartment]**. All my stuff was soaked. I was soaked, too.

Saturday, April 14, 1990—Day 102

Eliason and I taught Arata half of the 2nd discussion at the church. I like the way he taught; he stuck to the plan, but he planned on only teaching half 'cause he **[said that he]** didn't want to take two hours.

Sheesh, how hard can it be? There are only six discussions, not 12. **[This was to become a mental conflict within me throughout my mission. In countries with a Christian background, I'm sure it's easy to breeze right through the discussions. In Japan, however, they don't know the first thing about Christianity, so all the concepts are utterly foreign to them. It's quite impossible to get through the six lessons in six sittings. So, when trying to make a "pick-up," the goal is to convince them to listen to "the six discussions." Although this is technically true—which means I was never technically lying to them—I was always uncomfortable with the fact that the potential investigators were (probably) assuming that I meant six sittings.]**

Walked to his **[Arata's]** place and looked at his pictures, then walked back, got our bikes, and did service at Keita's. I wonder what's keeping us from laying our hands on his head and healing him? Every time I'm over there, I feel really inadequate helping him learn how to crawl only, knowing I have the authority to act in Christ's name. What would Christ have done? Healed him! Maybe that's the whole reason that Keita's like that! To try our faith, etc.! Is it God's will? **[You probably know what I'm going to say here, but I'll go ahead and say it anyway. I am thoroughly ashamed at the mentality I displayed in this entry. To assume that God would afflict someone with such pain and suffering for no other reason than to teach a passerby some sort of object lesson is pretty pathetic. Not to mention the fact that missionaries assuming that the world revolved around them and their work was as pathetic as it was commonplace. Or maybe I was just projecting on that last point, who knows.]**

In Sakae, we were stopped by 8-10 sixteen year-old girls doing a project for their school. They had a microphone, a video camera, etc. and interviewed us right there. They asked if there was a problem with trash in the U.S.A. and if we thought Japan was pretty. Horrocks and MacKillop showed up and they were interviewed too. It was fun—lots of looks from everyone who passed by.

Horrocks reproved me sharply for jumping to a conclusion. Correction gets a little hard to take at times.

Tonight was a first—two lessons in one day. We taught Hayashi part of the 3rd discussion. After meeting with the bishop and Imamura next, I wasted too much money at Mr. Donut.

The sisters use the church as often as we do, so we run into them quite often.

Sunday, April 15, 1990—Day 103

Hayashi came to church again. Using a disposable camera/film combination thing that someone **[Nagae]** had given me, I got a few of my own pictures. I got one of me and the sisters, 'cause they're both babes.

Rikki is another member who speaks fluent English and is a good friend. **[Her real name was "Rieko," but she'd Americanized it for our use.]** She's 27 and still not married. Her pancreas is such that she'll never have kids. Poor girl! She's awesome; I feel bad for her. **[Interesting how powerfully the Mormon lens can skew what's pitiable vs. what isn't, isn't it?]** There's another girl in the ward who's her age and not married, too. **[I'm probably thinking of the member named Sister Takahashi.]** I don't blame them; Japanese men are far more chauvinistic than Americans are. An American would fare so well here! **[Truer words were probably never spoken. I constantly kick myself for not going back and taking advantage of that assessment.]**

We cooked for Kawamura tonight, the guy we taught in the park last week. We also taught him the rest of discussion one. He found it very hard to swallow. I don't blame him; I'd have a hard time changing my religion and my life after only one or two visits. **[This point-of-view is, of course, diametrically opposed to what they hammer into your head in the M.T.C., since they pump you up to get investigators to commit to baptism even earlier than the discussions say to. Perhaps the fact that I could (at least sometimes) see things from an investigator's perspective is an indicator that I was, to some extent, an out-of-the-box thinker among my fellow-Mormons.]**

What's Theresa's deal, anyway?

PHOTOS 012



L-R: Sister Tsukada, me, Ryoko Morita (sandwiched between Sister Maruoka and me), Sister Maruoka.



L-R: Rikki, me.

Monday, April 16, 1990—Day 104

I finally got a letter from Theresa! Two in one envelope, actually. She's been extremely busy. She bought the book "TJOS" for us (code initials). So, when the time comes, she'll know what's up. **[Those were code initials for *The Joy of Sex*.]** I got in [i.e., "wrote"] five letters total today; I had written four before hers showed up. I wrote Wheeler Sensei, too.

Went to Eliason's before going to the park for the weekly tennis/baseball practice ritual. Ended up playing Frisbee. Ate with Brother Matsumoto over here.

My ¥ had better come soon; I'm about out of my emergency fund.

You know, one relic I'd really like to get my hands on is the Sword of Laban. What an awesome weapon—First held by Nephi, then handed down all the way to Moroni. It was a major relic even in his day. Wow—what an artifact. **[Too bad it doesn't actually exist.]**

Tuesday, April 17, 1990—Day 105

Had a nice conversation with Tsukada before district meeting. She's so nice! Horrocks says they're both triffs, though. I don't care. He said later that he's been pretty harsh with me. Whatever the reason, there's probably a reason for it, so I don't complain. **[And thus you see how easy it is to abuse and/or**

manipulate missionaries. There are many faith-promoting rumors floating around out there about someone being in the right place at the right time so it must've been God's will that such-and-such happened. These stories are especially common and encouraged among missionaries, who are taught to depend on God, the Spirit, and other intangibles for everything. It thus becomes easy to believe that everything that happens to you, even the negative things, are all God's will because you need to learn some lesson or other. So missionaries end up taking a great amount of abuse and suffering lots of manipulation without complaining (much), since who can argue with God?]

They call new missionaries "green beans." In my **[weekly and mandatory]** president's letter I discussed how that nickname probably doesn't bring out one's full potential. **[I considered it derogatory and contrary to the spirit of what we were trying to accomplish.]**

Taught Hayashi, then ate a full pound of steak at Ishihara's, a family who were referred, **[who]** like the missionaries, but as yet have no interest in the church. We'll see.

Before I forget—last night I got a call from Elder Anderson in the Tokyo South mission. Dan had referred Kenichi **[an exchange student friend from Japan when I was a senior in High School]**. Those elders had met his family, but he wasn't around. They called me to get more information on him. How they got my phone number I have no idea. **[At the time I was rather miffed that Dan would refer him instead of leaving it to me, since I was the one serving in Kenichi's home country, not him. But maybe Dan had a point, since I probably wouldn't have referred him anyway. Throughout his stay in Utah he attended church weekly with the rest of his friends, but if that wasn't enough to get him interested in Mormonism, I didn't see how referring the missionaries would somehow magically do the trick.]**

Today's the date (April 17th) that Theresa and I plan on being married if things go well. Two years from today. We'll see!

Wednesday, April 18, 1990—Day 106

Horrocks was sick and slept in. I took advantage of the time and studied effectively. I developed a new system of studying the lesson plan (which is 2nd on the list of priorities) in which I thoroughly analyze everything. I'm excited; it should work.

We met a member from another ward **[while streeting]**, and he bought us lunch **[at a nice restaurant]**—steak. Lots of steak the past two days—more than you usually get in a year. **[Steak is something of a rarity in Japan, and correspondingly expensive, since most spare land in Japan is devoted to rice farming, not cattle-raising. Hence the reason I mention it as often as I do: When someone gave it to us, we knew that they were really going out of their way.]**

Tonight I got a call from Kenichi! I haven't heard his voice in almost three years. It's exciting. It's nice already having a friend in the same country **[in which]** your mission is.

I tell you, it's fun being an American in Japan. Today we met Carolyn, an American exchange student from Pennsylvania. It was interesting, seeing blonde hair in a **[Japanese]** school uniform.

Thursday, April 19, 1990—Day 107

This morning, during baseball, I did far better. **[Although it wasn't P-day, we were playing against a corporate team full of non-Mormons, so it counted as "time" and was therefore okay.]** I'm getting to where I can at least touch the ball every time I'm up to bat. It's sad, 'cause I'm skilled as heck with an M-16 **[assault rifle]**, but I'm clumsy with a baseball bat. You'd think it'd be the other way around.

Afterwards, study time was extremely profitable. I'm going to be more diligent from now on. It's a good feeling. Did the dishes, too. It was a mess.

I was really tired while streeting. We had gotten up early **[because of baseball]**.

I taught the kids' class at English class, too. Keita's whole family, including his dad, was there. I taught them **[the English words for]** things in a park, then took them down to the corner park for an object lesson. Apparently they had a lot of fun. It's supposed to be me helping the sisters, but it's turned out to be the sisters observing me as I teach. It's fun, though.

Becoming a good missionary is my constant obsession. Hopefully, since that's all I think about, I'll eventually become such.

PHOTOS 013



Nagoya's city hall. You can see the Japanese flag flying right in front of the clock.



Me standing in the artificial pond area of Sakae. You can see the Nagoya T.V. tower in the background.



A clock with moving figures that come out and do their thing at the top of the hour, much like those famous European clocks do.



A line of kindergartners in their yellow hats. They're required to wear these hats to make them better visible to motorists.



Me standing in the middle of a veritable ocean of bicycles. This is just outside a subway station; locals will ride to a station and park their bikes outside for the day.

Friday, April 20, 1990—Day 108

We had been invited to play a softball game with a bunch of old guys yesterday, so this morning we got beaten by a bunch of 40~50 year-old men. That's twice in a row I've had to be up near 5:00 a.m. We slept over at Eliason's to be nearer to the park in the morning.

I got paid yesterday, so I've got money now. I was down to ¥200 **[which was approximately \$1.25 at the time]**. Horrocks still borrows from me; he hasn't been paid yet. At least I'll be rich when he gets paid.

After **[service at]** Keita's we went back to Eliason's and met Arata, cooked for him, and reviewed. I fell

asleep for four hours. Too many early mornings.

I've been on a split with MacKillop ever since. I hate splits. Moving around and sleeping over is a pain in the butt.

Saturday, April 21, 1990—Day 109

Sister Morita called with a few questions about the Book of Mormon, so we went over there and explained things to her. We were there a while on the front porch, then her husband came back and we got better acquainted with him.

All four of us met at **[the]** Shinodas; we had a doll-making activity, then **[after that]** we shopped, **[then]** went home, then went back to church to teach Hayashi. Horrocks was pretty sick, so he couldn't teach well at all. He cut it short.

There was a birthday party for a member that we were invited to, but we didn't show up 'cause we had an appointment here with Eguchi. He ended up cancelling out, so we missed it for no reason. But it's all for the best, 'cause I was able to get stuff done. Miura came over and got most of his stuff. No more stereo for us on P-days.

I'm starting to get burned out. I wish I had a higher energy level. I wish my body would agree and go along with everything my spirit wanted to do. Crud.

Horrocks wants me to play senior companion this week. Oh brother. I think he's lost the perspective as to what it's like for me. I can't even speak to people, let alone play senior companion. I know it's fun for him to watch me do tricks, but I think he's beginning to ask the impossible.

Sunday, April 22, 1990—Day 110

I wish I felt more like writing, 'cause a lot happened today. Rapped with lots of members, was given an umbrella on the street by a guy we'd played softball with ('cause it was raining), and visited **[the]** Atsumis. This senior deal isn't so bad, 'cause he does all the talking and I keep track of the schedule. Horrocks also met, at church, a guy who he'd met 14 months ago in a public bath house. We picked up him and his friend.

Maruoka had gone on a split with another junior this week who lives in Nonami. It just so happened to be Sister Larsen! She said to tell me "hi." Awesome! Her dad **[i.e., Sister Larsen's dad, not Sister Maruoka's dad]** was called to be president of the new Okinawa, Japan mission.

Looked at a few of Maruoka's pictures. She photographs so well! Her facial structure is sooooo cute—ah. What a doll.

Monday, April 23, 1990—Day 111

I didn't feel much like writing letters today. That's the first time this has happened to me so far.

Last night we were going on a "donut run" at 2:00 **[a.m.]**, and surprise surprise, we ran into Eliason and MacKillop, who had already raided the McDonald's trash can. We tried to hit Mr. Donut, but the streets nearby were too busy, so we gave up. We came back here and microwaved a few Big Macs.

I wrote a really funny letter to Dan, in which I ripped on him for his illegible writing and poor spelling.

Tennis was inconclusive. Very poor. It's becoming a habit; I'd feel weird if we didn't do it each week. Got a ride with Eguchi there and back.

Did some housing at my request (I'm senior, remember), **[Horrocks was far more partial to streeting,**

so I didn't have much experience yet with housing,] and we talked to a cool lady who said we could go back.

Tuesday, April 24, 1990—Day 112

We tried to visit [the] Atsumis with Sister Takahashi, but they weren't home. She ended up buying us lunch.

Played volleyball tonight at church with a few members and investigators and the other missionaries. We ran into the sisters on the street, too. That's rare. Once [on a different day] we were in Mr. Donut with Imamura and we saw each other as they rode by.

I'm in a nice catch-22. In order to be professional, I have to act Japanese, but people don't like it when you're not yourself. But if I'm myself, I'll act American, which makes everyone mad. Culture differences, you know. I can't win!

Wednesday, April 25, 1990—Day 113

Being senior was okay, 'cause I took the lead and decided who to visit and when. I'm on a split with Eliason; this time I'm [at] home. It's nice.

Sister Tsukada is a much harder worker than Yokoyama [was]. Tonight they showed the video "What is Real," [an LDS-produced short film] about a guy who asks questions about life. They had made flyers to hand out, too.

Once this language is mastered, I'm gonna fly.

It's nice to be organized. It's a good feeling, getting things done and out of the way.

Thursday, April 26, 1990—Day 114

During baseball, Elder Rolden hit two home runs in a row—so we dog piled him (where everyone jumps on someone all at once). Later, when one of the guys on the other team called one of their own "safe" when he was really out, we dog piled him, too.

The purpose [of playing these baseball games] is to meet and teach the other team, but after the game a lot of missionaries kept to themselves, so I got after them to mingle a bit. I found out later that they had gotten mad 'cause I'd been too harsh. Sheesh—it's too bad that you have to be all sweet and coaxing with the missionaries as well as the investigators. You'd think that they could put that off for two years.

We had an appointment to teach Hayashi at 5:00 [p.m.], but Horrocks forgot. By the time we remembered and went over, it was too late to teach.

Both belt loops in back had broken on one pair of pants, and I finally got them sewed up after a couple of months. Finally.

Today is Dan Clyde's hump day. It's been a whole year. ["Hump day" refers, of course, to the halfway point of one's mission.]

Friday, April 27, 1990—Day 115

What a day. [We had] softball really early, then we rushed back home to be ready to be at the church at 9:30. The A.P.s and President Smith did splits with us, to monitor our performance, I guess. They went with the other set; Horrocks and I went out on our own.

We hadn't eaten, so we went to Shakey's Pizza for an all-you-can-eat special. I saw my first cockroach

running around in there. A bunch of girls at another table screamed and jumped up; one had surprised them, too.

I spent way too much money. It's been my goal the past few days to not spend any money for two days straight, because I've been spending over my daily allotment (c. ¥500). I need to catch up **[to my target in-pocket amount by spending less]**.

But today I splurged—over ¥1,000. At least now I'm learning to manage my expenditures—I feel really guilty when I spend money.

The president did service at Keita's with Eliason. I never thought this would happen!

Later, I passed off the first part of lesson 1 to Elder Woolston, who used to be my zone leader. Now he's training to be an A.P. for when the current ones leave.

I finally have my business cards. They're nice. They were there for me at the zone meeting, but Horrocks said they weren't **[and thus I missed picking them up back then]**.

Like I said, becoming a good missionary is my constant, one and only obsession. I don't think about Theresa a whole lot like I used to back at the beginning of this journal. Of course, her letters are the best, and I'd still much rather get one from her than from anyone else, but I'm going to be gone **[for]** two years, so there's business to attend to here and now.

So deep was I in thought about that subject that Sister Maruoka asked me not once, but twice if I was happy. She said I didn't look happy. The thing was, I had just shut out the rest of the world while pondering becoming a good missionary.

In the video "What is Real," which we showed to the Terakoshis tonight, they sing a song at the end in which is contained a phrase that is, in my opinion, one of the grandest, most sublime statements ever made:

"There's a purpose and plan
for the family of man"

If only the world knew that! The answers, at long last, are here to be found!

Lately it's been easier to feel the Spirit. Oh, how I want to be totally fluent so that I can teach people these things.

PHOTOS 014



Me with the Terakoshis' kid. They gave me this picture when I visited their ward again six months later, thus proving how fastidious the Japanese people are when it comes to giving gifts.

Saturday, April 28, 1990—Day 116

I've decided that hitting the streets is a sign of defeat. Like we've nothing else better to do. The ideal is to go from lesson to lesson.

In Sakae we met the guy we dog piled the other day. He showed us the restaurant where they all work.

We went to a fire department and arranged to teach English once a week to the over 100 employees. We should contact a lot of people through that.

We visited the Horiguchis and the Terakoshis tonight and showed them both "What is Real" with English subtitles.

About Elder Horrocks—I love the guy to death, but a lot of times he'll use the U.S.M.C. as an example when illustrating a point, which pisses me off 'cause he knows nothing about it. Plus, when dealing with me, he sounds like a walking missionary guide. Dealing with me one-on-one as a person would be nice. Other than that, I love him. **["Loving" everyone was constantly emphasized to us missionaries. If you don't love your companion, you can't have the Spirit; if you don't love the people, you can't have the Spirit, . . . and the list goes on and on.]**

Speaking of the U.S.M.C., I'm sorry, but this mission is 10 times easier than that was. And Japan's a tough country!

I got two letters from Theresa today! Actually, two envelopes, one with a bunch of old, accumulated stuff. She had used too low of a postage twice in a row, so it kept going back. Consequently, a few were over a month old. But the other one contained the response to my most recent letter. In it, she confronted the fact that it'll be hard to overcome the country music barrier. She loves it, I hate it.

I'm glad she has the guts to bring up sensitive issues. Now I'll be able to discuss them freely, knowing she'll understand. **[Hah!]** She's great—I love her. I really do.

Sunday, April 29, 1990—Day 117

At church, Rikki (fluent English) gave me a letter explaining the situation with the members and her. She has a bad pancreas, and she's had lots of problems with it. The members think she's lazy, when in reality her energy level gets low at times. She gave me that letter 'cause she didn't want to say things in front of everyone, regardless of whether they knew English or not. **[And thus transpired my first experience with member-to-member conflict. When members can't get along, they'll often try to drag the missionaries into it for some reason. Perhaps they think that getting the missionaries on their side gives them the stamp of approval and/or decides the conflict. In any event, missionaries can't choose sides and thus have to ameliorate things as much as they can.]**

She explained how she was in the hospital for a year and had a lot of painful operations. Poor girl! Being a friend has its rewards, 'cause she wrote five pages to me. I've been nothing but nice to her, and I guess she appreciates it. This all got started last week when I asked her how she copes with a bad pancreas.

The A.P.s went to the church for a stake missionary coordination activity. That's the last time I'll see Clinger and Lloyd **[the two A.P.s who drove us back from the airport]**, 'cause they go home Thursday.

One of the guys we gave a Book of Mormon to last week has been reading it every day and talking about it to his friends. I hope something good comes of it.

We spent pretty much all our time at the church today, **[what with the regular three-block meeting and]** meeting with Horrocks's friend and Hayashi.

Monday, April 30, 1990—Day 118

We had a member-investigator English class picnic a couple of hours' drive north of here. Horrocks and I rode with Keita's mom and brother and the Ishiharas' kids.

At the picnic, I talked to a couple of girls, one of whom had studied English for seven years and still couldn't do it **[i.e., speak English]** worth beans. She was amazed I'd only been at it **[i.e., Japanese]** for less than four months. **[I still remember these girls. They were friends, most likely High School students, and were sitting off by themselves. I was concerned, and a little miffed, that no one was introducing themselves or otherwise making an effort to make them feel included and welcome. So I stepped up to the plate.]**

I wrote four letters in the van—two going up and two going back. They were pretty messy 'cause of all the bumps in the road.

Ouch—it's easy to forget you're a missionary. You constantly have to watch yourself to avoid messing up. **[I was in civilian clothes all day so I felt like just another member on this occasion.]**

This place was one of those nature-retreat type parks. Very beautiful. On the other side of the parking lot, in a copse of trees, was a tiny, ancient graveyard. That's one of the many unique and endearing aspects of Japan—people have been living there so long that you'll find graveyards and Shinto shrines pretty much everywhere, even in the most remote and/or unlikely places. You can stand almost anywhere in the country and be able to snap a photograph fully worthy of National Geographic.]

PHOTOS 015



The huge torii gate that marked the entrance to the obligatory Shinto shrine. This is facing West from the parking lot. At the extreme left is Miki Kato, the Palmer's dental hygienist friend, facing the camera; while a little closer in is Sister Maruoka with her back toward us.



Me in front of the aforementioned tiny graveyard.



Another of the stone lions that marks the decor of any of the bigger Shinto shrines. Notice how this one, unlike the first one I showed you, has lost any paint it once had.



L-R: Brother Palmer, Miki Kato, Mindy, the Palmers' daughter (in Miki's arms). Sister Palmer has her back to us, while Sister Maruoka is in the distance playing netless badminton with her.



Front to back: Yusuke (Keita's older brother), one of the Ishihara kids (if I recall correctly, brother Ishihara was the bishop), me. Yusuke was single-handedly making a fashion statement with those plaid pants, I think!



L-R: Me, Miki Kato, Sister Maruoka (she was cuter with her glasses on).



The two aforementioned High School girls.



L-R: Horrocks, Eliason, MacKillop, me. We were draped with four of the five Ishihara kids. Yusuke is on MacKillop's shoulders.



L-R: Sister Tsukada, Miki, Sister Maruoka, and a couple of girls I don't recognize.



Front row: Imamura.

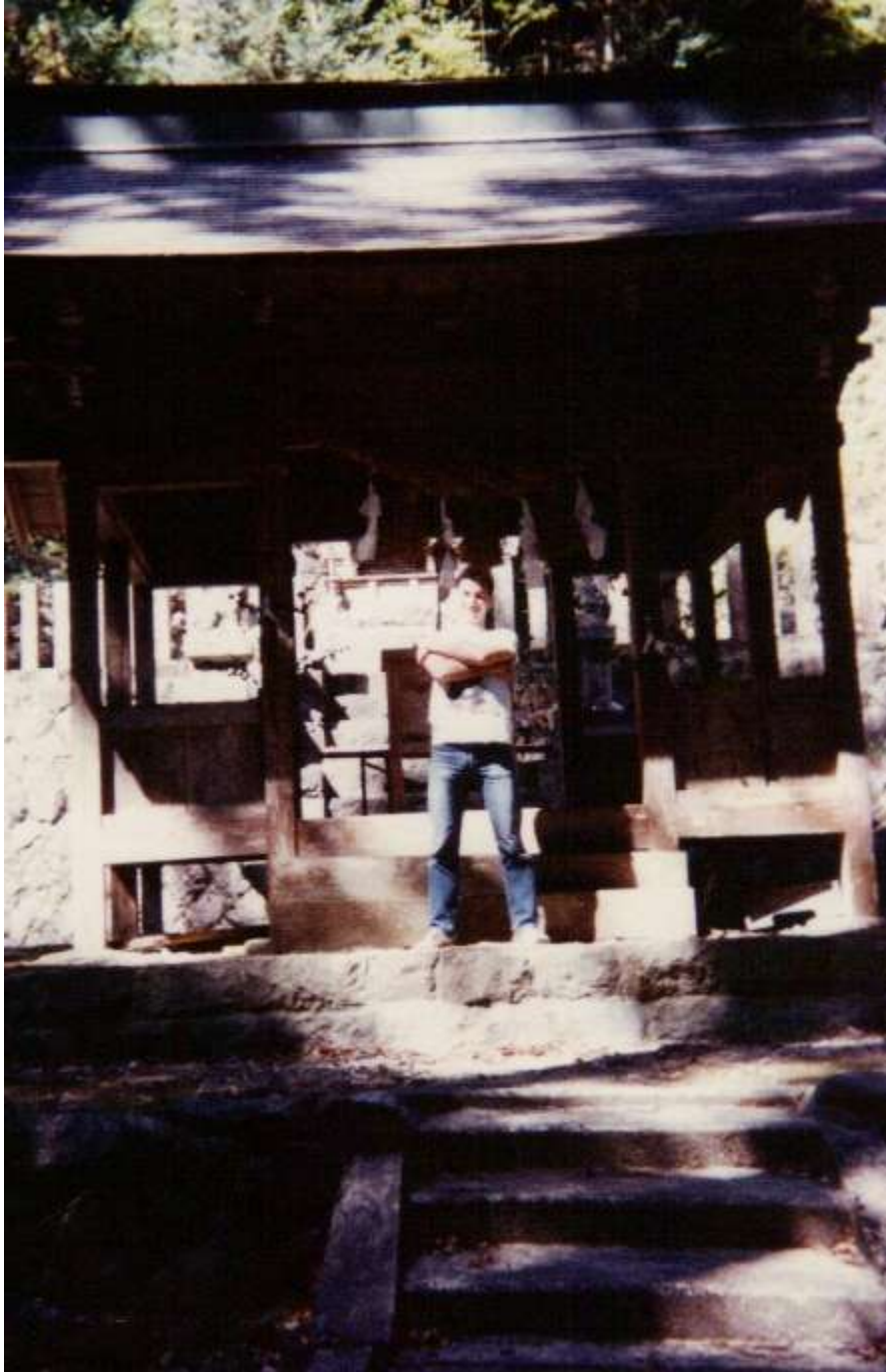
Back row, L-R: Me wearing my "Punkwheat" T-shirt, a guy I don't recognize, Eguchi's girlfriend, Eguchi himself.



Us again.



L-R: Brother Matsumoto (if I recall correctly), the guy I don't remember, me, Imamura, Eguchi's girlfriend, and Eguchi himself. Notice how the second guy is making a move for Eguchi's girlfriend's hand, while Eguchi is giving him the evil eye.



Me in front of another part of the Shinto shrine.

Tuesday, May 01, 1990—Day 119

Since today's May 1, we got to wear our short-sleeved shirts—no coats. I like it much better this way. **[It was a six-month cycle. May through October was short-sleeve shirt season, whereas November through April was long-sleeve shirt and suit coat season.]**

Before district meeting, Horrocks got a call from the mission president—he's transferring up north to Toyama on Thursday. My new companion will be Elder Oviatt. Horrocks used to live in a four-man apartment with him, and I've heard lots of stories about him, most with a negative connotation. Eliason

was his companion for two months.

We went to Nagoya castle where Keita's brother was in a kids parade where they wore samurai armor they had made out of cardboard. The four of us (Eliason and MacKillop too) were the only foreigners there—we got on lots of video cameras. Good public relations.

We went bowling with Miura at a high-tech bowling place. After that, we went to [the] Shinodas' to say goodbye, and they ended up buying us sushi. **[They took us to a small mom and pop sort of establishment. I forgot to ask for mine without the wasabi, and so I wound up scraping it out and ruining the appearance in the process. They expressed concern about the volume of rice which was wasted in the scraping-out process. I should've been more sensitive and just eaten it as-is.]** We got home when we should've been in bed.

PHOTOS 016

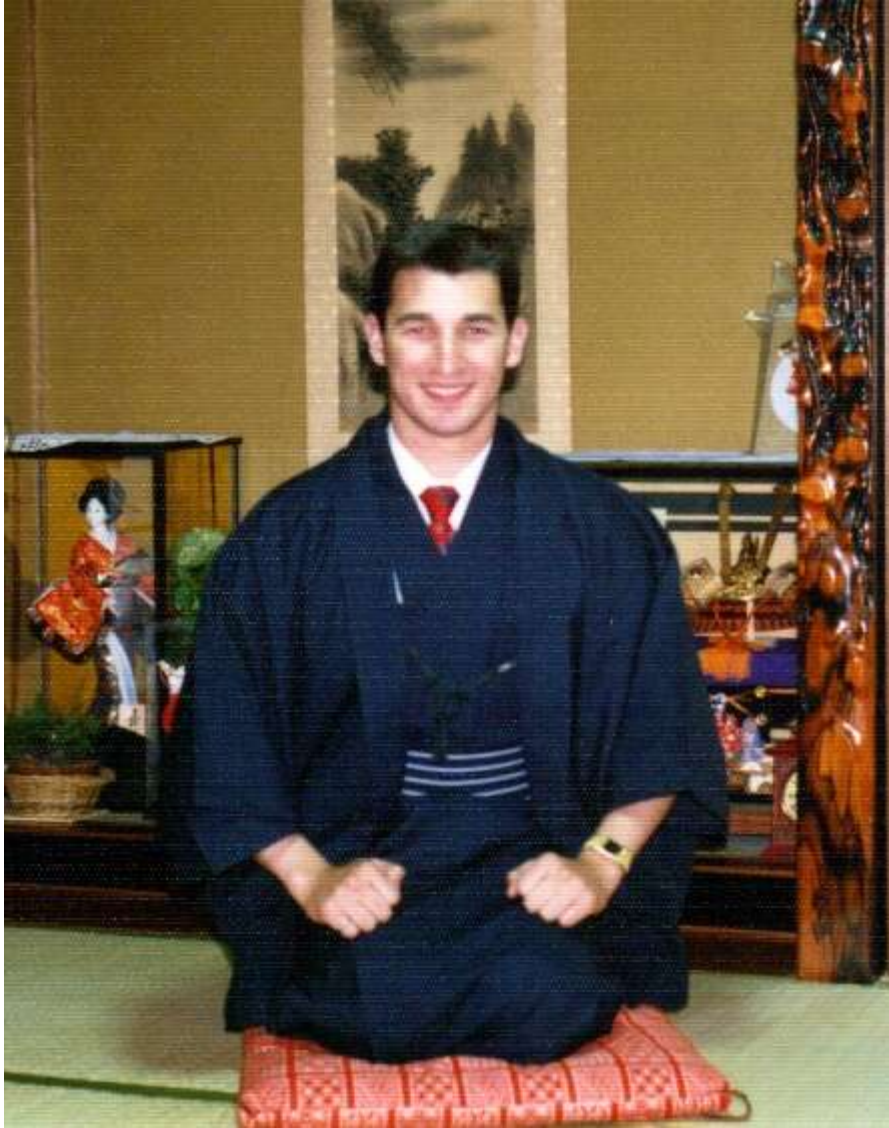


Front row, L-R: Horrocks, Yusuke (Keita's brother) in his paper samurai armor, Eliason.

Back row, L-R: MacKillop, me. This was taken in the grove of trees to the West of Nagoya castle after Yusuke's kids' parade.



Horrocks and me at the Shinodas'. They had dressed us up in kimonos, the traditional Japanese attire, for photo purposes. Although Americans often associate kimonos with women, these simpler, looser-fitting ones with subdued colors were (and sometimes still are) worn by men.



Me sitting Japanese-style, with my knees forward and all my weight on my calves.

Wednesday, May 02, 1990—Day 120

Horrocks was packing most of the morning, and we did service for Keita this afternoon. **[While Horrocks and Keita's mom were talking about his upcoming transfer,]** I made the comment "eternal goodbye" in connection with Horrocks. I found out later that his mom started to cry after hearing that.

We had ridden doubles on my bike 'cause Horrocks's **[bike]** was disassembled **[for his upcoming move]**. Keita's mom let Horrocks borrow hers **[for the ride back]**.

Today was Hayashi's birthday (he turned 19), and before his lesson, we gave **[i.e., threw]** him a mini-party. We gave him a bubble-blowing kit, a half-gag of sorts. The sisters were at the church too, so they joined us in our bubble-blowing activities.

We had dinner with Keita's extended family in her parents' house, which dated back to pre-war times. We got lots of sushi again—octopus, squid, eel, clam soup **[on the side]**, fish eggs, sea urchin, etc. I'm beginning to like the stuff.

Horrocks returned the bike, and they loaded mine into the back of a van and drove us home. Thus ended my last full day with Elder Horrocks.

[Now's as good a time as ever to make some final observations about Elder Horrocks, my trainer. I touched on this earlier, but one of his personal quirks was that he loved to shop for snacks. Japan does a lot of creative things with bread, and we were always stopping into the bread store for sugar toast, etc. Sometimes it was three times in one day!]

He was the only missionary I ever knew who actually gained weight while in Japan. Everyone else loses it. He showed me some pictures of his departure from the Salt Lake City International Airport, and I was rather surprised at how skinny he was back then.

Something funny happened once that I didn't mention: One day we were leaving a department store. While riding the escalator some girls behind us were talking about us, assuming that, as obvious foreigners, we didn't understand Japanese. One of them referred to Elder Horrocks as "the fat one." LOL!]

Thursday, May 03, 1990—Day 121

Spent the morning doing Horrocks's last minute packing, then we rode the train over to the mission home again. **[Horrocks had us ride a taxi from the train station to the mission home. Expensive, but better than hauling one's luggage, I guess.]** Lots of missionaries were there, as **[was the case]** with all transfers. **[Most people know that in Japan wearing shoes indoors is taboo. Well, there's a place behind every front door called a "genkan" where you're supposed to leave your shoes before stepping up into the main floor. During transfers, when the mission home was packed with missionaries, the mission home's genkan was full of shoes! You couldn't even see the original floor. It's a wonder everyone was able to find their own pair afterward.]** Gibson was there, too. Crud. I disliked him all over again.

I met Oviatt, my new companion. I'm going to miss Horrocks.

Rode the train back home and led the way back to the apartment. A small step for Oviatt, but a giant leap for me, 'cause for the first time I felt like I knew something.

I wish Horrocks had left better instructions as to how Oviatt needed to take over. I can tell already that he's going to be much better with paperwork. Finances, too. He's a courteous person; I appreciate it.

My back tire has a flat from riding doubles yesterday. It's a bummer. Oviatt's bike isn't here yet, so we walked mine to the church for an Eikaiwa party **[Remember, "Eikaiwa" refers to our English class]**. I found out that at least a few of the students would've rather had the actual class, 'cause it's different from their school, and we're Americans (except Oviatt—he's Canadian).

It's so hard not to flirt! Flirting is in my nature. It's a tough habit to break.

Afterwards, we walked back to **[the]** Tsuzuku's place, and he let us borrow a bike. Oviatt borrowed Eliason's, and I had brought a bike pump with us. So we rode home.

[Thus would begin my month-long odyssey with Elder Oviatt. I know I'll talk more about him in upcoming entries, but let me just say that I'm still in awe of the guy to this very day. He was like the original Terminator—single-minded and damn-near unstoppable. Not only was he an extremely hard worker, but he showed not an ounce of shyness or fear when proselyting. He was rewarded with lots of success for it, too.]

He never complained about anything. He had no psychoses, neuroses, or bothersome personality quirks.

On top of all that, he was humble, down-to-earth, personable, and non-judgmental. In short, he was, quite literally, everything the hierarchy wishes its missionaries would be. If there is or was such a thing as "super missionary," this was definitely him.

I determined that when I became senior companion, I would be like him and otherwise do things the way he did. Unfortunately, I fell far short of that ideal. I simply could never measure up to Elder Oviatt, no matter how hard I tried.]

PHOTOS 017



L-R: Sister Kitajima, me, and Horrocks behind the mission home. We'd just gotten dropped off by the taxi. Sister Kitajima's hobby at the time was missionaries, and she had pictures taken with as many of us as she could. This is the second shot she'd taken with Horrocks and me. Remember the first one?

Friday, May 04, 1990—Day 122

It rained hard all day today. We switched bikes back at Eliason's, and we found a bike shop where we

haggled with the guy to fix Tsuzuku's tire. Their way of thinking (the Japanese) is way different. Oviatt paid a lot for a new tire, after the guy had tried a few new inner tubes first. Confusing story, I know. We were wet and miserable by the time we got home.

On the way to the church to teach Hayashi, Oviatt stopped two guys and gave two Books **[of Mormon]** out! Right in a row!

Teaching Hayashi, he told him right out that this is the only true church—Buddhism, his parents' religion, isn't. I'll have to ask him tomorrow about that. **[I assume I meant that I'd have to ask Oviatt about the advisability of saying such a thing point-blank during a lesson—not whether or not what he said was true, since I certainly believed it at the time too.]**

We went to a sento, **[which is the word for a]** public bath house, again tonight, where he gave out another Book of Mormon. He talked to three guys today and gave out three books. Horrocks and I couldn't give out that many in a week.

Also, I've been determined to be really organized starting Sunday. Using his for an example, I developed my own system for keeping track of statistics. Oviatt liked it a lot. He's extremely organized. Now I can see how poorly organized Horrocks was in comparison.

Saturday, May 05, 1990—Day 123

We resolved the deal with him **[Oviatt]** saying to Hayashi that Buddhism wasn't true. He had only said his opinion only, and told him **[Hayashi]** that he'd have to find out for himself what's true.

In the park, we stopped and gave books out to two friends that were together—something Horrocks and I would never do. We always stopped single people—never **[people]** in groups.

Oviatt's really forward. At first I wondered what he was doing, but he always explained his methods. They always made perfect sense. Why argue with results? Four Books of Mormon total placed today. An amazing record for me, average for him.

He has no pride. He's always saying how he wants me to teach him, how he's looking forward to learning from me, etc. He tells me he has no skills, that it's all the Lord. He's also extremely non-judgmental, too. Not one prone to **[spreading]** rumors.

We met four guys tonight—one from Honduras, one from Bolivia, **[one]** from Costa Rica, and **[one from]** El Salvador. Three spoke very good English. Three said they wanted to meet with the missionaries back home, and one even said that he knew Mormons were good people and that he wanted to join the church. Of course, he had drank three beers by then.

At the Atsumis', Oviatt was really direct with them—and they opened up like never before. How about that! Even their little dog let him pet her—the dog always barked at Horrocks.

Sunday, May 06, 1990—Day 124

A guy was at church who lives in Orem and knew one of my old stake presidents. He was an old guy and he bore his testimony while Eliason translated. Miura was at church today, too. Surprise!

We taught Kubo and his concubine and her two kids. **[Kubo is the guy who'd met Horrocks at the Sento and tracked him down at church one Sunday.]** I wonder how they'll accept the Law of Chastity, since they're living together.

Coming back from streeeting, we saw a girl trying to get a bike tire pumped up. We both had tire pumps, so we stopped and helped her.

Since we were already talking to her, we kept going and placed a Book of Mormon with her. **[In retrospect, this should've come as absolutely no surprise. We had just rendered assistance; how could she have refused when she felt she "owed us one?"]**

We met and talked to a couple of people from America. One guy was black, and he used no slang or swear words. **[Yes, I am utterly embarrassed that I wrote that. I guess that back then I was still a victim of stereotype mentality. Why should I have found that noteworthy?]** Now, more than ever, I can see how respectable it is to use proper language. From now on, after my mission, as well as now, no more swear words for sure and I'll cut down on the slang. **[I've done pretty well on that count, I think. I rarely drop S- or F-bombs (when anyone else is around) and only do so when quoting someone or when it's absolutely necessary to make some sort of point.]**

Oviatt's awesome. As much as I love Horrocks **[missionary culture encourages the use of the word "love" as much as possible]**, I can now see how screwed up he was.

My only hope is that I'll be able to be as self-motivated as Oviatt is **[I wasn't]**. **[We placed]** four Books of Mormon today!

Monday, May 07, 1990—Day 125

Oviatt likes to sit around the apartment and do nothing on P-day like I do. It's nice.

Last night we went on a donut run and scored at both McDonald's and Mr. Donut. Most of the donuts were crushed and were not any good, but we retrieved more than enough to keep us from starving for quite a while. As it stands, our freezer is full of shrimp burgers. **[McDonald's in Japan has an Asiatic twist to its menu. In addition to shrimp burgers, you can get teriyaki burgers 365 days a year.]**

I got an awesome letter from Rikki today. She sent me a graduation announcement that was ultra nice. She also sent a graduation picture of herself. Oh, she looks nice. After seeing only Japanese faces for so long, you can imagine what a breath of fresh air that was **[variety being the spice of life and all]**.

I took a long nap today, the first nap since I've been in Japan. It felt nice.

Crud. All it ever does here is rain. I hate rain. I've come down with a slight cold due to it, too.

Tuesday, May 08, 1990—Day 126

I'm getting sick of writing in here every night.

My flat tire is making me mad. Being sick made it all the worse. Luckily we chatted and laughed a lot with the Sisters tonight to lighten things up.

Wednesday, May 09, 1990—Day 127

All we did was work today, and strange things happened. While we were sitting down waiting for me to finish a soda pop, a guy came up to us who had interest **[in our message]**.

After **[service with]** Keita, Oviatt asked his **[Keita's]** mom if it was okay if we gave Keita a blessing. She's going to ask her husband. It's about time someone had the guts to ask. Plus, while the guy at the bike shop near here that we always go to was fixing my tire, he **[Oviatt]** gave the guy a Book of Mormon. Missionaries have gone there **[for]** I don't know how many years, so it's about time. **[In retrospect, it would make little sense to alienate such regular customers, so maybe every set of missionaries had been giving him Books of Mormon from time immemorial. Maybe he had a big stack of them in his back room.]**

During our pickup lesson at the apartment with a couple of guys, Oviatt went way off track. Later I said

that I thought that the lesson was a flop, but it turned out that he was only resolving a concern and knew exactly what he was doing. I felt so bad after that for not trusting him. It was all my fault for getting irritated at him when he deviated **[from the lesson plan]**. Now I've learned: Always trust your senior companion. If there's a problem, wait 'till after **[the lesson is over before losing your cool]**.

Riding to the church, we saw a guy and some girl on the street in a big argument. Fearing it might have something to do with the Mafia **[or "Yakuza" in Japanese]**, we waited around to see if she needed our help. It cooled off after a while.

We placed five Books of Mormon today. Amazing! What are we doing right? Whatever it is, we'll have to duplicate it. **[It was]** a very eventful and interesting day indeed.

Thursday, May 10, 1990—Day 128

A while back I changed my ways and started getting up at 5:30 **[a.m.]** instead of 6:30 **[a.m.]** in order to get in all my studying (6:30 is totally legal **[according to mission rules]**). With this baseball deal twice a week, all this is really starting to wear me down.

My kids' class is hard, 'cause it's tough to find things that will keep them interested. **[I had been selected to teach the children's Eikaiwa (English conversation) class.]**

Would you be terribly offended if I left out a few things that are interesting but mean nothing to the overall mission? I hope not. **[Those are words I wrote in my actual journal; I'm not merely asking this now.]**

Friday, May 11, 1990—Day 129

During softball, it was great. I caught four hits into the outfield, missed another one, and caught another one—making five I caught total. Now I know I can do it. It feels so good!

The guy we met while sitting down the other day **[whose name was "Tatehana"]** didn't show up for his next lesson. He works nights, so he must've slept in.

Coming home, we talked to some guys who we found out sell drugs and stuff. What a life. They didn't seem too high-class at all. **[Did I conclude that before I found out they sold drugs, or after?]**

What a bummer. Missionary work isn't much fun. Of course, me not being able to understand anyone probably has a lot to do with that.

Saturday, May 12, 1990—Day 130

We four Elders taught English at that fire department I was telling you about. **[Actually, I probably didn't tell you about it. At any rate, Eikaiwa is the most effective way to find people to teach, so quite often missionaries will go overboard and set up miniature, quasi-unauthorized Eikaiwas everywhere they can. It gets ridiculous sometimes.]**

Later Oviatt and I ate a big dinner at **[the]** Shinodas'. Elder Perry was there, visiting from America with his wife. He had gotten home almost two years ago and was the one who baptized her **[i.e., he had baptized Sister Shinoda]**. His wife was somewhat arrogant with considering English to be superior **[to Japanese]**, etc. I forgot how rude a lot of foreigners get over here.

He told us he had seen our apartment and he **[also]** described it. Apparently it was just as bad c. three years ago as it was when I got here. I must've been the first one to do any effective cleaning in well over three whole years. Disgusting.

Sunday, May 13, 1990—Day 131

What a day. Everyone thinks it's weird that I never wear short sleeves with a suit coat, and I never wear long sleeves without a suit coat. I'm still a military man when it comes to clothing standards.

We had a huge stake priesthood meeting at our church. Van Cleave was there! It was good seeing him there. He's still in his 1st area, 1st companion. I told him that I saw Gibson last transfer. Same ol' Gibson. He hasn't changed.

We did a song in English during Sacrament Meeting that we'd been practicing for. Oviatt also gave a talk. He's been in Japan so long that he can whip out a good talk on anything without having to prepare.

We spent over 12 hours at the church today. We got 14 hours total. **[I no longer have any idea what I was talking about with that "14 hours total" comment.]** Oh, boy. And there'll be another donut run before the night is over.

Now for the heart of the entry.

Rikki (Rieko Yaguchi) has a pancreas problem, remember. A few weeks ago I got the idea that it might be good to give her a blessing to heal her. We are sent in the name of Jesus Christ, right? And what would Christ have done?

So today I asked her if she wanted a blessing and she said yes. **[I was wrong in doing this. According to the missionary handbook, or "white bible," one isn't supposed to offer to give a blessing. One is only supposed to give one when asked.]** We had an investigator and a fellowshipper to talk with, and she let them sit in on the blessing.

Oviatt did the anointing, and I sealed the anointing by her request. I tried my hardest to listen for the promptings of the Spirit. I'll tell you, I've never concentrated so hard in my life.

After reaffirming **[in English]** the fact that the Lord loves her, I added, or rather the Lord added through me (it's his priesthood), that very soon she'll be completely and totally better and that she'll be able to work as hard as anyone else. That's one of her sensitive spots, 'cause with a bad pancreas she often has no energy. **[Hmm, maybe that's my problem.]**

So, soon, it'll be as if she never ever had anything wrong with her body at all. I just can't wait to find out how soon it will happen. That's all I was prompted to say: Very soon she will be better, not immediately.

I feel really good about the whole thing. She requested I do it in English, which is the only way I could've done it well anyway. She asked me to speak slowly so she could understand it all. After it was over, the 1st thing she said was that she was able to understand every word.

She had tears literally streaming down her face. She was so thankful. She said she could feel the Holy Ghost. I could too, beyond doubt. What's comforting is knowing that the Holy Ghost bears witness of truth—sealing the fact that the blessing which we had sealed upon her was a true and valid one indeed.

I wonder what our investigator thought of that. He surely felt the Spirit and saw that it had made a deep impression on Rikki, even though he didn't understand English.

Rikki is a really good friend. It will be wonderful to see her totally healed. For now, we just have to have faith. Truly, faith is a gift from God.

[As an epilogue to this whole thing, I received a letter from her some months later. In it she mentioned her "crazy pancreas"—her words for her condition—as though nothing at all had changed. I put the whole blessing failure "on the shelf," as it were.]

Monday, May 14, 1990—Day 132

Our donut run didn't go so well. Our P-day was ruined, too. We hit Mr. Donut easy enough, but this guy was working out and around McDonald's, so we waited and waited, but the coast was never clear. So we gave up.

After answering the three letters I got, I was going to go back to bed, 'cause it was raining and we figured tennis was cancelled. But Sister Morita **[who also had happened to be my first Eikaiwa student]** called and said we were playing ping-pong at church instead.

Argh! She has to insist on ruining our P-day every week. Gads, lady, leave us alone. **[It's not uncommon to have some people—both members and non-members alike—who think it's cool to hang out with American missionaries, so they'll look for any excuse to do things with you. They always think they're doing you a favor, though, and never consider that you might have other ideas on how to fill your time. From what I've heard, this is commonplace worldwide, not just in Japan.]**

We were going with Brother Matsumoto to visit Kito, the inactive dude, but I drew the map wrong. I drew the wrong bridge on it—screwing it all up. We never did get to the guy's house.

I didn't get a letter from Theresa today. Maybe last letter had something to do with it. Two weeks ago, before leaving for the picnic, I let her know how bad I hated country music. **[She loved it and always wanted to play it. She would go to "country night" down at the old "The Palace" in Provo every week for country dancing. I went with her once and just sat around while she danced with all her male friends. I was a total fish out of water.]** She knows I dislike it, but I figure she's got to know sooner or later that I can't stand it. It's only fair. Of course, now she's free to rip on me for something. I wonder what she'll write back to me.

[The aforementioned letter turned out to be the kiss of death. I rather overdid it, for when she wrote me about a country song that reminded her of me, I wrote that I felt like jumping out our apartment window and head-diving into the pavement when I heard that. She brought it up to me almost two years later, and I could still feel the pain in her voice. Oops.]

Tuesday, May 15, 1990—Day 133

[We] had a bi-zone conference, and I saw Sisters Clark and Jew there. **[I had known them from the M.T.C..]** Sister Jew has her hair cut short and looks nice. Clark is in another threesome **[companionship]**. Van Cleave was there, too, and I got to rap with him quite a bit. He's so cool. He's still on his 1st companion.

Some guy named President Smith **[actually Douglas H. Smith]** of the 2nd Quorum of Seventy was there, and he's two spots above mission president Smith. He's Asian Area president or something. He says he's impressed with this mission. **[I later came to learn that visiting GAs often browbeat the missionaries, so I guess I was one of the lucky ones.]**

Oviatt had ordered 100 Books of Mormon, and so we each had to carry 50 books back. It sucked! After we got back to our **[train]** station, we took a taxi home.

[We] set a baptismal date with Hayashi, and we invited Kito to church and he said yes. An extremely successful day, yet I've still got a bad attitude. I never get to study, 'cause something like this **[mission conference]** or baseball always comes up. I must've changed—I'd rather study than play baseball.

PHOTOS 018



Sister Jew & me.



Me & Sister Clark. You'll hear more about her as this journal progresses.

Wednesday, May 16, 1990—Day 134

From now on I'm bringing my stuff and studying at baseball. **[i.e., instead of actually playing the game.]** I haven't studied in almost a week now for some dumb reason or another.

After district meeting, the gang surprised me with a birthday party! **[My birthday wasn't until the next day, but we were all together at this point for district meeting.]** There was shaving cream on the outside of the cake for frosting, and I accidentally tasted it. Yuck.

Ate a nice lunch with the Ishiharas and the inactive lady who referred them, Sister Arakawa.

We made a small card and bought another bubble-blowing kit for Yukako, the Atsumis' daughter. **[By "another," I'm referring to the fact that earlier, for Hayashi's birthday, we'd bought him a bubble-blowing kit as sort of a gag gift. He played along and blew bubbles right there in church.]** We **[went to her apartment and]** sang her "Happy Birthday." Her dad was on a walk, but she and her mom were smiling ear to ear. Poor girl! Today was her "Sweet 16th" and it looked like our visit was the most exciting thing that had happened all day. We invited her to our Eikaiwa party that I'm not supposed to know about.

Rhonda finally wrote again yesterday. She's been busy; that's why I haven't heard from her. Her last sentence was:

"I just want you to know that I miss you but I know how important it is to serve the Lord; and I'm patient!"

Patient? Wow! What could she mean by that? Hmmm.

My 21st Birthday—Day 135

What a day! Today's been one of, if not the, best birthday ever. First the Sisters and us went over to the Palmer's house, where she **[Sister Palmer]** and her friend gave me a few gifts. The friend who lives with her is the fluent English **[-speaking]** dental hygienist **[whom]** I may or may not have mentioned. Miki

[the name of the dental hygienist] gave me an electric pig that walks and squeaks, and Sister Palmer (Japanese—her husband's Canadian) gave me a little food and a very nice card that said some awesome stuff about me.

[Ahh yes, the Palmer family. I got to know them quite well, and much later on in my mission rubbed shoulders with them again. Our friendship continued after my mission as well. I met up with them a couple of times during mission reunions and a few more times at their home. The last time was when I brought my wife and stepkids over to introduce them all. Sadly, I haven't seen them in years.]

When I wrote that they gave me "a little food," among the food items was a cheesecake mix which turned out to be quite delicious. I found out later that Brother Palmer had been looking forward to it and wondered what had become of it. Oops!]

Before we left this morning, Mr. Atsumi came by and dropped off a gift—a tuna fish food thing that tastes pretty good. **[That's a very noteworthy thing about Japanese folks: They're way into gift-giving and paying back in kind and then some. I'm sure he gave me that gift not just because it was my birthday but mostly as payback for what we gave his daughter the day before.]**

I came to learn that you really have to be careful when you give a Japanese person something or do him or her a favor. You, the gift-giver, might consider it no big deal and think nothing more of it, but the next thing you know the person will come back and hand you something that they obviously went way out of their way to procure. Almost invariably it's something way better than what you originally gave them. That's their way of showing their appreciation, of course, but you start worrying about all the time and trouble you inadvertently put them through.]

My kids' class went well tonight. Afterwards the whole English class sang "Happy Birthday" to me. Lots of people gave me presents. I received a couple of nice neckties, an authentic **[American]** air medal given to Kubo by one of his friends, and some other things. After everyone had left, the missionaries brought out a couple more birthday cakes left for me by Sister Morita's husband, a non-member. **[Did he work at a bakery?]**

The missionaries gave me a card they all had made and signed. **[I still have that card, by the way.]** Wow. I received so much stuff and so much attention during the day that I feel so guilty!

I'm an adult, full-fledged, now. What a day today was.

[Now, at this point you might be asking yourself why I was turning 21 today and not 20. Obviously I went on my mission quite late; I was over 20 and 1/2 when I left.]

This wasn't due to some grievous sin I had to spend a year repenting of, however. It basically boiled down to money.

When I went in to see my bishop for a missionary interview, I was rather surprised by his lack of enthusiasm. It was almost like he was begrudgingly going through the motions. Over the weeks and months he dragged his feet for some inexplicable reason.

I forget all the details, but I eventually came to understand that it was a money issue. I had just gotten out of my active duty for training with the Marine Corps, and apparently my bishop had expected me to have a whole lot of money saved up. I had none whatsoever.

At the time I wasn't at all concerned about this state of affairs, thinking that the church would pay. I mean, c'mon, what 19-year old can possibly save up enough money to live without working for two whole years?

At any rate, we ended up moving, and I thought I'd have a better chance with the new bishop.

Well, he told me that I'd have to save up \$2,000 before I could go.

At the time I had no job—which translates to no money—so I didn't see how I'd be able to come up with that amount of cash and stay alive at the same time. I especially didn't see how I'd be able to come up with that much within a reasonable time frame. So I despaired of ever being able to serve a mission and thought it might never happen.

It wasn't until many months later that he finally called me in and encouraged me to go. I explained how my financial situation hadn't really changed, but this time he decided to cut me a deal wherein I'd save as much money as I could, then he'd go ahead and start the paperwork process.

And thus the ball finally got rolling. At the time I considered the whole ecclesiastical foot-dragging fiasco to be a "chastisement period," wherein the Lord was trying to teach me the importance of personal sacrifice instead of just relying on the church's coffers. Now, however, I see it as nothing more than browbeating. The church has way more than enough extra money to comfortably feed, clothe, and house every missionary on earth without a single dime from the missionary him/herself, but yet it chooses to squeeze the missionaries and/or their families for as much money as humanly possible instead. Disgusting.]

Friday, May 18, 1990—Day 136

During our lesson with Ote **[Kubo's live-in girlfriend]**, we had Sister Palmer there as a fellowshipper. Halfway through discussion one, Ote-san broke down and started crying! She said she's made some mistakes in her life, and she wants to find out how to get back on track. Sister Palmer cried, too. Such is the power of the Holy Ghost. I'm sure Sister Palmer now has a firmer testimony of what we, the missionaries, do. Hopefully the word will get out that yes, missionary work is good stuff after all.

We taught Shingo, the guy we picked up while sitting down, with Hayashi there. It was a good review for him **[Hayashi]**. Shingo felt the Spirit; he said he did.

We went around visiting members and inactives with Brother Ito, and he ended up enjoying it. He afterwards volunteered to help us again. That's another member who has a better testimony of missionary work.

At the fire station today, we talked to the highest-up guy. Talk about good public relations!

Saturday, May 19, 1990—Day 137

We taught Ote at the Palmers' earlier, then taught **[Shingo]** Tatehana with his member friend here at our place. The Spirit was there stronger with Ote, probably because she's older and this stuff is more important for her.

The Sisters said I was a good missionary, regardless of whether I can speak **[Japanese]** or not. They said it was your faith and effort and the Spirit that makes the difference.

Let me tell you, I want to be a good missionary so bad it hurts. It's my constant, driving obsession.

Sunday, May 20, 1990—Day 138

Rikki hasn't been better at all. When it rains, because of barometric pressure she goes through a lot of pain—and it's rained a lot. What's the deal? We gave her a priesthood blessing! I want her to get better so bad!

She gave me an extremely nice set of Japanese postcards for my birthday. She also gave me a letter, in which she let me know that **[Sister]** Maruoka has been very rude to her. **[I still remember that letter. She wrote that she'd asked Sister Maruoka what she could do to help out the missionaries—**

obviously thinking about fellowshipping, referrals, etc.—but Maruoka had merely replied, "If you want to help us, give us food!" She let Oviatt and [Sister] Tsukada know the same thing. Even Imamura has been getting complaints from various members about her.

That's a stumbling block. I can imagine it, knowing Maruoka, although I personally haven't had any problem with her. **[I was actually quite infatuated with her at the time, since she was quite cute. We crossed paths at various other times over the course of our missions, and it turned out that, after she became senior companion, all of her junior companions hated her guts. Even so, the two of us always got along well.]**

Rikki is such a good friend. She let me know how appreciative she is of me treating her nicely.

Monday, May 21, 1990—Day 139

Made a successful McDonald's run, after which I wrote letters then took a three-hour nap. After tennis, we had a pizza party to which came three guys Oviatt had talked to a couple of hours earlier. We made four returns in our grubby clothes with hardly any effort at all. **[I probably ought to clarify—Oviatt made four returns, not me, since my Japanese wasn't good enough to do such a thing yet.]**

I usually read the Book of Mormon a half hour a day, but I try to fit in other books if I can. I've finished the Pearl of Great Price; now I'm working on the Bible Dictionary. It's interesting.

Both Rikki and Theresa owe me letters.

PHOTOS 019



Me waving (of course). Sister Maruoka is facing away from the camera.



Me with my scriptures in hand. Yeah, I spent my time studying the scriptures instead of playing tennis; that's how dedicated I was at the time. Now that I look back, I really missed out on some quality human interaction that way.



First row, L-R: Eliason holding some kids I don't recognize, Eguchi, Oviatt.
Second row: Masami Ote and her two kids.
Third row, L-R: A woman I don't recognize, me, Elder Durham, Sister Maruoka. Too bad she didn't leave her glasses on, darn it!
Fourth row, L-R: Hayashi, Goto.

Tuesday, May 22, 1990—Day 140

I've decided that business comes before pleasure, and after I become fluent, then I'll play baseball.

While reading the Book of Mormon, one of the old guys we play softball against was watching us and looked at my scriptures. I ended up explaining that I had a Japanese copy of the same book, and **[then I]** gave him a book! My very first book **[placed with someone]** in total Japanese! Oviatt was playing, so he never helped at all—'twas totally me and the Lord. **[Missionaries are almost phobic about taking any credit for themselves. The story of Moses being cursed for bringing forth water from the stone but failing to give God the glory looms large. Missionaries feel that if they don't give God His due, then God will "jinx" things by not giving the missionary any more success for a while.]**

I never write anyone else's trials or experiences in here, 'cause it's my journal. Admittedly, though, my relations with others are what make up the whole picture of my mission experience. However, suffice it to say that the members are having a tough time with Maruoka 'cause of the lower-level Japanese she uses on them. **[In Japanese, the pronouns and verb conjugates you should use will vary according to the social rank of yourself vs. the person to whom you're speaking. You'll typically use a more polite or honorific form when addressing somebody else, since the idea is to exalt the other person. Chances are Sister Maruoka wasn't doing that. This sort of thing is extremely ingrained in Japanese speech and society; it's not a mistake you can just make without realizing it.]** None of us knew what to do, when all of a sudden she got a transfer call. She's heading a little ways north to the Gifu zone. Guess who's going to be transferring into her place?

None other than Sister Chandler!!

Now Tsukada has had two companions out of that threesome. First Fisher, and on Thursday, Chandler. However, I'm about due for a transfer, so it may only last a couple of weeks, but it'll be fun seeing her again.

However, I'm glad I've got Sisters in my district, 'cause it gives me the opportunity to grow by overcoming liking them. **[i.e., liking them more than a friend.]** My mission is so important, I don't dare risk a thing. I may have found Chandler attractive before, but that's where it ends. Period.

Maruoka was cute, though. I'll miss her somewhat.

PHOTOS 020



L-R: Me, Oviatt, Sister Tsukada, Sister Maruoka, Eliason, MacKillop. This was our last district meeting together before Sister Maruoka transferred.

Wednesday, May 23, 1990—Day 141

I forgot—yesterday we met a guy and his wife and kid who are in our ward, but we never see them because they work on Sunday.

The guy had a friend in the Marines who died in one of the actions a few years ago, and so he opened a barber shop and called it "Marine Corps" 'cause he thought the name was catchy, I guess. How about that—"Marine Corps" means something other than the organization I'm in. **[He gave me one of his "Marine Corps" business cards. I still have it to this day.]**

After softball today, Oviatt gave out four books and made three return appointments—our most effective use of softball proselyting yet.

We made a return a week ago with a guy in Sakae who didn't seem to have a lot of interest. Kurita **[his**

last name] showed up anyhow, and his attitude has totally changed. It's amazing what just a little contact with the missionaries will do.

We visited the Kondos, and he brought out some notes he had taken on his mission. His American companion would teach him the English bad words, and he **[Brother Kondo]** taught him the Japanese bad words. I was shocked somewhat, but it made me laugh.

Thursday, May 24, 1990—Day 142

I was too tired to study this morning. I hope I have the energy and desire to do my job once I go senior.

The Z.L., **[Elder]** Reynon, did an hour long split in order to teach Hayashi. I went out **[proselyting]** with Elder Rich, who went into the M.T.C. the same day as **[my friend]** Spencer did.

Tonight I met Chandler again. She had an American companion for nine days before this. Surprisingly (and happily), her Japanese is only marginally better than mine. **[I made that comment because she'd apparently been placed with a Japanese companion for well over two months before that American one, so I thought her Japanese would be way better than mine. I was happy to discover that mine was nevertheless almost as good as hers.]**

Friday, May 25, 1990—Day 143

Lon **[Hall]**, the Canadian who attends our ward, set up a deal at the school where he works so that we could present a quick introduction to our church. **[Probably under the pretense of "culture day" or something like that.]** The four of us spoke on a different aspect of Mormonism (mine was on what missionaries do and why I am one), and we taught all that to three separate classes. We weren't too good at first, but by the last class we were each rockin' and rollin' (in English—**[it was an]** English school).

[I still remember the presentation made by Elder MacKillop; he gave a rundown of the Book of Mormon. He at first described Lehi's journey and landing. On the chalkboard, he drew a line going from East to West and said (paraphrasing), "Lehi's family landed in, let's say California." Even back then I was appalled at his extreme lack of knowledge of both the geography described in the Book of Mormon and of geography in general. First, there's no narrow neck of land North of California, thus excluding it as a candidate for Lehi's landing; second, you can't possibly touch down in California if you sail West from the Arabian Peninsula!]

After the 2nd class, a Filipino girl **[named Carmen]** asked me what I think is the best thing about what I believe.

This girl was really with it all the way through and I can tell she's spiritually sensitive.

I told her that the best thing about Mormonism is that there is a way provided so that people can know for themselves whether or not our message is true. Then I went into more detail on the Book of Mormon.

She asked if we had a copy of the Book of Mormon that we don't use. Heck, we give them out all the time! So I gave her one—in English. She was very grateful.

I'm excited for her. I bet she'll be baptized.

Eliason did his **[presentation]** on the Word of Wisdom. He did a great job. We had pamphlets for them to take and the Word of Wisdom ones went like wildfire. We also gave out lots of English class flyers—lots. We'll be seeing a lot of these people again, soon.

The Spirit was there when I talked about the Book of Mormon. That was one of the best experiences of my mission so far. She was Catholic, so it made it a lot easier. I never got her name, but man, after this,

I really wish I was in a place with a Christian background!

(It was an all-girls school, by the way.) **[We ran into one of our Eikaiwa students in the hall. She walked up to Oviatt and, right out of the blue, pinched both his cheeks and worked them around for a split second. Oviatt was "astonished beyond measure," but I thought it was pretty funny.]**

Alex also talked to us tonight about "destinology," a Chinese art where you divine a person's personality and future circumstances by their birth date. Scary stuff. I'll bet it works. **[Because]** if it's not from God, it's of the Devil, as it were.

[Alex told us that when he interviews someone for a job or whatever, he merely asks their birthday, looks it up, then knows whether to hire them or just put their application into the shred pile. Thanks to destinology, he's able to tell right off the bat whether the person is honest and upstanding or not—according to him, at least.]

Saturday, May 26, 1990—Day 144

We stayed in the apartment until late so that Oviatt could work on our area book, and I got in lots of extra studying. It was nice. **[An "area book" is a 3-ring binder in each missionary apartment which has sheets full of information on various current and former investigators so that, when missionaries transfer out, the new ones can just read the book and pick up where the previous missionaries left off. A time-saving device, if you will.]**

We taught Mano Osamu, who's easy to teach. It's very nice! There was a "gyoza" **([the word for a] Japanese food [item—"pot stickers" as they're called in America])** party afterwards, and he really fit in. He's so funny! Not many Japanese **[people]** can have fun like he does. **[I blame their educational system. The conventional wisdom goes that if kids are constantly buried under mounds of homework, they'll be too busy and overworked to go delinquent. That's indeed how it works to a great extent, but they also get all the happiness and sociability worked out of them, too.]**

Riding home with him, Oviatt bumped into a taxicab with his handlebar. The taxi driver stopped us and threw a fit, 'cause we didn't say we were sorry. Osamu tried to explain that to Americans, if the car is O.K., they don't need to say "sorry." It took some crossing guards (or whatever they are **[they were actually foot-patrol policemen]**) to calm the guy down. He complained about Americans stomping all over **[the]** Japanese. I think that subconsciously the Japanese think we are superior. **[Yes, I'm embarrassed that I would ever write such a thing. In my own defense, I probably wrote that due to A) their pop-cultural obsession with all things American, and/or B) the fact that I may have been still pissed off over the incident when I wrote the entry.]** They know that we are better looking, that's for sure. **[In hindsight, I was probably mistaking the novelty with which they hold varied hair and eye colors for that. Not a whole lot of diversity in either of those two departments in Japan.]**

[You might be wondering how our little run-in got resolved. Well, after lots of back-and-forth arguing, the cop figured out that beneath all the rhetoric, all the taxi driver wanted was an apology. After he asked us if we'd apologize to the guy, we readily did so. Problem solved.]

So much for Chandler. She's just another sister.

PHOTOS 021



Me with the attendants of a service station that was having its grand opening. Yeah, I was quite the extrovert.

Sunday, May 27, 1990—Day 145

I was assigned and bore my testimony in church today **[in which I made a flub that made the whole congregation laugh]**. Had a fireside on faith afterwards.

We taught Kurita tonight, and Kito **[the inactive guy]**, of all people, was our fellowshipper. Kind of like hitting two birds with one stone. Kurita is progressing nicely—he believes in God now.

We dropped in on Nagae—Horrocks and I never saw him after that nice French dinner, 'cause we didn't know how to thank him for all that **[expensive food]**. Poor excuse, I know.

Today an idea hit me—after my mission, I'll write a book about my Boot Camp experience! I know I can fill more than 100 pages. I've never seen a book strictly from a recruit's point of view on Boot Camp only. And if it gets published—financial security! My dream come true!!!

[I didn't start writing the book 'till the Summer of 1996. I lost steam and gave up on it soon afterward.]

PHOTOS 022



Sister Tsukada, me, and Sister Chandler outside the church. This would prove to be my last Sunday in my first area.

Monday, May 28, 1990—Day 146

Today was nice. I had only two letters to write, so after our successful McDonald's run I slept in a while. Got two more letters and answered them right off.

Sister Morita's husband said I was a good teacher and that his daughter remembers what I teach them. Apparently all the kids are learning. That's my objective—for them to learn and have a good experience with English so they'll be better off when they start learning it in school.

Bought a convenient bike lock, one that fits through the spokes with a turn of a key. **[Of course, that wouldn't stop a would-be thief from just tossing the whole bike in the bed of a pickup truck and driving off, but luckily pickup trucks are rare in Japan.]**

I don't care so much about not getting letters from Theresa anymore. I'm a missionary. In a way, I'm kind of glad I had a girlfriend to start with, for I could overcome her and know for myself how dedicated I am to the work. **[There I go again with the "the world revolves around missionary work" mentality. Sure, having a girlfriend beforehand might've proven something to me, but what about how she**

felt? Not only that, but switching roles a little, I wouldn't be too happy knowing someone was trying to "overcome" me. Hopefully I've grown up a little since then.]

PHOTOS 023



Front row, L-R: Eguchi, Stratton, Elder Taylor (he was the other junior companion who lived in Stratton's apartment).

Middle row, L-R: Masami Ote with her two kids, Sister Morita with her daughter, Ryoko.

Back row, L-R: Oviatt, Goto holding Mindy (Sister Palmer's daughter), Sister Palmer herself, me, Sister Morita's husband Kiyoshi.

Tuesday, May 29, 1990—Day 147

What a day. I hope I can remember it all.

[We] Made the mistake of eating a lot of our McDonald's loot. After district meeting we (the four elders) went and visited an old guy who wanted to start up some sort of English class thing, and he went around asking us what we studied in college. I had to explain that I didn't go to college; I was in the military. I hate telling old guys that, 'cause chances are they had a best friend or a brother blown away by us. He ended up saying that he studied at a military college and was a major, and he mainly fought the Chinese. Oviatt said he may still be a little bitter, though. The fact is, they got their butts kicked by us and they know it.

We ate at **[the]** Ishihara's **[house]** with Sister Arakawa. They fed us hamburgers, of all things. Arakawa was acting like a spoiled kid, complaining and all. I guess she's rebelling against the church.

[We] went and met Hayashi's mom, and she fed us sushi and we had fun playing a few easy card games. Nice lady.

Met Brother Takahashi at the church, and Oviatt put a two-inch rip into the crotch of his pants while rescuing two baby birds that had fallen into one of the window wells.

We tracked down an inactive guy who worked at one of the military air bases. When he came up **[to the front gate after being paged]**, he wouldn't shake Oviatt's hand. He said he'd never met missionaries before and remembers nothing. If that were the case, why would he have been so mad? He didn't do a good job at lying.

After **[tracking down and]** visiting another **[inactive]** guy whose face was malformed on one side **[his left eye was way high and off to the side]**, Brother Takahashi took us out for steak to eat **[which was no small favor, since there's so little beef to come by in Japan]**. Oh, am I stuffed. After that we came back and gave his wife a blessing 'cause she's been really sick—cancer, maybe? She's the one who wanted to be the fellowshipping for the Atsumis. Speaking of whom, we dropped in on her today, too.

Tonight I received a transfer call from President Smith—I'm going to Okazaki, and my new companion's name is Elder Cloward. It's close to where Oviatt used to be. I'd rather not have transferred, since things are starting to rock and roll, but in a way it's relieving, 'cause there's no more baseball to contend with, no tennis on P-day, and hopefully no more kids' class **[I was right on all three counts]**. It's not too far from here, so it shouldn't cost a whole lot **[to get there]**, I hope. Plus, I'll be in a four-man apartment—a new experience indeed. It's got a really big ward, from what the President said.

Wednesday, May 30, 1990—Day 148

The Lord answers prayers. I prayed for all to run smoothly with my transfer, and we got my stuff off really easily. Plus, I feel **[like]** I'm well on the road to repentance.

I wanted to study during baseball, but this morning a guy ended up telling me about the history of Okazaki and stuff. I never did get anything done.

Keita's mom gave me more pictures—taken over the space of a month.

The Sisters called, and I said goodbye to them then. Tsukada wants doubles of the pictures I've taken—I wonder why? Hmm. . .

Thursday, May 31, 1990—Day 149

Baseball is nothing like it used to be. Almost no one showed up. I talked to this waste who rambled on and on about how he hated religion and other stupid stuff. What an idiot. There are a lot of degenerate people here in Japan, no kidding. I was trying to study anyhow, and I wasted a Book of Mormon introduction and my time on the guy.

Saw Sister Larsen at the mission home for transfers and got a picture of her. Sister Clark and Elder Van Cleave were there, too. I was talking to a member at first, and he **[Van Cleave]** said **[that]** my Japanese is better than his. I don't know. Sister Clark remembers how I would skip the temple **[endowment sessions]** to write letters **[in the lobby]**. Sheesh! She remembers that? **[To this day, it never ceases to amaze me what hardcore temple commandos new missionaries are. They talk as though getting to attend the temple is the be-all, end-all of their existence. As for me, I just never understood the appeal.]**

Elder Cloward is a person I recognized well from before, **[from]** previous transfers I suppose. For some reason, he's the guy I pictured. I have the feeling that a lot is going to happen with my new companion, one way or another.

I used the last picture on my roll of film. Can't wait to get these developed. It was one of those disposable lens/film deals.

I rode the train for a ways out here and fell asleep during the trip, so I'm not sure how far out I am. A ways east of my old area.

My new apartment is big and very convenient. I got all unpacked and settled in; this place is great.

I taught the advanced class at English class. They asked questions about the military and how the church fit into that. **[In Japan, people equate Mormons with the Jehovah's Witnesses. They often assume that Mormons are all strident pacifists who refuse to donate blood, etc.]** The Japanese have no concept of war or why it exists. They can't understand following orders or having to kill someone **[in war]**. Oh, brother. **[It's weird. The Code of Bushido, Samurai Spirit, etc. that seemed to have its zenith in World War II has been completely exorcised from the Japanese collective unconscious. Their former reputation as being a warlike bunch is now 180° removed from reality.]**

My stuff got here before I did. Convenient, eh?

[And thus I had left Fukutoku behind, transferring to my second area, Okazaki. Fukutoku was essentially contained in downtown Nagoya and was more or less flat territory. On the other hand, Okazaki, or "pinnacle of the hill," had (appropriately enough) lots of hills and steep inclines. Although it was a thriving town in its own right, it was far enough removed from Nagoya that it had a bit more nature mixed in; it wasn't 100% concrete jungle. It was a beautiful place. For some reason, probably because of Japan's plentiful (to put it mildly) rainfall, it was quite a bit more lush than what I'm used to here in the United States.]

Now for my final thoughts on Elder Oviatt. I ran into him once or twice more during the mission, then once again at a mission reunion a year or so after I returned home. To this day, I'm amazed at the caliber of missionary he was. Obeying the rules, never complaining, working himself to the bone, stopping and talking to everyone, placing lots of Books of Mormon, making loads of return appointments, getting along with everyone, and all the while being the epitome of humility and politeness—the guy was a machine. It's more than plain that the hierarchy wishes that every missionary was a carbon copy of him. As for me, I never could figure out how he did it.]

PHOTOS 024



My first transfer.

L-R: Cloward, Sister Larsen, me, Elder Scott (who was a month ahead of me in the M.T.C.).

Friday, June 01, 1990—Day 150

Cloward is a little more laid back, I think, than Oviatt was—plus there shouldn't be as many (if any) early morning things. I'm so looking forward to studying!

We did some service at a handicapped center, where we worked making fireworks packages along with them. They had music playing, and it was nice and laid back. Much more fun than **[service for]** Keita was, much as I love the kid. Normally I can't handle mentally handicapped people, but they didn't look a whole lot different than regular Japanese folks, a lot of whom look somewhat downs-syndromic anyhow.

Got my pictures developed today, finally. Now they're all arranged nice and neatly, in order in their albums. **[Whenever you get a roll of film developed in Japan, they'll give you cheap little photo booklets into which you can slide your pictures.]** One thing's for sure, this sure will be a well-documented mission.

Thanks to lots of prayer, my Japanese is rapidly improving. It's getting exciting **[to be finally able to speak to people]**.

Saturday, June 02, 1990—Day 151

[We] streeted with no success at all. I feel really disoriented, 'cause I was so used to my old area. It should get easier as I meet the members.

We had a three-family joint dinner tonight with some members. **[One guy offered to teach me Japanese on my P-days. I declined the offer as politely as I could, since I'd much rather study at**

my own pace out of a book. If a native attempts to teach you his or her own language, there's no telling how qualified he or she is to effectively do so—sort of like how, in America, not everyone is qualified to be an English teacher.] It was lots of fun. I'm glad I know enough Japanese to at least get to know people better. There are lots of cool members here that I've met so far.

The other guys in the apartment are Sparks, the District Leader, and Brough **[his junior companion]**.

Cloward talks a lot—it's hard, 'cause I end up tuning a lot of it out—and then I have to have him repeat himself if I think he's just said something important.

Sunday, June 03, 1990—Day 152

The members always have a certain problem—when they read my name, they always say it sounds like "*****" and laugh hysterically as though they were the ones who made it up or something. It wouldn't be so bad, but they always say "*****" 'cause they can't pronounce "V"s. That's a totally different word. Once or twice of that "joke" wouldn't bother me, but after 99 times it gets somewhat boring. They also say my name is hard. Heck, it's spelled out nice and easy **[on my nametag]** the way it sounds! (in the Japanese equivalent, of course.) Their names are what are hard. Holy crud.

I'm not sure how good **[at missionary work]** Cloward is. I think my month with Oviatt will set the standard of how I want to run my show when I'm senior. It may even turn out to have been the "golden age" of my mission.

It's about time I made a list of all the foreign countries from which I've met people.

SENEGAL—NEW ZEALAND—CANADA—GREAT BRITAIN—WEST GERMANY—THE PHILIPPINES—
BOLIVIA—AUSTRALIA—COSTA RICA—EL SALVADOR—NICARAGUA—SWITZERLAND—
NORWAY—SRI LANKA—ISRAEL—BRAZIL—MALAYSIA—GUINEA—INDIA—DENMARK—BELGIUM—
THAILAND—FRANCE—FINLAND—MEXICO—PAKISTAN—TAIWAN—GHANA—SPAIN—
COLOMBIA—BANGLADESH—CHINA

I'll leave room for more to be added later. **[As such, that list was compiled over the course of my entire mission; it wasn't a list of the countries from which I'd met people to this date. I forgot to add "KOREA" to that list. Since everybody in Japan is of the same racial stock, it's easy to spot people who aren't from there, hence the reason I was able to meet so many people who were from foreign nations.]**

There are a lot of weird people in Japan. It's amazing. You get some real dorks. I fear **[that]** that's one of my trials I may have to overcome here—trying to love all **[people]** unconditionally. After the Marines, though, I have little patience for class-B's and 2nd rates—and none at all for the obese or the insane. Oh, there are some real fools here in Japan. Woe is me.

Monday, June 04, 1990—Day 153

Another P-day has come and gone. I was really wired for some reason, probably 'cause I was listening to music. I couldn't figure out anything to do. I wanted to draw, but was too tense to do it well. For once, I had all the time I needed, but couldn't figure out what to do. Probably 'cause I had no letters to write, I just sent out postcards for the most part telling **[people]** my new address. I also sent Rhonda pictures at her request. Tsukada wants some of my pictures, too—so I've got some for her ready to go.

Went to go lift weights with Kato for an hour—**[he was]** the guy we taught my first day here. Coming back, he lit up a cigarette—stupid jerk. Right in front of us. He hasn't smoked in two years—he just took it up again to get attention from us. Idiot. He's always trying to bargain with us to let him drink coffee or whatever for as much **[of a]** percentage of the time as he can "get." **[For example, on that first day, Kato told us that scientists had found out that coffee was good for you, but Cloward responded that conventional wisdom was often wrong. He specifically used the example of everyone**

originally assuming that the world was flat.] From now on we're not going to fool with him. When he quits it all, we're game.

We didn't do a donut run **[the night before]**, so I wasn't tired at all today.

We taught Eikaiwa (I'm calling it that from now on—its real name; not "English Class") down at the other Elders' area. My companion and I had the kids' class again, where we basically babysat. No parents in the room.

Tuesday, June 05, 1990—Day 154

I "slept in" 'till 6:15. It wasn't worth it. I should've been up at 5:30 to study like usual.

We had district "pass-offs" today, where we practiced teaching lesson 1.1. The APs and the **[mission]** president and his wife were there, and I got my first interview after being out. Cloward told me that during his **[own]** interview, the President was really relieved about me and said he was glad I was so "obedient." Is that what's being said about me? Great! It's my goal to always carry my own weight and never become a stumbling-block.

Cloward's cool, but he may be a little more "fuke" than normal. **([The word "fuke" is]** short for "fukappatsu," or "inactive." **[In missionary parlance, it]** means "unruly" or "wayward.") He's got some music that's good but not church-related **[like Enya, for example]**, and a few TIME magazines. He goes home in three or so months and is still only a regular senior **[companion]**, while Sparks has been out a lot less and is district leader. The temptation to go a little fuke is strong, but I'll have to resist. The rewards for being good are better than the penalties for being bad.

Wednesday, June 06, 1990—Day 155

I let Cloward in on Oviatt's technique of being slightly forceful, and it worked.

We went looking for a certain video for our Eikaiwa party tomorrow. Man, there's a lot of pornography in those places **[i.e., in video rental stores]**. It would be so much easier to avoid if only I didn't like the stuff so much.

Heaven only knows how much left I have to learn, but I think I'm getting the hang of this mission.

Thursday, June 07, 1990—Day 156

This morning we rode the train to Kariya for zone pass-offs. Kariya is Oviatt's old area. In the church, I saw a picture of Sister Woodward—the guy who baptized her investigator is in that ward **[i.e., the Kariya ward]** and just got off his mission, I guess.

I hate it when we have stuff going on in the mornings, 'cause then I can't study. One thing this mission has taught me, that's to enjoy studying.

Dan sent me a letter using my envelope that I sent him. He preached at me again. I hate it when he does that. **[Unfortunately for me, Dan had left on his mission before I did, so no matter how long I'd been out, he had always been a missionary longer than me. This gave him perpetual justification to lecture me about missionary work.]**

We had an awesome party at Eikaiwa. I admit, I had a fun time talking to a bunch of women who are in this tennis club together. Wow! I think I'm almost at the point to where I can carry on simple conversations with people. At least I was doing well tonight. Still, everyone is amazed that I've only been at it **[for]** five months. I'm amazed, too. I even freaked out an American returned missionary who **[had]** served here when I told him **[that]** I got here only three months ago.

Friday, June 08, 1990—Day 157

These guys at a department store fixed my watch for free, as a service deal of some sort. **[Not a literal "deal;" I should've omitted that word entirely.]** Awesome! I doubt they would've done it if I were Korean, though. Lots of prejudice between those two countries.

Tonight we visited some women whom we're trying to either reactivate or obtain referrals from. Two of them are 25-27 years old and unmarried. Japanese female church members have it really tough, since there are so few decent male members who are single. Most single males in the church **[in Japan]** are jokers or losers, and the women are no longer willing to settle for the non-member scumbag husbands who are chauvinistic, etc. **[as is the custom in Japan]**. So many **[LDS women]** just don't/can't get married. Really nice girls, too. It's sad. **[Yeah, God forbid the unthinkable tragedy of a woman staying single, right?]**

Saturday, June 09, 1990—Day 158

Today I bought myself a "kapa"—a plastic/nylon rain suit. At first I tried to ignore the rain, but after I was thoroughly drenched it lost its novelty. The rest of the day I rode around without a problem in my new kapa. I'll be dry in the rain from now on, which will be very convenient. **[Of course, this didn't protect me from the cloudbursts that caught me unawares after I was out and about.]**

We went housing my second time so far. **[Elder Cloward was much more into street contacting.]** No success.

I'm getting excited to make my own set of flip charts. I won't be junior companion forever, but finding the time to do it will be a challenge.

Cloward and I talked some stuff over, and from now on our study time should be very effective. Starting July 2nd (the day before my 25% mark), I will be speaking nothing but Japanese, except at Eikaiwa or to a missionary who's been out less **[time]** than me or when speaking about Japanese usage.

[Cloward told me a rather funny true story about his language-learning philosophy. He said that during the first part of his mission he refused to study the language, thinking that if he studied it, it would demonstrate a lack of faith in the Lord's ability to bless him to learn it. I asked, "So, now that all this time has passed, how do you feel about that philosophy when you look back on it?" He replied, "I think it's the stupidest thing I've ever heard!"]

I got a letter from Daren today—the first I've heard from him in over three months. He's already seen eight baptisms—and he says it's not a whole lot!!! **[In Nagoya mission parlance, "see" a baptism meant "have" or "get" a baptism. Since the Lord is supposed to get the credit, we tended to use the passive voice for fear of being boastful or otherwise incurring the Lord's disfavor. Hence, what I meant was that Daren had already gotten eight baptisms.]** That truly makes me sick. **[Remember, at this stage, I hadn't had any baptisms, much less eight. I hadn't even witnessed one take place.]** Put any of these Japan elders there, and they'd see twice that many in that amount of time, though.

Sunday, June 10, 1990—Day 159

At church I wrote down and quizzed myself on lots of members' names. We had a turkey dinner at church courtesy of Maki Kyodai ("Kyodai" = "Brother" in Japanese). He rarely bathes and has long, unkempt hair. The **[member, not missionary]** sisters hate him. After the ultraclean-imaged Marine Corps, I have a low tolerance of such people.

Tonight we visited a guy who used to be 2nd Counselor to the bishop, then went fuke (inactive) after his wife left him. Watching "What is Real," he recognized one of the two Elders in the show. One of them is

Japanese **[Okinawan, to be specific]** and was here in Okazaki during his real mission. There was a picture of him sitting in the exact same chair I was—how about that. **[Although I don't think we ever saw this guy again, he was the epitome of politeness and generosity. He gave me a picture frame that I still have to this day. In retrospect, the idea that we could simply show him a church video and expect him (or anyone else) to return to church was pretty naïve.]**

Japanese folks don't discipline their kids. They think it'll make them mentally unstable if they do. They are extremely surprised when you tell them that **[in America]** even members slap their kids. Thus, their **[i.e., Japanese]** kids end up being spoiled brats like Maki Kyodai, whose folks gave him a nice car with a car phone and all which he's been in five wrecks in so far. He's 21 years old.

Too bad it's only the girls that are fun to talk to. I'm worried about my missionary image.

PHOTOS 025



Me in front of the church. The red bike wasn't mine; mine was the one parked against the wall.

Monday, June 11, 1990—Day 160

We had quite the donut run last night. Cloward and I stayed awake and just went, and it took us three hours, in which we hit Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald's, and Mr. Donut. McDonald's yielded three hamburgers only, and Mr. Donut had put some stuff in the donuts to make them taste funny so they wouldn't be stolen. At least Kentucky Fried made it worth it. We had lots of close calls with neighbors, dogs, cars, cops, etc. Truly exciting.

After that I wrote letters, then went to bed at 4:30 **[a.m.]** and got up at 12:00 **[p.m.]**.

By copying your seniors' **[photographic]** negatives, you can go through your mission without a camera and come back with plenty of pictures. Likewise, you can copy his music and be fine. I'm beginning to build up a small music collection. P-days will be far better from here on out. **[Missions around the world vary widely when it comes to the rules they implement, all depending on the president. Some missions have relatively few rules beyond the standard ones in the "white handbook," whereas other mission presidents are micromanagers and thus implement dozens and dozens of**

nitpicky rules. At any rate, nowhere is this phenomenon more evident than the issue of the music that's allowed. Some missions don't allow any music beyond hymns—not even the Mormon Tabernacle Choir—whereas others allow pretty much anything short of punk rock and gangsta rap. And yet, in spite of this, each mission president claims that the rules are inspired of the Lord. Go figure.]

[We] found a great sale and loaded up on Choco-Crispies.

I can't even tell how far off my standards are. Lots of girls who look cute now, I probably wouldn't've looked at twice in America. I wonder how surprised I'll be back in the U.S.A.

Tuesday, June 12, 1990—Day 161

[We] visited Kato today—he kept trying to bargain with us and rationalize away the Word of Wisdom. So we dropped him **[as an investigator]** right in front of his face. What the Lord says, goes. No deals.

Cloward kept saying what a dork he **[Kato]** was, but I think this may be an important step on his way to baptism. **[A missionary's denial knows no bounds.]** Maybe something as harsh as being dropped as an investigator is what it takes to make him realize that you play by the Lord's rules, not men's.

Cloward is a great missionary, in my opinion, 'cause he keeps on going in spite of our lack of success. I think the reason we haven't been too effective is because he doesn't love the people. He's always ripping on the Japanese. Everything he says is true, but I think we need to develop sincere love for them in order to be effective ministers of the gospel. I almost fell into that trap (**[of]** not loving them). Once again, Cloward is great, but he's had to put up with the Japanese and their way of thinking for a long time, so I really don't blame him a bit.

I wonder how things will turn out with Theresa. It's been about a month now. Either way, I don't care. The mission is all that matters—not what comes later. This mission only!

Wednesday, June 13, 1990—Day 162

I do a lot of streeting with Cloward. Just as I was feeling sorry for myself and was getting ready to give up and go through the motions only, our luck changed and we ended up placing two books **[of Mormon]** and making a return. I shouldn't let the 95% teach me about the 5%. **[I think that last sentence is a Stephen R. Covey platitude that we all learned in the M.T.C.]**

After service, a bunch of nurses came in as we were leaving, which caused no small stir among them, being as we're American **[and also because Elder Cloward has blonde hair—always a head-turner in Japan]**. One pointed to herself and said, "Japanese girl!" No kidding? A lot of people think we (Americans) like Japanese girls a lot for some reason. They are sometimes surprised when we tell them we don't have any Japanese girlfriends. We explained to one of the teachers earlier that we have no T.V., etc., and have nothing to do with girls for two years. That surprised her.

The Zone Leader, MacGregor, is over here on a split. He's quite funny, I doubt I've laughed so—

(Crud. That pen has lasted me ever since the M.T.C. I hated having to throw that away.)

—hard my whole mission so far. We discussed the sleepwalking habits of Elder Lowe, Cloward's old companion who's now in MacGregor's apartment. **[I also described for MacGregor several parts of the movie The Naked Gun, which he'd missed due to already being on his mission at the time. He himself couldn't stop laughing. Good times.]**

Thursday, June 14, 1990—Day 163

Cloward has these Groucho Marx nose and glasses that he wore riding back from service today. That

was a very non-Japanese thing to do, and it got a lot of laughs from passers-by and drivers in cars that we passed.

Tonight, I've never had so much fun at Eikaiwa. I taught the advanced class "Signatures, Slang and Sarcasm" **[a lesson of my own design, not something out of a book]**. The Japanese aren't sarcastic at all, so I knew they needed that lesson in order for them to understand us Americans. It was new to them (the concept), but they certainly enjoyed it. Afterwards one of the guys in the class gave me a great compliment—he said I must've been an English teacher for foreigners before coming here. He went on to say that I am a good teacher and that he learned. Awesome!

Something funny—as a lady came over to me to comment on my pink necktie **[something else that's quite non-Japanese]**, Sparks was setting up chairs behind her. Just before she sat down, he **[accidentally]** took her chair, and she fell flat on her behind. She was okay, but poor Sparks was so embarrassed!

Friday, June 15, 1990—Day 164

Tonight we had a volleyball activity at a school a number of minutes away, but we showed up early because of a pick-up lesson we had. We got there just as school was letting out.

Why do they like Americans so much? A bunch of girls, 12-14 or so, kept following us and giggling. They finally got up the guts and shook my hand, after which I thought they'd die of overjoyment. So we look different? So what?

Volleyball was great. I had loads of fun. I hadn't played it at all since the M.T.C. The activity was for members, investigators, and Eikaiwa students, as usual.

I played well. In order to let more people play, I sat out the 3rd round, and ended up talking to Sister Hayashi, at whose house we teach the Monday Eikaiwa, remember.

She was amazed at how well I could speak **[Japanese]**, since I've only been out three months. She found it interesting how I hate all sports except volleyball, and that I'd rather read books (especially scriptures) than play.

A couple of other women (ladies, girls,) were amazed that I've been at it **[i.e., the language]** five months total, and went on to explain how they'd both put in 10 years each at English and could still only read and write it, but not speak it. I'm the other way around.

I was called a new name by one of them several times tonight—"Sensei" (teacher). She was referring to Eikaiwa, and I guess she didn't know my real name. She kept on complimenting me for various reasons (saying I was great, or words to that effect). **[Her name was Yoshie Sugiura. You'll be hearing much more about her toward the end of this journal.]** Clearly, this is the Lord's help—blessing me with greater language ability due to the fact that I am always studying, thanks to the desire He's given me to pay the price for fluency rather than just praying for it. Once again, I know that the Lord has helped me. He must exist, after all.

Theresa wrote me a fetchin' letter. She got ticked at me for ripping her country music to shreds through the mail, and got a lot of doubts. She **[told me that she]** wrote a few letters, including a birthday card, but never sent them because she hadn't decided what to do about us yet. In my card (she tells me), she wrote that she had decided to go ahead and date and look for someone else. Then she decided that that would tick me off, so she changed her mind about it and didn't send it. She once got fed up and went down to the Palace **[a dance hall in Provo]** to get a date, and in 30 minutes she had her guy and he asked her out at the end of the night. By the way, you can tell she is quite proud of the fact that she can pick up any guy she wants to. **[Even before my mission I noticed her propensity to brag.]** Makes her sound like a hooker to me.

However, the next day she felt so guilty that she called the guy up and cancelled.

She did write some good stuff, so I guess I still love her, but either way I wouldn't care. Starting out fresh is mighty appealing.

She opened by telling me that she got my postcard (from two weeks ago) and that I sounded pretty worried. If I hadn't written to her out of the blue, would she have given me a letter? And what's more, at the end, she tells me **[that]** she can't wait to hear from me and to "write soon." She didn't write soon, so why should I? I'm tempted to wait a few weeks. I would, except I sent her a postcard after getting here **[to my new area, Okazaki]** telling her my new address, so there may be a double cycle going, but knowing her, I doubt it. Besides, the sooner I write, the sooner I'll be written back, as long as that may take. Heck, Japanese girl church-members are far superior to their American counterparts, but I can't marry one due to mixed racial kids and the language barrier. **[A talk given by Spencer W. Kimball—or Gordon B. Hinckley, I'm not sure—was widely circulated among us missionaries, cautioning us against marrying someone we met on our missions. One of the warnings was that having mixed-race children would place too many undue hurdles in front of them.]** I'll keep Theresa around just in case it works out after my mission **[why burn any bridges?]**, but I really don't care. I used to tone down my journal entries for fear of her reading them (i.e., Sister Chandler towards the beginning **[I was far more infatuated with her than I let on in this journal]**), but now I write what I feel, regardless of who may read this. I only plan on showing this to my wife after I'm married or my descendants after I'm dead anyhow. **[We can see how that worked out, can't we?]**

This sure is a long entry, eh? Today is Theresa's birthday, my brother Ethan's birthday, and Julie Ford's wedding day (refer to journal #6). **[I'd had other journals before this one. Journal #6 was the sixth binder I'd written in to that point. Anyhow, Julie Ford and her roommates were friends of Daren and me. I ended up in a business math class with her after my mission was over. She was pregnant by that time.]**

Saturday, June 16, 1990—day 165

This morning a huge greenish cloud rolled in, and it dropped huge sheets of rain. The streets were flooded. It let up by the time we had to leave the apartment, so it was fun.

I read Theresa's letter again. I got a new perspective. She must love me, her love having survived my country music onslaught. **[i.e., my onslaught against country music.]** I'll write her a nice letter back.

Crud. I wish I were a better missionary. The Lord never asks too much, so why can't I do it?

I love the members, but the other Japanese people are beginning to get to me. The American way of thinking is far superior, make no mistake.

Sunday, June 17, 1990—Day 166

While talking to a lady after church, I gave her advice to have her non-member husband read the Book of Mormon, and that alone would be just fine for now (he doesn't like the lessons). She ended up saying I was diligent. Great! I guess **[that]** when one keeps one's mind on one's duty, one comes across as diligent, especially in the case of missionaries. Because I think about it all the time, I think it's getting easier for me to keep my mind riveted on the fact that I'm a missionary 24 hours a day.

Japanese girls would be fun to date, since they like Americans and the Japanese men treat them like dirt by making the girls walk behind them **[while out on a date. Yes, you read that right]**. They'd probably flip out over being treated like a queen the way Americans do it. You can have a lot of fun here in Japan if you're American, **[have]** fluent Japanese, and **[are]** not a missionary.

PHOTOS 026



L-R: Cloward, Emi Haeno (who'd been baptized just two months prior), me.



L-R: Brough, Biddulph, me.



Sister Tominaga and me.

Earlier, I'd asked if she'd served a mission, and she said no. Feeling brave, I asked her why, and she said it was because she wanted to get married. She was still single.

Monday, June 18, 1990—Day 167

I stayed up late last night and wrote letters before going to bed, thus I had lots of extra time. I felt weird all day, actually having time to myself. I wrote Theresa a kind letter back.

We four watched "Saturday's Warrior" this morning. **[We most likely watched it at the church, since we didn't have a TV or a VCR in our apartment, of course.]** It was great. Theresa gave me a copy of it for Christmas and we and her family watched it then.

We next went and toured Okazaki castle. **[We]** shopped, etc., then went to our Eikaiwa. **[It was a]** nice day.

Tuesday, June 19, 1990—Day 168

I forgot to say—our kids' class isn't the same as my old one. We teach at Sister Hayashi's house, which is huge. **[Houses in more rural areas which weren't bombed out during the war tended to be much, much larger than those in areas built up since that time.]** There are no parents that attend with them, so the 4 ~ 5 kids are more interested in playing than learning.

[We] set a record while streeting. We met Sister Iwase, the married one, and talked for a while. Crud, Japanese husbands are overbearing. As she left, Kato walked by—aimlessly, of course. He attends a high school make-up class once a week, and has no job beyond that. I guess his parents pay for his place **[i.e., the apartment he lives in, not his "place" in the school]**.

After him, we ran into another member—**[that makes]** three people we knew in a 20-minute period.

Next, I ran into a friend of Sister Morita's **[whom]** I knew back in Nagoya. She was an investigator. I first met her at the Gifu picnic on March 21st, then at the Sakura thing on March 30th. She was here today only for her work. I couldn't remember her name, darn it.

We then ran into an inactive 19 year-old girl and walked with her part of the way to her home. We'd been trying to contact her for weeks. **[This was Shoko Nagae, whom you'll hear about later.]** The inactive situation here is interesting, 'cause a lot **[of them]** are still awesome people; they just don't show up to church, that's all. They're still friends with the members and all.

We reviewed with Junpei tonight at our apartment **[he was our other investigator]**. He catches on really well; it was a good lesson.

I wish the Japanese would say "hi" back at least once in a while.

I can recall offhand four instances in which I know that my prayers were answered directly. **[What brought that up out of the blue?]**

PHOTOS 027



Junpei (wearing Cloward's Groucho Marx glasses) and me.

Wednesday, June 20, 1990—Day 169

After I start speaking Japanese only, I'm sure we'll have the Spirit with us more often, being as we won't get caught up in irrelevant conversations. Plus, **[by]** actually demonstrating that I'm willing to pay the price for fluency, I'm sure the Lord will bless me. It'll be good practice, too.

Crud, I hope this is the true church! Ouch, worldly ways are so enticing! I don't know how much longer I'll be able to hold out, only hoping for a reward I can't even see!

Before I forget—All I want to do is study. I know that my real purpose is to teach, but I'm excited to get fluent in this language. I hope I don't get so caught up in studying that I lose track of the real purpose. Two years is a long time, so I'm sure I'll be fine.

A member loaned me a copy of the 3rd in the *New Testament Commentary* by Bruce R. McConkie. One thing's for sure, after my mission I'm going to devour the scriptures and other church works. **[This didn't actually pan out, as you could've probably guessed. College, work, and the opposite sex essentially monopolized my time, as I'm sure it does to most returned missionaries, regardless of post-mission intentions.]**

Thursday, June 21, 1990—Day 170

Tonight I hit a major milestone—a 26 year-old asked me (in front of the two friends, 25 and 26 **[years old]**), one of whom was the one who called me "sensei") if I ever thought of marrying a Japanese girl.

Not knowing what to say (after the other two laughed in 'that certain way'), I finally said, "Well, I haven't thought about it much, 'cause I do missionary work all day." Actually, I have thought about it, but decided against it. She'd have to be a member, fluent in English, and willing to leave Japan forever. **[As luck would have it, I broke all three of those rules.]** After all that, I wouldn't want 1/2 Oriental kids anyhow.

Ouch—it sure is fun to flirt with older Japanese girls. You can have so much fun here if you're not a missionary! **[It]** almost makes me want to come back afterwards just to date. Too expensive, though. Plus, I'm sure I'll have no problem back in the U.S.A. My standards are way off, remember. American girls! Yay!!

I got a letter from Rikki yesterday. She's now in Texas for training with the Army. **[I believe she became a medic of sorts.]**

Friday, June 22, 1990—Day 171

I'd better start from the beginning.

Yesterday, on getting home from our break, I saw my first cockroach in my own house—running around the hall. I promptly killed it with my shoe.

This morning, before we even set off to proselyte, a girl came up to us and asked if we were Mormons. Next, she said she wanted to hear our lessons!

So we're meeting her at church for church **[services]**. I wonder why she wanted to hear what we had to say, out of the blue? (She was c. 22-24 years old.) I was overjoyed, but Cloward was suspicious. This is only the second time this has happened to him his whole mission. A streeting self-referral! This is what missionaries dream about!

Met a crazy guy who bought us ice cream (one cone between the two of us), but some women who owned the store next to us gave us another one to make it even. Before the fat, sweaty, crazy guy left, Cloward gave him an Eikaiwa flyer—which was a mistake, in my opinion. What if he comes?

The women invited us to eat inside their store where it was cool. We ended up talking to some **[different]** older woman who wanted to take us bowling right then and there. We wanted to go home and eat (she had offered us tea and cigarettes earlier), so we made up an excuse and left.

I'll save the best 'till last, so suffice it to say that we got a phone call from some **[non-member]** guy at church who wanted to meet us or Sparks and Brough. We all went up **[to the ward building]**, and the guy had a business card from another missionary who had been on a split here. He was wanting to pay the church money—I guess 'cause the missionary was nice to him or something stupid like that. **[We]**

gave him a book **[of Mormon]**, and he kept making us take a ¥10,000 bill—about \$80.00 **[at the time]**. So we took it and slipped it back in the book when he wasn't looking. We gave him a pick-up lesson, but he wanted to think things over before meeting again.

The guy was 24 **[years old]**, but he spoke like he wasn't there. No confidence at all. Cloward thinks his folks must be oppressive. His pants and belt were far too big, so he had to hold them up with his hands. He had no idea how to cut his hair (most Japanese males haven't a clue).

What an idiot. AARGH! I'm getting sick of crazy folks! This country is loaded with them! At least in America they put them away. Here they're a normal part of society. There's this other guy who sits on his bike at a certain corner and talks to cars as they go by. One of these days I'm going to ask him why.

I probably haven't mentioned it, but a while back I wrote to a girl I don't know named Becky Hards. A year ago last March, Horrocks' friend in Virginia or wherever on a mission sent him a tape on which he recorded her address for some reason, to be funny, I guess.

So I decided to take a dare and write to her. I described myself and so on.

Today I received a letter back from her! She sent a picture, too—she's very attractive. It came as a shock, only seeing Asian faces for so long. She was curious as to why I'd write to a total stranger—imaginably. Oh, la la—I can't wait to write back.

We met an American 26 year-old today—**[she was a]** total airhead. But at least she had a personality—unlike 99% of Japanese "fit the perfect mold" women.

[I received] four letters today—From Mom, Cheryl, Jeanie **[who I haven't mentioned yet; although she and I went to different high schools, we knew each other from various church functions]**, and, of course, Becky.

Saturday, June 23, 1990—Day 172

Today was a sweat bath. So much for the monsoon. Crud, the past couple of days have been so hot. I'd better get used to it.

A lady who works at the same place we do service took us **[out]** for pizza. 'Twas nice. Not your typical Japanese lady, 'cause she's got a personality. We ate at a member's house tonight. Aside from that, we streeted the whole day. Lots of work.

There are two words of missionary slang **[that]** you'll need to know. One is "DENDO," shortened from **[the Japanese words]** "dendo suru," **[which, in English, means]** to proselyte. Also the word "FUKE," **[rhymes with "Duke,"]** from "fukkapatsu," or **[in other words]** inactive. We adapt it to mean "wayward," in reference to other missionaries.

I sometimes feel fuke, 'cause the other Elders are always out the door way sooner than we are.

[Someone can probably write a thesis on missionary slang throughout the world. When it comes to missionaries who often break the rules, are lazy, etc., I've also heard "gent," short for "gentile," and the more straightforward "apostate."]

Sunday, June 24, 1990—Day 173

Our self-referral came to church today!

While sitting next to Sister Akashi, she had a friend with her and this was her first time at church. (Sister Akashi had beckoned us to sit next to her for that reason.)

When I went outside to get a Book of Mormon for her **[friend]**, I discovered that the front doors were locked. This ticked me off, 'cause we'd talked to an American girl a few days earlier and she said she'd come to church. She may have showed up and left 'cause the doors were locked. At least our investigator got there a little late and still got in, though.

By the time church was over and we had our pick-up lesson with Hosomi (Toshie-san), **[our self-referral,]** she had met lots of members and had really loosened up. It went well.

Whoops—so far as Sister Akashi's friend goes, she lives in Kariya, so we couldn't pick her up **[to teach her the lessons. There were other missionaries in that area, so she'd be under their jurisdiction, not ours]**. Of all honors, I was the first American she'd ever talked to. I got to explain the Book **[of Mormon]** to her, and she said she'd read from it. She sounded sincere when I committed her to it. I hope it goes well.

[We] streeted a long time. **[We]** rapped with a bunch of religious folks, all of whom were 19 or under and were taking a break from Bible study or whatever.

We talk to groups of kids all the time. They flip out over seeing people who look different.

Monday, June 25, 1990—Day 174

I stayed up until 3:15 **[a.m.]** writing letters. The first one was a long one to Becky.

I slept in until 12:15—so I got a lot more sleep in than normal. I love music!! I get a little dubbing done at Sister Hayashi's house, but there's only one or two machines to go around. Tonight at the Monday Eikaiwa we had a good-bye party for Elder Jones, whom we think will transfer this week. **[Elder Jones was posted in the small town that was part of our Okazaki district. The name of the town was "Nishio" and was the place where the Monday Eikaiwa was held—at Sister Hayashi's house.]**

PHOTOS 028



At Elder Jones's going-away party. He's the tall blonde-haired missionary in the back row. Biddulph is to the far right.



Front row: The students in Cloward's and my kids' class.

Middle row, L-R: Sparks, Cloward, Brough.

Back row, L-R: Jones, me, Biddulph.



With Sparks' beginners' class. Sister Hayashi is standing at the far left.

Tuesday, June 26, 1990—Day 175

Cloward got a transfer call this morning, so we ended up sitting around here for a few hours getting his stuff ready for his transfer. I had very little energy and didn't study at all. I ended up going a little bit fuke by reading some of Cloward's Reader's Digest. I read about politics in China and the Judicial screw-ups

in America, in addition to the story of a Nazi criminal protected by the Syrian government. It's easy to get sidetracked. From now on I'll stick to studying.

Hosomi couldn't make her lesson, darn it.

I found out that Biddulph, Jones's companion, will be living here for 10 days after the transfer. We'll be mixing and matching companions the whole time. **[I was wrong about that last part. Since he and I were both companionless, we became companions by default. Co-juniors, as it were.]**

Wednesday, June 27, 1990—Day 176

Today was a huge zone conference, with an enormous fireside later on.

It started off on a bad foot. The place that's enlarging a few of my **[photographic]** negatives for Becky is closed for this week. I promised her three-four days; it may be a week before I can get them for her. It figures; the one time I need pictures, I can't get them! So I was mad for a while.

Once again, I couldn't stay awake for anything. I couldn't study; I kept falling asleep. When my ride showed up, I was out the door so fast **[that]** I forgot to brush my teeth.

Four or five zones were there. It took place at the Meito ward **[building]** next to the mission home. Gibson and Van Cleave were there, along with Sister Maruoka and **[Sister]** Yokoyama. (I was wrong—I did see Sister Yokoyama again!) **[I saw Sisters]** Chandler, Fisher, and Uthagrove, too—Yokoyama is now Fisher's companion. Fisher's companions have been the story of my life! (I told her that.)

Elder Kikuchi, whom I saw in the M.T.C., was there with Elder **[Merlin R.]** Lybbert, 2nd Quorum of Seventy, and Elder **[M. Russell]** Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve. There was no room next to Cloward, so I sat between Elder Scott **[whom I'd known from the M.T.C.]** and Sister Chandler, placing me on the front row, directly in front of the speaker. During his talk, Elder Kikuchi had me stand up and read a scripture for him in front of everyone (Joshua 11:15).

I gave Tsukada her pictures. We four had made a card for her, since her birthday was yesterday. **[That had to have been my idea, since she was in my former area, not theirs. I wonder if any of them actually knew her?]** We all (or almost all of us, who were in the foyer afterwards) sang "Happy Birthday" to her. **[That had to have been my idea, too. I had a weakness for sister missionaries, what can I say.]**

Elder Leach told me that he missed me. Wow—that was going out of his way! I sure have made some outstanding friends here. I saw Oviatt, too—man, I love that guy like a brother. That was the best time of my mission so far. He filled me in on what's going on **[in my old area]**—and Chandler gave me a few details, too—Hayashi is still going to be baptized, and Kurita, too (whom Oviatt had no faith in at first!). Harada, the Sisters' deaf investigator, has been baptized, along with Ote. **[Harada was male, but the reason he was taught by the sisters and not us elders was because Sister Maruoka had some skill with sign language.]** Mrs. Atsumi and her daughter are due to be baptized, too! Wow!

We tried to meet Junpei at Sakae (so he could show us where we could buy swords cheap), but he wasn't there. It was strange, seeing my old dendo area. (Remember that word? See entry #172.) We tried to get in touch with Sister Nagae, a fuke 19 year-old, but couldn't. It ended up being a waste of money and time.

We were a minute late for the fireside, so we couldn't find a seat for a minute or two.

My old ward, Fukutoku, got up and sang halfway through! Oh, I missed them. And for a while here it seemed like I'd never been there, that I'd been in Okazaki my whole mission.

Afterwards, I got to shake hands with a lot of them. Sister Palmer said she was sad that I got transferred.

Rikki was there too, and they both said I was a good missionary.

That, my friends, is the true mark of success. When two separate members voluntarily tell me that to my face—who can put a price on that?

Miki, who gave me the **[electronic toy]** pig, is getting baptized tomorrow. It figures; as soon as I leave, all the success is seen. Thanks be due to Oviatt.

Rikki says her pancreas is getting worse, but she has faith it can get better. She says she prays for me. I told her she's my favorite member and I'd write as soon as I got home. **[Oops—I forgot to do that. I still haven't written, and I've been home since 1992!]**

Sister Takahashi is now better, thanks to the blessing I helped give.

Kurita came tonight, along with Sister Atsumi and **[her]** daughter. It was awesome seeing them again. That one triff from Eikaiwa was there, too **["triff" being missionary slang for an airheaded Japanese girl who's infatuated with missionaries]**—from way back when. **[This was Junko, whom I met back during my very first Eikaiwa.]** She came up and asked if I remembered her.

It was all very inspirational. Seeing all the ward members again (including Imamura and Eguchi and others) made me feel like I'd truly left a part of myself behind.

Sister Tsukada and Elder MacGregor go home tomorrow. I talked to him a little. It makes me wonder who I have left to meet, even during my last month. Going home will be painful, for this is my whole life!

Thursday, June 28, 1990—Day 177

Cloward and I got out late and arrived at the mission home after everyone else had left except Biddulph and Cloward's **[new]** companion and the guys going home. **[This was too bad, since transfers were always a great time. You'd congregate in the mission home, drink punch and eat cookies, and meet back up with missionaries you hadn't seen in many months.]**

Had a major mess-up riding home and our train stopped before we hit Okazaki. We asked about it to a guy from Okazaki, who just so happened to have had an appointment with Sparks that he couldn't keep! So we rode back together and made Sparks an appointment **[with him]** for next Tuesday. Of all the luck! It's amazing how the Lord works.

I taught about U.S. culture at Eikaiwa with Biddulph, and it really rocked and rolled. Biddulph told Sparks and later me that I was a great teacher. My purpose is to make my students fluent in English, pronunciation and all, since they can already speak it. **[This wasn't entirely accurate—they can read it and write it, since that's what they must study from Junior High onward, but they can't actually speak it.]** It's amazing what you can get done once you have a genuine concern for the people. I hope I don't forget that principle.

Sparks had already picked up Yoshie, the one who calls me "Sensei." Awesome! ("Pick up" means **[to]** have them agree to all six discussions.) I invited a couple more people to come to church. Wow. It's getting easier to remember my purpose.

Friday, June 29, 1990—Day 178

[We] Dendood for a while. Biddulph and I differ as to what we think the rules **[of the mission]** are. I'd like to find out more from the president himself or have a definitive list as to what the policies are and what they aren't.

[We] did service for a few minutes, then headed out early to grab our stuff and catch the train. We're staying overnight here in Nishio, a smaller town where Jones and Biddulph live **[or, better yet, where**

Jones used to live until he transferred out], where the Monday Eikaiwa is.

As we boarded the train, an older man came up to us and told us **[that]** he wanted to join the church! We were quite surprised, to be sure, but it turns out **[that]** he was already a member. He spoke fair English. He is the First Counselor to the Stake President in a Tokyo stake, and he was going to take the bullet train, or "Shinkansen," back home after work in Okazaki for a stake meeting. **[That's]** dedication! All that ¥ just to go to a stake function. **[I think I was mistaken in that last sentence; I'm sure he was "working" in Okazaki, not "working" for a stake meeting.]**

[By coming up to us right out of the blue and saying that he wanted to join our church, it's obvious that he just wanted to joke with us a little, all in good fun. Even so, although he hid it well, Biddulph was rather miffed at him for getting our hopes up like that.]

[We] went to our small Eikaiwa, but Jones had ended it without explaining it to us. The lady at whose house we teach it was surprised to see us. Biddulph ended up starting it up again. They had the most darling little girl there, full of energy. The T.V. was on, and I saw WINK, two singers who are cute and who are on posters everywhere. Crud, they sing and dance well.

[And thus would begin my long love affair with *Wink*. I'm a huge fan to this day.]

Saturday, June 30, 1990—Day 179

[We] visited Sister Hayashi and **[a guy named]** Mike, **[who was living with her to teach Eikaiwa and was]** from America **([and was also a] non-member)**. **[We]** taught a lesson to Matsubara, who was referred by Sister Anan, whose husband used to be branch president in Nishio before he died. (The branch dwindled after he died until they decided to combine this here **[i.e., into the Okazaki ward]**).

Suck, I don't feel like writing.

The Spirit was there strong as I testified. Biddulph wasn't used to being Senior and made a lot of mistakes, but we learned.

[We] rode **[our bikes]** for c. 50 minutes back to Okazaki and visited Sister Nagae (19 years old). She's pretty cute, so it felt weird being there.

I'd go into more detail **[about]** how our lesson went and how the Spirit was there, etc., 'cause it's a long story, but I'm too tired. Sorry.

Sunday, July 01, 1990—Day 180

After church, we went with Sakibara (**[he was]** baptized 2 **[and]** 1/2 months ago—**[and is]** 17 years old) and visited Sister Nagae. After that, we met Sister Tominaga, a stake missionary, in front of our place and **[then]** we four rode down to Nishio. Sakibara was somewhat upset since Jones transferred, he having baptized him and been there every step of the way.

[Something interesting about Brother Sakibara: After I'd been home for a few months, he called me up and told me he was coming to the United States for a visit. He asked me if he could stay at my house for a few days, and I agreed.]

After his stint with us, he went a little way north to stay with Elder Brough. About a day after he departed, I got a phone call from the bishop of Okazaki, asking if I'd seen him. I of course answered in the affirmative.

Well, it turned out that he had simply jumped ship and taken off to America without telling anyone where he was going or when he was coming back, if ever. Needless to say, his mother was worried sick.

I told the bishop where Sakibara was going, and he was audibly relieved. Chances are he was able to get a hold of Brough thanks to having been given his business card, the same way he'd gotten a hold of me.

Of course, Sakibara was probably 19 years old by that time and thus as a legal adult he could do what he wanted, but I guess that was his way of "running away." The fact that A) he'd come here on an open ticket, and B) didn't tell us how long he'd be staying with us should've been my first clue that he was merely "winging it."

I never did find out what happened to him.]

[We] taught some guy a lesson, and he really caught on to the Book of Mormon since he'd been taught last.

[We] visited Sister Hayashi with the intent to pick up Mike, the guy from Oregon who's staying with them. Poor Biddulph! He was scared and stumbling, trying to figure out how to get Mike to agree to the discussions, when I came in and said, basically and bluntly, that we had six lessons, and that if he'd like to, we'd love to teach him. He agreed! Biddulph was quite relieved and amazed that I made it seem so easy. **[Of course, the major reason it was so easy is because Mike was an American and so I could just speak English to him.]** The way I see it, we're professional missionaries; this is our job. Right?

PHOTOS 029



L-R: Sister Tominaga, Biddulph, me. In the doorway at the far left, wearing glasses, is Sakibara.



Front row, L-R: Biddulph, me, Mike.

Back row, L-R: Sister Hayashi, her daughter Hazuki, Sister Tominaga.

Monday, July 02, 1990—Day 181

Today I began my new SYL **[missionary slang for "speak your language"]** program—No English except at Eikaiwa and when talking about Japanese, or to someone who wants to practice. I slipped up and spoke English a few times, but hopefully I'll remember as time goes on. I figure **[that]** if I want the Lord's help, I've got to do my part to qualify for it.

Mike had a fire in his fraternity house, so since he's some staff member he has to go back to the U.S.A. tomorrow. This upset Biddulph, who was looking forward to teaching him. He did say to Sister Hayashi that he'd look up the missionaries back at home. Maybe we're what it took.

I haven't had any time to really study all week. It sucks.

Before Eikaiwa, Sister Hayashi and I had a fun discussion about my family situation. What a joke **[my family situation, not our conversation]**.

The kids' class was discontinued, so I taught a group of women tonight; they were beginners.

Tuesday, July 03, 1990—Day 182

[I've been on my mission for] six months today. 25% of my mission is gone.

After a good district meeting at our apartment, since it was only us four anyway, we headed to Nishio. After getting there, I was too tired to speak only Japanese, so I spoke English the rest of the day. Later we decided that it's best to have a balance—not too much **[language practice]** and not too little.

[We] visited Sakibara, who's 17 **[why do I keep mentioning people's ages?]** and **[has been]** acting strange since Jones left. **[We visited him in order to teach a lesson to a friend of his that he'd referred. Apparently this wasn't the first lesson with this guy, since he already knew some of the answers to the questions we'd ask. Anyway, neither of them were really into the lesson. Biddulph was trying to get them to stay focused, while Sakibara, for his part, kept saying "I hate you" to Biddulph. It was probably the most bizarre—nay, surreal—lesson I ever taught.]** Biddulph was

tough on the guy, and I wanted to leave. Biddulph, on leaving, started to cry 'cause he couldn't get through to him **[Sakibara]**. Apparently he **[Sakibara]** wants to go fuke or something. Interesting experience.

[We] taught a lesson to Matsubara on the resurrection, but we could only get through one principle—**[she had]** too many concerns. She felt the Spirit, however, so I hope things work out for her.

I'm not being a very good (acting) junior. My energy level is almost nil.

Wednesday, July 04, 1990—Day 183

It's late.

Broke down and cried from the stress. **[While riding our bikes back from Nishio, we got rained on very heavily. I was wet, sweaty, and miserable inside my rain suit, and it was a long ride. I was thinking to myself, "is this really worth it? How do I know if this church is really true? If it isn't, what's the point of going through all this crap?" When we finally reached the Okazaki apartment, I opened up to Biddulph about this train of thought. As soon as I voiced the possibility of the church not being true, I lost it.]** From now on I'll just put in my 65 hours a week and do all I can. I won't kill myself in the process.

[Elder Biddulph tried to console me by saying that sooner or later every missionary goes through this. For my part, I was able to overcome this stress and self-doubt—and thereby continue onward for the rest of my mission—by concluding to myself, "Even if I don't know it's true, it's true enough."]

[We] met a cool 83 year-old guy while housing. **[I'll never forget him. We were invited into the house to sit down. It was an older home, very traditional. He was seated cross-legged at the head of a low table, just like Mr. Miyagi in *The Karate Kid*. He had a fly swatter with a hidden pair of plastic tongs embedded in the handle—obviously a two-part set. Anyway, he would periodically swat flies like an old samurai master, withdraw the tongs, pick up the dead fly, drop it onto a square piece of paper made for that purpose, fold up the fly in the paper, enclose the package in a rubber band so it wouldn't unravel, then discard it neatly in the wastebasket. He did this several times and clearly had the whole elaborate process down to a science.]**

Sorry no time, energy, or desire **[to write more]**.

Thursday, July 05, 1990—Day 184

A lot happened today.

[We] had zone pass-offs this morning, and we taught the Sisters, one of whom was Sister Blackburn, one of the two sisters in the district that Wheeler Sensei picked up a few days before I left the M.T.C.

By the castle, we ended up talking to a bunch of 10-11 year old grade school kids and teaching them games. One of them wanted to see how I wrote my name in English, and soon I was surrounded by paper and pens. I made a quick getaway before the **[kids']** teachers could get mad.

Riding home, I overlooked a white line where I should've stopped and rode through a small intersection and got my back end hit by a girl on a scooter. My first wreck! **[Missionaries sometimes say that your term as a "green bean" ends when you have your first wreck.]**

At Eikaiwa I had them write to **[my]** friends back home. Rikki, Theresa, Rhonda, and Dan are being written to. I did it to correct their spelling, etc. **[Perhaps this wasn't a good idea, since "Eikaiwa" means "English conversation." They get plenty of practice reading and writing in school; we were there to help them actually *speak* it.]**

Biddulph placed three books today. For being a junior **[companion]**, he's pretty good.

Friday, July 06, 1990—Day 185

This morning we four rode to Nishio with Sister Hayashi and did "aerobics dendo," where we did aerobics with a bunch of ladies in order to meet them, get acquainted and hopefully end up teaching them, etc. We had to leave early 'cause Sparks had a lesson, though. I've never done anything that interesting while being a missionary.

[We] did service and taught that small Eikaiwa on Fridays (to two guys) that we thought was cancelled.

Saturday, July 07, 1990—Day 186

[We] made cookies at Sister Hayashi's house with Maki. **[The recipe that Japanese people use for chocolate chip cookies is different from the one that Americans use. You know, the one printed on the back of the Hershey's semi-sweet chocolate morsels bag. Anyway, if Sister Hayashi's cookies were representative, then Japanese chocolate chip cookies are akin to a powder that has been crushed down to a solid, if that makes sense.]** Next we cooked spaghetti with Hirai. **[We]** rode back to Okazaki, and I had gotten a picture sent from Sister Woodward. **[She had used the photo as a postcard, writing her message and the address on the back. Interesting trick.]** That was above and beyond the call of duty.

[We] rode to and ate dinner at the same place I ate **[during]** my second or third night here. I could hardly eat I was so stuffed.

We taught Hirai the entire Third Discussion. This was the first time I've ever gotten through an entire discussion in one sitting. **[The missionary discussions, as they existed at the time, were designed with a Christian audience in mind. As such, they were made to be completed in one sitting. In Japan, however, their Shinto and Buddhist backgrounds made it nearly impossible to complete a single lesson in one sitting since there was so little common ground to build upon.]**

[We] visited Sister Nagae, whose first name is Shoko. She's 19 and cute. I noticed, for the first time, that she's got at least one hearing aid.

Sunday, July 08, 1990—Day 187

Sugiura (**[the one who called me]** "sensei"), Sparks' investigator, came to church today and seemed to enjoy it. Sister Komura is her fellowshipper. She (Komura) is a missionary-chaser, even though she's 27, I found out. **[I heard that she'd told Elder Jones that she hoped they could meet up after his mission.]** Too bad, too, 'cause she's ultra-cute. Dark hair and glasses, just what I like.

Talked to Sister Ikegami again, whose husband is a non-member. She's a really good friend.

[We] taught a lesson in Nishio to Ishikawa, and he told us **[that]** the only reason he's investigating is to find out how the Americans think. The idiot! Biddulph almost dropped him **[as an investigator]** right there.

[We] ate over at Matsubara's and taught her afterwards. She has a hard time understanding, but she's a great lady.

EXPLANATION—The Japanese don't use "Sister" and "Brother," but rather "Shimai" and "Kyodai," after their names. "Sister Hayashi" sounds weird. From now on it's "Hayashi Shimai," etc. Okay?

Monday, July 09, 1990—Day 188

Today we four went to the river and skipped rocks and stuff.

I feel a little bad for listening to non-church music, even though it's not "hard" at all (Enya, etc.).

Brough is quite sick, maybe **[with]** appendicitis. I gave him the anointing when we blessed him. Biddulph and I also gave a member a blessing after church Sunday.

Starting tomorrow, I'm teamed with Sparks, and Brough will live down in Nishio **[which is]** 45 minutes away by bike. We'll be the only two in a four-man apartment.

Tuesday, July 10, 1990—Day 189

Last night Brough was taken to the hospital and had his appendix removed. The doctor even showed it to Sparks, who didn't get back home 'till 3:00 or so in the morning. The bishop had driven them.

Brough will be in the hospital for three days, after which he will finish out the remainder of the week in the mission home. For now, I had to go with Biddulph back to Nishio to fulfill appointments, and we left Sparks at Okazaki to await the arrival of the mission president with Brough's temporary replacement, Elder Gray, who is just getting over recuperating at the mission home. Sheesh! For a while there, our numbers were reduced to half! **[It]** kind of makes me wonder who's next?

Back in Nishio, we visited Hayashi Shimai (remember?) who's missed church twice in a row now. I fell asleep, but when I woke up Biddulph was discussing with her her feelings about the church. It turns out **[that]** she hates the members. Ouch!

So, all members aside, I reaffirmed ('cause it's true, she's helped us lots, plus she's cool and we love her) and told her straight to her face that we all liked her a lot (the missionaries). I stated the fact that out of all the Okazaki members, she's my #1 favorite. I even said we love her. I believed she was quite touched by this. Our two-hour visit ended on a highly positive note.

Tonight we showed Matsubara-san ("san" is the equivalent of "Mr." or "Mrs."—male or female makes no difference) a video on God's plan for us. She certainly felt the Spirit all the way through. We asked her to pray when we ended, and she finally accepted! When she got through, she and Anan Shimai started crying. A lot. I handed them my handkerchiefs. Biddulph was quick to identify the Spirit. Wow—it was quite the experience indeed.

I need to be more humble. I need to find a balance in how to act as the Lord would have me act.

[Days such as this are what missionaries always hope for. They're what make up for the other 99% of the days that are pure drudgery.]

Wednesday, July 11, 1990—Day 190

After exchanging companions, we went and visited Brough. That hospital was scary. **[It's still one of my more vivid memories from my mission. I was appalled at the conditions. People were smoking not just in the hallways and lobbies, but right there in the patients' rooms! Not only that, but apparently the meal trays weren't collected; the contents were just dumped into buckets outside the rooms. Yes, buckets full of old food were festering right there in the halls. And the walls weren't clean; they were all stained with God only knows what. God bless America!]**

Oh yeah—President Smith called me this morning in response to the president's letter I wrote last week. **[Missionaries are all required to turn in a form containing their stats each week. This form also includes a blank section in which a letter must be written to the mission president.]** In it I **[had]** asked about drawing a balance and following the rules, etc. He put a lot of stress to rest, even though I felt bad for having bothered him.

[We] taught Sugiura for three hours. She was Christ-oriented before coming into contact with the church. She takes notes, etc. Her Book of Mormon was given to her brother by Horrocks in Sakae! She said it was either in March or April, when I was there, but it's got Beers' name on it (the Eikaiwa sheet). Small world! **[Elder Beers was the missionary whom I replaced when I became Horrocks' companion.]**

Next we went with her to visit Brough again. After that we went with Iwase Shimai to visit Nagae Shimai, but she wasn't home.

Thursday, July 12, 1990—Day 191

[We] visited Brough with Sugiura-san this morning. Dendoe with Sparks and spent time cleaning the apartment for the upcoming inspection by the [mission] president.

Tonight, Eikaiwa went super.

Afterwards, Komura Shimai was acting strange, as usual. Sparks finally asked her what was going on and she gave a long, roundabout "explanation." It was pouring rain and we spend a long time trying to resolve her concern.

She wants to be a little more than friends with the missionaries (for instance, she told Jones [that] she loves him and has been giving cards to Biddulph), but she can't say it outright, 'cause she and we both know it's bad. She was jealous of Sugiura, our investigator whom she fellowshipped for once. Poor girl. She's a bit paranoid. She's cute, I like her, but it's a strange situation.

Friday, July 13, 1990—Day 192

Biddulph and Gray had slept over, and we had district benkyokai ("study meeting"—another new word!) with the A.P.s and the [mission] president conducted interviews. Mine went fast. The new A.P., Elder Wade, was Horrocks' senior companion after he left me—Horrocks was [the] junior zone leader. **[Elder Wade had also been Cloward's M.T.C. companion].** I dendoe with him for an hour—he liked my ideas on member-missionary work, etc. I talked with Sister Smith, the president's wife, about how their call came, how their kids reacted, etc. It was interesting.

[We] had another long lesson with Sugiura. She's so cool!

At the store by the church, where the owner and his daughter run it, I wanted to buy a squid and I asked how to prepare it. He ended up cooking it for us! Awesome.

During fuke dendo **["fuke dendo" = "proselyting the inactive," or, in other words, attempting to find and reactivate them]**, we got to give a blessing to a 5 year-old girl in order for her to get over a fever. [We] visited Nagae Shimai ([first name] "Shoko"), too.

PHOTOS 030



L-R: Biddulph, Gray, Sparks, me (staying true to my "Dr. Shades" persona). Above my left arm is the gas-powered water heater that warms the water for your kitchen sink (only).

Saturday, July 14, 1990—Day 193

[We] had breakfast with the bishop, afterwards I was too tired to study much. I'm way out of the habit. I haven't had a full day of studying since the week before Cloward left.

They're half a month behind on my paycheck. I'm running on my emergency fund now.

Tonight we had dinner with the other (married) Iwase Shimai. We did fireworks after that, and the neighbors were watching. I walked over and invited them to come over and do them **[fireworks]** too, but only the daughter came over. She looked 15, but she was 21. Quite cute. It turns out she and her folks had had the missionaries over before, but she was in school then and couldn't pay too much attention. (Kondo Setsuko is her name. **[In Japan, the surname comes first and the given name comes second, so "Setsuko" is her first name.]**) I made a return with her, **[using]** total Japanese! She wants to hear the discussions! I made a return at Eikaiwa, but it was in English with the lady who dresses and looks scary. Wow—a major landmark for me. **[I.e., the "landmark" was using 100% Japanese to make a return, all by myself.]**

Sunday, July 15, 1990—Day 194

What a day! Lots of investigators came **[to church]**, and it was the perfect day, too! For they had **[general]** conference set up on a movie screen and translated into Japanese. Setsuko was there! Amazing! I meet her, and less than 24 hours later, she's at church!

Matsubara-san was there, too, along with Nagae Shimai—who was looking very cute. She had me sign her Bible. (I signed some **[of it]** in Japanese, the other half in English.) Hopefully they'll all be coming **[to church]** from now on. I felt the Spirit; it was great.

[We] taught Fukuji Shimai's mother, who was referred by her.

[We later] visited a new member with the ward mission leader. The new guy is going somewhat crazy from working so hard, like **[the way]** most Japanese work. Sad.

Monday, July 16, 1990—Day 195

[It was a] good day today. I feel great. Had fun rappin' with a few members (Komura Shimai, Kamiya Shimai, and Sakibara Kyodai). I can keep my personality and still be a good missionary, I think.

[On my missionary nametag,] I want to see if I can get my name in kanji, the picture alphabet, rather than katakana, the [much simpler] one they use for bold facing and foreign words. Darn, it's fun to flirt.

Tuesday, July 17, 1990—Day 196

Had a good district benkyokai at the apartment for the third time in a row. [We next] waited around for Brough and our new companions to show up.

Elder Harris, my new senior [companion], arrived. He's a bit taller than me. It turned out that I had talked to him a little as we both left the Elder Ballard fireside. He was Oviatt's companion for four months, just before Oviatt got me. His last area was Inuyama [you'll be hearing a lot more about this place before long], and he took Van Cleave's place when he left.

Today was his first day as senior companion. He [has] had five seniors and three areas before now, and he's been in Japan almost a year now. I've been in Japan [for] four months only, and I'm four and two! I'm really rockin' and rollin'!

Another story—Elder Scott [who was our junior district leader when I first got to the M.T.C.] was Sparks' companion when he [Scott] was first out, and he's a month ahead of me. They were together [for] four months. Sparks and I came here together, so when I was going to area #2, companion #3; he (Scott) was staying in the same place, picking up companion #2! Let me tell you, I'm flyin'.

[We] sat around and got to know each other [Harris showed me all his mission pictures so far], then we dended a little bit. I can tell [that] Harris is just barely senior. I like the guy; I just hope we can see success.

Wednesday, July 18, 1990—Day 197

I think Harris may have gotten a little mad at me for not knowing where more members lived this morning. He's barely senior, so I suppose he's under stress.

Crud, it's hot here. I haven't sweated so much since the Marines—and then it was 'cause of the work, not the temperature. [It's] humid hot [here].

[We] did service for the first time in weeks.

Saw another cockroach last night, but he got away from me.

Aunt Dala sent me a letter [that] I had sent to her along with some pictures I had drawn for her when I was eight [years old]. What a surprise!! [It was] interesting, to be sure.

[The American] Rikki sent me an awesome letter, too. She asked about how things were with my girlfriend and I, and she also said [that] she's counting down 'till I come home. We've got a lunch date [set] for when I return, you see. She has a boyfriend, too, although she didn't hide the fact that she wouldn't mind much if things didn't work out [between her and him].

Awesome, or what??

[Here's the humorous story of the day I first met Rikki. She and I both worked at K-Mart, although we never saw each other due to the fact that I worked the morning shift whereas she worked the

evening shift.

Anyhow, me and two of my friends, Brian and Daren, had to go in the store one night for whatever reason. She was there, I saw her nametag, and we all started talking. After finding out who I was, the first words out of her mouth were, "I hear that you want to get a woman and really put her in her place."

I was shocked beyond measure. I've never even thought that, much less told anyone that! That didn't stop Brian and Daren from busting up laughing for minutes on end, of course. Thanks, guys.

I immediately went into (justified) denial mode. I protested my innocence over and over. I didn't think Rikki was buying it, but she must've come around to my way of thinking because we later became really good friends. Whew!]

Thursday, July 19, 1990—Day 198

I saw a couple of pictures of "WINK," without all the make-up and fluff. They looked normal. Rare, indeed. **[I ended up buying one of those pictures. I still have it.]**

I bought the awesomest flipchart material today. **[It consisted of a binder with small transparent page protectors.]** They fit the ones **[i.e., the pages]** of the **[standard-issue]** paper flips easily, so I can cut out of Ensigns whatever pictures I want and have the standard pictures, too.

At service, I was asked if American or Japanese girls were cuter. I said American, so they wouldn't get the impression that we're out here for girls.

Eikaiwa was fun, 'cause we ended up just talking the whole time. It got a little out of hand, but I corrected it. I wouldn't've cared, but there was another member in the room. **[Members worldwide are notorious for complaining to the mission president about every little thing the missionaries do. (It makes you wonder whether they have anything else to occupy their time.) As such, missionaries have to be very, very careful around them.]** I also explained a little about the Word of Wisdom. I'm glad **[that]** I have a clean record as far as that's concerned.

I wrote **[a letter to]** Sister Leigh a couple of P-days ago, and today I received a letter back. She was really excited to get my letter, she wrote.

PHOTOS 031



Me at Eikaiwa.



The American in the background at the far left is Harris, the woman at the far right whose face we can barely see is Yuri (whom we later taught).



The woman in the white shirt whose back is to us is Suzuki-san (whom I mention in the next entry), the woman at the far right whose face we can barely see is Sister Komura.

Friday, July 20, 1990—Day 199

[We had] nothing but finding time all day. At first I highly doubted Harris' ability to dendo, but now I see [that] he can do it. It was a successful day. I gave a Book to Suzuki-san, a lady who works at a store near the dendo area and who comes to Eikaiwa. She was extremely glad to get it—I bet she'll read it. I have high hopes.

I'm three weeks late getting my \$—It's getting scary.

Saturday, July 21, 1990—Day 200

My \$ (or [should I say] ¥) came today—[what a] relief.

Harris is okay, but he's deathly slow and deathly quiet. [He's] from Southern Utah, and one can tell. I feel like taking the reins myself. I'll have ample opportunity to do at least my share and more. I placed a Book on the street for my first time today, putting my total at five. [I don't know what I meant by "my first time," since I know I placed a book while streeting back in my previous area. Did I mean that I placed my first book while in Okazaki?] One thing's for sure—once I go senior [companion] for real, I'll be more than ready.

I had made a mistake when I gave Suzuki her Book yesterday. I gave her the wrong phone number for our place. Today we were in a little restaurant, and she just so happened to stop by! [It's] amazing how the Lord works! I immediately corrected my previous mistake.

Tonight we attended Relief Society with Setsuko. It was her first time there, and mine! [If she was invited to a Relief Society function by someone in the ward, I have no idea why we felt it necessary to accompany her. I can't imagine that we would invite her to one, non-member that she was.] She's a great girl. Japanese women are ultra-feminine.

Sunday, July 22, 1990—Day 201

I love the members. They're awesome.

[We] had a lesson with Sakai after church. Harris was boring to the point of heart failure. Poor Sakai. He must've been picked on severely **[a distinct possibility in Japanese society, sadly]**. He's totally spineless, and sorry for expressing his opinion. Thank goodness for the USMC, or I'd be much the same way.

[We] met a guy who said he'd heard a lesson or two before. **[I remember asking him what he thought of them. He said they were "interesting."]** He had a couple of cute kids, so we told him about eternal families before he had to leave the park we were at.

Cloward called today for some information on one of the members. I miss that guy. Somehow, I'm sure I'll miss Harris, too.

[We] had a lesson tonight with Yuri. **[She was the one whom I had (tastelessly) said "looks and dresses scary."]** It came down to just answering her questions, which was fun. She felt the Spirit for sure, but she was confused 'cause she had never felt that way before (at least that's my theory).

Life here is far more spiritual than it appears in this journal, 'cause it's tough to get the feelings down in pen and paper. Trust me, I'm a far better missionary than how I appear in here.

Monday, July 23, 1990—Day 202

Regardless of the fact that I stayed up 'till 3:00 **[a.m.]**, I woke up at 9:00 **[a.m.]** and spent all my free time making my flipcharts. They're gonna be great.

Personal—since the 10th grade I've had a bad habit with ***** *****. Funny, I know. Even now it'll be tough to conquer.

Tuesday, July 24, 1990—Day 203

[We] had a lesson with Sakai, and he tried not to make an appointment to meet with us again, but we stared him down 'till he accepted. **[So much for people's free agency.]**

In the parking lot outside, we spotted him from a distance praying Buddhist-style again. Strange dude. **[By-and-large, missionaries are notoriously disrespectful toward the religious traditions of the people amongst whom they serve. Sadly, I wasn't much of an exception at the time.]**

I've almost got my flipcharts done. They're awesome.

I'm about getting sick of being rejected all the time. It's going to take something from God to make these people wake up before it will become a profitable country.

Wednesday, July 25, 1990—Day 204

Harris and I do lots of bike dendo. **[It's the same thing as]** streeting, but on bikes.

[Elder] Windley, the D.L. before Sparks and now Z.L., was here for a split today.

While riding to a dinner appointment at Horie Shimai's, my bike jackknifed and sent me sprawling in the crosswalk. It was in front of a bus and a bunch of cars, and when I got up, I bowed and blew kisses. **[Judging from their expressions, the people in the vehicles thought my reaction was funny.]**

I wonder how Theresa is? She hasn't written me at my new address yet. Oh, brother. **[At]** the rate it's going, Rikki will be more eligible than she will. Maybe Theresa's trying to break me of the habit so I'll be a good missionary, but that means I'll be broken of the habit when I get back, too.

Thoughts are so hard to control!

Thursday, July 26, 1990—Day 205

[It was a] pretty successful day today. I gave another Book today to Kyoko Kobayashi, a girl [whom] Cloward and I met one day who speaks good English. She's really cool. My Book of Mormon total is now six.

At Eikaiwa I considered picking up a couple of 15 year-old girls [to listen to the discussions], but it felt weird. I figure there are no sisters [i.e., sister missionaries] here, and they need baptism too, so why not? It felt weird trying for it, but it worked out, 'cause one lady commented that their parents might be opposed, and I ended up talking to her and making a return with her. (She's 36-40 [years old] approximately.) She's bringing her friend, too. Great!

Friday, July 27, 1990—Day 206

I should've mentioned it, but yesterday on the street we met the girl from Eikaiwa who wrote to Dan. She's read from the Bible, but she's [an] Atheist 'cause she can't believe the miracles. I talked about the Book of Mormon, but she said she had no time to read it.

[We] met Kato again on the street. He's given up smoking and coffee, so we made an appointment for tomorrow.

[We had] another lesson with Sakai. He's slowly getting some bearing in his bones.

I bought and cooked myself up some mean squid. It was delicious.

We're building up a good relationship of trust with Suzuki-san. We told her [that] we'd help her move (it'll be close to downtown), and she told us to call and we'd do something sometime.

Harris has just gone senior, but we're seeing more success than [I did with] either Horrocks or Cloward. Awesome, eh? Of course, I'm accounting for over half [of] our investigators and returns, though.

Saturday, July 28, 1990—Day 207

[We] met with Kato again. Today, Sakai gave us each baseball hats—probably because he knows [that] Harris collects them. [If there's one thing the Japanese people are good at, it's gift-giving.]

I received quite the letter from Cheryl Depriest today. She's got anemia—and possibly hypoglycemia. Last year, I prophesied that the next Def Leppard album would be named "Animal Instinct"—and guess what—it is!! [Cheryl was wrong. It was actually named *Adrenalize*.] That's how into Def Leppard I was/am. She also writes that [my friend] Ward Bushman is getting married in about a week! Holy cow. What a letter.

We visited Setsuko tonight. We ended up just BRTing (Building Relationships of Trust—a tactic explained in the Missionary Guide). Halfway through, the Jehovah's Witnesses came over—[it was] my first time ever [having them show up at a place in which I was sitting]. It's a good thing we were there. The guy had taken the discussions once or twice before.

Setsuko is cool—she's really with it. The church is true. Nobody holds faith like we do. I love it!!

Sunday, July 29, 1990—Day 208

Hata-san and Kato-san, her friend, didn't show up [for their discussion appointment].

We four went to a festival **[that]** the folks connected with service put on. It was way crowded. They had us get up and dance with the rest of them. One of the teachers, during one part (where they all put on costumes), was dressed up as a pile of cow crap, just to give you an idea of how immodest the Japanese **[people]** are.

After it ended, I stepped on a "semi"—**[which is the Japanese word for]** a cicada-like bug. Everyone was shocked. I guess no one steps on bugs here.

Riding back, a bunch of "triffs," 14-15 year-old giggly girls, yelled "I love you!!" over and over as we went by. That's the first time I've ever been said "I love you" to by a total stranger.

Monday, July 30, 1990—Day 209

I spent over five sen **["sen" is Japanese for "thousand"]** at the store today—¥5,000 **[which was equal to about \$40.00 at the time]**. That's the most I've ever spent at once my whole mission. I ended up taking a long nap and wasting most of my P-day. I wrote a letter to Tsukada Shimai—my first one in total Japanese.

Tonight only Harris and I went to Eikaiwa **[in Nishio]**, for only four missionaries are necessary. **[In other words, Sparks and Brough stayed back and we teamed up with the two who were already in Nishio.]** Afterwards, I talked to a lady who had a copy of the Book of Mormon **[and]** who had been attending the Jehovah's Witnesses' church every once in a while. I did a great job explaining why we need the Book of Mormon, etc. I asked Harris for a copy of an Eikaiwa sheet that had a map to the church, but I guess I was so excited **[that]** I yelled it out and everyone looked and she got embarrassed (I think) and said "no thanks." Would she have come to church? I really feel bad. I messed up. She did say she'd come back next week and ask more questions, etc. After tonight, she understood a whole lot more about the Book of Mormon's purpose, etc. Oh, I hope it works out.

Tuesday, July 31, 1990—Day 210

A lot of people can't believe that we can actually speak Japanese.

During my break, I took a nap—the first time I've done that during a break in a long time. I wish I hadn't've, 'cause I felt awful (physically) afterwards.

Tonight we visited Nagae Shimai. She would've gone to church last Sunday, but she got a cold on Saturday night. She's going with Harris and I to the firework festival on Saturday. She's really cute—too bad she's Japanese and I'm a missionary.

Tonight we four were taken to an all-you-can-eat place by a member. We chowed down.

Maki is staying over tonight in order to dendo with us tomorrow. I wish I could make him get a fetchin' haircut.

Dan Clyde is learning Polish, too. How anyone can possibly learn two languages in one mission is beyond me. **[He was serving in the Vienna, Austria mission, speaking primarily German. He wasn't assigned to learn Polish; he did it on his own volition so he could teach all the refugees he was meeting.]**

Wednesday, August 01, 1990—Day 211

I'm in the middle of perfecting my flipcharts, so this'll be short.

Maki went with Sparks and Brough, thank goodness. Dendo was too hard for him.

Sakai asks questions about irrelevant things. Plus, he wanted to know if he could still worship his

ancestors if he joined [the church]. Fetch!!!

Tonight we went around trying to find members.

PHOTOS 032



Front row, L-R: Emi Haeno (Maki's girlfriend), me.

Back row, L-R: Harris, Sparks, Brough.



Me at my desk working on my flipcharts.

Thursday, August 02, 1990—Day 212

Maki surprised us; he stayed to dendo today. Whose idea this was is a mystery. He was extremely slow **[on his bike]** and it ticked us off. Then when we made him lead, he rode his bike too fast to stop anyone. I had to order him to take a shower this morning. I **[also]** had to stand next to him in order for him to shave and do it correctly.

He could barely handle service. We five went.

I got a letter from Rikki and a package from Daren. Rikki's letter was great. I wrote her an awesome, in-depth one two P-days ago. She should've gotten it a day or two after she sent this one. I can hardly wait for her reply to it. I talked about Theresa, etc.

Daren sent me a Def Leppard hat. Awesome! It was great to see the familiar lettering again. He wrote a distressing letter; his faith is low and he's considered going home. He needs a quick reply. I understand; I've felt exactly the same stuff he has so far. He listens to tapes to drown his sorrows, and he copied **[and mailed me]** "Hysteria," my favorite album in the world (Def Leppard, of course). Ouch!

I can't resist; **[on]** P-day I'm going to listen to it. He copied it onto one of the missionary guide tapes, of all things **[as camouflage to keep it away from other missionaries' prying eyes]**.

[When I slipped it into the tape recorder, hit "Play," and the old familiar intro came on, I couldn't help but laugh. Sparks said, "Is it Def?" I lied and said "no" and made up something. Not my proudest moment.]

Eikaiwa was great. During class, we got into a discussion about resurrection, reincarnation, and polygamy. I got one guy to say he'd read about the resurrection in the Book of Mormon he'd received a long time ago.

Eikaiwa went late, so I only had five minutes to talk, but I was able to make another return with Hata and another lady. They'll both be coming tomorrow together. Hata didn't show up Sunday 'cause she had to

visit her little sister.

I want to pick up those 15 year-old girls, 'cause they're not corrupted by Buddhism yet. But they're girls. What do I do?

Friday, August 03, 1990—Day 213

What a day, what a day, what a day!

It started off slow enough. But then we had a lesson with Sakai. He was dressed nice—like a missionary. He's gotten lots stronger on the inside, and I told him so. He believes the church is true. Such is the redeeming effect of the gospel!

I received two letters—one from Rhonda, finally, and one from Mom.

Rhonda's REALLY with it. Really. She misses me, and she told me that as soon as I get back, she's going to smother me with kisses and keep me for a week. Wow!!!

Then the big news—Mom's getting married, or so she thinks for now. She's been seeing this guy who owns a portrait studio, and a famous one at that, so he's well off. **[I was wrong on those last two counts.]** Ethan and Grant are in Washington State visiting their dad for the Summer, so they haven't even met the guy yet. It'll be interesting to see what happens.

[We] had a pick-up lesson with Hata (who's older than my mom) and Izumihara, who lives one floor below us. We mostly rapped and got acquainted (Hata did most of the talking), and then I explained about how this church answers questions. I introduced their Books of Mormon as "presents," and they were glad to receive them. Was that foul play? It was all too easy once I called them "presents." I made return appointments.

That lesson was mine, for sure. I did all of the teaching and explaining. Harris didn't care. Awesome!

I've been worrying about Daren's letter all day. I'm really worried. But now I think I know what I'll write on P-day.

Sometimes we stop off at Suzuki's store to visit for a few minutes. Today her boss drove by. Uh-oh. I don't think we'll visit much anymore.

Tonight was a big parade. Lots of companies made their shoulder-toted floats and ran with them back and forth, bouncing them up and down. "Matsuri" is what it's called. The first company had a pseudo drum-marching band with lots of barely clad women dancing around. They only had on enough to barely cover the essentials **[no pun intended]**. Sheesh, I haven't seen so much skin since I went to that nude beach when I was 16.

Afterwards, we walked in the park where all the food stands were. I gave out several Eikaiwa flyers, including to two older triffs who boldly told us to our faces that we were "cool" and that they love Americans #1.

Quite the day, eh?

Saturday, August 04, 1990—Day 214

What a fun day! First, we went housing at an apartment complex and a bunch of kids saw us. I invited them to come with us. After a while, there were seven or so kids with us, ages 2 - 9.

After we finished, we sat at the bottom **[of the complex]** playing games with them, etc. A mom was down with her two daughters, and I thought I had explained the Book of Mormon beautifully, but she still

turned it down.

I bought some "WINK" tape covers and photos. I put them (the photos) in my album. They look real. I wonder if any other missionaries will notice? I plan on saying that they're just old investigators.

Dendoing before the fireworks show, Harris met an old Eikaiwa student from his and Oviatt's old area, Kariya **[The adjacent missionary area and ward just West of Okazaki]**. With her was a guy from Switzerland—cool dude. **[He had]** fluent French, German, and good English. He goes home tomorrow—I told him I'd get a French Book of Mormon to him. Awesome!

[We] met Sugiura and walked to Shoko's place. She had a friend with her. On the way to the river to see the fireworks (the seven of us—we met up with Komura Shimai later), we had to get across the road fast—so she **[Shoko, a.k.a. Nagae Shimai]** grabbed my hand and led me across. Holding hands! I wish I had more time to explain, but a couple of times she took hold of my hand or wrist to keep me out of the way of traffic. At first, I didn't clench my fist, but then I gave in and squeezed a bit. I'm sorry, but it felt sooo nice! Luckily no one saw.

As we went through the crowd, she took hold of the back of my belt to avoid getting lost.

After watching **[the fireworks]** a while, Komura left for some reason. Later she called and explained that her dog died, so she had a feeling she should go home, and then she discovered it.

There was a kid with us whom I've seen lots around town. He'd lost his friends, so I invited him with us so we could build good relations with him.

[We] left after a while and got something to eat. **[We]** took lots of pictures, then watched 'till the end.

Then we all walked Shoko (Nagae Shimai) back home. Does she like me? Or do I jump to conclusions? That hold hands stuff was bad, but it's been a long time. It felt good. I bet she did it on purpose. **[Am I a]** bad missionary, or what?

Coming home, we darted in and out of traffic, to the surprise of onlookers. **[It was]** dangerous, but fun.

[I'm] sorry I'm in such a hurry. It's past bedtime, and I've got to eat so I don't starve tomorrow during fast Sunday. **[It was a]** fun, fun, fun day indeed.

[I can't believe I didn't go into more detail—I guess it was because I was in a hurry—but this fireworks festival we all watched was apparently a very famous annual event that people come from miles around to see.

The streets in every direction were jam-packed. It was like the general admission area of a rock concert.

The display itself was mind-blowing. It was like nothing I'd ever seen before. It puts every fireworks display I've ever seen in America to absolute shame.

I shudder to think of the amount of tonnage of gunpowder and explosives that went into this thing. There were people lined all down both banks of the river lighting off skyrockets and other pyrotechnics. Not only that, but there were a few boats anchored in the river with dudes dancing around with blazing torches, lighting firework after firework willy-nilly.

Not only were there the standard skyrockets going off at the regular altitude, but you had medium- and low-level spark storms shooting upward and exploding, so they were going off at all heights. Think of the grand finale of any American fireworks display, multiplied many times over, going on the whole time.

Plus, this wasn't the usual 15- to 20-minute display that you see here in the States. This thing went on and on and on, as evidenced by the fact that we left partway through to get something to eat.

The sky was, quite literally, ablaze. It's no wonder this thing is so famous and that it attracts so many people. I have, quite literally, never seen anything like it either before or since.]

PHOTOS 033



Front row, L-R: Shoko Nagae, Yumiko (her friend), Yoshie Sugiura.

Middle row, L-R: The kid I invited to come with us, me wearing my sunglasses at night, Brough, Harris.

Back row: Two girls who invaded the picture.



The crowd prior to the start of the fireworks display.



Front row, L-R: Yumiko (Shoko's friend), Yoshie Sugiura, Sparks.
Middle row: Shoko Nagae.
Back row: The kid I invited to come with us, me, Harris.



L-R: Yoshie Sugiura, Shoko Nagae, Yumiko (her friend).



Us again.

Sunday, August 05, 1990—Day 215

After having so much fun yesterday, today sucked. I'm sick of the oppressive weather, the blazing sun, and the humidity. I'm getting sick of dendoing in it and not seeing success anyway.

Shoko didn't come to church like she said she would. Man, I'm fuke—I think I like her. A temporary thing, soon forgotten after transfers, of course.

Funny thing—**[tonight]** while dendoing, we tried to stop a guy, but he got scared and ran the other way and ducked into a store. **[Every so often you'll encounter people in Japan who are, quite literally, scared of foreigners.]** Funny!

Monday, August 06, 1990—Day 216

Last night I wrote lots **[of letters]** while Sparks and Harris painted our shower room. Thus, **[thanks to the fact that the paint was still wet,]** I had to take a shower **[this morning]** by dumping water on myself on the back porch. I hope no one saw me naked!

They started **[painting]** at midnight, so I was able to slip in some Def Leppard before that. After seven months, it felt sooo good! To repay Daren, I'm sending him my war flag. **[It was actually the Japanese naval ensign, the one with the sun's rays.]** (Of course, there's no room for it in here, and I can get a better one cheaper downtown.)

The reason they were doing it at night is 'cause we had a deal going on in Gammagori with Iwase Shimai and Setsuko. The other two came and brought Sugiura.

We all rode the train there and went to a little island (via a bridge **[called the "Takeshima Bridge;" the island itself is a considered a national treasure]**) and wandered around the tide pools and caught crabs, etc. That was the first time I've seen the Pacific from the Eastern side. (We were in our civilian clothes.)

Next we went to Iwase Shimai's old place, where her parents run a restaurant. It was traditional Japanese. A fun day. **[Walking to the restaurant, we went straight through the red-light district, to**

my surprise.] However, last night I got a flat tire. **[It was a]** bummer trying to get around.

Tonight after Eikaiwa I talked to the same lady as before; her last name is Nakane. I was answering her questions, and the Spirit said that she was ready for some advanced stuff. The Spirit was there. I did an awesome job, giving examples and once more reaffirming the Book of Mormon. I think I more than made up for **[the errors of]** last week, thanks to the help of the Lord.

PHOTOS 034



Me getting ready for the trip to Gammagori. I always smile for pictures; Harris caught me by surprise this time.



L-R: Harris, Sparks, Yoshie Sugiura, and me offering them some shrine

water. This was at the Shinto shrine on the little island.



L-R: Me, Brough, Harris, Yoshie Sugiura.



Front row, L-R: Yoshie, two kids whose names I don't recall, Iwase Shimai, another kid I don't remember. Notice how both Yoshie and Iwase Shimai happened to be wearing matching outfits!

Back row, L-R: A woman I don't remember, me, Setsuko, Brough, Harris, another random kid, Sparks.



Front: Iwase Shimai wearing the hat.

Back row, L-R: Me, Yoshie, Sparks, Brough, Harris, and Setsuko right in front of Harris. The Takeshima bridge is in the background.

Tuesday, August 07, 1990—Day 217

Slept in late and had to fix my tire before district meeting.

During our break, Harris fell asleep—I let him sleep rather than wake him up after one hour. He didn't seem to care that our break went over. I sure didn't.

We went looking for members and inactives with no success. There was some sort of concert going on by the river that I wanted to see, but since we'd decided to go finding, Harris didn't want to change plans. **[I was actually pretty mad about this. Gatherings such as the above are the most effective places to meet people, so going there would've been the most effective use of our time. Harris was the type that once his mind was made up, he simply couldn't change it or otherwise adapt to unforeseen circumstances.]**

Matsubara is getting baptized this week—I can feel the Spirit just thinking about it.

Wednesday, August 08, 1990—Day 218

My bike tire went flat again, so I took it to the bike shop for repairs.

Hata and Izumihara dropped the lessons. After I had borne such a great testimony! I had taken command of this lesson, too **[And we can see how far that got me]**.

Tonight we all retrieved our copies of each other's **[photographic]** negatives we had made. My collection has really increased now.

Thursday, August 09, 1990—Day 219

Studying is getting awesome. My study habits are really working.

[We] had a lesson with Sakai, and he kept bringing up Buddhism, so I explained to him how it wasn't true. Buddhism is really easy to disprove. **[Oh, the irony!]**

Harris is a nice enough guy, but his intellectual capacity is perhaps 10% of what mine is.

[We] met Kyoko Kobayashi on the street again. I thought she was in her late 20s, but she's only 20—half a year younger than (Crud. Another pen bit the dust.)

—me. She had no problem talking to us—maybe we're two of her only friends.

Eikaiwa was fun, as usual. I talked a bit afterwards with Yoko, a member girl a month younger than me. I told my class how my mom's getting married and how she didn't supply me with any details. I still can't believe it. I can't wait to read about my friends' reactions to the news when they write back.

They instituted a special fast to get the Spirit into our dendo. That sucks, fasting twice in one week. I'm pissed off. I'm so thirsty!!! How I'll make it through tomorrow is beyond me.

Friday, August 10, 1990—Day 220

Got up at 5:00 **[a.m.]**, and we all left at 6:20 **[a.m.]** and made it to the church **[building]** next to the mission home at 8:20 **[a.m.]**. **[We]** had zone pass-offs first, then a zone meeting (two zones). Gibson had a hernia operation and was recovering in the mission home, so he showed up. Van Cleave was there, too, so we two talked a lot. 'Twas a spiritual meeting. **[We]** didn't get back home until 7:00 **[p.m.]**, 7:05 **[p.m.]** or so. I bought a new set of discussions at the mission home, too.

Saturday, August 11, 1990—Day 221

Awesome. Just awesome. This should be **[a]** long **[entry]**, but I have to hurry!

[We] met Nagae Shimai and Setsuko at a train station and met up with Sparks and Brough. We went to a concert at the Meito ward building, **[the]** same **[building]** as yesterday. I was sick and wanted to throw up.

Before we switched trains, I went into a unisex bathroom. Setsuko had to go, too, so she took the stall next to me. Interesting. **[It was]** my first time with a squatter john. Felt better after that.

[We] met up with Clark and Biddulph, Matsubara and Anan Shimai on the next train. Once we got off and rode the subway to the destination station, we all met Sugiura, who had driven **[there]**.

The concert was about God's love for us, put on by an R.M., Gettling, who's now back **[in Japan]** teaching English. He was once Sparks' senior companion. **[It was a]** Good concert.

[You'll hear more about Dallen Gettling as this journal progresses. As luck would have it, both he and Dan got to know each other later at BYU, since they both had the same majors. He even attended Dan's funeral.]

The three girls, Setsuko, Shoko, and Sugiura, went home in her car. I **[again]** met a **[girl named]** Tanaka Shimai whom Biddulph and I **[originally]** met on the street leaving the mission home after transfers. She said I looked like Richard Gere and had a picture taken with her and I. Met Kitajima Shimai too. She's cool. She hopes I transfer into her ward. **[Months later I did indeed transfer into her ward.]** Van Cleave was around when I spoke to her, and he and she both said I'm really good with

the language. Thanks to the Lord!

[We] went to the top floor of the mission home, and there Matsubara left the president's office from an interview, misty-eyed. She's so cool! The president drove us all to the train station, and we (including Sakibara) rode home from there.

[It was a] spiritual day indeed. Great day. This sucks, 'cause whenever I have awesome days that need lots of writing, I get home late and am forced to abridge like crazy. I could've written lots more today.

[One thing I definitely could've written more about was just how ill I was on the initial train ride before finally getting to that unisex restroom. I was borderline violently ill. I didn't know how I'd be able to last until reaching a bathroom. I've been that sick on later occasions, but never when I was stuck on a train with no bathroom in sight. I'm surprised I was able to hold out.] Oh well. At least you get the general idea.

From what Becky Fratcher **[the wife of my friend Dave]** wrote today, Theresa may be playing some sort of mind game where she's not writing. Oh well, her loss.

I heard **[that]** Proctor is in my old area, Fukutoku, and has lost 40 lbs.

PHOTOS 035



Me and Tanaka Shimai.



L-R: Kitajima Shimai, Van Cleave, me. The date in the upper-right corner is wrong.

Sunday, August 12, 1990—Day 222

Today I gave my first talk in Japanese. I did it like I did my farewell; notes on a 3x5" card upon which I expounded. It was on "faith." I bore good testimony that this is the only true church. Sakai was there. Yuri came for her lesson at 1:00, but we taught her for 1/2 hour **[and]** then had her and Sakai watch Matsubara's baptismal service.

I sat in front of the chapel with Yuri and Tominaga Shimai. I cried. Felt the Spirit strong.

Next we went in to watch the actual baptism. It was crowded in front (we were all standing), so we couldn't see. Biddulph **[who performed the ordinance]** messed up once, but the second time it was okay. Next it was back into the chapel for the closing comments. **[It was]** so cool. She had been shedding a few tears or two now and then, but when the time came for me to shake her hand, I completely broke down. I could barely say "congratulations." She's no longer Matsubara-san; she's Matsubara Shimai. I had a hand in teaching her. Oh, it was so good! It's so nice having someone who's willing to work with you! Indescribable.

Tonight I met a couple of Sri Lankans who want Books of Mormon. They spoke English and were cool. During this, Harris was talking to a guy who's American and Atheist. **[It was an]** interesting way of thinking he had, but it's too bad he can't feel the joy I felt this morning. Matsubara's so cool—man, I love that lady!

[I meant that last comment in a purely platonic way. I was never romantically attracted to her.]

Monday, August 13, 1990—Day 223

Jammed on some good **[Def]** Leppard last night. I received a reply from Tsukada Shimai; **[it was]** my first letter sent to me in a totally different language. P-day went way too fast; I want to listen to more music.

Tuesday, August 14, 1990—Day 224

I gave blood **[for]** my first time today. I was a little scared to **[do so]**, but for that very reason I knew I had to, to conquer that fear. (Only one out of every 400 **[people]** has my blood type, A -.)

We taught Sakai and he accepted the Law of Chastity and the Word of Wisdom. We set a baptismal date, so Matsubara's baptism that he saw must've really helped him. He's progressing beautifully.

In the park tonight we talked with a bunch of 10-14 year old kids. They wanted us to come back tomorrow night, so we agreed. **[the idea was to eventually meet their parents, and we were most likely going to be out and about anyway.]** Sheesh—a return with a bunch of kids.

Wednesday, August 15, 1990—Day 225

When we met with the kids, there was a 42 year-old lady with a little kid whom I explained the gospel simply and beautifully to, or so I thought. The Spirit was there; I could feel it. She was very interested, but **[she]** didn't take the Book. She had the negative Buddhist attitude that **[all]** religions are compatible. She said **[that]** she's at that park often, so chances are we'll meet again.

I got a letter from Cheryl. She sent me the newspaper clip of Ward's marriage. He's been married since the 6th. His wife is fairly cute, I guess.

We did fireworks at Shoko's place. **[Japan experiences a lot of rainfall, so fireworks are legal there 365 days a year.]** I told her how I was so glad to be a missionary, etc. She said, over and over, that I was "tsuyoi," or "strong" **[in Japanese]**. Maybe all she needs is a good example. I looked at a few pre-baptism pictures of hers (including an album full of baby photos), and she was a lot darker then—thus proof of the redeeming, enlightening effect that the church has on people. **[Either that, or the photos were from before she became an adult and started wearing make-up. Japanese women almost always wear make-up that lightens their complexion; see the photos from Day 214 for proof.]**

Thursday, August 16, 1990—Day 226

In the park, I met a lady and her sister who both knew good English. They sometimes have lots of visitors from Utah, and one said **[that]** she hopes I transfer to Gifu, where she lives. **[She gave me her phone number, too. I still have it to this day.]**

Got a letter from Mom—the date **[of her marriage]** is set for September 29.

Eikaiwa went great: I gave two Books afterwards, one to Toshie, who comes often, and **[one to]** her friend, whose first time it was **([they're])** both girls). They said they'd read. Great!

Maki is getting married to Emi-chan. **["-chan" is an affectionate diminutive for a young person, most often a girl, who isn't old enough to be a "-san" yet.]** When, they don't know. I was able to introduce

the gospel to the other two by talking about eternal marriage. Dendo is in my blood! That's all I ever think about.

When Rhonda wrote back to Yoshiko, she told her to give me a big hug if she could, 'cause I'm special to her. Awesome! Rhonda's great. I like her better than Theresa, and I told them all that. Hopefully Yoshiko will pass that on. From what Becky Fratcher says, Theresa may be playing some game, purposefully not writing. Oh brother.

PHOTOS 036



Me clowning it up at Eikaiwa.

Friday, August 17, 1990—Day 227

Tried to cash a check my mom gave me, but no bank could do it. **[In the mission binder that we all got when we arrived in-country, there was a page with instructions telling us that the mission home had a deal with one of the local banks wherein they could cash checks with only a minimal fee. Unfortunately, I hadn't read the binder closely enough to pick up on this—and wouldn't for many more months—so I lost out on the money.]** Luckily my ¥ came anyway—just when I thought I was going to have to live on water and rice for a week.

It rained twice today, but before then, Harris still was able to give out three Books.

I finally got a letter from Theresa—miracle of miracles. Like usual, she sent a couple of other ones she had written earlier but didn't have the guts to send then. The overlying theme was that since we're both so different, how are we ever going to make it work? I hate the country lifestyle, and it's in her blood. **[It's a]** tough situation indeed, but worrying about it now will only hurt. I'm not going to bother with the future 'till it comes. Scary idea. I'm scared stiff of failure, especially financially. I can't let myself get married 'till I'm **[financially]** set—I can't let my life turn out the way Mom and Dad's did.

Saturday, August 18, 1990—Day 228

I'm getting sick of doing nothing but streeting.

Spencer wrote me a letter, rebuking me for comparing myself to Daren. I appreciate it when people lay it on the line for me.

Mom wrote me too, filling in some details **[about her upcoming nuptials]** for me, at long last. The guy **[whom she's marrying]** dropped in a note, too—he seems pretty righteous. Who knows, maybe the Lord has had a hand in it, after all. "Dick" (her love) speaks highly of me to his friends 'cause of the U.S.M.C. and now this. They **[i.e., the aforementioned friends]** have an 18 year-old daughter who may write. Cool, eh? **[18 is]** a little young, though.

We went and talked English with a bunch of 12 and 13 year-old kids for Kawaii Shimai, who teaches at their school. After, we played in the gym with them. Harris and I had to skip the dinner afterwards 'cause of a lesson with Setsuko. She was sick, so we came home, made cookies, and dropped some off at her house. We gave some to Shoko, too, and made her commit to come to church. She's cool.

I'm not sure about marrying Theresa—I have to marry my own kind, and she's severely country. Why marry straight into problems at the outset?

Sunday, August 19, 1990—Day 229

This morning was profitable, for I hit another quantum leap in my lesson plan study and I finished the Book of Mormon (**[for the]** second time in my life) and I finished reading through my M.T.C. notes. Plus I passed the 300-page mark in my "red book"—the basic Japanese language text used by M.T.C. missionaries, putting me at over halfway done.

Sakai came to church, along with Shoko—and she looked nice. They started early and skipped Sunday School because of a Vance Law fireside in Meito (**[which is the ward building]** next to the mission home). Vance Law is a Mormon who plays for the Nagoya Dragons (baseball) and doesn't speak any Japanese. We went with **[a]** member and Sakai, too.

Vance Law is a really good example. He gave an awesome talk. **[During part of his talk he shared a funny story. He said that he likes to munch on sunflower seeds, and one time he was in the dugout or somewhere with a mouthful of them when a bishop or someone asked him to meet a group of boy scouts. After Vance agreed, the bishop said, "But first, I need to ask you to spit out**

the chewing tobacco."] Matsubara was there, looking happy and radiant as ever. Yoshie (Sugiura-san) was there with her friend Amano-san, who is 26 and also comes to Eikaiwa.

Kitajima Shimai was there, too—**[she's an]** awesome lady. Get this—she wants me to transfer to Meito so I can baptize her daughter. Wow—is that a Christlike compliment, or what?

When I was talking to Van Cleave, a girl came my direction, so I introduced myself and started talking. I thought she was a member, but it turns out **[that]** she was an investigator of Reynon's in my old zone. I started into the gospel and all that, and she told me, sincerely, that she wanted to become a good person. She felt the Spirit strongly as she said it—I could easily tell, for I felt it too. She said the same thing again, and I assured her that she certainly could **[become a good person]**, just keep listening to the discussions. I'm sure, at least I hope, that she felt my love. Feeling the Spirit like we both did, that's an experience I'm sure she'll never forget. I know I never will. **[Actually, I did forget until I read it again just now.]** In retrospect, I should've taken the Spirit much further—identifying it, telling her **[that]** her Father in Heaven loves her, etc. Oh well though, it worked. At least I know what to do next time.

What a profound influence this can have on the lives of people, if only they'll give it a chance! She was certainly being led to do good by the Spirit. What a message we have.

Thanks to the Lord, in all modesty I'm getting far better at calling up the Holy Ghost. He's there to help; we just have to ask. Soon, if not now, I'll be able to pull His influence out of the air at will. It's worked every time so far.

Back at our **[own]** church, we two talked to Yoshie and Amano. Yoshie admired how I picked the toughest **[military]** service to join, etc. and how interestingly I've engineered my life.

PHOTOS 037



Front row, L-R: Three random kids, Elder Wasden (the junior zone leader).
Back row, L-R: Me, Kitajima Shimai. The date on this photo is, once again, off by a day.



L-R: Emi Haeno, Harris, me, Yoshie.

Monday, August 20, 1990—Day 230

The president called me today to answer a couple of questions I **[had]** asked in my last president's letter. I asked for the procedures on casting out devils, raising the dead, etc. I wasn't sarcastic; I figure **[that]** I'm in this line of work, so it's better to know now than **[to]** get caught off-guard later.

I wrote a fairly short letter back to Theresa. I hate anything having to do with the country **[lifestyle]**, but I didn't tell her that.

I talked with the same lady at Eikaiwa tonight. She asked some tough questions about the Bible, ones I didn't have the answer to. Everyone else had left the room to hear Biddulph and Clark sing, so she and I were in the room alone, which is against the rules. I was a little worried, so the Spirit wasn't there as strong. Teaching the gospel comes before keeping rules, so I stayed up there. I didn't do as well as last time, but I accomplished more—I was able to definitively prove that her "New Translation" of the Bible was dangerous without authority from God (Ecclesiastes 9:8—a note to myself). And until she realizes that, we can't get anywhere. So, in short, I didn't do as well, but I accomplished a lot more. I sure hope she starts reading the Book of Mormon.

Tuesday, August 21, 1990—Day 231

[We] met with a cool kid this morning who goes back to college somewhere in the Tokyo North mission tomorrow, dang it.

Got a great letter from Daren. Things are getting better for both of us. His mission president is a real jerk, for he sent me a letter of correspondence to the guy and the president's response. (I have to mail them both back.) **[The guy had written something to Daren along the lines of, "It's not your place to criticize your priesthood leader" or something like that.]** Daren really liked the war flag I sent him, and my letter really helped him a lot.

[We] met with a guy tonight who was really willing to play ball—he even said he wanted to learn how to take part in our church meetings!!! Now that's rare. Awesome guy, indeed.

Wednesday, August 22, 1990—Day 232

I'm on a split in Toyota, Sparks' old area, with the junior zone leader, **[Elder]** Wasden. There's a new rule that the zone leader has to take part in one lesson with everyone who's slated for baptism, so he's teaching Sakai Lesson Six with Harris.

On the streets, I met the same girl who gave me a flyer for a concert back a week ago in Okazaki. She recognized me, not vice-versa. Of course, U.S. missionaries are easy to spot. She was cute, too.

I got to see the branch room they use for a chapel. Blackburn Shimai was out dendoing, too. I met her the last few days of the M.T.C., remember. **[She was one of the two sisters whom Wheeler Sensei picked up just before our group departed for Japan.]**

Thursday, August 23, 1990—Day 233

Back **[at]** home, I got a nice letter from Sister Ruth Leigh in Osaka again. We've got a date cut out for when I'm home—my third one made so far. She's going to hold me to it, she said. **[It never materialized. She didn't respond to one of my letters and I've never heard from her since.]**

Eikaiwa was hard, 'cause they study and know the English rules and I only speak it.

I'm sick of dumb dendo—mine will be smart. **[I was wrong, by-and-large. Often you just run out of ideas or can't come up with something creative to do, so you don't have much of a choice other than to hit the streets or the houses.]** Folks, I've got to let you have it—I'm going to be one of the best missionaries in this mission, if not all of Japan itself. I can feel it. No doubts at all. **[If mere numbers are your measuring-stick, then I was wrong about this, too.]**

Friday, August 24, 1990—Day 234

We **[four]** had a lunch appointment with the Hanaes, the guy who is the Ward Mission Leader and hasn't showed to the meeting the past three weeks. His wife (not him) was there with the youngest four (of five) kids. Two **[of the kids']** friends were there, 10 and 11 years old, too. The 11 year-old was Akiko, the younger sister of Yoko, a 20/21 year-old member girl with good English. Akiko is **[a]** really cute **[kid]**. Anyhow, the Japanese never discipline their kids, so they were bad as heck. The three year-old kept putting his filthy hands in all the food. I'll never forget that meal.

[We] met a born-again Christian. He'd only accept the Bible, nothing else. It was frustrating. Man, I'd never make it **[as a missionary]** in America.

Like last Saturday, we talked with kids for Kawai Shimai. We played basketball in the gym, us six against lots and lots of kids. **[I was definitely the weakest link on the missionary team, since I'm terrible at sports and tire very easily.]** I got so hot and sweaty that I took a shower. Thus, I was bit late getting out, and Kawai Shimai was yelling at us all to hurry. She started saying, "Hurry, your mother is waiting!" in English, as though we were little kids. That wench pissed me off bad.

Saturday, August 25, 1990—Day 235

I'm sick of not being able to give out Books like I should be able to. **[I think part of my "problem" is that I wasn't pushy at all. I always made every effort to respect the other person's free agency.]** Met up with Suzuki-san from service, and she took us for pizza at a new place. Didn't eat much, but it was good.

Tonight we had another volleyball meet. First we met three Eikaiwa girls at the church, then we went over **[to the gym]**. One girl was the one from Kariya that Harris knew (see Day 214), and one was one whom I had given a Book to (**[their names were]** Kyoko and Toshie). We had met and talked with Toshie and her two other sisters before meeting up with Sparks and Sugiura that same night, also. **[Yeah, that last sentence confuses me, too.]**

Sunday, August 26, 1990—236

Sakai, Yuri, and Atsushi, our cool, willing-to-play-ball investigator, were all at church today. We prepared Sakai's upcoming baptismal service.

We had another thing with Kawai Shimai's school. This time they were 9th graders. 'Twas fun. It works both ways, but when a person speaks another language, I've noticed, they imagine they have a shield around them and can get away with saying anything. For instance, a couple of times I was told **[that]** I was cute, etc. (not 'cause it's true, just 'cause I'm American).

[We] visited Shoko again. I like her too much, I realize, but I guess this is one of those regular temptations. It's thoroughly impossible.

Monday, August 27, 1990—Day 237

I stay up Sunday nights to write letters, giving me more time on P-days. That's against the rules, plus listening to Def Leppard is making me feel guilty. But do I have the strength to quit? I bought some more WINK tape covers today. They're so cute!

Nakane, the lady I talk with, wasn't at Eikaiwa tonight. I ended up teaching another lady a mini-lesson. It went well.

I hope this Iraq thing blows over before I get home. **[I was referring to the first Gulf War, of course. My Marine unit was activated and made it all the way to Okinawa, but then the war ended. They were stuck there for eight months before returning home. As for me, thanks to my mission I avoided all that drama.]**

Tuesday, August 28, 1990—Day 238

I gave a Book to the cute girl who works at the post office. She gets excited and talks whenever we come in. She had gone to a Catholic high school here in Okazaki, so hopefully she has a **[Christian]** base to build on.

I got a letter from Grandpa and Grandma S_____, among others. He says **[that]** I'm good at expressing ideas through writing. He encouraged me to use my talents. Great! That's all the more encouragement to write my book about Boot Camp once I'm home. **[I made a feeble start on this book in the Summer of 1996, but that's as far as I ever got.]**

I gave out (placed) another Book tonight with a 16 year-old kid. I've placed two books in one day on two separate occasions, but never at different times in the same day.

Wednesday, August 29, 1990—Day 239

[We] got taken on an all-you-can-eat place, the same as before, by a different Kyodai at around noon. Placed two more Books today, one—amazingly—with a Moonie (Unification Church) missionary, a guy we see on the streets often. I decided to be unconventional and talk to him about dendo, etc. The

Unification Church is all about uniting all religions, so I was able to build on that by explaining that it'd help to know the Mormons' beliefs, right? So I placed a Book with him and he was glad. Matsubara and Anan Shimai walked around the corner halfway through, so I was able to talk to them afterwards.

I may have saved him from a lifetime of dendo, 'cause that's what they do once they join **[the Moonies]**. So, 'twas a major, major, major accomplishment today—I actually placed a Book with a missionary from another church—while he was dendoing!

[We] had a long wait while Sparks interviewed Sakai for baptism. He **[Sakai]** knew almost nothing—so they both decided to wait on it. Harris was visibly disappointed. We found out that he **[Sakai]** really respects Harris. Oh well.

Thursday, August 30, 1990—Day 240

Brough had to transfer to Ichinomiya today, so we were up early to watch his video of his folks that his parents sent him (**[we were awake at]** 4:30 **[a.m.]** to be exact). Biddulph has also gone to Takefu, way up north. **[Biddulph was there quite a long time. I myself later transferred there to replace him.]** Both their replacements are fresh from the M.T.C., exactly six months behind me.

We met Kyoko Kobayashi on the street today, and we walked with her the rest of the way to work. She has good English. She's not Japan-like at all, 'cause she's not shy and she likes to make friends. I encouraged her to keep reading the Book of Mormon.

Right before Eikaiwa we had time for streeting. I offered a sincere prayer beforehand and felt that it'd be answered. Sure enough, we met a cool guy and made a return for tomorrow.

Lots **[of people]** showed up to my Eikaiwa class. Afterwards, Amano-san gave me a picture she had taken of me. She's cute! (**[She's]** 26, too—Rhonda's age.) Before Eikaiwa I placed a Book with Toshie's friend who came to the volleyball activity.

Friday, August 31, 1990—Day 241

Without the true church, people come up with weird ideas. We ran into a college professor who's good at English who we know, and he took us into a small restaurant. **[He had a British accent, which sounded extremely strange coming from a Japanese person.]** We met a guy who was a Sokka Gakkai church member. Our **[own]** guy ripped him up and down, and I guess you don't talk back to your elders here, 'cause he sat there and took it. Our dude thinks that since everyone has their own way of thinking, that everyone is God. Weird, indeed. Funny, but I don't seem to remember creating the earth.

Our pick-up lesson went well. The guy's cool; he doesn't freak out when you mention the word "Christ" like 99% of the Japanese do.

Saturday, September 01, 1990—Day 242

Gave a Book to the guy we always see in the park. Since I gave it as a friend, he was glad to receive it. Another guy knew the Bible well, but didn't want the Book of Mormon. I can never figure those types out.

Setsuko wasn't home for her lesson.

Harris found a "WINK" phone card, but he wouldn't give it to me, dang it. **[Prepaid phone cards were quite heavily used, and many of them had widely diverse pictures of, say, the Japanese countryside, famous landmarks, or other aspects of Japanese culture. When the cards ran out of credits, people would often just leave them in the phone booths. A number of missionaries would collect these whenever they found them and later produce their own photo albums of sorts. Harris was one of these collectors.]**

I was a far bigger fan of WINK than he was, so I thought he should give it to me, but he would have none of it.]

Sunday, September 02, 1990—Day 243

Church was fun. Yuri came again. She's cool. We saw Setsuko in a car with her mom while dendoing, and she waved. Okado is the guy's name whom we often see in the park. Tonight, he was at a table with a friend, and his copy of the Book was next to him. Awesome! Our guy we met with last Friday didn't show up to his lesson.

Since I've finished **[reading]** the Bible Dictionary, I've started **[reading]** the Doctrine and Covenants.

The two new guys **[in our district]** are pretty good; they were using a few grammar principles that I didn't know when I was at their level.

Harris is slow, dang it. Deathly slow. (Mentally and physically.)

I'm getting into the swing of where my priorities are. I can easily see sacrificing my own time for the sake of teaching the gospel. That's the whole reason I'm here.

Crud—should I give up my Def Leppard on P-days or not? The Spirit works through whoever it wants, but rules are rules. Cloward didn't keep too many, but he'd seen the most baptisms. Plus, the more **[rules]** I try to keep, the more stressed out I get. To give up or not to give up—that is the question.

Monday, September 03, 1990—Day 244

My mission is 1/3 of the way over today. Wow, eh? **[I was wrong. I ended up extending for over a month at the mission president's request, so I wasn't at the 1/3 mark yet.]** I'm glad I write **[in this journal]** every day, 'cause I can look back at any day I want and see how things were.

Dan listens to worldly music and he still sees success. Maybe I won't give up Def Leppard.

Nakane-san came **[to Eikaiwa in Nishio]** tonight. I got down to basics, asking her "What's the reason for religion?" She paused and said, frankly, "I don't know." I explained **[that]** it's 'cause God loves her and has a plan for her to be happy. I asked her how she felt during the J.W.s' (Jehovah's Witnesses) meetings, and invited her to come to our church and feel the difference. I hope, I hope, I hope, I hope, I hope she comes! The Spirit was there.

Tuesday, September 04, 1990—Day 245

Spent some time perfecting my flipcharts. **[Later, while dendoing,]** some 9~10 year-old girls ran after us all the way from the park to the castle—a 10 minute bike ride. If only people our age with interest in the gospel would do that!

[We] taught a pick-up lesson to a 16 year-old with his own rock band. Harris is getting better at teaching by far. There was a member from Okinawa there, who was originally from China.

Wednesday, September 05, 1990—Day 246

[We] housed and met good people and I got sick. **[I received a]** letter from Mom—**[she]** moved **[the]** date **[of her marriage]** up, **[and is]** married now. Ugh. **[She had written the letter to me on the hotel stationery, believe it or not.]** **[We]** dendoed, **[it was the]** longest three hours of my life (except **[when I was in Boot Camp in the]** U.S.M.C.). Dendo sucks. I'm so sick I want to die.

Thursday, September 06, 1990—Day 247

I tossed and turned all night last night; I couldn't get comfortable. We had zone pass-offs today, and I thought I wouldn't make it. **[I couldn't even eat the refreshments afterward.]** Back at home, I was too sick to dendo—I stayed home all day.

At Eikaiwa, one girl in my class (Jokyu—**[the]** advanced **[class]**, **[whose students are]** near fluent) told me that she could visibly tell that I'd lost weight since the last time she'd seen me, one month ago. I was an idiot and didn't bring a Book with me, so I gave the same girl an English copy that was laying around downstairs. I hope it carries the same weight **[as a Book in her native language]**; I promised her a Japanese copy next week.

Maybe the reason I'm so sick is from all the worrying. Mom getting married, possible war in Saudi Arabia, etc. My life is all messed up.

Elder Price is in my zone now; **[he's]** the one who took my place in Fukutoku. Oviatt is now zone leader; Kurita and Mrs. Atsumi have both been baptized. Cool, or what?

Friday, September 07, 1990—Day 248

I got a bit better today. I gave blood again while Sparks and Harris donated plasma, which took a while. Last night they changed the arrangement of our desks and stuff around, so now the apartment has a different flair. Coming home tonight, the other two hid outside the window that is in the stairway and scared me half to death as I was walking up to the apartment.

Saturday, September 08, 1990—Day 249

We searched out Okamoto san's place, a lady whom Ishida Shimai had referred and Cloward and I taught once. She's been busy. We searched out Suzuki sensei's house, and while we were in comparative nowhere we saw Sakai in the passenger seat of his company truck! He was shocked to see us, too. Suzuki's house isn't far at all; we found it (on bikes) to prove **[to her that]** she could get to Eikaiwa without a problem.

[We] met an American tonight, and he said it was good to see **[that]** I've got some direction in my life. **[Referencing]** my book, my wallet idea, etc.) I hope I've got direction.

Sunday, September 09, 1990—Day 250

During the one hour I had to lead, I placed two Books. I've finally found out that it works to BRT (Build Relationships of Trust) to no end and get their opinions and thoughts on everything. In order for Sparks and Harris to teach Sakai, we did a split—I was true acting senior for the first time. I went and visited Setsuko's mother (Setsuko was extremely sick again) and found Iwase Shimai's house and talked to her for the rest of the time.

Monday, September 10, 1990—Day 251

I didn't stay up to write letters, but I still slept in 'till past 9:00. I may as well write at night after all. I really want a clean record and want to be forgiven of my sins mentioned in the first few pages **[of this journal]**, but I wonder if I need to give up Def Leppard in order to be forgiven. Should I give it up? *Can* I even give it up? Can I still see success with it? Would I see more success without it? Or does it even make a difference? Tough decision!

Tuesday, September 11, 1990—Day 252

[We] biked down to Nishio for district Benkyokai. **[Once again, "benkyokai" is Japanese for "study meeting."]** **[We]** had it at the other two's apartment. Sister Matsubara dropped some food by. **[She's an]** awesome lady—she radiates happiness. She's beautiful!

[Back in Okazaki,] I bought a pastry to feed to the pigeons by the river. They were aggressive—climbing all over me and getting me dirty. It was lots of fun, however. **[There were]** five birds on my arm at a time. **[I got]** lots of scratches.

I got a letter from Jodi Longstroth, finally. **[Jodi was the daughter of one of my new stepfather's best friends. He had hooked me up with her address, so I wrote to her.]** She doesn't know me too well, obviously, so she just said "hi" and asked me to tell **[her]** a little more about myself. I'll do that.

Wednesday, September 12, 1990—Day 253

Sparks and Harris are finally getting an organized member-missionary program under way. We went to visit members this morning, and one lady told us straight out that they'd quit coming to church. I wonder which Kingdom she wants to go to?

Thursday, September 13, 1990—Day 254

We had district benkyokai or whatever with the Toyohashi **[district]** guys and the president and the A.P.s. One A.P. is **[Elder]** Hakes, who was Oviatt's companion on the M.T.C. I've only "passed off" (practice taught on my own) up to **[discussion principle]** 2.3. The president's wife harped on me badly 'cause I'm so far behind. I don't care about it too much. I felt a little nervous in my interview 'cause of Def Leppard. The inner war over whether or not to give it up is getting fierce. I was diligent in the M.T.C., and it got me nowhere. Other missionaries, like Daren, listen to it and still see success. Plus, it's a stress reliever—one of the few I have. What to do? Is it keeping me from getting too far out of **[touch with]** reality—and thus helping me? Is it relieving stress and giving me more productive energy? Or is it ruining my spirituality and ability to teach?

Tonight I had "picture night" at Eikaiwa—where we showed each other's pictures and explained **[them]** in English. **[It was]** lots of fun. I was talking in a group afterwards, so it was tough to single out someone to ask to hear the discussions. I did give Chika her Japanese copy of the Book of Mormon and gave her her chapters to read. She said she'd do it.

Dan has written Masako, in my class, twice now. He told her to listen to my message. Great! I'll single her out next, asking her to try a lesson and see. Man, I'm sick of not making returns at Eikaiwa like I want to.

Friday, September 14, 1990—Day 255

[We] went way out to visit members. It rained today, but at least it's getting quite a bit cooler than the sweat bath it was a month ago.

We went to Suzuki sensei's house to introduce ourselves and meet her family. She fed us pizza; we'd already stuffed ourselves at home. We played UNO and watched T.V. 'Twas fun.

Yesterday the president told me that they **[i.e., the mission home staff]** were all a bit apprehensive about teaming me up with Harris, 'cause we're so different. I'm surprised they could tell, what with all the missionaries they have to deal with. **[According to the president,]** one of the reasons **[for making us companions]** was to bring Harris out of his shell. It's cool to see **[that]** they're using me to bring about good purposes. Got a letter from Daren today, too.

[Although I didn't make the connection at the time, the mindset that the mission president revealed was indicative of the "babysitting" aspect of missions that sometimes creeps in. Although it wasn't rampant in my mission to my knowledge, some returned missionaries report being constantly paired with lazy or "screw-off" missionaries thanks to the mission president wanting a reliable missionary to keep an eye on them. This often means that a diligent missionary will be obliquely punished precisely because of his diligence through constantly being "held back" by companions that the mission president wants to have babysat.]

Saturday, September 15, 1990—Day 256

This morning our stake, covering the Nagoya zones and ours (**[the]** Mikawa **[zone]**), I think, had a field meet. I met lots of missionaries I knew and members, too. Chandler Shimai took Larsen Shimai's place in Nonami—where Van Cleave is.

Before the field meet started, a big, green wall **[in the sky]** moved in—just like the one that hit here in Okazaki on June 16th. Just like before, it dumped torrents of rain—sending everyone running for cover. It was wild. We all moved up to the gym later to play around and salvage as much fun as possible. **[My Japanese/English dictionary was thoroughly saturated with rain. I was afraid it was ruined for good, but Elder Clark helpfully informed me that once it dried the pages could be thumbbed through again. Luckily, he was right—although the pages were permanently warped, it was (and is) still functional.]**

Tonight we saw a drunk dude pushing around a taxi driver and his mom trying to restrain him. Finally another dude pulled the guy into the train station. I wanted to beat the drunk dude up, but we're here on revocable visas and I don't want to be sent home.

Sunday, September 16, 1990—Day 257

I told Aoyama Shimai that people like her are our favorites (she's a convert), and Hanae Kyodai overheard me. It looked bad.

We met with Sakai and went over the basics. The relationship is getting better. He's a good guy. We gave him a D&C.

Monday, September 17, 1990—Day 258

I didn't stay up late last night in order to keep the rules, but it took me longer to write my letters than it would've otherwise. So it's back to writing at night. Plus, I'm trying to give up Def Leppard to see how it affects me—for the first time in a long time, I listened to no music at all all P-day.

Had a nice talk tonight with Nakane-san. We pretty much just chatted. It was nice. She has a beautiful voice! It's fun just to talk to her. I let her borrow my Missionary Pal—**[it has]** lots of Bible scriptures proving the church is true. I hope it helps. It felt weird, loaning it to her and not giving it to her **[like we always did with Books of Mormon]**.

Tuesday, September 18, 1990—Day 259

[We had] scattered showers today. Crazy weather. We visited a few members' houses, which took all day. We looked for and found a Sister Tanaka's home. At first, we were just looking for members by their names, not really knowing their faces beforehand. Sister Tanaka turned out to be the lady **[whom]** we sometimes meet on the streets and whose house we're eating at in a couple of weeks. I shared a little about sharing the gospel and talked about the Lord's help, etc. I think she felt the Spirit.

[I still remember that visit. We dropped in unannounced just as she was about to leave (again?) for work, presumably after having eaten lunch. She scrapped that and hurriedly made lunch for us. She totally didn't have to do that, but Japanese people are notoriously generous to their guests, especially members hosting missionaries.]

When we got on the subject of member-missionary work, she said it was very hard to talk to her non-Mormon co-workers about the church. At the time I wasn't very sensitive to her point of view. You can even say that I was a little annoyed: Here we missionaries had come from halfway around the world, leaving behind our whole lives and everyone and everything we had ever known, even learning a new language in order to work all day sharing the gospel, and here she

couldn't even approach a few co-workers??

Now that I've matured a bit, I much better understand her point of view. Harris and I had nothing to lose, since in Japanese society American missionaries "don't count," whereas Sister Tanaka had to continue living there and was risking the neutrality—or even the goodwill—of her co-workers by hitting them up about religion. Even worse, in Japan there aren't any laws against discrimination (employers can discriminate in any way against anyone for any or no reason whatsoever, up to and including termination), so she might have been risking her employment as well.]

My ¥ from my check finally came in, although my regular monthly ¥ hasn't. That's good, 'cause I was out of money. At least now I'll survive 'till payday.

We took our break at 6:40 [p.m.]—our latest ever.

Wednesday, September 19, 1990—Day 260

We rode way out looking for members and got drenched. There's a typhoon coming, so we're catching the prelude. [We] came home, dried off, and went to service, but only the normal (senseis) people were there. The rest were home, preparing for the typhoon.

[We] took a break (I'm getting good at making squid), then found more members. I think Harris is developing an outgoing personality, thanks to me.

The mission president passed the word on for all missionaries to be in by 8:00 [p.m.] ([there's an] upcoming typhoon, remember).

Thursday, September 20, 1990—Day 261

So much for the typhoon. This morning it was all nice and clear. It had blown down lots of trees and took out a phone booth, however. [Japanese folks tend to freak out over any hint of inclement weather, blowing things (no pun intended) way out of proportion. It's bizarre. Sure, the wind blew hard throughout the previous night, but it was nothing more serious than the intense windstorms that occasionally hit Utah.]

Tonight, Elder Windley, the Z.L., is here on a split. He's [going] home in two weeks. Sparks took his place here as D.L.

Only three [students] came to my Eikaiwa class, the lowest number ever.

Friday, September 21, 1990—Day 262

[We] met a guy this morning with fluent English who had lived in Louisiana for six months. [We] talked for an hour and 20 minutes, [then] gave [him] a Book at the end—[it was] my longest "shokai" ([Japanese for] introduction) ever.

My money came—[it was] a lot less than normal, 'cause right now the value of the dollar is way down. Normally I get c. 38~39,000 ¥ each month; this time it was only 33,000 ¥. Ouch.

[We] had a good lesson with Yoshida, the 15 year-old kid [whom] Cloward and I met. We hadn't been able to meet him (Harris and I) since then.

Saturday, September 22, 1990—Day 263

For not having anything on our schedule, we sure had a busy day.

A few days ago I procured a copy of "Jesus the Christ" from the shelf above our closet that was left here by a former missionary. Now I've got my own. **[Studying]** Japanese comes first, however.

This morning I met another Israeli guy. He was really cool. Man, those folks have a lot of wars. He requested a Book of Mormon in Hebrew.

[We] met Suzuki sensei and Kano sensei (both from service) and Kano sensei's two kids and ate ramen for lunch. Then we were dropped off at our bikes, rode home and picked up our "Uno" cards, then rode to Suzuki's place. Harris ended up cooking curry rice for us all for dinner. **[Being an easily-prepared dish, curry rice is a ubiquitous staple of the diets of American missionaries serving in Japan.]** After Kano sensei went home, we three went to a close gym and played an easy-going game of volleyball with a bunch of other ladies. Man, we spent a lot of hours with her. At the gym there was a huge spider on the wall—and none of them cared!

[I still remember that spider as though it was yesterday. I'd never seen such an enormous specimen of the arachnid world. When I say this thing was huge, I'm not talking "very large." I'm talking "knock-your-socks-off" gigantic, causing you to completely reevaluate everything you thought you knew about terrestrial invertebrates.

Thanks to the Internet, I now know that it was a Japanese Huntsman Spider. Think of a typical tarantula, then triple its leg span. In addition, think of one that, unlike normal tarantulas, can also stick to walls and ceilings like a normal spider and move lightning-fast. As luck would have it, I apparently saw an exceptionally large one.]

Sunday, September 23, 1990—Day 264

I often feel guilty for talking with members after church—do they lose confidence in us, 'cause we're not out working? Or do they like it better 'cause we care enough to talk to them? **[Looking back, I think it's the latter. To whom would you rather refer your friends and neighbors: A pair of missionaries you hardly knew, or a pair of missionaries with whom you were quite well acquainted?]**

There was a stake meeting of sorts here today—and Oviatt came here on a split with Proctor! Proctor looks great. It's been over half a year since I've seen him. We were going to take our break with them at our house, but their meeting went way over and after that they were offered a free ride home—so they didn't come over. I miss Oviatt—he's totally cool. It was great getting to rap with Proctor again.

Earlier, a girl from Brazil rode after us and had us take each other's pictures with her. (I thought she was Japanese at first—she spoke it well enough.) In each picture, she slid her arm into ours and leaned her head onto our shoulders. **[It was]** bad news for a missionary, but lots of fun all the same.

[I remember using this incident to play a little prank on Harris. While she had her arm around his and her head on his shoulder, he was obviously very uncomfortable. Perhaps he wasn't used to that sort of thing back home. Either way, I deliberately took my time: For example, I fumbled around with the camera, saying things like, "Do I need to focus this, or is it auto-focus?" Then I said stuff like, "Uh, let me step back a little. No, never mind, let me come in a little closer. Yeah, that's a bit better." And thus I dragged it out as much as I could. Maybe I'm a jerk, but it was simply too much fun watching Harris sweat.]

Monday, September 24, 1990—Day 265

We went with Hayashi Shimai and a couple of other ladies from **[the]** Nishio Eikaiwa to a kids' park way out there. Sugiura and another 19 year-old investigator of theirs was there, too. Sakai came—Boy, is he a weird puppy. I don't care anymore; I give up on him.

We met the Toyohashi elders there by chance. **[This must've meant that we were taken outside of our area.]**

We never did come home, we just changed **[into our missionary garb]** over at **[Sister]** Hayashi's house for Eikaiwa. I did a poor job.

Nakane-san hadn't done her homework with my Missionary Pal—so now I've got it back.

I had received four letters when I got home—among which was a nice one from Rhonda. She looks very promising. Plus **[I received]** one from my next-door neighbors back home. Mom wrote, too—she's been married a bit now, and she sounded a bit more mature. What's done is done; my hands are clean.

This is the first time I haven't been able to answer all **[my]** letters on P-day (including the ones received on P-day). It's just as well, though—I'll probably be transferred this week; I'll be able to tell them all my new address next time.

Tuesday, September 25, 1990—Day 266

Today was a zone conference in Nagoya. Got to talk a bit with Oviatt, the Z.L. **[and]** Cloward, too. Oviatt sat in between Harris and I during the testimony meeting. I got called up! Oh, boy! So I bore my testimony as best I could in Japanese. It got a little funny at the end, but it worked.

Afterwards, me and the others who would end up transferring were called into the president's office. Guess what? I'm going to Inuyama ("Dog Mountain" in Japanese), and my new companion will be **[Elder]** Koyanagi, a Japanese elder with no English. He was in my first zone, so I know him pretty well. We'll be in a two-man apartment—so **[I will get]** lots of practice, you figure! I'm looking forward to it. He's cool. Either this is to get me practiced up for the future, or it's to humble me 'cause I'm getting a bit confident in my language ability, or a little of both. Koyanagi has the member-missionary work going, so that'll be nice. Inuyama was Harris's old area before here, and it was also Van Cleave's first area.

Harris had me take the lead as we taught Sakai out of the gospel principles book. We went to meet his folks, but he hadn't warned them we were coming—so they wouldn't come out to meet us. He lives close to Kato, so we went to visit him—then a figure ran out from around the side **[of the house]** while we were at the door. We chased after him for a while, but he kept running—it was probably him.

Wednesday, September 26, 1990—Day 267

I skipped studying in order to get all packed. We four ate lunch at Ishida Shimai's with her friend from Toyohashi (they're both about Mom's age), then went to service for my last time. **[We]** went downtown to replace the war flag I sent Daren; this one is far nicer. **[The one I sent Daren was only printed on one side. This one was silkscreened on both sides.]**

It rained hard; we both were soaked. My stuff was packed, so it was a pain getting into dry clothes. Sparks and I split so that Harris and Miles **[Sparks' former junior companion who replaced Brough, now Harris's new companion replacing me]** could check on a referral with a member to Gammagori. We walked a few minutes and visited a former bishop who's now fuke. It's amazing; **[it's]** my last night here and I barely found out about him. How much more would I find out if I'd been staying?

It seems like just last night that the president called me and told me I'd be going to Okazaki. I can't believe it. I've come a long way, yet I still have oh so long to go. Regardless of what's been written **[in this journal so far]**, the bulk of the experiences have yet to be had—as senior companion.

[Thus ended my last full day in Okazaki. One thing I remember about the area that I don't think I mentioned is what a tough bike ride it was to the church. It was quite close to our apartment as the crow flies, but it was up a steep hill that left us winded whenever we went there.]

Beyond that, my time serving with Elder Harris taught me a good lesson, although he never realized it. Heck, even I didn't recognize it at the time. Anyway, as I alluded to a few times, Harris

wasn't anywhere near as outgoing as I was, nor was he anywhere near the conversationalist that I was. Although he wasn't dumb, he moved and talked slowly. He had grown up in a farming community and intended to become a sod farmer himself.

All these traits were pretty much my exact opposite. Therefore, I'm sorry to admit, I was quite judgmental of him. You might even say that I considered myself superior.

Although the lesson is probably obvious to everyone else, Harris unwittingly taught me that just because I'm *different* from someone doesn't mean I'm *better* than him or her. Who's to say that being outgoing is "better" than being reserved? What gave me the right to assume that Harris's traits were inferior to my own, as opposed to the other way around?

So, he taught me a good lesson: Never judge someone due merely to the way they are. If you must judge, do so according to their *actions*, not according to their *traits*.]

Thursday, September 27, 1990—Day 268

Had hassles with the moving company, but they came before I left. They had no change, so I have to pay when they get here.

Shook hands with Harris one last time, then Sparks & I walked to the train station. I never looked back.

At the mission home, I met Horrocks again. It was great; he ran up and gave me a hug that lifted me off the floor. I tried to repeat the feat, but couldn't. Man, It's been five whole months—I can't believe it. I told him how Yoshie got the book he gave her brother—that excited him a lot and he told his then-companion at the time, **[Elder]** Beers. It was a huge transfer; lots **[of people]** were there. His **[Horrocks's]** last companion was **[Elder]** Scott, who was Sparks' **[companion]** before Brough and whom I knew in the M.T.C. I forgot to tell him about my mom getting married, dang it! Cloward was there, too—I told him about how we chased Kato last night. He had extended a month, of course, so he and Horrocks go home together tomorrow. I'm finally having a senior who dies! "Die" is the word we use for "go home **[from one's mission]**."

Uthagrove Shimai was there, too—looking her usual self (forlorn). I thought I was fast—she's going to area four, senior six. (I'm now four and five). Gibson was also there, among many others whom I know.

I can't believe it. I knew all the areas, I could trace who was with who **[as companions]** when and where, etc. Seven months **[in country]**! That's a huge chunk! The mission home is the only place where time stands still—it seems like just yesterday **[that]** Horrocks was picking me up—and I was dropping him off, too. Amazing.

Met a sister (Iwamura?) who's fair at English who **[had]** barely came **[to the mission]**. That was fun. **[I was wrong; her last name was "Iwamatsu."]**

Elder Koyanagi and I next took the train to Inuyama. He walked onto it, and I almost missed it as I was a bit far behind; the door closed on me. **[Another reason I almost missed the train is because Koyanagi boarded it without saying anything or gesturing to me or otherwise indicating that our train had arrived. For whatever reason, I thought he had walked onboard to look at one of the posted schedules or maps or something. It's a good thing I decided to follow him, or else I would've missed it. It was like he was completely oblivious to the fact that he had a companion. Oh well, I guess you had to be there.]** *Whew* I don't know what we'd've done had he taken off without me.

I'm in Van Cleave's old apartment, I think. I saw a recent picture of a girl in baptismal clothes in the Gokiso church (**[I saw the picture]** here)—it looked like the one I talked to back in Meito on August 19th—she received baptism after all!! Yay!

We ate lunch, then I ended up cleaning up around the apartment. We went to Eikaiwa, where I clean forgot to tell everyone "Hi" from Harris, dang it! I forgot a lot of stuff today, didn't I?

I "taught" the kids' class today, but we only played cards (**[there were]** no parents). One **[student]** was a twelve year-old girl who was recently baptized. The other two elders are Thomason and Dorough—Dorough was Biddulph's companion in the M.T.C. Today is their Hump Day. Wow. I am as long out as Biddulph was when we became co-juniors.

Murdock, the guy I replaced, left me a nice note in my new desk.

Speaking all-Japanese isn't as hard—or as bad—as I'd expected. Koyanagi's cool—this is going to work out great. **[Boy, was I ever wrong about *that!*]**

Friday, September 28, 1990—Day 269

[It was a] pretty laid-back day. I'm back to an o-furo—**[there's]** no shower here. First off we had Okasan Eikaiwa, an Eikaiwa for mothers who tend kids at night and are only free during the day. Crud, that was fun. Explained my father situation to them. I can't decide whether or not I have four in my family or five. They were cool.

We spent time cutting flyers, then **[we]** shopped and broke.

Koyanagi works and uses Eikaiwa to pick up people, so it's a nice relief. I'm used to shouldering all the responsibility myself.

[We] had a lesson at 4:00 **[p.m.]**, and I understood everything! Hah!

My luggage won't come until tomorrow. I won't be settled in and ready to go until that's all taken care of.

[We] had a fun volleyball meet tonight. I wore clothes left **[behind]** by Murdock.

Koyanagi was **[Dallen]** Gettling's junior Z.L. after Sparks. Then Woolston came in, and when Koyanagi left for senior in Takabata (an area in my first zone—see Friday the 13th, day 101) he was replaced by Stratton. See how that works?

This isn't as tough as I thought it would be. I guess all that studying paid off—and I'm being blessed, as well. Nothing but Japanese.

Saturday, September 29, 1990—Day 270

We housed for a couple of hours this morning. Man, Koyanagi is funny! It's not uncommon for the Japanese to just walk right into a person's house after they knock **[but only into the "genkan"]**, so I was a little surprised. But on separate occasions, he laid on their floors, looked through their magazines, and fed their fish! One time, he imitated my voice—the guy at home was looking at me through another window and could see that my lips weren't moving!

We met a cool dude and talked for a while. This guy **[i.e., Elder Koyanagi]** can dendo!

After dendo coordination meeting (usually on Sundays) we rapped with a guy, Niwa-san, and set a baptismal date. He's been getting lessons for two years now, but has had problems with the Law of Tithing. I hope he pulls through. **[He didn't.]**

My stuff finally came **[from the movers]** today!

Sunday, September 30, 1990—Day 271

It rained most of the day. I'm in the first branch of my mission now. **[The first two were full-fledged wards.]** It's small! Last night at the meeting they talked about a dangerous triff who likes missionaries. Turns out she's the organist **[for the branch]**. She was at BYU and went to those teaching experiences at the M.T.C. but left a week or so before I got to teach. She's a babe, darn it! **[Unfortunately, she wore "pancake makeup."]**

I gave the triff bike I'd been using back to its rightful member owner and we walked home. **[We]** followed up on a lady from Eikaiwa (he'd given her a Book) and ended up being fed and teaching a lesson. **[We]** checked up on another girl and made a return with her roommate. **[We also]** made friends with the Soka Gakkais behind the apartment, then housed. **["Soka Gakkai" is the name of a semi-competing sect in Japan. They use a lot of chanting as part of their ritual; perhaps you've heard the phrase "Nam myoho renge kyo;" well, that's them.]** This is fun; Koyanagi's willing to try various other methods besides just streeting. Amazingly, I'm getting used to **[speaking]** nothing but Japanese. Plus, he's the first person I've dendoed with who's older than me. **([He's] 24.)**

Monday, October 01, 1990—Day 272

[It was a] pretty laid-back P-day. Luckily, Koyanagi likes to sit around the apartment like I do on P-days. He wouldn't let me stay up to write letters, so I got up at 3:00 a.m. in order to do so. I ended up sleeping most of the rest of the day.

I've been in the **[mission]** field around seven months, and Dan has around seven months left. I was in Fukutoku for three months, Okazaki for four, so I'm betting I'll be here for five. That'll put me at exactly a year from when I got to Japan before I transfer again.

Maruoka Shimai is in this zone—she's senior **[companion]** now.

Tuesday, October 02, 1990—Day 273

We had district benkyokai in Ichinomiya, and I met Maruoka's old senior whom she'd left. The sister said that she knew who I was through her **[i.e., through Sister Maruoka]**—so she's at least mentioned me! Hot dog!

I met Brough again, too—this is his new area.

We saw the same video that was shown to us when we had it with **[the]** Toyohashi **[district]** about the missionary guide—**[it's a]** long show.

A little bit before, I was really wanting to *know* if I was clear of all those sins I committed just prior to coming out **[on my mission]**. I would've felt funny telling the president during my interview, so I didn't. I guess I'm fine; I feel O.K. now.

[We] made a return with a 20 year-old girl tonight. Here it's O.K. to teach single members of the opposite sex alone, 'cause there are hardly any members to fellowship for us.

President Smith told me that in Koyanagi's interview, he told the president that I was really good compared to the other Americans he's worked with (language-wise). Awesome, or what?

Look, we often have spiritual discussions and all, but they are too many to detail in here. Don't worry, we are working; I just write the different stuff **[from the norm]** in here.

This will be my last area as junior companion, I bet. **[I was right.]**

Wednesday, October 03, 1990—Day 274

We went out early to pass out Eikaiwa flyers at the train station. **[We]** gave out *lots*—we'll see how many

show up tomorrow night.

We went to a Protestant church to attend their Bible class, but the guy politely told us no. Argh! I still can't believe it! Did Christ ever say, "Depart from me?" Do they want converts, or what? Truly, the **[Great] Apostasy runs wild. [Mormon teachings hold that Christianity fell away from its roots and lost God's sanction a couple of centuries or so after Christ. This chain of events, and its aftermath, is termed by Mormons "the Great Apostasy."]** So, rather than give up, we snuck around the back of the church and listened in. The guy was spewing out all kinds of false doctrine in a straight, no-break monotone. **[It was]** a lecture, not a discussion. **[There were only about four or so other parishioners who'd come to hear him.]**

Next, Koyanagi put his special, no-flash camera into the window, and so we took secret shots of the Bible class in progress. Just like spies!

Koyanagi's funny. **[He's]** not your normal Japanese dude. He's sometimes off-the-wall. He dendsos like I would **[if I were senior companion]**—a variety of different activities with meeting people in mind, not just the brainless walk-the-streets dendo that 99% of the other missionaries do. I'd often suggest visiting other churches, etc. to Harris, whose primitive brain wouldn't allow him to try anything beyond the obvious. Koyanagi dendsos *smart*—and I like it!!

Thursday, October 04, 1990—Day 275

[We] had zone pass-offs today. Gibson's in my zone—in Maruoka's area! He says she's kind of weird.

Anyhow, when she showed up, she broke a huge smile and waved! We ran together and shook hands. Crud, she's cute.

Later the zone leader had us get into groups and pass papers around, writing good things about each other. After that, she came up and asked for my paper! She went *out of her way* to write some good things about me—that's sweet.

'Twas great, 'cause lots of new people came to Eikaiwa—**[they were]** mostly female, but one male English teacher **[attended]**. It didn't run as smoothly for me as I would've liked it to, but it worked out O.K. **[We]** built good relations. It's exciting, new people! **[It was an]** excellent day, indeed. (A couple of them are *babes*!)

Friday, October 05, 1990—Day 276

After Okasan Eikaiwa, one girl (who likes missionaries) asked us to help her fill out an English college assignment, but as we were doing it, Koyanagi explained to her that missionaries don't have a lot of time, etc., and not to ask us for favors like that, or so I believe he said. I think he was a bit mad.

You see, maybe he was afraid that one thing would lead to another and she'd start bringing all her homework, or else he's tired of her hanging around with the missionaries after hours. Plus, from his point of view, I'm sure he's not too thrilled at having all the babes go for us Americans and not him. So I don't blame him at all. Dorrough said that she was almost in tears as she rode away **[on her bike]**, but I didn't notice that. Normally I'd have thrown a fit, but she'd heard all of Lesson One before and has no interest. Sure, he **[Koyanagi]** should've had Christian consideration for her feelings, but since she's not willing to play ball with us, I'm not inclined to care as much. She's cute and really sweet—too bad it had to happen. I wonder if she'll come next week? **[She didn't. Nor did she come any other week, either.]**

[We] taught a great lesson to a certain Watanabe-san—he understood extremely well, something I'm not used to. I hope he ends up being baptized! **[He did, but went inactive soon after and cut off all contact with the church.]**

Saturday, October 06, 1990—Day 277

[Today we] housed way out there. Tonight, for Niwa-san's baptism interview, Harada, the zone leader, came—but an hour late. The interview lasted over two hours—afterwards we talked with him. He's having a tough time with his faith and tithing. His mom "used to be" a Jehovah's Witness, so that's a big problem. I still like the guy lots, though. I hope he pulls through.

Sunday, October 07, 1990—Day 278

This morning, Yuki-kun, 11 years old, had his baptismal interview by Koyanagi. He made sure Yuki knew all he needed to know. It took a while, but he was excited once he found out he "passed." [He's a] really good kid.

We four ate a great dinner at Ata-san's, a lady who comes to our Okusan (wife) Eikaiwa. [As I previously explained, "okasan" is the word for "mother," whereas "okusan" is the word for "wife." I often mixed-and-matched these two words when referring to the Eikaiwa we taught on Friday mornings, since our students were both wives *and* mothers. I never did find out what its official name was.] She has interest and has heard a few lessons, but her husband won't let her pursue it. He'd lived in Saudi Arabia for two years a ways back, so he had some interesting photos. [She's a] cute lady.

We had a lesson for the guy we talked to while housing that first day, and we showed him *The First Vision*. We only had an English version, so I translated for Koyanagi and he—[it was] my very first real-live translation exercise! The guy, just like with Watanabe last night, understood really well. I like this place.

Explanation: [In Japanese,] "-san" is a title like Mr. or Mrs. that goes *after* either a first or last name, male or female. "-kun" is the suffix for young boys, and "-chan" [is used] for girls ("-sama" is used for people of extreme high rank only).

Monday, October 08, 1990—Day 279

While Koyanagi took a nap, I indulged in a little Def Leppard—something I haven't done in weeks. I spent a lot of time digging through flipchart resources here; I guess perfecting flipcharts is an ongoing process. But once I'm done this time around, *man*, are these guys going to be awesome! [I was right. Missionaries who later saw my flipcharts pretty much universally said that they were the best set of flipcharts they'd ever seen.]

Koyanagi says that WINK is pretty bad—they sing about pretty sexual stuff. He said that he got a bad image of me initially when he found out [that] I liked them. I've only seen pictures [of them] and heard one song, so I never knew. That's not going to stop me from buying a ton of their albums the day before I go home, however. [I didn't pick up on it at the time, but in retrospect, I can hardly believe he'd look down on me because of the subject matter of WINK's songs. As we all know, it's hard enough to pick out the lyrics of songs on the radio in *English*; how on earth was I supposed to comprehend lyrics in *Japanese* when I'd only been studying it for less than a year? Plus, missionaries don't have regular access to popular music, so how was I supposed to have heard enough of their music to become familiar with the subject matter of their songs anyway? Ridiculous.] These Japanese [members] are pretty serious about following church leaders' counsels and the whole law—something I would do well to learn from. Americans are usually somewhere in the middle, but these people are either all or nothing.

Since I write each day [in this journal], in addition to the reader knowing each event, it also has the unintended side effect of showing where I change pens. [The gauge of today's entry was substantially thinner than yesterday's.]

Tuesday, October 09, 1990—Day 280

Spent lots of time perfecting flips. My desk is cluttered. Wow—we went to a Jehovah's Witnesses meeting with a person Koyanagi had met. I didn't bring my scriptures! **[It was]** one of the worst mistakes of my mission so far.

When we met the guy, his dad came out and yelled at us (**[it was]** my first experience with that) for using the wrong words and standing the wrong way, etc. **[He was a]** crazy dude, but I wanted to beat him up.

We went to the little meeting at a neighbor's house. The lady gave me some English literature to read while the "elder" spoke. What false doctrine! I read from the same Bible that Nakane-san had. **[It had been]** changed to suit their views. I made friends with the "elder" afterwards. I kept my place (as a guest) in mind, and asked plenty of questions, playing the student role. That won us some good relations; we were invited back. I received some background literature on how they **[the Jehovah's Witnesses]** came to be. They freely admit that the leaders aren't receiving inspiration, and an easy reading revealed that a bunch of people started it up on their own, off their own interpretation of the Bible. **[In other words, they started the religion without express permission and authority from God, which is what Mormonism claims is a baseline requirement for a church to be true.]**

[After all is said and done, there's something that deserves mentioning about the Jehovah's Witnesses: When I became senior companion, I made it a point to drop in on all the local religious meetings at least once. My experiences pretty much always held true to what you've seen in this journal so far: Evangelical Christian groups were quite often rude and/or unwelcoming, but the Jehovah's Witnesses were always polite, welcoming, and otherwise good-natured. Good on them!]

Wednesday, October 10, 1990—Day 281

My flips are about done. **[They're]** detailed as heck. Luckily we took a long break so I could accomplish this.

[We] met a guy on the streets, Soma-san, and gave him a Book. I called later tonight and booked a return! My first streeting return! **[The others had been contacts made through Eikaiwa.]**

Thursday, October 11, 1990—Day 282

Finished my flips. Next we went to a place where we play with little kids. **[I don't remember this place or why we showed up there. Perhaps it was the service set up at Inuyama.]** There were only a few, so I ended up talking to the four mothers, one of which thought that we used the cross.

I'm on a split with Tamashiro Choro (**["choro" means]** "Elder" in Japanese), the junior zone leader, in Ichinomiya. The last time I was on a Z.L. split was with Stratton, back on March 30th. This guy knows no English either, but I'm used to it.

Eikaiwa is a bit disorganized here. I helped Brough with his class, and to liven it up, I took over and taught some pronunciation. That worked.

Afterwards, since it was my **[first and]** last night, I gave in and talked for a while with a cute 20 year-old triff. I shouldn't have, 'cause afterwards Tamashiro Choro said, "Lock your heart!" Crud, I guess it looked a little bad. **[In Japan, or at least in the Nagoya mission, there was a certain talk by Spencer W. Kimball that was printed and passed around among all of us missionaries. As you can probably guess, it was titled "Lock Your Heart," referring to the strict admonition to all missionaries to not develop feelings for anyone of the opposite sex throughout their missions.]**

While I'm on the subject, that talk had a companion talk that was also printed and passed around among the missionaries. This one was called "Go Home, Yankee, Go Home" and was delivered by Gordon B. Hinckley, who at the time of the talk was the Asia area president or something like that. In it, he all but forbade missionaries from A) marrying interracially and B) returning to live in

Japan right after their missions.

Those two talks were never far from a missionary's mind. That last one in particular would severely haunt me after my mission was over.] He [Elder Tamashiro] also said ('cause he attended the class) that I was a good teacher and that I'd probably make money at it (Eikaiwa).

Friday, October 12, 1990—Day 283

Last night I stayed up 'till 11:00 [p.m.] or later listening to [Elder] Colter, Brough's senior [who'd been] in the [Army] Rangers, tell some of his mission stories. [They were] funny as heck. Looking back, I've had a dull mission!

At church I practiced singing with all six of us for a program they're doing, then met the other two [elders], switched companions, and came home.

I'd gotten six letters and one postcard yesterday—a record, I'm sure! One [was] from Theressa—that wench! I devoted far too much pen time to her. How embarrassing. She's still there and all, it's just that she has no desire to repent and is full of nothing but criticism. Rikki hasn't written since forever. I've got a really good feeling about Rhonda, though—now there is a person in whom there is no guile!

I must be progressing spiritually, for I was a bit shocked at her letter. [It was] a bit on the worldly side. I hope I can keep this sensitivity, but in the meantime, I'm constantly fighting temptation.

Tonight I went with a member and Hibino-kun to eat Ramen, and the girl at the counter kept checking me out. She waved good-bye to me, too.

Saturday, October 13, 1990—Day 284

Koyanagi took a nap during [our] break, and I fell asleep [while] studying. We slept in 'till 5:50 [p.m.] and met Niwa at 6:00 [p.m.]. The branch president came later, and we four discussed Niwa's problems. I hope he pulls through. It lasted 'till 10:45 [p.m.]

Sunday, October 14, 1990—Day 285

Three Americans were at church today. They'll be moving here with their folks for work.

Talked to Fukushima Shimai, the triff who was at the M.T.C. when I was (Yumi-chan). She was going to BYU at the time. It turns out that she shopped at K-mart [my pre-mission place of employment] every once in a while, and she also went to Movies-8 every night almost, like Daren and I did! I wonder if we were ever in the same theater together? [It's a] small world, indeed! She was sitting across from me at one of those small sit-on-the-floor dinner tables [that are near-universal in Japan], and she had on a really short skirt. She probably wore it on purpose. I saw her underwear a couple of times. It was white. Oh, oh, oh, what a turn-on! Reader, I can't tell you what a babe she is. Wow. She'll probably be at BYU once I get home; I hope she calls me then.

Monday, October 15, 1990—Day 286

Koyanagi had back pain again [kickboxing was his hobby and he'd taken a few too many kicks to the head], so he slept in while I jammed on Def Leppard. I purposely didn't write to Theressa—[it was] the first time I've ever purposely not written someone back on P-day. [In other news,] Mom finally sent me a picture of the two of them—he's not the way I'd pictured him. [In still other news,] we pretty much lazed around 'till the time was up, then housed for an hour. Koyanagi did telephone dendo the rest of the night and I got in lots of studying.

I'm getting briefer and briefer in here. By the time things get really spiritual, my entries will be shorter still! The first entries, the ones [that are] least important, are the longest—I'm cheating you, in a way.

Tuesday, October 16, 1990—Day 287

Bought some squid, and I had to clean it out. **[It was my]** first time at that. **[I'd never cleaned a standard fish before, either.]**

Hibino had his baptismal interview tonight. He's such a goofball! We went over the sins you're not supposed to do, one by one, and he kept saying, "But Sumi Kyodai does that!" and "But Sumi Kyodai does that, too!" after every one we listed. **[It was]** probably the funniest experience of my mission so far.

Also, he kept asking if we'd done all that, too. Ouch. **[At one point the topic of masturbation came up. Hibino looked at me, narrowed his eyes, pointed straight at me, and asked, "Have you ever done it?" I truthfully answered "no," since up to that point (and for the next ten years afterward) I never had, not even once. I don't think he believed me, though.]** We get commitments out of them **[i.e. our investigators]**; it's high time I got fully repentant of all my sins. I don't feel too guilty for them, darn it, but I'd better repent as much as possible anyhow, 'cause it's a commandment **[to repent]**.

Wednesday, October 17, 1990—Day 288

[The] first thing this morning, I repented in the sincerity of my heart. I feel that I've done all I can now and **[that]** I'll be forgiven in the end, provided I endure 'till then.

A black cat ran between Koyanagi's tires. He didn't kill it, but it got knocked around a bit.

While housing, we met a lady who's American and married to an English-fluent Japanese dude. We had seen him ride by earlier. She used to be a Catholic, but became a Soka Gakkai in America. She goes to the place right behind our house that we visited a while back (I'm facing it now). We had heard them chanting earlier, and it turns out it was that same chant that a guy on the street taught me when I visited Hollywood back in February of 1988. I've remembered it ever since. She respected the fact that we were LDS—that good ol' *American* attitude!! Respecting others, regardless of religion! She was also thoroughly *amazed* at my Japanese. She still can't speak it and doesn't want to learn. **[Personally, I can't imagine not wanting to learn the language of a country you're actually living in.]**

[We] went to the chiropractor again tonight. Koyanagi has a bad back, so we go often. **[We]** went with a brother and another sister named Ono Miko Shimai (family names come first here **[so in the United States she'd be called "Miko Ono"]**). She's so timid! **[She's]** cute, though. She's so shy it's funny. I showed her my Marine picture, and she told me several times how cool it was. For being so shy, she's pretty forward. **[Perhaps I was confusing "mousy" with "shy."]** I'd love to date her just once (she's 23) just for the experience. I'm *far* from shy—I wonder how she'd react?

Thursday, October 18, 1990—Day 289

The A.P., **[Elder]** Orton, had come with another person from the mission home for a split with the other two **[Elders]**. They (the other two) wanted to see my flips, so I brought them to Eikaiwa. They liked them a lot.

[At Eikaiwa] I taught my favorite tongue twister, "Betty Botta." I've been practicing it for close to 10 years, so I can do it *fast*. It was great; I blew everyone away, including the Americans.

[I learned the tongue twister back in sixth grade. It goes like this:

"Betty Botta bought some butter. 'But,' she said, 'This butter's bitter. If I put it in my batter, it will make my batter bitter.' So she bought a bit o' better butter. Better than the bitter butter. Which made her bitter batter better. So 'twas better Betty Botta bought a bit o' better butter."]

Rapped with a couple of cute chicks afterwards, but I didn't try hard enough to get returns, dang it. I

BRTed quite well, however **["BRT" is an acronym for "Build Relationships of Trust," which according to the Missionary Guide is the first step when trying to get a commitment out of an investigator or a potential investigator]**—next week, I'll get those returns *for sure!*

Crud, it's too easy to forget that one is a missionary, 'cause one is one 24 hours a day for two years. You get too used to it.

Friday, October 19, 1990—Day 290

Last night, Tomoko, a girl at Eikaiwa, was wearing a denim miniskirt—I saw her underwear, too. It was white, as well.

I got a letter from Jodi Longstroth—**[it was]** her reply to my letter. Her opening statement was, "Where have you been all my life?" Now *that* was impressive!! Whoa, looks like we've got a live one here.

[We] had Okusan Eikaiwa this morning. I like teaching that. Ata-san told me that out of all the missionaries she'd been taught from since the beginning (Van Cleave and Harris are on there, her list, too), I'm the #1 most fun, loosely translated. They like to be taught from me, so that's nice.

Tonight, Koyanagi said that when the zone leader was here, he got a bit worried about me, 'cause I've got pictures of Rikki and Rhonda on my desk, plus pictures of WINK around, plus a picture of Tsukada Shimai **[that]** I cut out of a magazine (**[the magazine was called]** Seito no Michi—**[which is]** the Japanese **[version of the]** 'Ensign') of her M.T.C. group **[Japan has its own miniature missionary training center]**, and also 'cause it turns out **[that]** they perceived that I'm kind of into Maruoka Shimai. The zone leader is Japanese. He was afraid that I'm going to marry a Japanese girl. **[His fears would eventually prove correct.]** Koyanagi kind of politely lectured me about all that.

Crud! That's a major sign of 'fuke'-ness—the zone leader worrying about me. And I swore that no one ever would! If I could've seen myself now a year and a half ago, I would've killed me! All this "spiritual" this and "disciplined" that. How could I have let this all happen to *me*—when I was determined to be the absolute *BEST* beyond doubt? And that's not even mentioning the music—no wonder I feel temptation stronger now than ever before. I can't believe **[that]** I let the conflict rage for no purpose—I can't let my faith or spirituality die. I can't be #2. Def Leppard, WINK, girls, etc. are *OUT*—gone. Over. Finished. I've got to be worthy. I've got to have a clear conscience before God. Koyanagi used to be the ward mission leader, so he knows the difference between good missionaries and bad. He's worked with scores. He knows what makes one **[missionary]** see success and another not. I think I've learned the trick—I used to think **[that]** you'd stress out if you kept all the rules. I think the trick is to keep the rules, but not stress out. I may not be able to do all the good things, but at least I can avoid all the bad things—I think that that's the answer I've been seeking for so long. Plus, with that in mind, I can still be myself! Maybe the reason I stressed out over it in the M.T.C. is 'cause I was so laden with sin that I couldn't qualify for the Spirit. Maybe now I can take it all on.

The main point is, I can't stand the conflict anymore—I've *got* to be pure before the Lord.

This may have just been a turning point in my mission.

[I failed to make the connection at the time (as had happened so often before), but now that I know a bit more about Japan's strict top-down hierarchical social system, I realize how condescending and patronizing Japanese people naturally are toward those they consider to be their professional "juniors" or their social inferiors. The above paragraph displays an environment ripe for such condescension, since here was a Japanese zone leader talking with a Japanese senior companion about a fish-out-of-water American who was also a mere junior companion.]

I'm sure I've emphasized often enough how Japanese members expect absolute perfection out of missionaries at all times. So, rather than just ignoring the pictures on my desk or simply assuming that I had the situation under control or that I could handle my own life or that I could

make my own decisions, this zone leader decided to stick his nose into my business and draw all sorts of conclusions and make all sorts of judgment calls. And all over mere *pictures on my desk*, of all things to worry about.

I was in "missionary mode" back then, so all I could think to do at the time was to suck it up and try to incorporate it all. I didn't think of asserting myself or dismissing all the criticism as the mere meddling that it was.]

PHOTOS 38



Front row, L-R: Dorough, Rieko Nakatani, Naomi Ata, Masae Hibino, me.

Back row, L-R: Nakayama Shimai, Koyanagi.

These were four of our Okusan Eikaiwa students.



L-R: Thomason, Dorough, Koyanagi, me.

Saturday, October 20, 1990—Day 291

This morning, Koyanagi got a bit upset when I tried to explain myself during his feedback of my pass-off. My policy is **[to have]** no pride, but I think he overreacted. **[Koyanagi was of the mindset that when he spoke, I needed to just listen and agree with everything he was saying without question by mere virtue of the fact that he was the senior and I was the junior. Whether he was right or wrong was immaterial.]**

In fairness, however, it wasn't just Koyanagi—the vast majority of Japanese people have that exact same mindset.]

We four **[elders]** plus Hibino and another member, Suzuki Kyodai, the one with whom we see the chiropractor often, went to the Japan Monkey Park. It was interesting. Encountered a couple of rude triffs whom I wanted to smack.

Tonight I met a man from Guinea, a country in West Africa. He spoke good English. First off, he shook hands without reservation, and later he referred to the missionaries he meets as his "brothers." **[He also joked that when he meets someone new, he says his occupation is "Mayor of Inuyama City."]**

Why wasn't I called on a mission to Africa? Why can't these **[Japanese]** people be unreserved like that?

Meanwhile, Dan Clyde's raking in the baptisms in Austria. **[He taught a lot of refugees from Ghana.]** How does he do it? They're all Christians, that's how.

Sunday, October 21, 1990—Day 292

This morning I spent all **[my time in]** church translating for the Americans who came. New ones were there, and the ones we'd met last week gave we three Americans each a kanji book **["kanji" are the complex Japanese ideographs]**—and a great one at that. I embarked on my study of kanji this week—the book I use is the one I bought in the M.T.C. that explains it really well. The new one I received is one for further practice beyond that—I couldn't have received a more appropriate one.

[We] ate and then took off for Fukutoku **[For Yuki's and Hibino's baptism. (They'd both been taught by the other pair of elders, not us.) The Fukutoku ward was the closest building with a baptismal font; our branch in Inuyama rented the second floor in someone else's building. Ironically, a bar was on the first floor].** We had to ride in a member's car to get there, and so we had to attend a fireside on genealogy for two hours first. Niwa-san was there, and he (along with everyone else) about died of boredom. **[I was sitting next to Sister Ono, the timid one, and for kicks I kept making direct eye contact with her. Every time I did so she got embarrassed, covered a little, and giggled. Great fun.]** However, I met a *lot* of my old member friends from Fukutoku—that was *great*. The Palmers, Horiguchis, Brother and Sister Matsumoto (literally), Sister Morita, the Takahashis and Sister Takahashi (the single one), Miki, who was baptized; the Terakoshis, who were happy to see me and gave me a picture they'd taken of me and their baby a long time ago; Eguchi, and Imamura, whom I talked with *lots*. Also, I saw Rikki again—we wanted to give each other hugs, but couldn't. I told her **[that]** she was my best friend in Japan—she liked that. It's true, she is. However, she got away before I could say goodbye. I was saying hi to a couple **[of]** other women (Sister Matsumoto, **[Sister]** Takahashi, and Miki), so maybe she felt bad and left. I wanted to talk to her later, darn it.

Koyanagi has a bad habit of running off without his companion. **[After I noticed he was missing, I discovered him hanging out with some members in the parking lot.]**

Next we had the baptism meeting. The kids were loud, the meeting started late, it was unorganized as heck—by my standards it was a disaster, but Yuki-kun's **[non-member]** mother felt the Spirit so strongly that she cried. Before he received baptism, all the kids crowded around the front, and she couldn't see. She wanted to know if she could go into the font area to see, but I made all the kids clear out so she could have the front row (figuratively). I assisted in both the confirmations.

Eguchi was there to watch, and he says that Kito, the inactive guy I used to work with, is now fully active. After that, I met Brother Ito (I think **[that's his name]**), the guy Oviatt and I dendoed with that one night, and the Bishop. Everyone says that my Japanese has gotten really good, and some said I speak really fast, too. Kurita, Mrs. Atsumi, and Ote-san have all received baptism—so that's four people **[on whom]** I've had some sort of influence (however small) in their conversion. Not a lot, but a lot more **[people]** than I did in America.

It was great seeing everyone again. Since that's the zone leader area now, who knows, maybe with the new mission president I'll go there again. I received plenty of invitations to do so.

Monday, October 22, 1990—Day 293

Heck, I may as well tell you. Ono Shimai, the "shy" one, sure made a point of showering me with compliments last night. It's amazing; if someone were to act so timid and all in America, I'd be disgusted. Once I get back to the U.S.A., I'll probably be amazed at how low my standards dropped **[while I was]** out here.

No Def Leppard today. And I woke up at the regular hour and wrote letters, not **[at]** 3:00 a.m.

[While proselyting,] I've gotten over getting mad at people on the streets. Now the next challenge is to extinguish the urge to kill people in the houses.

Tuesday, October 23, 1990—Day 294

I usually make it a point to not talk about other missionaries in here, since this is my journal, but I've got to talk about the transfer call that Dorough received. He's now going senior, the #1 toughest part of one's mission, and he's being shipped to the #1 Northernmost part of the mission, for the #1 coldest part of the year, with the #1 least amount of members, in the #1 farthest away place from anywhere, and he's getting a Japanese companion—the worst you can have when you're a fresh senior. Apparently the guy he's getting is questionable, too. Now that is the transfer call to end *all* transfer calls! He, Biddulph, and MacKillop are all in the same [M.T.C.] group. **[I have no idea why I felt the need to throw that last sentence in there.]**

Tonight, while housing, there were a group of Junior High kids in a little classroom **[it was one of those after-school test preparation classes that most school kids in Japan attend]**, and we gave them the thumbs-up and peace signs. The teacher came out, but we had ran away. Koyanagi returned and gave the sign again, and this time we ran and hid. **[After this the teacher simply drew the blinds.]** We were laughing so hard it was tough to do the next few doors. **[Yeah, I guess you had to be there!]**

Wednesday, October 24, 1990—Day 295

It finally happened!!!

First, we went to a photography exhibit put on by the Soka Gakkais at the city hall, or whatever the place was. After that, we did some housing in the Branch President's **[apartment]** complex like before.

We ran into a Jehovah's Witness lady. She dendos just like us. GENTLEMEN, START YOUR ENGINES!

And we were off. She began by asking us all types of questions about where so and such was written in the Bible, i.e. where is it written that the Book of Mormon would come forth, where is it written that Christ has other words, etc. **[It was the]** typical closed-minded Christian attitude—the Bible is all there is. She couldn't adequately explain why she felt or believed the way she did, except for the fact that it was "written in the Bible." She couldn't explain how to know which church was true or not.

At first, it was **[the]** typical bash/argument feeling, but then she got a little nervous and had to quit to fix her kids dinner (whether or not that was true is a different story), so we asked her if she had ever felt the Spirit—she hadn't. So we explained how we'd felt it before lots, and that's pretty much where it ended. We both even felt the Spirit then, too, for we'd slowed down and spoken quietly. I bet she felt it, too.

At first, she must've thought **[that]** she had us by referring to all those scriptures, but when we looked up plenty on our own, she quickly reverted to the defense. She tried to explain away this and that, but everything she said was quickly neutralized by a well-placed sentence of common sense by us. So that's why she quit.

We had clearly, cleanly won **[I wonder if she'd concur with that assessment?]**. I was excited 'cause I hadn't been in a real one **[i.e., a real Bible bash]** for so long. I didn't understand most of it, though, so I was really frustrated. I want to bash in English!

[On a few occasions during the rest of the evening, Koyanagi repeated, "Poor lady. Never felt the Spirit!"]

Thursday, October 25, 1990—Day 296

Asked Koyanagi lots of questions about **[Japanese]** grammar, etc. I took up a lot of his study time, but I

came to understand a lot more.

He made green rice, green curry, and green milk for Thomason's green bean companion. **[In other words, Thomason's new companion was a guy fresh out of the M.T.C.]** His name is Elder Reed—this dude is lots of fun. He's so enthusiastic, it's amazing. It's going to be fun from here on out. **[I was right on all counts. To this day, not only have I never met a more enthusiastic missionary, but I've probably never met a more enthusiastic *human being* than Elder Reed. Where he got it, I'll never know.]**

[We] met an inactive member while housing. She had a bad attitude. She'd made the mistake of marrying a non-member; now he won't let her come to church. I hate husbands like that!

I talked to those two girls **[at Eikaiwa]** tonight, but there was another lady there, so I couldn't single them out to make returns, darn it.

Friday, October 26, 1990—Day 297

We taught two lessons today, the first time I've done that in *well* over four and a half months, I think. Whoops—did it once on day 187 with Biddulph. The first one **[today]** was with Yamada-san, a guy we picked up **[while]** housing. His wife brought us out some tea, and Koyanagi spoke right up and told them that we don't drink it. That got us a bit sidetracked. Heck, I would've just said "thanks" and then ignored it. It's worked before.

The other lesson was with Watanabe-san. We set a baptismal date with him.

Hibino goes to institute in Takabata, the church in my first zone where Koyanagi was when I first met him and where my first zone conference was. He knows a lot of the Fukutoku members, including Eguchi and the rest. I'm jealous.

Guess what else? You'll never believe it—I can hardly believe it myself—it turns out **[that]** Hibino met and talked to Stratton and I (me especially) while we were on that split, in Shakey's Pizza, back on Day 88!! If you look back, you'll see that *he* was the very first person with whom I had a reasonably meaningful conversation with! Holy cow, what a coincidence! **[At first,]** he asked if I'd ever been to Gokiso **[Stratton's area at the time]**, and I said I had been, on a split and for another zone meeting. I told him who it had been with, then he mentioned Shakey's, and we figured it out from there. He even said I looked familiar to him when I first showed up here.

What a coincidence—I'm still amazed. What's more amazing is that I even understood him in the first place, 'cause he uses really low, sloppy Japanese.

Saturday, October 27, 1990—Day 298

Today is Koyanagi's birthday—He's 25. **[Most Japanese members are converts, so by extension Japanese missionaries are quite often older than the normal 19-21 years old (or 21-23 for sister missionaries), since in many cases they converted at an older age than that.]** We sat around making copies at the church building (it's rented), then went with members to Gifu to see Kent Derricott speak. He was a missionary in Sapporo a long time ago; now he's a national celebrity. It was at a girls' junior college. (I go to a lot of those, don't I?)

On the way, we two went in Suzuki's car with Ono Shimai and Hibino. Hibino told her right out that I can imitate her really well, and she asked for a demonstration. Argh! Hibino's quite foolish. **[A more accurate description would be, "Hibino's got a big mouth."]** It took a while to dig myself out of that hole. She's really shy-acting (on the outside), so **[some days earlier]** I imitated her at the Monkey Park in front of the rest of them. I knew I shouldn't have.

At the meeting **[to which we'd arrived late]**, Kent Derricott had Thomason stand and tell where he was

from, etc. It turns out that Thomason knew his wife's little brother. So after it was over, he **[Thomason]** became a sort of celebrity himself.

We looked around in a store, and to my surprise I met one of the girls I'd tried to make a return with (the cuter one) at Eikaiwa. I forgot her name, but she works in the store where we shop for food.

For Koyanagi's birthday, we ate at the Takeda's (he's the branch president). We ate a lot—'twas really good **[food]**.

PHOTOS 039



Front row, L-R: Thomason, Brother Suzuki, Sister Miko Ono (the timid one), Sister Kawamura, me.

Back row, L-R: Reed, Hibino, Brother Kawamura (husband of Sister Kawamura in the front row), Koyanagi mostly hidden.

This was outside the auditorium after we'd heard Kent Derricott speak.



L-R: Koyanagi surprised by the camera, me eating some sort of sweet-'n'-sour chicken concoction. It was windy and cold that evening; I should've been smart enough to wear a jacket.

Sunday, October 28, 1990—Day 299

I believe my plan, giving up bad music in order to feel the Spirit, etc., is working. While talking to Fujisaki Shimai, I can swear I felt the Spirit. That woman has had lots of trials in her life, including a prior divorce and forced separation from her children. Now that's sad. She joined the church back in '71, but she's been married again for the past seven years to a non-member **[who looked quite a bit younger than her]**. We talked about overcoming obstacles and enduring to the end.

I think I've learned something—whether or not I'm right is up to you to decide, but it's this—There's no better, easier, and quicker way to get somebody to love you **[in a platonic way]** than to help them feel the Spirit.

She complimented me on how I was always happy and positive. I can't remember the exact wording, but Fukushima Shimai **[not to be confused with Fujisaki Shimai]** told her the same thing about me. And that was only after talking that one day! Fukushima Shimai hasn't been to church since then; she's afraid the members are judging her.

During it all, I felt a kind of brotherly love for Fujisaki Shimai. She must've felt it, too, 'cause she openly invited me to come to her house anytime I felt like it.

Now we're rockin' and rollin'. Now we're getting someplace! At first, I was afraid of being too positive for fear of appearing like an idiot. **[Koyanagi was big on that. He rarely smiled, since in his mind smiling too often makes you look like a fool.]** I'm not too afraid, for now I see the positive effects, but I'll still have to keep within bounds and avoid going too far. With the Lord's help, I believe I can keep

within limits. I'm no longer worried.

Next, we went and placed two Books and made a return. Could we have done it without the Spirit?

Tonight I spent some time reading *Jesus the Christ*. I feel a lot stronger now. I suppose that in order to convert **[people]**, I'll have to work on my spirit, too, not just my language ability. I'll have to spend time on both from now on, instead of just all **[on]** Japanese like it's previously been.

Monday, October 29, 1990—Day 300

Koyanagi had a district leader "taikai" (**[which]** means "meeting"—like "zone taikai" from now on,) in Nagoya, so I hung out at the other elders' place today and wrote letters and talked. They went to another activity at 6:00 **[p.m.]**, so I rode home alone—**[it was]** the first time I've been wholly alone since the M.T.C. Koyanagi called and we met at Oyama Kyodai's place to teach him a lesson. He hadn't been to church or read the Book of Mormon or prayed in three years before all this. We taught him for a review.

[It's] no wonder I didn't develop such great relations with the members in Okazaki as I did with the members in Fukutoku. I didn't have the Spirit! I was writing letters late at night and listening to questionable music! At least I learned my lesson as a junior **[companion]**. I've got a new branch now and I think I've got a great start.

Tuesday, October 30, 1990—Day 301

[We four elders] had a long benkyokai. **["Benkyokai" is Japanese for "study meeting." I'd been calling it "district meeting" up to this point.]** **[We]** went to teach Yamada-san, but he was sick and in the hospital. It rained, so later we spent lots of time at the church so Koyanagi could translate all the members' addresses into Romaji (As, Bs, and Cs) for Thomason to use. I spent the time reading *Jesus the Christ*. **[It's a]** good book.

Some people just don't hear the voice of the Good Shepherd!

Halloween, 1990—Day 302

Today my fear of going senior **[companion]** died. We had an all-day split and I went with Reed as senior. I tried to listen to the Spirit as to where to go, and so we went to the best housing place I could find.

My very first door as senior companion met with this reaction: The lady told me "no thanks" as soon as she saw me, before I'd even said anything. I hope that's not a prelude of things to come.

We heard **[the sound of]** monkeys, and with the help of an old lady, found our way to a primate research center close to the Monkey Park, but not accessible to the general public. There were colonies of monkeys in their mini-environments like before. We met a guy, and he ended up showing us around a little. At the chimpanzee cage, a girl was below us filming their behavior. She kept bending over and looking into her camera. Crud, I couldn't help but look down her shirt, darn it. Oh! If I can break that one last habit, I can break any of them!

[We] went to look at more monkeys, then left. Looking for a new area, we ran into one of the women **[who's a student]** at our Okusan Eikaiwa. She invited us, so we went to her place for some food. Her husband wasn't there, so I felt a little nervous about being there, and Reed did too, but what else could we do?

Poor lady. She's really messed up in her way of thinking. **[She's]** motherly, though. Wonderful woman. Older than my mother (by one year).

[We] went and visited a huge Buddhist shrine upon the side of the hill. Reed got nervous from the waste

of time, and I did too. So we left.

While streeting, I met the other girl with whom I'd tried to make returns at Eikaiwa. Her car battery had died, so she was waiting for her mom to come and get her. I tried to give her a Book of Mormon and make that return, but she had no interest. At least I know not to try again. So, trying to be friendly, we waited around with her 'till her folks came. I hope we didn't seem like idiots. **[We]** housed some more later. Reed has got guts and talks to anyone, but he doesn't know what he's doing, so it gets annoying. So all night tonight I was giving him words from the wise in order to help out he and Thomason both.

Anyhow, I was senior and felt motivated to work and guilty when I didn't. I'm not afraid of going senior now, 'cause I did it today with no problem.

Happy Halloween!

Thursday, November 01, 1990—Day 303

[We] had a zone "taikai" in Ichinomiya. Gibson's now gone. I asked his **[former]** senior how it was, and he said it all was interesting. Brough's in Maruoka's area now, and his junior was Horrocks's first green bean. Brough had barely gave her the message I wrote to her, even though I'd seen her the month before. I'd sent a word of greetings to her with Brough, 'cause he was transferring to her area. She had left before he got there.

She's sooo cute—she's got a perfect smile. Man, I'd love to smother her sweet face with kisses up and down.

The thing took a long time. That was my sixth zone conference, I think. Since today's November first, we're back in suit coats for the next six months **[as opposed to our short-sleeved shirts]**.

For Eikaiwa, we four dressed up (**[thanks to]** Halloween). I was an "oil sheik," one of those rich Arabs with the suit, shades, and rag on the head. I got to conduct interviews for my first time. (We do interviews to get their feedback and find out if they have interest **[in hearing the discussions]**.)

[Continuing with that last concept, there was something that always bothered me about Eikaiwa. Whenever we gave someone a flyer for it, we were always careful to point out that it was an ordinary community class with nothing whatsoever to do with religion. However, our instructions were to open and close with a prayer. The incongruity made me feel hypocritical.]

Friday, November 02, 1990—Day 304

Since we were visiting a fuke in the area, we went and saw the same monkey **[research]** place. Later I blew a flat, and where I stopped there just so happened to be a bike shop (repair *and* sell—that's the usual) next to me. That's how convenient they are around here.

[We] hit the chiropractor, and beyond that it was a pretty average day.

Saturday, November 03, 1990—Day 305

Finally sent the letter I wrote to Theresa on P-day. I purposely waited a month so she could get a taste of her own medicine. **[How petty, eh?]**

We were supposed to eat lunch at Suzuki's house, but they came to get us extremely late.

[We] taught Niwa, then broke and went over to Oyama Kyodai's place, but he came an hour late back to his place. We ended up playing "Uno" all night instead of re-teaching him.

[We had] only 20 minutes of finding time today. The day was hallmarked by a lot of waiting around.

Sunday, November 04, 1990—Day 306

10 years ago today we moved to Utah. Even though it was fast Sunday, the mission president came and gave a talk. No other Americans were there, so I got to translate for Sister Smith, his wife. She's used to A.P.s translating for her. That was a bit intimidating, but she said I did well. (I thought I sucked.) **[She's a]** nice lady; I like her.

I gave my name card to a female member friend of Fukushima Shimai's. (Yumi-chan is the name she prefers.) I'm having her give it to her so she'll call me in the U.S.A. if she ever goes back, and **[I'm]** also having her friend invite her back to church.

Niwa-san fasted too, and we broke it together and cooked and ate here.

Housing is getting to me. We did meet a dude who'd lived for a year in the U.S.A. with a Mormon family. Their older son had served a mission here **[in Japan]** in the Fukuoka mission. He's coming to Eikaiwa. However, **[if]** you ask people if they've ever thought about the purpose of life, where do we go when we die, etc., **[then]** they all say **[that]** they've never thought about that before. Maybe they just don't like missionaries, but regular *animals* don't think about stuff like that. **[Or, put a different way, you'd think that pondering such mysteries would be a normal part of the human condition.]** Man, these people are beginning to *really* piss me off. Nothing but rejection. Maybe I shouldn't take all this so seriously. At least I'm laying up blessings for myself.

We had made a return with a girl for almost a week ago, but Koyanagi had completely forgotten about it. We visited the house, but talked to her dad. He rejected us and said that she had, too. Yeah, right. **[It's]** too bad; she was cute, too.

Monday, November 05, 1990—Day 307

I picked up a package from Rikki today. She sent me the things I'd asked for, i.e. scripture markers and deodorant. From what she wrote, she'd written me earlier. It must've somehow been lost in transit, and that's the first time that's ever happened to me **[it wouldn't be the last]**. So I wrote a quick letter back, explaining all. She'd also sent lots of Halloween candy.

I also wrote to Miki Umemoto in Japanese; she was an exchange student at my high school when I was a senior. I had my mom look up her address in my yearbook for me **[she had voluntarily written it in for me]**. It's been three and a half years; I should've written before now. **[At the time, she really wanted to go to one of the dances—Homecoming, I think. Not necessarily with me *per se*; she just really wanted to go. I ended up asking someone else. In retrospect, this was a big mistake, since Miki was so darn cute. I should've asked her out when I had the chance.]**

Now for the real bread and butter of this entry: I got a letter from Jodi again today. The first couple of sentences alone were so exciting that I started writing her back! She also sent me a picture, too. Wow, she's really cute. So later I dug out the old picture frame, took Rhonda out, and put Jodi in—and she's on my desk now. In the meantime, I spent a lot of time and wrote back what I consider to have been a masterful letter.

Her letter got me *really* excited—more excited over a letter than I've been in a long time. Why, I wonder? Let me tell you, I've got a really good feeling about this. Jodi and me . . . hmm, I wonder?

Tuesday, November 06, 1990—Day 308

We were at a big department store buying paint for the inside of the church, and I bought the kanji books that kids use, going from grades 1-6. That covers all the kanji. **[I was wrong; it only covered about half.]** I'm excited; I'm going to learn to read and write **[in Japanese]**! I got so excited that when I got home, I sat down and mapped out my study format for several stages to come. However, I hope I'm not

so excited about learning **[written]** Japanese that I'm losing track of teaching the gospel. Or who know, maybe I'm being led by the Spirit to study so hard.

Mom wrote a letter and said that Jodi's sisters are petite, but she's pretty big. That doesn't worry me, 'cause Mom's quite short, so lots of people seem big to her. I was going to warn Jodi that I was only 5' 8.25" ~ .50", but I completely forgot. **[I'll tell her]** next time. **[When I finally *did* meet her—at her wedding reception, as fate would have it—she was about my height after all, maybe a little shorter.]**

The zone leader rode his bike from Ichinomiya to here to sit in on Watanabe's lesson. Elder Tamashiro and I went to visit Nakayama Shimai, who recently became active.

Japanese is so fun! I love learning! I feel *good!!*

Wednesday, November 07, 1990—Day 309

I worded a letter to Dan wrong, so he got the conclusion that I wasn't working and proceeded to preach at me in a letter I received today. I'm irked; I'm going to put a stop to it **[i.e., the preaching]** once and for all next letter. **[It never worked. I would ask him to lay off, he'd more or less apologize and agree, then a couple of letters later he was back to preaching. And so the cycle continued; he just couldn't resist.]**

[We] went with Suzuki and the other two **[Elders]** and went to a place where I blew ¥600 on video games. Expensive.

Made a big mistake at Eikaiwa last week; our Friday volleyball activity we taught as being for tonight. Coming to church, "the two" from before were there, and I had to apologize for messing up their schedules. I hated having to do that. I felt bad. Next Reed and I went to the gym to intercept others, and met only Tomoko, Noriko, and their friend Shin. They're in High School. **[If they're the same two I'm thinking of, I may have been wrong about them still being in High School. Even if they were, they had to have been Seniors.]** So to be polite, we sat around and chatted for quite a while. 'Twas fun.

Thursday, November 08, 1990—Day 310

[Today I went on] another junior split, and we housed way out there; **[we]** met folks whose ancestors and them had been making ceremonial parasols for 400 years. **[We were shown around behind the house and saw other members of the family busy at the craft. It was pretty interesting.]** Later **[we]** met a lady whom we talked with for a long time, and **[we]** even got invited in. Her daughter had lived in Britain for a year, and she wanted us to come back and meet her later this month. We said we'd do it. I don't know if we'll be able to talk about the gospel, so I guess it's only half a return.

[We] made a return appointment at Eikaiwa through interviews. We also visited Yamada-san's wife. He'll be in the hospital 'till next year, January or so. Too bad! The good news is, he took his Book of Mormon. With all that time, you know he'll read it. I wonder how it'll turn out?

Friday, November 09, 1990—Day 311

It'll take a long time to explain, but I told a joke, then I broke it by saying, "I'm just lying," you know, like you always do? It was at Okusan Eikaiwa, and when Ata-san heard **[me say]** it, she got a bit offended and went into how missionaries don't lie, etc. **[You see? Sometimes even *non-members* got in on the act.]** Sheesh! I guess it takes that to remember how much we're looked up to.

Koyanagi doesn't push us too hard, but that's okay by me, 'cause I get in all the more study time.

Today I finished my pass-offs. I'm finally done with them! Yay! We all played volleyball at the gym

tonight, so that was fun. **[Volleyball is the one and only sport—well, that and bowling—that I actually enjoy.]**

Saturday, November 10, 1990—Day 312

Today is the Marine Corps's birthday. 'Twas cold, too. **[We]** housed for a few hours, **[then]** came home and we both fell asleep. **[We]** woke up too late, then streeted. Could barely stand the cold. **[We]** ate at Oyama's, the four of us, and his place blew a fuse, so we ate by flashlight for an hour before the dude came and fixed it later. **[We]** played UNO afterwards.

I told you that I needed to work on my spirituality. Well, I felt like I was committing a sin for reading "Jesus the Christ" instead of studying Japanese this afternoon. Strange, huh?

Sunday, November 11, 1990—Day 313

These people are merciless. They had Reed give a talk **[in Sacrament Meeting]**, and he's been here only a few weeks. He's a lot worse **[at Japanese]** than I was at his level, but he's far more eager than I ever was.

[We] taught a lesson to Oshita-kun, who's only 13. **[He had friends in the Noguchi family who had already been baptized, so that's how he was referred.]** We taught a lesson and a half, poor kid! It took two hours.

Y'know, it's a temptation to write short entries **[in here]** for fear of going over the amount of paper I've got in this one journal. It's tough to be totally objective. But at any rate, this mission is *far* better documented than 99% of other missions, right? Even my photos are in order, and on the backs are written the date, description, and the corresponding day. Neat, eh? I just hope I'm legible enough to read **[which shouldn't be a problem in this electronic version, of course]**.

Monday, November 12, 1990—Day 314

We went on a hike with a few members and investigators and had a picnic at the top of a hill. There were lots of idols and statues along the way. **[We]** taught Oshita back at the church. Koyanagi **[verbally]** drilled the poor kid! I hope he's not feeling as though he's being forced to join or anything.

[Oshita mentioned his mother not being too hip about his being baptized, but Koyanagi got on his case saying things like, "Why don't you do more chores around the house to get her to change her mind?" and things like that. When Oshita didn't appear thrilled enough about this idea—let's face it, what 13 year-old wants to do more chores?—Koyanagi really got in his face with the intimidation, asking him, "Do you want to be baptized or don't you?" and essentially not taking "no" for an answer. I honestly can't do it justice here, but I was highly uncomfortable throughout the whole exercise. I nevertheless bit my tongue, since I was determined to court good karma by being the kind of junior companion that I wanted to eventually have.]

Maybe that's why I didn't see very many baptisms (I don't count the ones I saw as a junior companion, since the style of teaching wasn't up to me): I utterly refused to engage in manipulation, coercion, or scare tactics and insisted on respecting my investigators' free agency at all times, since that's the way I pictured Christ as having taught people.]

Got back **[to the apartment]** with enough time to answer a letter from Dan. I spent a little time furthering the perfection of my amazing flipcharts. Man, oh man, are these babies truly *awesome*!

PHOTOS 040



Me in the parking lot before hiking up the hill to the picnic.



Me at the picnic.



Me munching on some chips. This picture was the one that convinced me to get an electric razor, since the blade was obviously doing a number on my face.



Me with the shades back on. Not a moment too soon!



L-R: Thomason taking aim at the camera, me still munching.



Background, L-R: Koyanagi and me.



L-R: Koyanagi, me, Thomason helpfully pantomiming the proper way to cut steak.



L-R: Me, Niwa-san.



Me. Let the lesson be learned: Never take an outdoor photo with the camera facing toward the sun.

Tuesday, November 13, 1990—Day 315

This morning I read an article from the *Ensign* instead of reading the Book of Mormon. I read from it and skipped studying, too. I felt disoriented all day 'cause I'd veered off my usual pattern. *That* won't happen again. **[Hah!]**

[We] taught a lesson to Hibino-san, the lady with whom I made the appointment at Eikaiwa. **[She usually attended *both* Eikaiwas—the normal one on Thursday evenings with her daughter, and the Okusan Eikaiwa on Friday mornings by herself.]** She's no relation to the Hibino who was recently baptized. Ata-san was there, too, 'cause she lives close by.

It was a great lesson. The Spirit was there strong. We showed the Joseph Smith story video. Like usual, they were surprised to find out that God and Jesus Christ were different people. I wonder how this will work out?

[We] taught Oyama again tonight. Man, has that guy changed for the better! Thanks due to the church and the Holy Ghost.

Wednesday, November 14, 1990—Day 316

We **[Koyanagi and I]** had a semi-heated discussion about pass-offs and feedback; what one person might think is bad to do during a lesson, another person may regard as a skill. Therefore, who's right? We spent at least an hour and a half talking about that. It'd take a long time to explain, but he asks "yes/no" find-out questions during lessons, which the missionary guide and I say are bad news. **[I had been taught in the M.T.C. to avoid such questions, especially the question "do you understand," since the investigator will usually say "yes" because they're too embarrassed to admit that they don't actually understand. By contrast, I'd been taught to ask open-ended questions such as "what's your understanding of this principle," so they could describe their thoughts and we could therefore see if they'd grasped what we were trying to teach.]** Yet the mission president where he's from is a salesman **[in his professional life]** and considers that a skill. Long story, but who's right? We decided to wait and see.

[This conversation is what finally opened my eyes as to why Koyanagi did things the way he did. I'd been taught to stick to the missionary guide and the lesson plan and not "go maverick;" I'm sure this was because missionaries, if left to their own devices, will do and say a lot of stupid stuff which the hierarchy would just as soon avoid.

On the other hand, Koyanagi's home town was in the Sendai Mission, and the aforementioned salesman mission president there taught his missionaries—and Koyanagi, the ward mission leader at the time, picked up on—that there were "other skills" above and beyond what's taught in the missionary guide. Hearing Koyanagi talk, I caught on to the fact that these "other skills" consisted of nothing more than whatever would get the person into the water. Manipulation? Skill. Coercion? Skill. Hard-sell tactics? Skill. Deception? Skill. You know, just what you'd expect from a professional salesman.

Therefore, it made sense that Koyanagi would ask "yes/no" questions during lessons, since he could thereby speed through lessons with minimal input from the investigator, getting them that much closer to the commitment phase. It also became clear why he brow-beat poor Oshita-kun so badly; he was just employing whatever "skill" it took to get him into the water.

As an aside, the Sendai Mission, the jurisdiction of this infamous salesman, did indeed have the highest baptism rate in all of Japan, *by far*. None of us could figure out how they did it, but after this conversation, the mystery had been solved for me. Koyanagi, who like most Japanese people

could only think in absolutes, simply let the numbers speak for themselves. As for me, however, I was always 100% convinced that not all baptisms are created equal; there was a difference between *quality* and *quantity*. Throughout my mission I consistently strove for the former and paid no attention whatsoever to the latter—which is doubtless the reason why my stats were so comparatively low once I went senior myself.]

I gave out my first Book while housing today. [I don't know what I meant by that, since I'd given away several Books of Mormon before then; did I mean my first Book *in Inuyama*?] Today I *swear* I saw a famous singer on the street today. She was in a small car which was nicely done up [especially the interior]. As she drove by, her face was etched on the glass in the rear side mirror. I knew it had to have been someone famous, for I'd seen that face before. Later tonight, going by the local record shop, sure enough, there was a poster of her in the window. [The] problem is, what would she be doing in Inuyama? [Visiting] relatives, maybe? Crud, this is *still* bugging me.

[When I saw her, she was on one of the main thoroughfares, which often were the closest things to true freeways in Japan anyway. So chances are she was just passing through. Assuming it was really her—and I'm now quite convinced it was—her name was (and still is) Shizuka Kudo. Here is a picture of her:]



At lunchtime, I taught Koyanagi how to play checkers. I won every time (except for a tie in the first game—neither of us could move after a while).

Today was certainly the day for famous people. Beforehand, I'd seen a T.V. show at Oyama's [place] on which this extremely beautiful [T.V. and movie] star was. In the background was the poster for her recent movie, which poster I'd seen in Okazaki. I later saw her image on a video game.

I thought it was someone new I'd found, when tonight I happened to see a picture of her on a newspaper, then I realized that it was the same girl I'd admired *lots* of times on pictures in the subways from *waaay* back when—with Horrocks in Fukutoku. Wow, what a coincidence. I'd wondered who she was. I'll have to ask Koyanagi her name again.

[Her name was (and still is) Yasuko Sawaguchi. Here's a picture of her:]



After Watanabe's lesson, we painted the chapel as much as we could. It was on the newspaper there that I saw her face. **[I tore the picture out of the newspaper, stuck it in my scriptures, and kept it there for years.]**

Thomason asked me if I liked Japanese girls. The truth is, 90% of them are butt ugly, 9% are okay, and 1% are *supremely* gorgeous—they even beat the best *America* has to offer! Thomason feels the same way—Dorough did, too.

Thursday, November 15, 1990—Day 317

[The four of us] spent all afternoon painting the inside of the chapel and the halls, etc.

Spent my last ¥800 on rice—I now have only ¥4 (2¢ or so) to my name. My money had better come soon, or I'm in *big* trouble! I hope the exchange rate is back up in my favor. **[It wasn't, and never would be. The exchange rate continued to steadily decline over the course of my mission.]**

Theresa sent me a postcard, which must've crossed with mine en route. My plan worked—for in it, she more or less apologized for making me mad and said that she still cares for me, etc. Making her wait was the right thing to do, after all, ha ha! I'll give it a week on this one, too. I think back on all the pen time I gave her in the beginning and think, "What a stupid fool!" I *knew* it wouldn't work out; it never does!

The guys in Okazaki forwarded it—'twas a postcard, so they could read **[it]** all. I wonder what they thought?

[We] had a lesson with Oshita-kun before Eikaiwa. I feel pressure. Poor kid! Does he even *want* to be baptized? **[It]** feels as though Koyanagi is almost forcing him into it. I want to go senior just so I can take over and relieve the poor guy.

Crud, I am *such* an awesome Eikaiwa teacher! [I know how arrogant that sounds, but apparently there was a lot of truth to it: When I finally went senior, my first junior told me that Biddulph had told *him* that I was "good at Eikaiwa." Many months later, this same junior called me up asking for ideas for teaching Eikaiwa. He began the call by saying, "You are the Eikaiwa king!"]

Friday, November 16, 1990—Day 318

After Okusan Eikaiwa, we [four elders] spent *all* day painting the inside of the church. [It wasn't always just us, thankfully. Other members, including the Noguchi kids and Oshita—our investigator and their friend—would come by when they could (usually in the afternoons after work or school) and help.]

Saturday, November 17, 1990—Day 319

[We] spent all day painting again, with the exception of a lesson with Oshita and an earlier visit to his mother. She looks 22, but she's 40—it's amazing. When she picked him up last night, I almost thought she was his big sister.

I thought I was motivated at first, but Reed is so positive about everything it's amazing. He's got to be one of, if not *the* best, missionary to ever hit this mission.

[I'm quite sure that every missionary who ever lived or served with Elder Reed has a multiplicity of stories about him; one of them took place on this day. Missionaries are generally careful about giving all the credit to the Lord, but Reed took it one step further: He said that God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost painted the church!]

Since home is a day behind, three years ago today I went to Boot Camp. [In other words, I left for Boot Camp in the U.S. Marine Corps on November 16, 1987.] What a day *that* was!!!

Sunday, November 18, 1990—Day 320

Today was the third day in a row [that] we went without a break. We taught Lesson 6 to Watanabe and reviewed with Oshita. It looks as though I'm going to perform Oshita's baptism.

Received a few more pictures of me today. I love this tradition they have! [i.e., the Japanese people's tradition of giving copies of any group picture they take to every person in the group.]

[We] went and streeeted for an hour. Beforehand, we all (Watanabe and Oshita, Thomason and Reed, Koyanagi and I, and the other guys' investigator) had fasted, and we all prayed in turn, going around the circle we'd [knelt and] made. The [mission]president had called a special fast for this "covenant dendo" program he's instituted, where we set specific goals. This fast was so that the Lord would accept our goals and help us achieve them. Up 'till now, I haven't been much of a goal-setter, but now I'm glad I did [set goals]. It gives me something concrete to look at and strive for.

[If my mission's culture was any indicator—and I think it was—missionaries are very, very much into setting goals and trying to achieve goals, with far more attention being paid to the former than the latter. For example, missionaries would quite often set goals on how many Books of Mormon they'd give out that day. As you can see by my previous paragraph, mission presidents also got in on the action by encouraging goal-setting and by cooking up goals for the entire mission.

As for me, I never really bothered setting many goals, because it instinctively felt rather pointless. My thinking was (and still is) like this: If God wants missionaries to meet people and teach them, won't He make it happen on His own? If Mormonism is true, why must the missionaries bend over backwards in order to bribe a reluctant God into grudgingly giving them success?]

Since we'd worked hard this week, I had the feeling we'd see success this one hour. Sure enough, we met this awesome dude who even came up to the church with us and listened to half [of] the First Discussion. We picked him up on the spot. Awesome, or what?

[We] ate dinner at Tsutsumi Kyodai's house, the ward mission leader. One of his thoroughly undisciplined kids threw some pineapple on my suit, dang him.

This morning I got up at the usual 5:20, but was so tired that I went back to bed and slept in 'till 8:00. I'd better not make that a habit.

PHOTOS 041



The inside of the newly-painted church restroom. Notice that only the stalls were labeled "Gentlemen" and "Ladies"—like many restrooms in Japan, it was unisex.

Monday, November 19, 1990—Day 321

[We] had a late lesson with the chiropractor [Koyanagi knew him so well by then that he'd picked him up as an investigator]; it's 11:30 now. Theressa and I have known each other [for] a year now. Tried to make a tape for Jodi, but Koyanagi's recorder is pissing me off. Got a letter from her today, too. [We] painted more and received food from members—[I have] no time, can't write, but a lot happened.

Tuesday, November 20, 1990—Day 322

This morning I finished the tape I made for Jodi. I basically told her a little bit more about Japan, etc. I wanted to let her know what my voice is like. I talked for almost 25 minutes total, but the first five were ruined thanks to Koyanagi's strange [tape] recorder. I also wrote her a regular letter back, plus gave her a group photo that I was in. Now she'll know what I look and sound like. I wonder what she'll think? I'm worried, 'cause when I mailed the package, the tape was coming off in one part. I sure hope it makes it to her okay.

As I was leaving the post office, I tried to throw away a candy wrapper, but one of the ¥100 coins I was holding in the same hand slipped into the trash, too. So I'm mourning that loss.

This morning, Thomason passed along to me a present from the Tsutsumis: ¥10,000! **[At the time this was about \$75.00.]** I'd been telling Sister Tsutsumi how the yen was rising and how I was getting less and less money every month, and I guess they want to help me out. I wasn't hinting for help; they've got a family to worry about without me. Plus, the Stake instituted a program where they'll be helping us out financially every month—thus all the food that was bought for us yesterday. **[I don't recall anything else ever coming of that program, whatever it was.]** So with that, I may have been okay. It'll be hard to accept the money; I'm going to try to get out if it, but maybe it's for the best—last night my money came in. It was only ¥30,000 this time, while the last two months were ¥32,000. Remember, I'm used to getting ¥38,000.

[It was pretty shrewd how the Tsutsumi family gave the money to Elder Thomason to pass along to me. They obviously knew that I wouldn't have taken it if they had tried to give it to me face-to-face. Even so, this was a great example of how one must be very careful when complaining about deprivation in front of a Japanese person, because they'll quite often go way out of their way to make things better for you.]

[We] had another lesson with Hibino and Ata-san today. The Spirit was there. The only reason they gave against being baptized was [their] opposed husbands. Man, their hearts are pure—I can easily see them being baptized, especially Ata-san. She's member material, indeed. She gave an awesome prayer. I wonder how this'll turn out?

Oshita and Watanabe had their baptismal interviews tonight. Both [of them] passed. I should be rejoicing right now, but I don't agree with the way Koyanagi rushed through the lessons. He was weak on the commitments, too. **[Clearly he cared only for getting them baptized, not for whether they were ready to keep the commitments that members are expected to keep.]** As for now, it's an empty victory. Dan has talked about the magic of envisioning, and I can easily envision Watanabe blessing the sacrament as a priest.

Wednesday, November 21, 1990—Day 323

Made my own little map of the plan of salvation this morning for my flips. Crud, it's awesome. Can't wait 'till I've colored it and everything.

Housing is getting to be a bit more fun—I think I'll survive. Received an early Christmas gift from my mother, a nice electric razor that I'd requested. Hopefully now my acne will go away, now that I don't have to drag a blade across my face every day.

Thursday, November 22, 1990—Day 324

This morning, benkyokai consisted of us arguing more or less over whether the pre-existence and the Celestial Kingdom are the same place or not. **[Koyanagi says they aren't;]** I say they are. **[The]** fact is, I've been a member for 10 years longer than he has and have been attending **[for]** longer still. There aren't so many church books translated into Japanese—so that's another reason **[why I'm right]**.

[I was amazed to have this same argument with a couple of American junior missionaries several months later. I simply couldn't fathom how an active Mormon can *not* know that, according to Mormonism, the pre-existence and the Celestial Kingdom are the same place, since it's impossible to *return* to the presence of Heavenly Father if one was never there to begin with. Plus, God being God, his residence remains the same; he doesn't pack up and move for no reason.]

Had a split with Thomason. We met some ladies playing a tennis-like game, and we joined in. Along came another lady who'd rejected Koyanagi and I yesterday from across town. What a coincidence! She joined in, too.

More happened today, but I'm borrowing Thomason's "The Greatest Salesman in the World" book, and I want to read that. Sorry!

Friday, November 23, 1990—Day 325

Finished **[reading]** "The Greatest Salesman in the World." **[It's a]** good book! Very inspirational. I wish I had a copy so I could review it often. I've made up my mind to dendo as the Savior would—and I'm constantly trying to picture how He'd do it. With that in mind, I'm sure it's what the Lord wants. How can I go wrong?

Met a lady in a store who owned the place, and she'd been given a Book **[of Mormon]** by Harris and **[Elder]** Nishi before. She loaned me a book by some dude with wild ideas, **[that of]** trying to fuse Christianity and Buddhism and all else together. **[This author's name was Ryuho Okawa and he was the founder of the "Kofuku no Kagaku," roughly translated as "the think-tank for happiness," a rapidly expanding New Religious Movement in Japan.]** No Holy Ghost—man, what falsehood. But the lady believes it. How can I B.R.T. on this? I hope she reads her Book of Mormon.

We took too long of a break. I want to work, dang it!

Saturday, November 24, 1990—Day 326

Went back to the lady to give her back her book, and I tried to be diplomatic, but it didn't work. **[Maybe I inadvertently set the tone by something I said at the outset. She asked me what I thought of the book and I said, "The author has a great imagination." As you can guess, she countered, "It's not his imagination, it's the truth!"]** At one point she more or less demanded me to show her the Holy Ghost. She claimed to have read one-half of the Book of Mormon but felt nothing. I don't believe it. Next I tried to show her the mistakes and contradictions I found in her book, but she rationalized it all away. **[Oh, the irony!]** It was more or less friendly, since both **[of us]** were smiling, but it felt like an argument. Koyanagi got tired of it and made us leave, dang it. She and I parted as friends.

He doesn't like to argue, but I love a challenge and **[love]** people who have an opinion. That's the major difference between Japanese **[people]** and Americans, as she admitted—Americans like to think, Japanese **[people]** don't.

Koyanagi told me that President Ikeda, the founder of the Soka Gakkais, used to be LDS—He went to BYU and was converted and baptized there. Later he **[Ikeda]** told a prophet or someone that he was going to make his own church, bigger than ours, watch and see. . . and he was promptly

excommunicated. Voila—Soka Gakkais. I said a little about them in my tape to Jodi, since they're **[in the building]** next door. It'll be interesting to write about this new discovery.

[We] tried to play billiards with a member, but he didn't show up. The place had a slob-like atmosphere—all these Spirit-killing activities are getting me down. I want to feel the Spirit again!!

Sunday, November 25, 1990—Day 327

Had a guy we met housing come to church today. I made him feel welcome—

Forget it. I just had a long conversation and now I want to go to bed. But here's a note to myself (code words) so I don't forget what happened today—BAPTISMS—PROCTOR CHORO—MONOPOLY—HEN

[Now I can finally go into detail.

Regarding the code word BAPTISMS, Watanabe's and Oshita's baptisms were today. I performed the baptism for Oshita, and I was *very* nervous all the way to the Fukutoku chapel. I spent the entire time memorizing the baptismal prayer in Japanese.

At any rate, when it came time to perform it, after saying his full name I forgot the first two words of the blessing proper. Brother Tsutsumi was in the wings acting as witness or whatever, and he had to stop and correct me. I was embarrassed, of course, but luckily everything ran smoothly the second time.

Regarding the code word PROCTOR CHORO, he was still the Junior Zone leader living in my old apartment (my first apartment), so I saw him there in church.

As for the code word MONOPOLY, we played it at Brother Oyama's place later that evening. Now, my friends from high school and I played board games quite often, typically every Friday evening unless there was a dance, and had developed our own "gaming culture." Specifically, in our minds, the actions over the table constituted a second front, a "psychological warfare" battlefield with each of us trying to bluff, bluster, and otherwise manipulate each player against the others. I sort of forgot that not everyone is like this, so I got a little *too* much into the game, Monopoly being the fertile ground for psychological warfare that it is.

To make matters worse, I had a hotel on Park Place that they kept pretending not to land on.

Regarding the last code word, HEN is the Japanese word for "strange." I don't remember specifically what triggered it, but it *might* have been the instance when Brother Harada, who was still an investigator when I was in his ward there in Fukutoku, handed me a copy of a group photo I'd been in that he'd taken, as is traditional for Japanese people to do, then charged me ¥50 for it. Japanese people *never* charge you for gifts they give you, so needless to say this was the first and last time that ever happened to me. Yeah, "strange" definitely describes it.]

PHOTOS 042



L-R: Watanabe, Koyanagi, Oshita, me.
This is just prior to the baptismal service.



L-R: Brother Tsutsumi introducing Watanabe, Watanabe himself, Koyanagi fastidiously avoiding smiling, Oshita, me.

Monday, November 26, 1990—Day 328

Got letters written. Received one from Denise Shelton in which she said she was sorry **[that]** things didn't work out between Theresa and I. Whoa, does Theresa know something I don't?

Gave a Book to a cool dude on the street, and we intended to teach Oyama, but **[we]** ended up playing "Uno" instead. I want to **[do missionary]** work! I hope I can keep up that attitude.

The Japanese have hyper-polites built into their language, but they've still *got* to be the most tactless people in the world. They're brutally frank about everything; they don't know how to put things without getting you ticked off. **[For example, if you're overweight, they'll say "you're fat!" or if you have acne, they'll say "you have pimples!"]** Plus, they're a lot shyer than we Americans are—any display of a forceful personality scares them off.

I performed Oshita's baptism yesterday; Koyanagi did Watanabe's. They gave good testimonies, so maybe they are converted, but it doesn't change the fact that they were manipulated. So it was an empty victory.

Saw Rikki again, so that was cool. Proctor Choro (**["choro" means]** "Elder" in Japanese) was there, and I invited him and he watched the baptisms. It was twice as cool, having him there. Plus, they say that the Kato family *still* talks about me—why, I don't know.

This is probably a sin, but I'll be glad when Koyanagi transfers. **[If wishing that a companion would transfer is a sin, then I'm willing to bet money that it's the sin that missionaries commit most often, by far.]** Better yet, I'll be glad once I'm back in the States and can be a real American again.

Tuesday, November 27, 1990—Day 329

This morning, I was accused of ticking Oyama off, not understanding, not being smart, not having skills, getting angry often, fake smiling, and lying—all in the same benkyokai, **[and all]** from the same fetchin' person. **[Remember when I told you about how the Japanese are pathologically condescending to those they deem their social inferiors?]** I must have Christlike patience to endure all that. I know he's wrong, too—I always admit it when I'm wrong and half the time I admit it when I'm not **[actually]** wrong just to stay friends. Oh, brother. Just a simple misunderstanding being blown out of proportion by everyone and laid on me. **[I think the "simple misunderstanding" was over my aggressive approach to Monopoly a few nights prior. As for "not having skills," since I wouldn't join in with Koyanagi's manipulation, I must not have any skills, right? As for "fake smiling," since I smiled far more often than Koyanagi did, then in his mind I just *had* to be faking it, right? As for lying, since I said some things that Koyanagi disagreed with, then I must've been lying, right? Yeah, Koyanagi took being Japanese to its logical extreme.]**

[We] rode into the canyon to see some "oni" or demon statues, then watched some dudes fish—**[it all amounted to]** something close to nothing. Our break lasted three hours while Koyanagi slept. I like studying, but I don't like stagnating.

Spoke slowly, felt the Spirit, and placed a Book. I felt a rush of Christlike love, so there were no problems at Oyama's tonight. I even feel forgiving about this morning—it must be a miracle.

Wednesday, November 28, 1990—Day 330

On the way to the chiropractor's, we actually saw a lady get into a wreck on her scooter (she jackknifed and fell over). She was okay, though. He's reading the Book **[of Mormon]** as much as possible, but it's hard to meet. He at first had a bad image of us as Christians, 'cause when Protestant guys from the U.S.A. speak in seminars (for chiropractors), they'll use the money for sex outings. He knows us better now.

We put a Book **[of Mormon]** on the door handles to the **[local]** Protestant church. It was Koyanagi's

idea, but we put one in the mailbox of a Jehovah's Witness, too. Beyond that we pretty much housed and that was it.

Thursday, November 29, 1990—Day 331

I'm glad I'm studying "How to Win Friends and Influence People," for by applying the skills I learned from that, I placed a Book when I might not have otherwise. **[I placed it with someone named]** Ogawa-san—a pretty lady was she.

[We] went to Shibata-san's, the lady with whom Reed and I made the return, but she'd forgotten and made other plans. No daughter **[to whom she promised to introduce us]**, either, or interest. She told us **[that]** our proselyting methods were bad, but only Koyanagi understood that part. She said he looked Chinese, which made him mad. So much for her.

A few new people came to Eikaiwa tonight.

Friday, November 30, 1990—Day 332

Slept in late, darn it. Had a split with Reed, it rained hard, and had fun at volleyball. **[I worked some]** more **[on my]** flipcharts—I went picture-hunting through some Ensigns. Holy cow, these'll be so good **[that]** there'll be no room for improvement.

Saturday, November 01, 1990—Day 333

Now every month has been written in here. **[In other words, I now have entries spanning January through December.]** I've almost made the round.

[We] didn't do a whole lot other than house. Naturally, we met our cool dude at our very *last* door of the day. Isn't that how it always works?

[We] played some fun "Uno" with the other two at Oyama's. This sure was an average day.

Sunday, December 02, 1990—Day 334

Today was Watanabe's first time partaking of the sacrament. Fukushima Shimai came again, too. It's interesting, 'cause we started seeing all these baptisms as soon as she went fuke. Jensen, the guy who was district leader here before Koyanagi, would call her every night—and he didn't have a single baptism the whole six months he was here, and no investigators, either, the whole time Van Cleave was with him. I guess it's true about having the Spirit with you and keeping the rules, etc. She has a nice voice, too, darn it.

We got a lot of food from the "fruit basket," where members give the missionaries food on Fast Sunday. This place **[i.e., the congregation here]** is far smaller than Okazaki, yet the yield is far higher.

[We] broke our fast and ate with Niwa, then taught Oyama for the last time. **[We]** went to pick up his bike from his company and walked past some stupid fools breathing glue or whatever. **[They were staggering and speaking loudly as they went, so it was obvious that they were totally high on glue fumes. Since Japan is so strict and unforgiving when it comes to drug possession or distribution, hard drugs are very hard to find. Therefore, Japan's drug of choice is huffing glue, paint thinner, etc. since those are the only readily-available substances.]** Oyama's here rappin' right now.

Monday, December 03, 1990—Day 335

Got a haircut; it's the shortest it's been in a year. I love it! I should've gotten a letter from Jodi, but I guess it's taken my tape a while to get to her.

Tonight we followed up on leads, i.e. former Book of Mormon recipients, etc., and invited them to the ward **[technically "branch"]** Christmas party. That's my kind of dendo.

In our "Paradigm," the mission monthly newsletter, I found out that in October Sugiura was baptized and also Matsubara-san's kids. Too cool! Looking back, I really was un-missionary like back then. Ineffective seniors were part of it, but I count it as little more than a waste, that four months, yet it was pretty much my fault. With that in mind, I'm going to keep the rules, have the Spirit, and be a kick-butt senior.

Tuesday, December 04, 1990—Day 336

After district benkyokai, we spent time at the bank on financial reports. **[I have no idea what I meant by that.]** Reed's **[bank]** card got messed up, so while they were fixing that problem, I made friends with the lady that works in the lobby. That sort of thing is fun, since the rest of the Japanese are so glum. **[When banking issues come up, it's a lifesaver having a Japanese missionary in your district so that he or she can sort things out with the bank staff. Non-native missionaries focus on religious vocabulary, so when it comes to technical or financial issues, American missionaries are typically dead in the water.]**

[We] met with the zone leader for a further explanation of the covenant dendo program, then rapped about the state of the mission and other missionaries—who's with who and where, etc. Those talks are fun.

[We] went streeting and I placed a Book; housed later and gave a Book to Suzuki-san, a 22 year-old total babe. **[I still remember her. She was definitely runway model material, head to toe.]** She seems smart; I bet she'll read it and this'll go somewhere. I followed the Spirit as to what to say in what order, and it worked, for she accepted it and it went well. I value a Book **[placement]** without a return as little more than nothing, but still, it was another two Books in one day day.

Wednesday, December 05, 1990—Day 337

This morning I let my thoughts run wild, and I paid for it this afternoon by not having the Spirit with me. I got discouraged, etc. Dang, I wish I could control my thoughts.

Remember the lady and that book I borrowed from her a while back? Well, we met another believer tonight. The guy who wrote the book is named Okawa, and he claims to be receiving revelation. Our lady tonight spoke quickly and unassuredly, yet we didn't argue, and the Spirit was there—we gave her a Book and she said she'd read it.

The interesting part of it all is this: We asked her how he **[Okawa]** was receiving revelation, and she said that God appeared to him as "an angel of light." In II Corinthians 11:14, who appears as an angel of light? **[Answer: Satan.]** Yet that's the word Okawa's disciples use for God. Isn't that fascinating?

Thursday, December 06, 1990—Day 338

We biked for 50 minutes to Ichinomiya for zone pass-offs. That impressed a few people. Maruoka's a babe. Apparently she's been telling her companion about my shirt stays, for she asked to see them. **[It's]** too bad they got worn out and left in Okazaki.

I finished my white kanji book yesterday; I go through the grade school books starting tomorrow.

A sister in the ward **[actually "branch"]** came up after Eikaiwa and awarded me with none other than a kanji dictionary! I'd told her earlier that I'd like to look at one sometime, but I wasn't hinting that she buy me one. But since I've got it, man, it sure is nice. **[It's]** convenient, too. Can't wait 'till I know enough to use it.

We were just listening to one of Okawa's tapes, and he says that the beings he's receiving revelation from

have no bodies. Can you believe it?

Oh yeah, I forgot—we received our pass-offs from Brough. Also, in the train station **[later that night]**, we saw a weird dude **[strung out on the floor]** who looked as though he'd been beaten up. The next time we went through, there were normal clothed police around him and he was sobbing pretty bad. Weird, indeed.

[At the time I wanted to help the guy, but two things held me back: First, I didn't know what, exactly, I could've done that would've helped; second, it wasn't quite clear if he was truly hurt or if he was just crazy.]

Friday, December 07, 1990—Day 339

It's been 49 years since we were bombed **[at Pearl Harbor]**, it looks like. Maybe I'll tell Koyanagi once I'm done **[writing in]** here.

Got a great letter from Jodi—she's the right height. She liked my picture I sent her, too. Awesome, or what?

Tonight we got in a bit of an argument, but we've got it worked out. It'd take a long time for me to give all the details, but it was over me talking and making a return in all English. **[Typical Koyanagi. As long as a return was booked, who cares what language it was booked in?]**

Saturday, December 08, 1990—Day 340

I started **[working through]** my grade school (1st grade) kanji practice books today. Crud, I'm bad. I'm just like I was as a real 1st grader trying to write English letters for the first time. I hope I get better with practice.

*(Note to myself: In Ito Yokado **[The local department store]**, we met a babe behind the jewelry counter who's 22, unmarried, lives in Nagoya, and looked a bit like Maggie McGuire.**[*]** Remember?)*

We taught an awesome (albeit two-hour) pick-up lesson. This not being fluent stuff is really beginning to tick me off.

[*Maggie McGuire was the girl I took to the homecoming dance when I was a junior in High School, back in 1985. Here's our picture from that event:]



Sunday, December 09, 1990—Day 341

When investigators come to church, Koyanagi doesn't go too far out of his way to make them feel welcome, which irks me. **[We]** met Shibata-san in the train station **[which we often passed through while street contacting]**; she still wants us to go by. I will once I'm senior.

I decided that from now on I'm going to trust all those little instincts when I've got someone stopped. Today I did my best to follow the Spirit with a guy, and I felt impressed to share Moroni 10:3-5, so I did. The result? We ended up making a return for tomorrow. It pays off! I'm following the Spirit from now on—I know I'm going to see *lots* of success in every way.

[We] went to Oyama's to teach an after baptism ("AB") lesson, of all things. I get the impression that Koyanagi goes over there just to get out of dendo. We ended up just playing UNO as it was.

Monday, December 10, 1990—Day 342

I sent a card to Jodi, and in it I placed a self-portrait. It was a colored picture of me in my **[Marine Corps]** dress blues, sword-in-hand, and all. I drew myself with a countenance that radiated bright as the sun. I hope she doesn't think I'm stuck on myself or anything.

Got several letters from my dad's folks in Washington **[State]**, which I all answered. Our pick-up lesson didn't show.

Remember the Protestant church? Well, we met an older lady who's a member there, and Koyanagi gave her a Book. Will she be baptized?

Coming home, we helped a lady whose car had died. Other than that and the picture, not a whole lot happened **[today]**. I had to dig for tonight's entry. From now on, I ought to be honest when nothing happens and just say so.

Tuesday, December 11, 1990—Day 343

[We] spent a lot of time preparing for an upcoming fireside we're putting on. It rained quite a bit, so with all this in mind, there wasn't a whole lot of room for dendo. We wrapped Books of Mormon as presents for Eikaiwa students, too.

Received a package and letters from the same batch of folks as yesterday, at least a few of them. They say my dad has a girlfriend. They say she's got a couple **[of]** kids, **[aged]** 12+ whatever, both **[of them]** girls. Just **[the]** opposite of Ethan and Grant, it looks like.

Wednesday, December 12, 1990—Day 344

[We] got to the train station at 8:25 **[a.m.]** and were off to the mission home for the Christmas taikai. Dang it, I'm exhausted, and the prospect of writing about it all doesn't thrill me.

During the slideshow at first, I'd sent in the picture of the grand service station opening in Fukutoku **[see PHOTOS 21]**. I had people, especially girls, all gathered around me **[in the picture]**. When Elder Gray **[the emcee]** (remember him from early July?) announced it, he said this:

(Blank screen) "This year, people came up with lots of new ways of meeting people. Here's Shades Choro's method" and then showed it. It got a lot of "aw"s and a few laughs. I was excited.

Every zone put on something for a program later, and we sang "We Three Kings." For the "Star of Wonder, . . ." part, we four waved the stars we'd made with chopsticks and tinfoil. **[The]** problem is, no one else did. The rest of the zone waved theirs during some other "Star Bright" song; we didn't. Were we mistaken the first time around? At any rate, a few people commented (including Dorrough) how fun it was to watch me/us. We probably looked like fools.

Before this, we all gathered outside, in front of the church, for our yearly **[mission-wide]** group photo. I've been looking forward to this ever since I first found out about it. At first I tried to get into the center of the steeple **[the taikai was held in the church building next door to the mission home]**, but Madsen (whom I haven't seen since we first got to Japan), Proctor, and Gibson were already there. With no room, I went down to the front. I was to the far left (the viewer's far right) of all the sisters. Koyanagi was close by. Sister Smith was right behind me. Later she was joined by the **[mission]** president. I was in quite the conspicuous place—I was the only elder on the front row, smack dab in between the mission president and his wife and all the sisters. I hope it turns out okay. I was next to Hisako Miyamori Shimai, whom I was told to say "Hi" to so long ago by Brother Christensen **[if I remember correctly, he was my**

missionary preparation Institute teacher]. He'd told her of another whom he knew in her mission, but he'd forgotten my name. So she was more or less looking, too, but with no leads. After all this looking, it was only justice that I be next to her in the picture.

[We] had a testimony meeting, and all five of us elders that had been in the M.T.C. together sat together. I no longer dislike Gibson, I think.

Kitajima Shimai was there, and she re-extended her invitation to come to her ward. She remembered me out of all 150 missionaries! And I'd never even lived in her ward. She got my picture taken with one of the A.P.s.

We five ate together later, too. Before going home, we mingled a while. It was interesting to see who knew who. About a year from now, this'll be my last major event.

Once I got home, there was a package from Jodi waiting for me. In it she'd sent a tape, too. She has a *beautiful* voice—I'm in love. She has the *best* voice, let me tell you! In fact, I probably enjoyed that more than the whole Christmas taikai.

Ever since the other page **[within this entry]**, from the words "at any rate," it's been the next day. I haven't studied the lesson plan yet, but oh well. I used to write at night **[in this journal]** exclusively so that I wouldn't forget anything and so the impressions would be fresh, but maybe I'll write in the mornings from now on just because I have more energy.

Harris has had a baptism, a female self-referral. I'm happy for him!

PHOTOS 043



In the subway on the way to the Christmas taikai. Notice how tired the passengers still are.



Everyone getting in place for the annual mission-wide photo. I'm near the far right. The Japanese girl standing at the extreme left, wearing gray, is Sister Chikako Ito, the one who would end up riding the plane back to America with me well over a year later. Next to her, wearing brick-red, is Sister Fisher, her companion, who had been one of the sisters who rode the plane *from* America with me less than a year *earlier*.



L-R: Elder Kim Orton (one of the A.P.s), me. Yeah, I wasn't always as photogenic as I would've liked.



Our official, annual mission-wide Christmas taikai photo. In the lower-right corner is President and Sister Smith, with me directly to the left of them. Obviously there are lots of people pictured here who I've mentioned over the course of this journal, but it would be too difficult to accurately describe their coordinates.

I'll make one exception, however: See the girl wearing bright red near the center of the photo? Well, the woman directly to the right of her is Sister Uptagrove. Remember her from the M.T.C.?

This image is, by necessity, rather small, so [CLICK HERE](#) for the full-sized picture.

Thursday, December 13, 1990—Day 345

I guess I'll write **[in this journal]** in the mornings when I have a lot to write.

[We] had a pick-up lesson with the girl I met housing. I forgot (or never learned) her name. **[She's]** not too religious-oriented, but she accepted a return appointment, so what the heck?

[We] had another picture night at Eikaiwa. Most **[people]** forgot to bring them, but it still went over really well.

Friday, December 14, 1990—Day 346

I had my okusans really laughing this morning.

Had a split (that pen sucks too **[I had just tried switching pens, then switched back again]**) with Reed, and we dended a ways south. We met a couple of kids while housing, then one thing led to another and they went with us. They were joined by more and more friends, 'till finally we had a group with us. We weren't doing too well **[at housing]**, so we decided to show them all pictures and teach them games. We played volleyball, where Reed and I tied two jump ropes together and they hit a balloon back and forth.

[We] played another game that'd take too long to explain, then gave them all Eikaiwa flyers and told them to tell their parents "Hi" from the Mormon missionaries. There were between 12-14 of them, ages 7-12.

[We] played volleyball later (for real).

Saturday, December 15, 1990—Day 347

I totally forgot to shave today.

I tried to visit the lady we placed the Book of Mormon with on November 29, but she turned stupid on us, like 90% of the race. She was saying some trash about her older brother. Maybe if I understood Japanese better they wouldn't come across as such fools.

[We] rapped with Tsutsumi about the fireside we're doing tomorrow, then went with Watanabe and his brother to the Branch President's **[apartment]** for dinner. Reed's poor Japanese had me laughing pretty bad. **[That was a severe understatement. Few times in my life have I ever laughed so hard. You see, Reed was talking to the two Watanabe brothers, trying to say something about a tornado, but he didn't know the word for "tornado" so he held up his index finger, spun it in circles, and called it "disobedient weather."]**

A year ago, Theresa and I were in the bonds of iniquity.

Sunday, December 16, 1990—Day 348

Kizawa-san came to church today. **[I think he was one of the other pair's investigators.]** It was Reed's idea, so we put on a fireside where everyone received "mission calls" and then learned about their respective missions from the missionaries. I was the "mission president" for New Zealand. Afterwards, they talked about member referrals, goals, etc. and passed out referral sheets. If this takes off, we're going to see a lot of success and our job will get a lot easier. Who knows, maybe this is the beginning of the fulfillment of all those prophecies about Japan becoming productive **[convert-wise]**.

[For some background, in the mission home after arriving to Japan, the mission president gave us all a pep-talk by reading aloud a few different prophecies about a "new age" dawning for the church in Japan, and how we were on the threshold. Even so, in retrospect, I can't believe how naïve the above paragraph was. One little fireside was supposed to be the spark that started a wave of conversions nationwide??]

As for all those hopeful prophecies and urban legends about Japan soon to become just as productive as South America, well, a few years after I came home, all missions in Japan had the number of missionaries cut by about half. You do the math.]

Kizawa-san stayed the whole time, and afterwards he was in the kitchen helping wash dishes. Rare! He must be gaining a self-identification with the members, which can only be good.

[We] taught Watanabe-san's brother **[Yuji]** tonight. Their mom was Christian before she died, so that helps. He set a baptismal date, but it is for over three months away.

[Here's the story of how we met and began teaching Yuji: Thomason and I were on a split one evening and Thomason stopped Yuji coming out of the train station. While Thomason was giving him the usual introduction, Koyanagi and Reed showed up since we were about due to meet up and end the split.]

Once Thomason had booked the return, Koyanagi took him aside and said that since we were already teaching Yuji's brother, we rightfully deserved to teach Yuji as well. Koyanagi then more or less demanded that Thomason relinquish him to us.

If it had been me, I would've just let Thomason and Reed teach him, since Thomason booked the return (fair is fair, after all). But, once again, that's Koyanagi for you.]

There's a 15 year-old girl at Eikaiwa named Ishida-san whom I have high hopes for for some reason. I bet she's golden; I can just see her serving a mission. I'm purposely not inviting her to anything, 'cause I don't want Koyanagi to teach her **[how sad is that?]**. Am I receiving spiritual guidance? Or am I just crazy? I'll write in here the later results so you can find out. However, we do seem to be seeing her around town an inordinate amount of times. Is it arranged so that she becomes familiar with the missionaries? **[The reason she appeared so golden, I think, is because she was clearly mature beyond her years.]**

I'm a gospel-teaching, soul-saving time bomb just waiting to go off. **[The reason I hadn't already "gone off" is because there's only so much you can do when you're only a junior companion and when you're not yet fluent.]**

Monday, December 17, 1990—Day 349

Got up at 3:30 **[a.m.]** in order to write letters. I sent Jodi a picture of me that I think is awesome. It's of us at the baptism, me in white. On the other side of Jodi's tape is some Christmas music that I think is *awesome*. **[It was by Mannheim Steamroller.]** It's probably against the rules, but I'll only do it again next week.

I wrote nine letters spaced into six envelopes, with two smaller notes inside them.

At the bank, I struck it rich!! ¥57,000! On a good month, I'll only get ¥38,000! I'm set for quite some time to come.

Later, six letters came! One from Mom says that my old **[Marine]** unit got called up to Okinawa, where they trained this Summer, in order to replace active duty guys who were sent to Saudi Arabia. *That's* big news.

I couldn't wait a week to write Mom for more details ('cause I'd sent one to her already this morning), so I belted out the remaining five **[responses]** super-fast. I explained the urgency, how I only had a little time left of P-day and had to write **[to]** Mom, etc. I told a bit about the grim reaper being at my door, a dusty grave at age 22, and being concerned for my very *life* once I'm home **[since at the time there was no guarantee that the first Gulf War wouldn't be another Vietnam]**. Perhaps I played it up a bit, but I needed an excuse for writing fast, 'cause I wanted to get them **[i.e., the responses to those five letters]** all done today so I wouldn't need to worry about them next week. Besides, I want to see their reactions.

Here's who all I wrote to today:

MORNING:

1. Jodi
2. Daren
3. Patti **[a friend of the family on my dad's side]**—Lanel **[one of my aunts on my dad's side]**—Shaun **[another of my aunts on my dad's side]** (and Patti's fiancée Val)
4. Grandma S_____
5. Mom—Ethan (and Dick)
6. Dan Clyde

EVENING:

1. Andy Thomas **[A friend of mine and Dan's from Junior High]**
2. Jeanie Hancock
3. Cheryl Depriest
4. Rhonda
5. Mom

6. Dan Clyde

Over 12 envelopes, 15 letters total, with two extra little notes. A record!

Rhonda is tempting. However, I'm going to tell you something next, and you're going to say two things about it: #1, I'm crazy, **[and]** #2, I'm an extremely poor missionary. Irregardless, I'll say it anyway—I think I'm in love with Jodi.

Tuesday, December 18, 1990—Day 350

We had some time in between appointments, and the nearby streets were barren, so we spent some time at the new library. I can't read **[Japanese]**, so it didn't help me any. We visited the place again when one appointment cancelled out.

Watanabe's brother, Yuji (the brother of Watanabe) **[Why did I just write that?]**, catches on to everything really fast. It's so refreshing!

Koyanagi fell asleep during **[our]** break, and it was so late by the time he woke up that we just stayed home and did phone work, etc.

I've been thinking. I hope my unit won't still be deployed by the time my mission's over. If so, in order to avoid being activated, I'll have to make a quick move to San Jose, California with my grandparents and sign up with the intelligence unit there.

Wednesday, December 19, 1990—Day 351

Koyanagi didn't get a transfer call this morning, which surprised all of us. That means I'll be with him for over another month—can I endure it? I wanted to be his companion from way back—now I see that I'd better watch what I wish for, for I just might get it. I bet I'll go senior when he leaves **[I was wrong]**. I'll be here another two months in order to give the new companion one month to get adjusted to the area before I leave. So, most likely, I'll leave in March, about a year from when I first came to Japan. My prophecy just may be correct. If not, I'll certainly go senior in March, or the transfer that counts for March. Crud, that means I pass hump day still a junior. Ugh.

We spent all morning decorating the church for the upcoming Christmas events. **[We had]** a lesson with Yuji (Watanabe's little brother), then we four went to Yuki's house so his mother and brother could have their baptismal interview. His brother passed **[the interview]**, his mom didn't.

Today's huge news: Rikki's **[Army]** unit got activated. She'll be in Saudi Arabia by December 22. She'll be there **[for]** six months, a year if a real war breaks **[out]**. That means, if there's war, she'll come home the same time I will. Poor Rikki! This is bad news, *really* bad news. I hope she pulls through okay.

Thursday, December 20, 1990—Day 352

This morning we **[Koyanagi and I]** ended up having another more or less heated discussion about various things relating to dendo that we differ on. What made it twice as hard was the fact that he's Japanese and I'm American—what's polite and what's not vary greatly between the two of us. He opened my eyes to a few things, 'cause I'm always willing to admit when I'm wrong. I can understand where he's coming from, but the Christlike element is still lacking. He sure does differ a lot—I wonder why I haven't just purely *trusted* him like I did Oviatt. He knows the Japanese better than I do, but a lot of things apply to humans in general, I think.

This lasted a few hours. It was way late when we ended, yet Koyanagi still fell asleep for a while. We weren't out of the apartment 'till past 3:00 **[p.m.]**.

I've finally figured the Japanese out, or at least made a big step, I think. In the English language, there

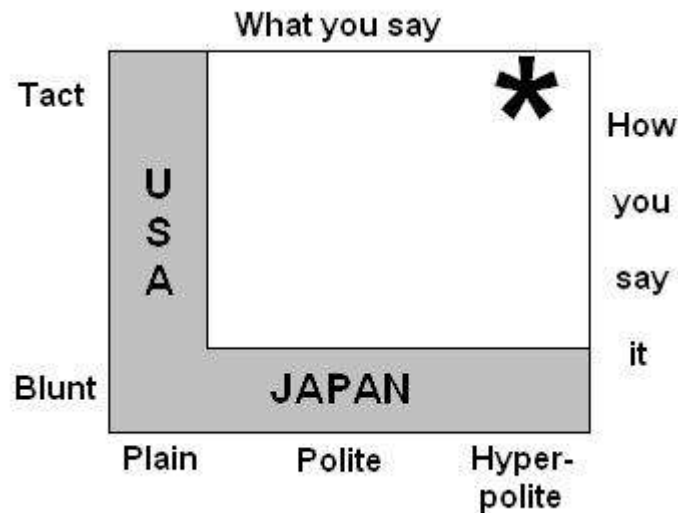
aren't too many words besides "please" to denote politeness. Yet in Japanese, there are so many levels of speech and ways of using them that it's a science in itself. Therefore, Americans get really good at saying things in a polite way, while the Japanese use separate words **[entirely]**.

THEREFORE:

IN AMERICA, IT'S NOT SO MUCH THE WORDS YOU USE, IT'S THE WAY YOU USE THEM.

IN JAPAN, IT'S NOT SO MUCH THE WAY YOU USE THEM, IT'S THE WORDS YOU USE.

Here's a graph:



Americans can't go too wide, 'cause they aren't blessed with that many words. The Japanese just plain don't know how to go tall. Therefore, with the star (*) as our ideal, each ethnic group views the other as being at the lower end of their particular scale as far as skills go. *That's* why they've appeared to be so direct (to me)!

How do you like my chart? A stroke of pure genius, or what?

We had a Christmas party at Eikaiwa. Lots of people came. We all brought presents to exchange. We'd wrapped up Books of Mormon as Christmas presents, and before eating and opening gifts, Thomason read a scripture about Christ from it. We were running late, and I felt pretty weird; I think people got a little uneasy with the scriptures being read out loud **[we'd always touted our Eikaiwa as a purely secular affair, remember]**.

However, after I got the gifts divvied out, I went forth, person by person, asking them if they'd like a Book of Mormon. I didn't count, but nearly 20 people accepted one! One was Yoshimi, who didn't accept one on the street a few weeks earlier. Awesome, right? Another girl told me directly that she'd read it. Too cool! I can only see success coming from this.

Friday, December 21, 1990—Day 353

After a good Okusan Eikaiwa, we gave the rest of our wrapped Books of Mormon away until there were but two left. So the grand total, we figured out, was 19 for both Eikaiwas. I guess I was a bit off last night. Another lady said she'd read **[it]**. Too cool!

Since Yuji's done with the lessons, we had a special lesson with him today. We showed him "How Rare a

Possession." I first saw that show over three years ago, and I still felt the Spirit strongly.

["How Rare a Possession" is a church-produced short film, supposedly a true story, about a young Italian clergyman named Vincenzo who finds a discarded Book of Mormon in an alley without its cover. He reads it, becomes converted to its doctrines, and starts preaching from it. He gets defrocked for that, but remains a believer in it, never knowing the book's name or the church that publishes it.

Years go by, and in his old age he's looking up a word in the dictionary one day and accidentally stumbles across the word "Mormon." He learns the church's name, writes a letter to it, and has the missionaries show up, whereupon he's finally taught and baptized.]

Got a letter from Jodi. She asked what my fatal flaw was, and **[said]** that "there must be *something* wrong" with me. She said **[that]** she can't see any flaws, and that I'm "as close to perfect" as she's met "to date." Okay, *now* we're talking! All systems are go!

[We played] volleyball again tonight.

Saturday, December 22, 1990—Day 354

I have been making a new and improved map of the Plan of Salvation, and I got it done tonight. After these copies are colored (showing step-by-step, flip by flip) and my first page on God is finished, I'll have infallible flipcharts for sure.

We went around giving copies of "Seito no Michi" (the Japanese Ensign—literally "Path of the Saints") to various acquaintances. We met both our Okawa-san fans; the lady at the store did most of the talking to Koyanagi this time. The lady at the house gave us our Book of Mormon back. We pointed out the "Angel of Light" deal to her, and she said that he **[Okawa]** can tell the difference **[between good and evil spirits]**. Oh brother!

We rapped with the preacher of a local Christian church's wife, but when he **[the preacher himself]** came in he was none too pleased. We had to leave.

[This was the same church and preacher we'd visited earlier. He hadn't been terribly excited about meeting us the first time, so why Koyanagi insisted on going back was a mystery to me. I had a bad feeling about it from the start, but to make matters worse, Koyanagi actually went *inside* the church to talk to her.

When the guy walked in on us, you could cut the tension with a knife. He couldn't have been any less pleased if we'd been having a threesome with her.]

We dropped by the Jehovah's Witnesses' place, and they'd had a baptism. They just pull a big square wooden tub thing into the center of the chapel and pump water into it. We were invited to a meeting they were having at Inuyama city hall (the same place where the Soka Gakkais had their thing), so we dropped by on our way home.

The auditorium and overflow were filled with Jehovah's Witnesses! There are a lot of them! They were all listening to the program, so we didn't get to talk to them. Oh well.

The church Christmas party was tonight. Few people were there, and it's a good thing, too—for it was little more than organized chaos.

It sucks when you see a cute Jehovah's Witness. Such a waste! **[By that comment, I suppose I meant that it was a "waste" since she was by definition outside the eternal marriage pool.]**

Sunday, December 23, 1990—Day 355

Today Sister Noguchi and her last kid, Tomoyasu, received baptism. She'd been changing her mind back and forth the past couple of days, but it worked out.

Upon getting to Fukutoku, I met Proctor again. He'll have been here six months by the time he transfers out next month. He was Nishi Choro's companion for a month. Did I explain about Elder Nishi? He's home now, but since the Noguchis were his old investigators, he came to perform one of the baptisms. ("He's back to haunt me!" said Proctor Choro.)

[Back on Day 283, I mentioned how Elder Colter told loads of hilarious stories from his mission to date. Some of these were about Elder Nishi. One of them I remember is how Nishi took a shopping bag out proselyting with him one day, stopped at a trash bin, put about five empty cans into it, then walked around with them all day for no apparent reason whatsoever. Weird dude, eh?]

Miki Kato, when she saw me, got all excited and came running up and said to everyone that I was a "special" missionary (or did she say "her" special missionary?). I must've been liked back there!

Sister Noguchi is really shy, so she had a tough time with it. Reed performed her baptism (barely). Miki and the sister missionaries (in Fukutoku) were there up until the baptisms, and Imamura bore his testimony.

Afterwards, Sister Takahashi (the younger, unmarried one), the one to whom I gave the U.S. coins, and I talked. I made the mistake of griping about my family situation to her. That was unwise! Her folks were divorced when she was little, and she had to live with someone else. Now she can't find her father, and her mother denies that she's her kid. She shed tears as she related the tale, and (if I understood her Japanese correctly) she said that I shouldn't just cast them off, 'cause they're still my family and I should be happy with them, etc. I felt stupid afterwards, 'cause my mom getting married and forgetting about me is nothing next to her situation.

Takahashi Shimai—**[she's]** *totally* cool! Too bad she's Japanese and I'm a missionary!

Thomason performed the confirmation for Sister Noguchi. He wanted to do it at least once in Japanese. He said some pretty powerful words at the end; she was crying so hard that she couldn't shake all of our hands. Yuji said that he felt the Spirit really strong.

I love the Holy Ghost! He leads us to do what's right.

[Here's] another item of note: I didn't understand it at first, but during a small luncheon after church, Hibino yelled out loud in front of all the members that I'd "broken the Law of Chastity" twice. It was a lie, of course **[I was still a virgin at the time and even if I wasn't, there's no way I was going to tell him that]**, but the room sure got quiet fast. I can't wait to see how the member-missionary relations go after this.

Christmas Eve, 1990—Day 356

I listened to Christmas music the whole time I wrote letters, so I couldn't concentrate too well. Thus, I think I did a lousy job. I told Jodi about my unit being activated and how my days may be numbered. I wonder how she'll react?

Tonight we four ate over at Oyama's, then played some fun UNO.

Whenever I write in here about Theresa I always get a letter the next day, so I may as well. With all the talk about Jodi, you may be wondering about my attitude towards Theresa. Well, she's essentially trashed, but I'm purposely not making it formal just to see what she will do.

Christmas 1990—Day 357

[In the afternoon we streeted just like any other day. I doubt that very many missionaries worldwide do that on Christmas.]

Tonight we went to a Christmas "party" put on by a lady that Thomason does a service Eikaiwa for. When we got there, she had on dance-type music **[wherein I heard "Can't Touch This" by M.C. Hammer for the first time]**, and her daughter had invited a few of her friends over—so there were a bunch of 16 year-old triffs there to party, too. Oh brother. I wasn't about to let myself slip up over this, so I was constantly on my guard all night. Later their English teacher from school came over, too. **[He was]** Barry, from Cincinnati. As we ate, we spent most of the time talking to him (we three Americans, that is) about current events. He told of how I could, with my knowledge of Japanese, easily enter a high-paying job when I got back **[to America]**. Without a **[college]** degree may be a little tougher, but he even told me how I could do it.

Now I'm fired up about my future. I can do this!! I'm no longer so worried. **[It turned out that such jobs are probably available in California and Hawaii, but in Utah, Japanese speakers are a dime a dozen, so knowing Japanese isn't that big of an asset to job-seekers there.]**

We had to leave early to teach an after-baptism lesson to Watanabe. We did a variety of other things today, including ordering for me a dictionary of Japanese grammar from the mission home.

So much for today. It was a "Triff Christmas" this year.

Wednesday, December 26, 1990—Day 358

[We] taught a great lesson to Yasuda-san. We got **[Discussion]** #2 totally done in one hour—the fastest I've ever seen it go. Usually #2 is the longest one (**[i.e., it]** takes the longest).

Nakatani Rieko **[family names come first in Japan, remember]**, one of my Okusan Eikaiwa students, invited us four to a Christmas party at a "school" for little kids where she teaches. It was lots of fun. I jazzed up a "duck-duck-goose" game by getting their mothers involved. **[I did that by leaving the circle when it was my turn and tapping the heads of the observing mothers seated randomly around the room, saying "duck-duck-duck" etc. as though they were playing, too.]**

We got thoroughly mobbed by little kids. During the dinner portion, I was so busy placing Eikaiwa flyers that I hardly ate anything. I gave a flyer to every last one of them and explained all, too (gave and explained to the *mothers*, that is).

I told one lady who had exceptional English skills that she was "good." She told me that I was "good," too—at Japanese. Crud, she caught the joke! (Did *you*?)

We ended up with lots of food. All in all, thanks to Nakatani-san, it was an *extremely* fun party. And **[it was]** the only Christmas party I'd ever been to *after* Christmas!

Thursday, December 27, 1990—Day 359

It snowed last night. Last year it didn't snow at all. This is still the latest I've ever experienced snow in at least 10 years, probably 13. For some stupid reason I wore the shoes with holes in them as I housed. My feet got wet and cold, and I was miserable.

However, just as I was getting ticked and starting to think that dendo was impossible, we met a High School girl to whom I gave a Book. I wasn't sure whether to continue after the Eikaiwa spiel, but Koyanagi told me to go for the Book, then he took it further and made a return for tomorrow. He later told me that he'd had a feeling **[that]** she'd be baptized.

I should trust him more. He was more in tune **[with the Spirit]** than I was.

[We] had a fun Eikaiwa and broke a piñata afterwards, which made a mess.

Reed is fun, but he gets a bit wild at times.

Friday, December 28, 1990—Day 360

Through regular dendo, we placed five Books. It's been a while. We met a couple of triffs, one of whom is a member in a different area. The other is an eternal investigator. For some reason, they're coming to our church this Sunday.

Our girl didn't show up **[to her lesson]**, but she was still with it when we visited her.

Remember that analyzation lesson plan study method I developed so long ago? Well, today I got totally done. All six lessons **[are now]** fully analyzed. Soon I'll make my list of grammar principles (sentence by sentence) to be copied off and given to everyone. Who knows, maybe people will like it and I'll become famous. **[Believe it or not, that last sentence actually came true!]**

Saturday, December 29, 1990—Day 361

While streeting, we met a weird dude who took us to a restaurant, then started talking about how he wanted to go to America and join the CIA. he kept asking how to do it, but he can't speak English, so he has no chance. He wouldn't talk about anything else. Strange dude. **[Throughout the conversation, he kept on asking whether the CIA "does bad things." I was forced to admit that, according to my knowledge, they probably did. Imagine my surprise when I found out that that was exactly the answer he was looking for—he wanted to join the CIA so that he could legally "do bad things," too!]**

[We] had a lesson earlier, in which Koyanagi did a poor job (if at all) of resolving concerns. I'm not too sure what all to write in here, for fear of it being of no worth. I mostly write just what I want to have documented, anyhow. Maybe every day writing in here has led me to write about worthless things. You're probably bored to death. Oh well, you're free to close this journal anytime you please.

Sunday, December 30, 1990—Day 362

Yuji and our other guy with a baptismal date set seem to be at home with the members, which can only be good.

Brother Tsutsumi sure is kept busy with church. He has quite a few callings. Since the membership is so small, every member has a lot to do, what with speaking in church and all.

From what Thomason has read in the Japan Times (**[which is an]** English newspaper), Iraq has been breathing out pretty bold threats against us. Crud, **[it]** looks like there will be a war, after all. I'll be here 'till the beginning of March, so I'll find out one way or another while I'm still here. The deadline **[for war]** is for mid-February.

We met a few people tonight who knew who we missionaries are. Interesting. Dendo's been better all around lately, too.

Monday, December 31, 1990—Day 363

Today wasn't P-day, since tomorrow is a big holiday. We taught Kino-san, our cool dude for whom Koyanagi didn't resolve concerns, and those unresolved concerns bore fruition as he didn't want to continue **[hearing the lessons]**. Koyanagi got to the point where he'd ignore his questions and just

continue. That got me mad. Koyanagi may have more experience, which is his all-purpose cure-all claim, but he still sucks.

When all was said and done, I bore truthful testimony as to why I was here, how this church has brought me happiness, and how I cared about him. I could tell **[that]** he was touched somewhat by that. The Spirit was there, too. We parted as friends. Tell you what, I'm willing to bet anything that when Koyanagi transfers, I'll succeed where he failed.

We tried to go bowling with some members tonight. Since car space was limited, we'd agreed earlier to ride our bikes out there, which was the next town over. Yuji went with us.

We waited for over a half hour. The place was closed. No one showed up. Later we met the other two **[elders]**; the members were extremely late, that's why we missed them. They tried to go to a different place, but it was closed, too. So no one bowled tonight.

Koyanagi is always running off on his own, especially inside stores. I guess he's never heard the rule that companions are supposed to stick together.

Tonight in the store, a worker girl asked me if I knew so-and-so who lives in Osaka, because so-and-so is a Christian, too. Stupid people! **[After laughing out loud,]** I gave her a similar question to show her what it was like. **([I said,]** "If we were in America and I said to you that I also knew someone in Japan **[who was Buddhist]**, 'do you know so-and-so,' what would you think?") **[She apologized and said she was sorry for wasting my time. I felt rather bad after that.]**

So much for this year. As soon as the time clicks over in America, I will have been a missionary for the church for all of 1990, except for 60½ hours' worth.

Tuesday, January 01, 1991—Day 364

It was tough getting that 199"1" out, since I'm so used to writing 199"0" after every heading. Pretty soon I'll be able to look back and see exactly what it was **[that]** I did a year to the day ago.

It rained this morning, which cancelled our New Year's plans. **[The mission president had, according to Koyanagi, told everyone to wake up early and watch the sun rise at the beginning of the new year, but I just wanted to sleep, so I was happy that the rain nixed those plans.]** After writing letters I took a four-hour nap. Since the president is probably going to inspect our apartment tomorrow, we spent the evening cleaning the place **[from]** top to bottom. You can't really dendo on New Year's Day, 'cause everyone is partying with their folks.

I haven't set foot outside the apartment at all yet.

Wednesday, January 02, 1991—Day 365

What a thoroughly wonderful day! We had zone pass-offs in Gifu and a district taikai at the same time. I was interviewed by the President. Somehow he knows that I want to go senior. He explained that there are a lot **[of missionaries]** who are ahead of me, yet when next transfers roll around, I'll probably be ready to go. From the way he sounded, it looks as though he may make an exception for me. Not because I'm complaining, but because he sees **[that]** I want to go **[senior]** and 'cause I'm ready.

Rapped a little bit with a sister from Rexburg, Idaho (Thomason's town) named Laiana Huber. She said I was the only person who had ever read her name correctly the first time. Score one.

As a zone, we learned from the A.P.s about planning. After it was over, we had a little free time and I rapped a bit with Maruoka Shimai. I had been telling people that due to the possibility of war, I may not live to see my 23rd birthday. So I told her that, too. I went on to explain that if I did die, that'd be okay, 'cause I wouldn't have to go through all the trials of mortality.

Next, the part I liked, she brought up the fact that you have to be married for eternity in *this* life. I found it neat that she was thinking along those lines. She later went on about how it's through trials that we grow, etc. She's awesome. Earlier, she encouraged me not to die. She'd received lots of Christmas packages, so she gave me some chips and some meat, too. Ahh, she's so sweet!

Her companion (an American) later told me, "She *really* likes you! She's always 'Shades Choro this' and 'Shades Choro that' . . ." and she told me a few other things that Sister Maruoka, **[a.k.a.]** Miyuki-chan, was always saying about me.

Now *that* made my day, to say the least! Wow. Maybe one reason it made my day so much is 'cause it's been two weeks since I've heard from Jodi. But **[when it comes to Sister Maruoka]** one thing's for sure; I'll certainly be writing letters to her once her mission is over. And I find it wonderful that she's thinking of me on her *own* time, even when I'm not around.

I received my dictionary of Japanese grammar **[today]**.

We had a lame New Year's party at the church, then went with the Tsutsumis to eat dinner at his parents' place, which was fun.

Sister Maruoka. Not without problems, yet totally *sweet*.

PHOTOS 044



Far right: Brother Tsutsumi's dad.

Far left foreground, L-R: Me, Reed, Thomason, Koyanagi.

Far left background: Shohei Tsutsumi is the younger kid in between Reed and Thomason wearing a colored shirt; I don't recognize the other kid in white. She was probably one of the cousins, I imagine.

Hump Day—Day 366

Actually, if the war's over before my mission is, I'll be home for Christmas, **[what made me think that?]** which means hump day has already passed. If not, then I'll be extending for a month, which means **[that]** hump day hasn't come yet. **[Even though the First Gulf War ended quickly, I ended up extending anyway.]** But since I'm not a prophet, I'll just go along with tradition and label this as "hump day." Close enough, I suppose.

We rode our bikes to the same bowling place as before, only this time it was open—and *crowded*. So to pass the time **[until a lane opened up for us]**, we hung out in the video game area. I couldn't believe it—there were some games that were thoroughly *pornographic*. **[Actually, in retrospect, "lascivious" would've been a much more accurate word than "pornographic."]** The urge to look was overpowering—so I gave in.

Yuji played one. **[In it,]** you play some type of card/dice game **[I believe it was Mah-Jongg]** with a video girl, and if you win, she strips for you. But in Yuji's game, the chick (or what happens to her) is *far* worse than just her taking off her clothes. I *had* to find out what happened, so I more or less watched. Bad mistake. I felt spiritually stained for some time to come. What got me is when Koyanagi sat down and played one. I wouldn't've said anything, but he later told me **[on the way out to do street contacting]** that he was surprised; normally it was only a normal game. Yeah, right. I didn't buy that for a second. He's Japanese; he knows those games far better than I do. Reed had even gone up and told him not to **[play it]**.

I won't use it as leverage, but I'd love to hear him say anything about "WINK" now.

[We] had a lesson booked, but the guy didn't show. I used the time to study my Japanese grammar dictionary. It's so awesome; I'm going to be thoroughly fluent a year from now, just watch.

The zone leader came to give Imai and Yuji their baptismal interviews. **[Imai, first name Tatsuya, had heard the discussions and became converted a couple of years earlier, but due to being underage and having opposed parents, he couldn't be baptized until he turned 18, which was right about the time I wrote this entry.]** Next, I split with the junior zone leader and I'm currently in Ichinomiya. Tonight and last night we came home so late that I had no time to write in here, so this is the second time in a row that I'm writing **[in this journal]** the next morning.

Got a letter from Rikki. She was home for Christmas; **[she]** didn't have to be in **[Saudi]** Arabia just yet. **[I also got]** another one from Denise—she tried to kill herself and was hospitalized. Oh, give me a break.

Friday, January 04, 1991—Day 367

I wrote yesterday's entry pretty late this morning, and I think it sucks, thanks be in part to that fact. Crud, I just *had* to have all that porno-stuff happen to me on hump (no pun intended) day, the day that readers will usually look for first. **[It's]** just my luck. Comparing that with Day 1, one wouldn't think **[that]** a whole lot had changed. Trust me, it has.

I hate splits. They're too expensive. I've spent almost a week's worth of food ¥ just because of that.

Before I forget—yesterday, we four were in a store, and a girl came up to me smiling, asking (in English) if I could speak Japanese. So I explained about Eikaiwa and gave her a flyer. She was *thrilled* to get it. She'll come.

As we were bagging our groceries, she went by and said "Bye bye!" to me, excitedly, I guess. There must have been something different about it, because Thomason said, incredulously, "Holy cow, what did you *do* to her??"

Heh heh! Chalk another one up for charm and personal magnetism!! In all modesty, I really do have a darn good personality.

Our junior zone leader is pretty fun. He has a different way of studying and dendoing. We streeeted around Ichinomiya for a while, and we stopped off at the local Shinto shrine. Lots of people were clapping their hands and praying to the place or whatever **[actually, Shinto supplicants pay homage to the deity enshrined inside, whomever/whatever that may happen to be]** for their yearly religious activity. Talk about a faith-building religion. **[That last part was sarcasm, of course.]**

How have I grown or changed lately, you may ask? Well, my attitude now is that the investigators are all-important—anything for them. I'm out to teach the gospel of Christ, and *convert*—not just baptize—people unto their Lord and Savior. I'm trying my hardest to become *Christlike*—and I believe **[that]** I'm making headway. Above all, I'm trying to develop the strength to do the *Lord's* will, not my own. And that's my attitude.

People are still celebrating New Year's, so you still see kimonos around. They are tremendously, fabulously, dazzlingly gorgeous. A kimono does for a Japanese woman what dress blues do for an American Marine. **[They're]** totally impressive.

PHOTOS 045



I clipped this photo from a newspaper, since I was eyewitness to the activity taking place. Note the English captions I placed at the top and bottom of the shot. I think the edible portion is "mochi," which is a paste made from smashed rice and traditionally eaten around New Year's.

Saturday, January 05, 1991—Day 368

We spent some time at the huge Buddhist temple on the side of the hill. **[Actually, I think there was a Buddhist edifice at the base of the hill, whereas the stone stairs led to a Shinto shrine higher up. The Shinto shrine is where all the New Year's action was taking place.]** Koyanagi must be getting tired of dendo at this stage of his mission, or else he's sick of working hard for little result. At any rate, there were still lots of people going up to pray to their idols, but the kimonos were getting few and far between. We found one girl in a nice one, and I had Koyanagi take my picture with her. I gave her an Eikaiwa flyer (hereafter called "chirashi"s, 'cause that's the Japanese word for them and we always use it).

That was the last one on the roll, so we went and bought more. Returning, Koyanagi had me take his picture with the same girl. He told her **[that]** he was from Hawaii. The thing is, if you're a foreigner, they'll let you take your picture with them, but if you're a native, they'll think you're picking up on them. She even said **[that]** he had good Japanese, which we thought was funny.

Let my thoughts run wild during **[our]** break. I wish I knew *how* to control them.

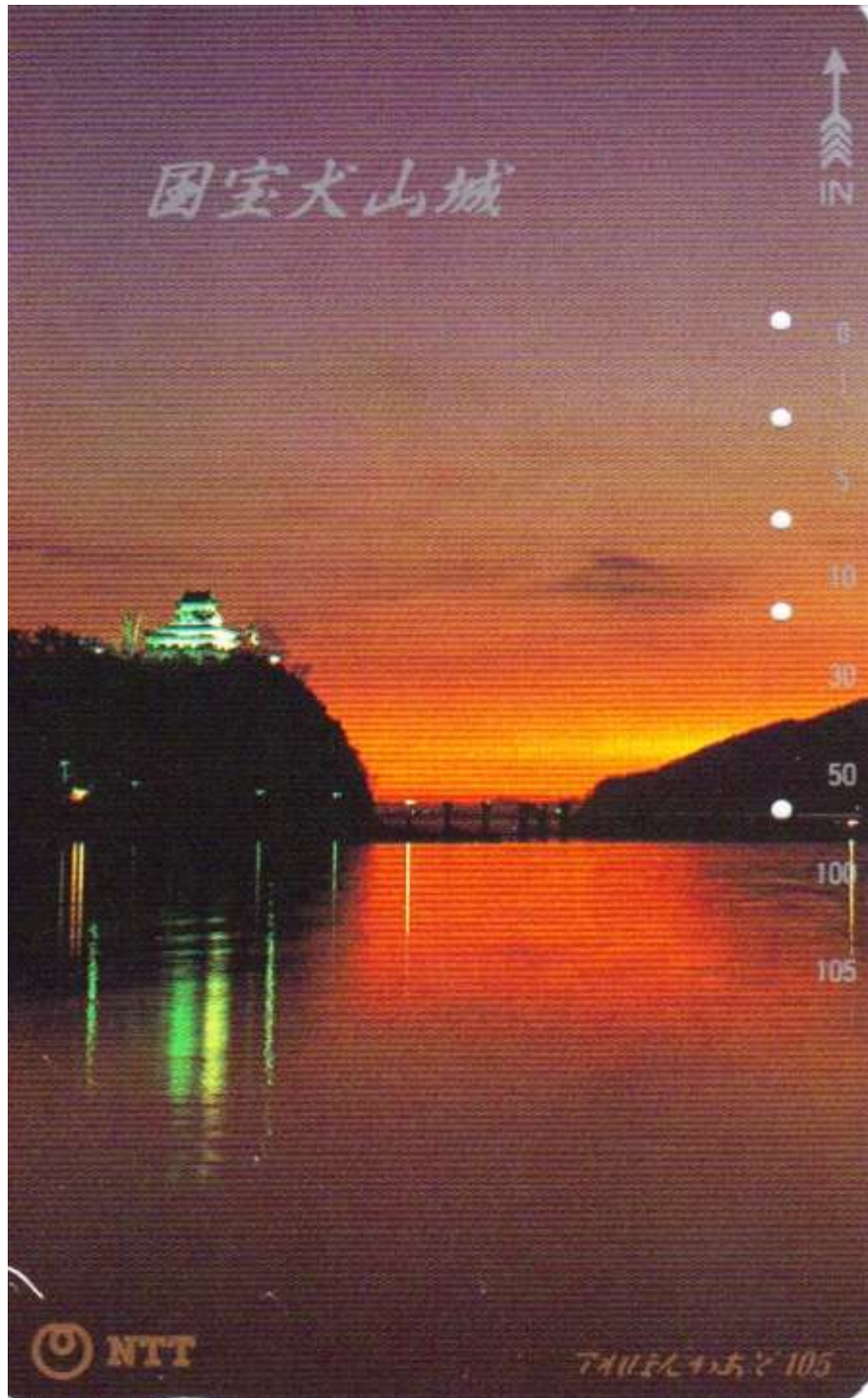
We **[four elders]** played UNO at Oyama's, and he turned on the movie "Predator," rated R. It was during one of the best parts, dang it. Reed was being dedicated, as always, but I couldn't help it and gave in and watched a little.

Man, I've just *got* to quit this "give in a little here and there" business.

PHOTOS 046



Me and the aforementioned girl in her striking kimono. If you look just to the right of my face, you'll see the northernmost eaves of Inuyama castle at the top of another hill. To the right of the girl is the Kiso River.



This is a scan of one of those picturesque phone cards I was telling you about. This particular one shows Inuyama castle again, from a similar angle to the photo above (both are facing West). Instead of the shot being taken from the shrine, however, it's taken from the Kiso River a bit closer in.



This photo came out blurry, unfortunately. Behind me are a bunch of Shinto supplicants bowing, clapping, and tossing coins into that huge wooden coin receptacle at the lower-left of the shot to gain favor from the gods for the new year. I'm in front of them holding up a Book of Mormon.

Sunday, January 06, 1991—Day 369

[We] taught a really lame AB ("after baptism") lesson to Oshita, after which we and Tsutsumi Kyodai went and visited his (Oshita's) folks. His dad doesn't know he's been baptized. **[According to the church's rules, minors only need the consent of one parent to be baptized].** **[During the self-introduction portion of the formalities,]** I started showing around my little picture book which has a picture from the baptism in it. I started explaining it, then got really bad vibes from Koyanagi and Tsutsumi. So I put it away lickety-split (how did you like *that* word?). Luckily his dad didn't notice.

He's got a really nice family. His dad is cool, and his mother seemed *quite* friendly, too. After that, we went and visited a fuke family, and the guy opened up about his feelings, **[which marks]** the first time I've ever seen a fuke do that. Awesome family.

All this took **[up]** quite some time. We were dropped off at the church, where we met Thomason, who had obtained a few copies of the all-English paper "The Japan Times." The countdown is on—come January 15th, we're going to war.

Monday, January 07, 1991—Day 370

Koyanagi spent time in the store watching the high school rugby championships. I was bored, but luckily I met a few Eikaiwa students that I talked to. (Chiharu, then a couple **[of]** others.) Tonight, at the church, we watched a video that was made by the Sendai mission president, dealing with his way of teaching that all the Sendai guys follow. Holy cow, was it trash. He was advocating a bag of tricks, not Christ-centered teaching (he's Japanese, by the way). Sadly, Koyanagi sucks it all up.

Tuesday, January 08, 1991—Day 371

While Reed passed off to Koyanagi, Thomason and I went and paid our bills at the bank. This was the first time I'd handled it on my own.

Got a cool letter from my Aunt Shaun and a far cooler one from Jodi, at long last. She **[Jodi]** was

comforting me about the possible war, and in doing so she said, "Remember that I love you" and so forth. Whoa, that's quite the bombshell. In closing, she wrote, "I love you, Jason—" Now is this just too awesome, or what? It's going to be fun writing back, that's for sure. She also wrote that she, her folks, and my parents all ate dinner together for her birthday up in Salt Lake City at a Chinese restaurant. They received fortune cookies at the end, and hers said, quote:

"A distant romance could begin to look more promising."

We're rockin' and rollin' now, folks.

I also got a letter from Mom, and she related some of the dinner's events, too. Jodi had asked about me, and Mom told her some of my interests—including *****, dang it. Jodi wrote nonetheless, so I guess it's okay. Mom also (by previous request) described her physically. She's not athletic, but *voluptuous*—Oh la la, my very favorite body type in the world! Theresa's fully trashed now. Dick gave me a note, too. He was in the circle when Jodi was blessed and named, and he's been kind of her godfather ever since. Awesome! We're really keeping within the family relations here! **[Why on earth did I consider that a good thing? Remember, Jodi wasn't a blood relative by any stretch of the imagination.]** Man, this could work out so well . . .

Koyanagi slept too long during **[our]** break, so we both stayed home and did telephone dendo.

Wednesday, January 09, 1991—Day 372

It appears as though we've changed roles. While housing, we ran across a couple of Jehovah's Witness women out proselyting, too. The bags they each carry give them away every time. We went up and started talking, and Koyanagi immediately ripped into Jesus' other sheep, prophets, temples, continuing revelation, etc. I just wanted to make friends; it opens more doors that way. **[It's]** strange; usually he's the one that avoids the arguments **[with other people. He had no qualms against arguing with me, unfortunately]**.

That went on for a while, then finally it cooled off, and I got to getting to know one of them; asking about her family, etc. Her parents are Soka Gakkais and she's had to endure persecution. I let my admiration show on that and how they work so hard, believe in Christ, etc. I even ended up showing my pictures. They had me write my name on the Eikaiwa chirashi I gave them (they didn't ask Koyanagi for his **[name]**, I noted).

We four parted as friends. I'd even suggested to the group that we four do a split. Wouldn't that have been interesting?

We'd won, both ways. Wow, I'm surprised at myself. I guess all this effort to act in accordance with God's will is paying off. For the first time in my life, I did what I thought was impossible for me: I didn't argue at all **[and]** I spent all my effort building on common beliefs. Now *that*, my friends, is a small miracle.

While streeting, I met a totally cool dude with whom I made a return. I had a feeling **[that]** I would. And thus we see that if a person is prepared, **[then]** one doesn't need to do a whole lot of tricks.

I spent some time doing my final flipchart overhaul. Okay, folks, I know you've had enough, but today was it. Final. Now I'm positive **[that]** I've got to have the all-around best flipcharts in the entire mission, and I'll more than wager that mine are in the running for the best worldwide.

I'm finding that being myself is opening doors. I'd thought that my over-friendly, off-the-wall personality was on the borderline of being flirtatious (well, maybe it is), but tonight I was making copies and printed too many, and the worker girl whom I'd talked to before told me that she wouldn't charge me for them if I promised to come back.

I'm sure **[that]** not everyone gets an offer like that. Not bad, considering the alternatives, eh?

Thursday, January 10, 1991—Day 373

Today, while housing, I asked Koyanagi a question concerning the etiquette behind asking if someone else is home to the person answering the door. He must've taken it as a challenge, for he again went into his insulting spiel where he digs for hits, draws false conclusions, makes all kinds of accusations, and otherwise flies off the handle. **[It was just]** one question, for Heaven's sake! He must subconsciously know that I'm far better all-around than he is, 'cause when I question him as to why he does a certain thing, he takes offense right off and digs for hits on me. Oh well, I guess some of us are on higher levels than others.

Another thing about the Japanese—they have a hard time grasping the most obvious things.

I've finally figured it out—the mission president hates me. He must. He's trying to kill me off slowly, first by putting me with Harris, then **[by]** leaving me with Koyanagi for well over three months. Either that or they're playing guinea pig with me to see how much a human being can endure before losing sanity. Get me out of this!!!

Something else interesting happened, too. For Eikaiwa, I made up a game where people stand and the rest have to ask them various questions in order to get to know them better. When Yoshimi (one of my two **[students]** that I tried to make a returns with—see page 238 **[Halloween 1990, Day 302]**) stood up, for some reason Yuji asked her if she loved me. Why, I don't know. Get this—she said "Yes!" Can you believe it? Later I told her **[that]** I was impressed (at the time **[it happened]** I didn't know what to say), and she didn't deny it. As she left, I told her **[that]** I'd had fun, thanks to her, and her friend Chiharu said, in English, "She loves you!" Again, she didn't deny it.

In the U.S.A., I would've picked up on that right away. I can't here—so what now? What'll happen next? Probably nothing, provided I never bring it up again, which I won't. Talk about things getting interesting real fast.

Friday, January 11, 1991—Day 374

There was a split with Reed that occurred today. We went way East and dended a while. At various houses, I was myself and acted accordingly (off-the-wall and unreserved), which got him laughing. At the last door (I'd forgotten to bring a Book, so Reed's was the only one we had), the lady rejected us like usual, but I was able to bring my outstanding (it's my journal, so I can write whatever I want) personality into play, and it kept the door open. The result? I fully, thoroughly, shokaid ("shokai" means "introduction" **[in Japanese]**) the Book, the Spirit was there, she gained lots of interest, **[she]** wants to read, and **[she]** says it's okay if we go back and visit. That's as far as I could get; she wanted to read the Book before hearing a lesson. Yet still, from what was formerly a rejection, **[that's]** pretty good, eh?

Walking back to our bikes, next to the road were a couple of discarded magazines. One of them, on the cover, had a picture of a lady where you could see her underwear—so you know **[what type of magazine]** it was.

Now I know why you have companions. Oh, I wanted to look so bad! If Reed hadn't've been there, I would've. Temptation.

[We] took too long of a break, then tried to go out streeting. **[We]** met Barry again, which was a nice surprise. We talked for over an hour. **[Among other things, we discussed how many Japanese people would be overweight if they had Western diets.]** During that time, a strange guy came up to us, trying to speak English. **[He was a]** big dude. He had to have done drugs a little too much **[back]** in the 60s. **[He was]** saying that my mother and his mother were the same, etc. Luckily he left.

A little later came a couple of the triffs who had played volleyball with us before. They had some friends with them, four in all, and they'd been drinking a little and were acting strangely. Crud, get three white people together on the street talking, and adventure soon follows.

Saturday, January 12, 1991—Day 375

Beyond helping two foreigners find Inuyama castle and eating squid for lunch again, nothing at all worth writing about happened today.

Sunday, January 13, 1991—Day 376

Today Imai received baptism by Koyanagi. Imai had been found and taught two years previously. Before the actual service, I got to talk to Imamura and Miki Kato Shimai again. She was very excited to see me and eventually went so far as to put her hands into my folded arms. Boy, did that ever feel good!

The First Counselor there commented on how hard the **[missionary]** work was, and I said that that was okay; without challenges and trials we can't grow. Upon hearing that, he invited me to transfer back to Fukutoku and be the bishop. Now that's a compliment, indeed.

Saw Proctor at first, too. Plus, the guys in my old apartment are working with Miura again.

Imamura related the tale that Elder Eliason had dendoed together with Koyanagi for only *one* week—and Eliason *hated* him. How about that, eh?

A lady **[that]** we'd met **[while]** housing wanted us to come over and help her daughter with her English, so we spent 20 minutes over there. I'd originally shokaid the place and the lady at first rejected our religion pitch. Lucky thing I went ahead and pushed for Eikaiwa. From now on I won't be afraid to push a little, because I have seen it pay off a few times.

After that we went over and got some business done with the Takedas. They fed us a little bit, but unfortunately I'd eaten a big lunch.

I didn't teach Imai any, but he is definitely converted. He couldn't be baptized before **[he turned 18]** because his father was so opposed.

Monday, January 14, 1991—Day 377

In my letter to Jodi, I asked her what her blood type was. I know that that was jumping the gun, but a stitch in time saves nine, right? That's the last thing standing in our way, so better to find out now than to receive a nasty surprise a year and a half down the line—and such I explained to *her*, as well. **[I'm totally embarrassed by that now. How many people nowadays worry about pre-nuptial blood testing anymore? For that matter, how many people worried about it *then*, either? For some unfathomable reason, at the time I thought it was some sort of requirement before you could obtain a marriage license.]** I doused the envelope with plenty of cologne as anesthetic **[did I really mean *aphrodisiac*?]**. Still—I wonder how she'll react?

Koyanagi left a Book on the Jehovah's Witness building doorstep, inside which he'd written a most impressive testimony that I had him read to me. Maybe I should be more forgiving.

Tuesday, January 15, 1991—Day 378

WAR DAY?

No news as yet. I hope I'm kept informed.

Today was "Seijinshiki," the celebration for all those who turned 20 last year—**[which in Japan is]** legal

adulthood. We four went, 'cause Thomason was legally eligible. It was held at the same city center where the Soka Gakkais and Jehovah's Witnesses held their things, respectively. **["Held their things" = "held their events," of course!]**

Lots of girls were in their kimonos, far more than during New Year's. All of them were upper-class, nicer kimonos, too. **[In Japan, a girl's kimono for Seijinshiki is equivalent to a girl's prom dress in America: It's expected to be the best she's ever looked to date.]**

Everyone assembled in the big assembly to listen to the talks, etc. Halfway through, they went around asking people **[for]** their opinions and how they felt at this time, etc. By previous arrangement, the lady brought the mike up to Thomason and they asked him a few things, e.g. how the chicks in kimonos impressed him, what's his resolve from here on out, etc. You could tell **[that]** he was nervous, but he pulled through. They even asked Reed a few questions (**[which was a]** big mistake), but luckily he didn't make too big of a fool of himself. Keep in mind that all this took place in front of at least 1,500 people or more.

Afterwards we took lots of pictures. It got to be a hassle after a while for everyone. Holy cow, Reed has no limits.

A couple of times, girls came up and had our pictures taken together, including a girl from Eikaiwa and her friend.

This, I believe, marks the last of the major holidays I had yet to experience here **[in Japan]**. I was surprised **[at]** how quickly the whole thing was over. Everyone who turned 20, including we four, received a free gift—a really nice picture album. Even Koyanagi was shocked at the turn-out—basically every girl there was in a kimono. **[The males mostly wore suits and ties, but a very, very small number of them were in the traditional male form of the kimono, which is structured differently and is much, much plainer than the female version.]**

Suck, my handwriting sucks!!!

During benkyokai (companion-), Koyanagi was polite about it but got on my case about giving worker girls in the store Eikaiwa chirashis ("flyers," remember?). The way I go about it, it probably is flirting, but how else are they going to hear **[the]** lessons and become baptized, without at least a chirashi? **[In our mission, it was considered bad form to stop a person of the opposite sex on the street and give her the spiel, so doing so was unheard of.]**

Once again, Koyanagi doesn't really think along those lines; he's one of those people who sees the world in only black and white.

The best thing that happened all day was this: Koyanagi got a transfer call! The mission president told me that my number hasn't quite come up yet. I'm still junior companion, and the new district leader will be **[an]** American. I guess the president is worried that I'll mutinize, 'cause he told me to support him and a few other things along those lines. I can't remember if he hinted anything to me about it, but he told Koyanagi directly that I'll be senior in one month. Awesome!! I don't know when the exact date will be, but in one month or so I'll be out of here. I like Inuyama, though.

Koyanagi is going zone leader up North, replacing Stratton. I can't wait to find out what sort of tricks he ends up trying to teach the missionaries up there.

We spent the rest of the day packing.

PHOTOS 047



Thomason being interviewed. That's Reed in the foreground.



Front row, L-R: An unidentified girl, me, our Eikaiwa student, Thomason.

Back row, L-R: Koyanagi, Reed.

This is outside the building after the Seijinshiki ceremony ended. Notice A) the beautiful kimonos to the left and B) everyone holding their gift bags.

Wednesday, January 16, 1991—Day 379

[We] didn't do a whole lot other than get Koyanagi's stuff sent off and visit a few people. We were in Ito Yokado [our local combination department/grocery store], and the press was astir with war news. Luckily A.B.C. was coming in from Washington in English. It hasn't started yet, but the countdown is on. Tomorrow, at 2:00 p.m. our time, 10:00 p.m. Utah time, 12:00 a.m. Washington time, and 7:00 a.m.

Saudi Arabia time, if Iraq hasn't pulled out **[of Kuwait]**, then we're sending in the most massive air strike in the history of mankind. It looks like war, folks.

Thursday, January 17, 1991—Day 380

It looks as though we started the war a little ahead of schedule. It appears as though we bombed Baghdad this morning. We've got instructions not to comment **[on]** or discuss the matter with civilians, 'cause it causes problems. **[That's]** okay by me. We're not supposed to get involved with political matters anyhow.

Our whole M.T.C. group was at the Honbu (**[Japanese for "headquarters," which in this case means] mission home**) **[for transfers]** except for Madsen. Gibson is now taking Proctor's place in Fukutoku. Proctor is going senior in a month, too.

Lots of people were there; it was a ton of fun.

My new dode is great. **["Dode" is a missionary slang abbreviation for "doryo," which is Japanese for "companion."]** I didn't realize how out of it I was with Koyanagi. Seeing and talking with this guy makes me realize how great it really can be. This is *such* a breath of fresh air! I'm glad it worked out this way, because after Koyanagi I need to be resurrected before going senior.

[On the train ride back from the mission home, a drunk guy came up to us, trying to speak English. At one point he pulled a ¥10,000 bill out of his pocket—which was about \$80.00 at the time—and tried to give it to us. We didn't take it, of course. Strange dude.]

At Eikaiwa, I came *so close* to making a return with Ishida-san. I was interrupted, so I wasn't quite able to, dang it.

Well, my whole group of Elders (**[from the] M.T.C.**) has been up North now except for me. It'll probably stay this way. **[I was wrong. What made me think that in the first place, I wonder?]**

[My new companion is] Poulsen Choro. We're going to rip it up!

[And thus my four-month stint with Elder Koyanagi finally came to an end. This wouldn't be the last time we dealt with each other, however.]

The mission president later told me the reason why he left me with Koyanagi for so long: No one else could get along with him, so since I never complained, the mission president assumed that we were getting along just fine. You know, one of those "if it ain't broken, don't fix it" scenarios. Stupid me, I should've complained.]

Friday, January 18, 1991—Day 381

Ata-san was the only one in my **[Okusan Eikaiwa]** class today, and the other ladies made fun of it, bringing up "infatuation," etc. Ata-san was going along with it, dang it! She mentioned that she's still young, after all. 'Twas a bit too risqué for me.

We went to the city hall to get Poulsen registered. I purposely haven't registered **[in this area]**, 'cause there's only limited space **[on the back of my alien registration card]** with which to write each new address. My card won't survive five areas. So it got a little scary in there, trying to keep a low profile. I don't know what they'd do to me if they caught me, unregistered **[at my current address]** like I am.

We visited Yamada-san's wife for a while. She made a few comments about how Koyanagi was "dark." How he was humorless, had no joy, didn't joke or smile, etc. So I was right, after all! I knew it. I knew it was best to smile. I wish I'd had a tape recorder so I could tape it and send it to him.

We played volleyball again tonight. I tried to invite Noriko to church, and I explained it and talked about it and all, but when it came down to yes-no inviting, I dallied a bit **[too]** long and she was interrupted, just like Sanae last night. Dang it! At least I've learned my lesson: When the time comes, just *invite*, don't dally!

Being with Poulsen has been great. Sheesh, now I know what it feels like to be raised from the dead!

Saturday, January 19, 1991—Day 382

We had a district leader taikai in Gifu and had a heck of a time finding it **[i.e., the chapel in which it was scheduled to be held]**, riding all over creation (on the bus) trying to get there. I don't know why they picked such an obscure place for it. We got ticked and were on our way home, but saw it (the church) purely by accident, so we went. Elder Miles is teamed with Brough, both in the same district as Maruoka Shimai. Miles says that she thinks I'm "so funny!" I had him tell her "hi" or the equivalent for me. **[Such a]** cute woman she is.

Got a pack of letters from Daren. He sent me the copy of my name tag **[that]** I'd blown up **[i.e., enlarged]** several times and put on my door in the M.T.C. I thought I'd thrown that away. How in the living world he ever got a hold of it is completely beyond me. I can't wait to find out.

His faith is at a low again. **[Now, all these years later, he's the faithful member and I'm the apostate. Go figure.]** I know what to write, though. Plus, he informs me that things are going to pot at home. Brian is sleeping with Denise, Becky is sleeping around on Dave, Dave had a nervous breakdown, etc. Holy cow! The results of sin. It makes me appreciate being here even more. I shudder, too, for if it weren't for the grace of God alone, I'd be in their situation too.

Sunday, January 20, 1991—Day 383

Church was fun; I'm really getting to like the members better than ever.

[We] had Reed and Thomason over for lunch. Poulsen and Thomason were in the same **[M.T.C.]** district, so they had plenty of stories. Man, I should've played in the M.T.C. and lived it up like the rest after all. I would've had a better time.

[We] went around and visited Kino-san and various other inactives, among others. Suck, I hate not knowing Japanese! How am I going to survive as senior **[companion]**?

Poulsen has a good personality for a change. He's Koyanagi's opposite in many ways. Unfortunately, my awesome personality only works when I have a high energy level, which isn't always.

Monday, January 21, 1991—Day 384

Tonight we went around visiting various people. We visited Kizawa's mother and found out **[that]** his dad's birthday was today. So we went and bought a snack and wrapped it and made a card for him. We came back and left it inside the door. I wonder what he'll think?

In my letter to Daren, I told him all about the trash with Theresa. I wonder what his reaction will be? **[I wondered such things a lot, didn't I?]**

Tonight we sat around and discussed past sins and forgiveness, etc. Man, now more than ever I want to be clean and really do the Lord's work purely. What a stupid fool I was earlier on for not being sorrier **[for my immorality-related sins.]** I'm sorry now. I've got to repent, whatever it takes.

Poulsen really has the right idea about missionary work. It's nice.

Tuesday, January 22, 1991—Day 385

After benkyokai, we came back here and baked banana bread for investigators and others. We went to teach Oshita an A.B. (After Baptism) lesson with Tsutsumi, but we ended up teaching his mom the first part of Discussion 1, basically. More happened today than just that, but those are the semi-worthwhile parts. I got three letters today—if this keeps up, I'll be swamped next P-day. Poulsen has done a lot and seen a lot and has had fun his whole mission—**[he's]** not **[had]** a bad time yet. I'm envious, 'cause whether or not I've had a good time even once is still in question. Matsubara's baptism and that's about it.

Y'know, I've never even seen any *real, true* success yet. All my potential excitement about being a new missionary was killed by my feelings of unworthiness way back then. And now, having seen no success yet and having been put with third-rate companions for so long, the novelty of being a missionary is long dead. The wear-and-tear is beginning to tire me. And now, the only thing keeping me going is my devotion to duty—nothing else.

Wednesday, January 23, 1991—Day 386

We went around looking for different ways to dendo. We dropped in on Shibata-san, who paid me the compliment of telling her friend that I really understood women's point of view well.

[We] met with Yuji to plan the baptismal service, and he paid me the compliment of choosing me to perform it!

Tonight I'd received a letter from Chris Bain, whom I stayed with during infantry school and who was a boyfriend of my mother's from way back. Man, he's got a funny sense of humor! **[Unfortunately, he and his wife later perished in the wildfires that swept through Southern California in October of 2007.]**

Tonight we stayed up talking about various Japanese cartoons and other movies. **[Elder Poulsen was a huge manga and anime fan.]** So much for today.

Thursday, January 24, 1991—Day 387

Today **[there]** was a big zone taikai in Gokiso. Two zones were there, ours and Nagoya West, the same way my second zone taikai was. Man, Sister Maruoka has a *perfect* smile. Her hair was done up very nicely, also. We received our mission-wide pictures from the Christmas Taikai, and they were a little blurry, dang it. I had made a "Bill & Ted's" gesture to the camera, and it turned out well. Gibson, who took Proctor's place in Fukutoku, said that he laughed out loud when he saw it.

During a talk she gave on obedience, Sister Smith decided to speak on the military way of doing things **[compared to how we do things while on a mission]**. She asked if anyone had been through any type of basic training. I raised my hand; I was the only one.

So she asked me from the pulpit how they woke us up, etc. I answered the best I could, e.g. "Several drill instructors would loudly rouse us from our sleep with complete lack of tact," etc. It got a few laughs. Halfway through she said it was great; **[that]** I couldn't've answered better had I had a script. 'Twas my day in the sun.

I got a package from my mom today. She'd sent a couple of books, neither of which I wanted or needed. She'd lost the letter in which I'd specified exactly what it was I needed, so she'd only guessed.

On the train home beforehand **[what did I mean by that?]**, we talked about missionaries beating up Japanese people, getting in fights with the **[Japanese]** Mafia, how we'd beat someone up if they hit us first, etc. If anyone on the train understood English, they'd probably think **[that]** we Americans were pretty scary.

Eikaiwa went well. Kizawa said that his dad was really impressed with his gift, and now he wants all four

of us to meet him at his house and have dinner, too. Wow, it's a good thing I'd suggested to go visit them instead of house for an hour like we'd planned. The magic of following up! **[It was]** just a simple ¥200 thing of junk food, and look at the door that's now open! **[It's]** amazing how it's the little things that count so much.

Friday, January 25, 1991—Day 388

I love my okusans, and they love me in return. It's neat. I tried to rap with Ata-san about hearing the lessons again, but we were distracted and she left. That must've been enough, 'cause she called our apartment later to book returns for Hibino and herself at her place. Too cool! She said **[that]** the feeling they'd felt previously was nice and they'd like to feel it again. That's the Spirit, all right!

We had Kizawa and Atsushi Fukutomi, his friend, over for banana bread. It was fun. Poulsen was able to commit them to hearing the lessons. Good job, Poulsen. They'll be meeting with us here every week before Eikaiwa from here **[on]** out.

Volleyball took place again tonight. **[It was a]** successful day.

Saturday, January 26, 1991—Day 389

Nothing that happened during the day is worth writing about compared to tonight. We had a huge zone-wide bowling taikai in Ichinomiya for missionaries, members, Eikaiwa students, and anyone else who wanted to come. We all assembled at the church at 5:30 **[p.m.]** to divide everyone between the cars available. Oshita's mom *and* dad came, bringing one car each. Great! Now they're beginning to be absorbed in by the fellowshiping of the saints!

We drove out there and were among the first **[to arrive]**. Later Maruoka showed up, which got me excited. Rapped with her for a bit. It was organized chaos at first, but we finally were assembled into a room where we sang, prayed (we pray to begin and end Eikaiwa), and then we were organized into our spots. I played with Thomason, Shin (from Eikaiwa) and his friend, and later another elder from Ogaki showed up (that's Maruoka's area). He was Gibson's old companion.

I did about average for me, which wasn't good.

Next we played doubles. I was put with a supertriff from Ichinomiya, **[who was]** squealing and touching me, etc. **[It's a]** good thing **[that]** Thomason was playing too, or I may have given in to all the temptation and flirted back. I did pretty awesome bowling this game, however. The girl's name was Yuko. **[Pronounced "you-co."]**

At the end, a video was playing of WINK. Oh, they looked good. It was the same song I'd seen them sing on June 29th (Day 178). **[That video has since been uploaded to YouTube. [Click here to watch it.](#)** Too awesome—WINK, Maruoka Shimai, Tomoko and Noriko, Yoshimi and Chiharu, my triff, and others—all in the same room! The gang's all here!

[The most memorable thing about a mission is the people. Not the people in general, mind you, but the specific people you meet, learn from, and develop friendships with. It's the memories of those people that last a lifetime.]

Back into the room for awards. Shin walked away with the huge singles trophy. Poulsen and Yamaguchi Kyodai, **[one of the members]** with whom I'd done fuke dendo (**[i.e.,]** visiting fukes) in Fukutoku, won the doubles trophy. Ironically, the trophy had been in our apartment since forever, and here it sits, back in the apartment again.

There wasn't enough room in all the cars for everyone this time, due to the fact that many **[people]** had come late. So Poulsen and I and Tomoko, Noriko, Shin, and his friend rode the train home. It was midnight when we got back home.

I'd invited Chiharu, Yoshimi, Noriko, and Tomoko to Yuji's baptism tomorrow, but it looks like none are coming.

'Twas lots of fun. **[It's]** too bad I can only be in one place, talking to one person, at a time.

Sunday, January 27, 1990—Day 390

We rode in the car to the baptism with Fukushima Shimai. She's cute. Ugh, temptation again. It wasn't so bad this time around, though.

When we entered the water **[for the baptism itself]**, the surface was quite hot, but the bottom was cold. Before I forget, Yuji forgot **[to bring]** his white pants, so he had to use one of those jumpsuit things. It wouldn't fit over his shoulders, so he had to tuck the top into the bottoms. He couldn't sit down due to that. So he and I both stood up during the first part of it. Interesting, eh?

The baptism itself went well. One shot was all it took.

At the end, Yuji bore his testimony concerning his experience for quite a while. He even cried—he's *converted!* It's nice. I felt the Spirit, but I would've felt it more had I been confident about the way he was taught.

[Thus we see that conversions can come about due to the unlikeliest instrumentalities imaginable. This adds fuel to the missionary lore that every missionary has (at least) one person whom they alone can convert, hence the reason that missionaries are called to the places they are. In this case, although Koyanagi was a poor teacher of the gospel, Yuji was sincerely converted anyway, much to my surprise.

For his part, Dan related a story from his own mission about one missionary—a senior of his, perhaps—who would get into literal shouting matches with one of his investigators. Yes, *shouting matches*. This of course is a violation of every code of missionary conduct in the book. Nevertheless, the investigator in question eventually converted and served a mission of his own!]

Back at church, Sister Tsutsumi said that Koyanagi had really improved since coming to Inuyama or since becoming my dode, thanks to me. Crud, I'd hate to have seen him *before* he improved. No wonder Eliason couldn't even stand him that one week well over a year ago.

She also paid me a compliment, telling me **[that]** she knew I'd make a great senior 'cause of all the patience I've learned and all the bad things I know not to repeat. That's for sure.

PHOTOS 048



Me and Yuji at his baptism.

Monday, January 28, 1991—Day 391

Got up at 3:10 [a.m.] to write letters, then went and spent the morning with Reed while our seniors went to someone's house to watch the super bowl. Later we four rode to Gifu for an all-you-can-eat thing at Shakey's, like they've got in Sakae. The conversation went to spiritual things, and it was brought up how when you bear your testimony, you're forgiven of your sins. I began to feel the Spirit that this was verily true. Plus, I got the feeling that the Lord knows that I'm not looking for a shortcut to forgiveness, so He's willing to forgive me for that **[reason]** alone, knowing I would do it with fullness of heart if only I could feel fully guilty like I want to. Does this make sense? **[I never really figured out how one could feel guilty for sins of a sexual nature, since according to Mormon teachings it was God Himself who put the sex drive in us. How can you feel guilty for being exactly the way God made you?]** It also hit me to some degree, just the sheer importance of what it is we're doing out here.

We attempted a Family Home Evening at the church, but only Hibino and Imai showed up. Hibino is a joke and a half; the combined antics got Imai and me laughing hard for a long time. **[Here's what happened: Out of boredom, I drew a random picture. It turned out to be of a stoned-out guy wearing a suit jacket and a tie, but with sandals and tattered shorts. He was wearing glasses, had messed-up hair, and was smoking a huge joint. Hibino looked at it and asked, "Is that Jesus Christ?"]**

'Twas quite an active day.

Tuesday, January 29, 1991—Day 392

We had a great discussion during district benkyokai about personal worthiness, etc. I think I've found my answers. I've known this for a while, but I'm finally going to put it into play. "When you worry about other people, yourself will take care of itself." I'd spent too much time trying to purify myself so that I could help

others. Why don't I just get to the heart of it and just help others?

So that's my strategy from here on out: I'm not going to worry about myself anymore, i.e. whether or not I'm worthy, etc. I won't give it any more thought. I'm going to turn outward as much as possible—to others. Will it work? We'll see. From here on out, it's a changed man who's writing in here.

Got a really vague letter from Mom. I'll return the vagueness by not writing about it in here.

At the church, Poulsen and I got a call from a lady. She found a copy of the Book of Mormon and likes it a lot. She had a few questions and even asked Poulsen to teach her how to pray over the phone. We've got an appointment to meet with her on Monday. The elect!! A self-referral! I sure hope this goes through. Who knows; maybe I'll finally see a *real* convert baptism to pump me up enough so **[that]** I'll be prepared to be senior. **[Why didn't I count Yuji as a real convert baptism? I'm sure it was because I disagreed so vehemently with Koyanagi's teaching method, if you can truly call it "teaching."]** I've got a good feeling about this.

We four were summoned to the Tsutsumis for some reason. Apparently Nakayama Shimai is into gossip and backbiting, and this branch has suffered from it. So we were warned to be *very* careful with her and protect our investigators, 'cause they tend to be driven off thanks to her. Ugh.

Wednesday, January 30, 1991—Day 393

[We] had a nice little visit with Ata-san, then went and gave banana bread to Suma san who works at the monkey center. He's the one **[from Guinea]** who called us his "brothers" and shook hands. I'd called this morning and found out where he works, etc. **[He's a]** good guy, indeed. A couple of people you barely know come to your work to give you banana bread—I'm sure it made a good impression **[or a strange impression, take your pick]**.

I finished my 1st Grade kanji book today, and I'm now working on my lesson plan grammar list.

[We] went to **[the]** Tsutsumis' to find the lady's address who wants to hear the lessons, and ended up staying a while. I played with their kids to keep them out of the parents' hair, and that went on a while. Sister Tsutsumi said that only one other missionary had played with them (almost three years ago), and the younger one usually doesn't let other adults play with him. Pretty good, eh?

I also got a letter from Jodi. She was quite flattered that I asked her blood type, but after a while she warned me that she can't and won't make any promises. **[That should've been my first clue that the novelty was beginning to wear off on her end.]** Fine with me, but it'll take a long letter back to get **[it]** all rehashed. **[To]** settle any fears, etc.

Thursday, January 31, 1991—Day 394

President Smith came by to do interviews, and in mine I confessed all that had happened with Theresa, etc. We discussed repentance for a while. A lot was said, but my biggest impression was how he brought up Ammon, Paul, and Alma: **[They were]** some of the greatest missionaries to ever live, yet serious sinners beforehand. He said **[that]** I may even make a *better* missionary, having gone through the wringer myself. I hadn't thought of it that way. How about that?

After my interview, I had a pleasant chat with Sister Smith. She'd brought me a picture of Elder Boyd **[which was cut out of a newspaper]**, who had gotten married less than 24 hours after getting mobilized. The paper had done a special story on the wedding, being rushed how it was.

[Let me explain it better: Thanks to the first Gulf War, my Marine reserve unit got mobilized. Boyd was engaged to be married within the month, but thanks to the mobilization he would have to scrap the wedding (since he wouldn't be there). So his only options were to wait until he returned home from war—no telling when that would be—or rush the wedding, honeymoon, etc. into a

single 24-hour period before having to report for duty the next day. He chose the latter option, asked his fiancée if she was down with it too, and she said yes.]

Later we went and had a great visit with Yamada-san and his family. We were invited back later, along with Thomason and Reed, for dinner.

We "taught" our lesson to Kizawa and Fukutomi. Poulsen will only teach one principle in one hour, which I think is crazy, which inevitably makes you go way off track. **[It's amazing to me how many missionaries think they can teach better discussions than the missionary discussions themselves.]** Fukutomi had a lot of questions about evolution, etc. Poulsen got a little ticked because he/they didn't take it all in **[unquestioningly]**. **[It was]** not a mature attitude; I'm glad I'm finally past that stage. He attempted to prove **[that]** there is a god, etc., but without the Spirit you can't teach anything.

Eikaiwa was somewhat bland for me. Afterwards Thomason and I got a bit sidetracked, talking about picking up on chicks and about homosexuals, etc. with the crowd. The Spirit died; I feel really bad. When will I ever learn? I should've just left.

Nakayama Shimai had called Thomason before Eikaiwa with loads of gossip and complaints. She's been doing this for 10 years now. In fact, the first complaint **[that]** President Smith ever got in Japan was in relation to her.

Today was quite the eventful day.

Friday, February 01, 1991—Day 395

We attempted to visit our self-referral, but the train to her place wasn't running due to a train wreck the night before. We rode to Gifu for an alternate train, but found out **[that]** we'd have to go all the way to Nagoya and then back up, so we called and cancelled. While we were there, we gave in and ate pizza at Shakey's again. The place was loaded with triffs.

On the train up, I talked to and gave chirashis to four girls. I guess it's not flirting if you do it with an eye single to the glory of God. If you've got people skills, use them! Girls need salvation too, right? **[And no,]** that's *not* an excuse!

[We] got back as Okusan Eikaiwa ended. **[We]** met Ata and her friend on the street. I was in my overcoat; she told me **[that]** I was "cool." Inside, Rieko Nakatani told me that she was looking forward to me teaching her next week. Wow, she's an okusan, but she's completely cute and she turns me on. I must be getting older, because **[some]** people a year older than my mom seen highly attractive to me.

[We] rode around with Fujisaki Shimai visiting various people. I'm beginning to abbreviate a lot in here, giving only essentials. Dick wrote and said he's excited that I want to learn about the business. **[He owned—and still owns—a portrait studio.]** Too cool! I'm talking *great*. **[I'll have]** a "job," **[or]** at least a lead, when I get home. Now I'm not going to worry so much about my future, which is a load I've been carrying around for several years now.

Saturday, February 02, 1991—Day 396

It's becoming a soap opera out here. Nakayama & Fujisaki Shimais hate each other, so they scheduled conflicting dinner appointments and each invited all four **[of us]** missionaries. So we split up **[and]** made up stories to cover each other. We **[Poulsen and I]** ate at the church with Fujisaki. It'd take a long time to explain, but Nakayama likes U.S. missionaries and tries to cut others down or drive investigators away so that she'll get all the attention. This branch has really suffered due to her. We four are caught in the middle.

We went to a fireside in Meito for people whose folks had died and **[we]** took Yuji. They told us the wrong time, so we got there two hours early and we hung out at the honbu **[i.e., the mission]** headquarters). It

started late anyway, but it was pretty scarce. **[We]** met a girl whom I recognized from Okazaki.

We basically cooked food and ate it and introduced ourselves. We had to cut out early 'cause Yuji needed to be home.

Poulsen's ¥ is scarce, so I've been paying all the train fare. There's now a new program where we get reimbursed for anything past ¥2,000, so I'll be rich once I get all the ¥ from January back. It's only February 02, but already they owe me a ton for this month.

Remember the girl who's in pictures in the subways whom I've been infatuated with since April or earlier? (See Day 316.) I asked Yuji, and **[he said that]** her name is Sawaguchi Yasuko (or "Yasuko Sawaguchi" American-style **[where the family name comes second]**) She's so beautiful! I'm dying to meet her at least once in my life.

Sunday, February 03, 1991—Day 397

[We] had dinner at **[the]** Tsutsumis. **[We]** had dendo chosei shukai **[or "proselyting coordination meeting"]** there later and we just got back. I've got to be up early tomorrow to get letters off 'cause we have a teaching appointment, so I don't feel like writing **[in here]**. Oh well.

Monday, February 04, 1990—Day 398

I got up at 2:20 in the morning in order to write Jodi 'cause of a teaching appointment later. I think it was a work of art. I hope she likes it. We had to ride a train to meet Matsushita-san, our self-referral. Walking to her place, we met up with her sister **[completely unplanned and out of the blue]**, who was smoking and drinking coffee from a can.

Back at her place, we were introducing ourselves, and her sister let the cat out of the bag. You wouldn't believe it, but she's a fuke member! She went fuke about 10 years ago. There used to be a church **[most likely a branch]** in their town that was dissolved. Matsushita was a little afraid of inviting her over **[to the lesson with us]**, 'cause she thought **[that]** her sister was totally against religion. She was shocked to find this out **[as were we]**; it was total "coincidence."

[We were tipped off that something was out of the ordinary when we asked Matsushita-san something about her understanding of God, she answered, and then her sister, Yamakawa-san, answered "that's correct" before we did.]

[During the lesson itself,] it was a little tough to concentrate, 'cause two of her cats were going at it hard in the other room across from us **[in plain sight]**. **[For his part, Poulsen kept right on teaching the lesson as though nothing was in any way amiss, whereas I was exerting Herculean effort to avoid busting out laughing.]**

Her sister still has a testimony. After the main lesson, she told us that she felt the Spirit again and now she wants to quit coffee and smoking and return to church. **[It was just like something out of the Ensign. I've never heard of such an idealized scenario actually taking place in real life either before or since.]** Just think, if there hadn't been that rare train wreck on Friday, we wouldn't've been there today and met her sister. The Lord works in strange and marvelous ways—it's a small miracle, folks!! **[More on this in a moment.]**

Got a letter from Dan postmarked two months + ago. **[We]** tried to have Family Home Evening, but no one showed, so we visited Kino-san.

[Back to the astronomically unlikely chain of events that led to Yamakawa-san being with us during that lesson: It, along with something else that happened many months later, has prevented me from becoming an outright Atheist even today. Now, the following discussion assumes that, if I indeed heard correctly and there was an actual train wreck, that nobody was

seriously injured or killed—otherwise divine intervention can be safely factored out.

Also, a skeptic could just as easily say, "Couldn't God have just arranged for you to encounter Yamakawa-san on Friday, when the original appointment was scheduled, and just skip the whole train wreck thing entirely?" I honestly can't answer that.

All other things being equal, however, let's look at the circumstances behind our meeting:

- Matsushita-san just happened, against all odds, to find a Book of Mormon somewhere in an area in which missionaries hadn't operated for who knows how many years.
- On the day we were scheduled to meet, the trains weren't running—a very, *very* rare event in Japan, a country that has the public transportation system down to a science.
- Not only that, the trains weren't down across the entire area; it was just *that one line*—the line we were going to use between our place and hers—that was down.
- When we finally met up with Matsushita-san after rescheduling, we just *happened* to encounter her sister *out of everyone else in the whole town*—the sidewalks were barren except for her—who just happened to be walking down the *same* side of the *same* street that we were, a little ahead of us.

Again, all other things being equal, any break in the aforementioned extremely unlikely chain of events would've prevented Yamakawa-san from being there during that lesson, which in turn would've prevented her from feeling what she felt that motivated her to give up coffee, cigarettes, and return to church.

My inability to chalk it all up to random chance is one of two things that has, to this day, kept me from becoming an outright Atheist.]

Tuesday, February 05, 1991—Day 399

I've been a U.S. Marine [for] three years now.

My shirt stays and tie pin *finally* came! I haven't had an anodized tie pin since I lost my old one [on] New Year's Eve [while] dancing, over a year ago. ["Anodized" means treated with some sort of coating to make it shine profusely. It was the official Marine Corps enlisted tie pin, authorized for use with civilian clothing.] Several war articles came with it [i.e., were mailed in the same package], too.

Tonight we walked by the library and two people came out and asked, in English, if we were Mormons. Apparently they want to internationalize Inuyama, and they invited us to speak at a panel meeting a week from Saturday.

After volleyball, I was much less reserved about inviting people to church.

Wednesday, February 06, 1991—Day 400

I've been reading war articles the past couple of days, and I feel a little fuke, 'cause I guess that that's not exactly keeping one's eye single to the glory of God. I'm a little worried about going to war now. I can just see it escalating, with other countries getting involved.

We four had a nice dinner at Yamada-san's around noon. They're getting pretty cool. I guess it's important to have a personality, 'cause all of this wouldn't've happened with Koyanagi around.

Found out how Daren got my name tag copy. He had Celestial Service [in our building] the day I left and took it off the door then. He never mentioned all the stuff I wrote about Theresa and me.

The Lord sure is blessing this area. This place is going up! It's near-unbelievable. Referrals [are]

beginning to come **[in]** from everywhere, **[we have]** good member-missionary relations, **[etc.]**. This place has literally transformed.

Thursday, February 07, 1991—Day 401

A train didn't go where we'd expected, so we were late to zone pass-offs. Before that, **[while on the train,]** a lady who spoke English came and sat next to Poulsen. She wouldn't take an Eikaiwa chirashi, saying **[that]** she teaches English, she has friends who do, and her final excuse was, "Nothing is more expensive than free!" That pissed me off. How scary can taking a chirashi be? It looks as though she's met Mormons, so that may have been part of it, but *dang*, these Japs can get *really* stupid at times.

There was a cute girl across the way who seemed to be listening in on our English conversation. I was going to give her the chirashi, but as we were walking out the door I was afraid of it closing on me, so I didn't give it to her (I hurried out instead). Boy did I regret it a second later. Stupid me.

After zone pass-offs got over (in which I played Senior), Maruoka Shimai came up and told me that one of the girls in Ogaki is a fan of mine. **[She was]** one of the ones we met on the street that said she'd visit Inuyama. Anyhow, Maruoka Shimai told her that I'll be going to war if it's still **[going]** on once I'm home, and (she reports) the girl broke down and cried hard! She sends word that she'll be praying for me, etc. Whoa, what a compliment! I met her and a few friends again bowling **[back on Day 389]**, so I'm *fairly* sure I know which one she is.

[We] had a pleasant visit with Ata and Hibino-san again. Poulsen did a good job of identifying the Spirit.

[It's] interesting how Maruoka Shimai and another girl were discussing *me*, of all people. Hmmm. . .

PHOTOS 049



L-R: Poulsen, me. This is inside Ata-san's house.



L-R: Poulsen, me. That's Ata-san in the background.



L-R: Poulsen, me astride my trusty 12-speed (I miss that thing), Ata-san on the steps. This was outside her house, of course.



L-R: Ata-san looking the other direction, Poulsen, me.



L-R: Hibino-san, Poulsen, me.

Friday, February 08, 1991—Day 402

The highlights of the day are these:

At **[Okusan]** Eikaiwa, Hayashi-san at the end went on and on about how great we missionaries are and how dedicated we are to another lady there who had received a chirashi from me at our Christmas party with Nakatani-san. Great, even non-members are dendoing for us now!

Looking for a fuke, a car passed us by, reversed and came back, and a lady got out and gave us a melon! **[Melon-giving isn't a national tradition or anything; sometimes when they see someone to whom they want to give a gift they'll reach for the first thing at hand. If they've just gone grocery shopping, a melon is a convenient item.]** She said **[that]** she joined a Christian church when she was

five, but God's the same even though our teachings are different, right? She had us walk to her place, rapped about how she knew missionaries from before, etc. She even gave us a loaf of bread and invited us to come back and visit. **[She's a]** cool lady. Why can't all people have her attitude?

[We] had an awesome visit at **[the]** Tsutsumi's. They're cool people. I've been falling asleep during morning Book of Mormon reading for a week and a half so far (5:30 **[a.m.]** and 6:00 **[a.m.]** every day). Will I be able to survive tomorrow for ½ hour?

Saturday, February 09, 1991—Day 403

A kid's friends rode by **[on their bikes]** while Poulsen was shokaiing him, and he must've felt the peer pressure 'cause he walked off without saying anything, pissing Poulsen off. I was none too pleased, either.

[Students in Japan who are high school age or younger all wear mandatory school uniforms. I never stopped anyone wearing such a uniform, since I thought it was bad business to pick up (for the lessons) someone who was younger than 18 and thus still under their parents' care and supervision.]

[We] made a cake for Fujisaki Shimai's husband, after which Sister Tsutsumi asked **[me]** why I went on a mission. After telling her why, she said she could tell that there was more to me than my parents forcing me to go. She could feel it, she said.

Mission accomplished so far!

Got a letter from Spencer. He says **[that]** they teach about 25 lessons per week **[in Argentina]**. That got me demotivated all night. He says **[that]** they go through investigators "like a hotel goes through towels." For us, they're few and far between.

Sheesh, we see so little success as it is; why do we have to be tempted so badly? I'd love to hit one of those love hotels. That temptation's been hitting me hard the past couple of days.

[When I first said "hit," I meant "attend," of course. In Japan, living quarters are cramped and older parents often live with their children, so for some quality "alone time" couples will rent a room at a "love hotel" at hourly rates. Of course, love hotels also double as discreet locations for more adulterous meet ups, too.]

Sunday, February 10, 1991—Day 404

I was a little sick today and I've been down ever since.

A Brazilian lady of Japanese descent who first came **[to church]** last week brought a lot of her friends, all **[of them]** Brazilians of Japanese descent. They could only speak a little Japanese. After Sacrament Meeting we basically all got acquainted and such.

After taking a nap I went out and housed. Boy am I out of form. I feel as though my Japanese is getting worse, not better. This'd better click soon or I'm in big trouble.

[We] went and gave our cake to Fujisaki Shimai's husband. **[We]** ended up staying a while. **[I guess it was his birthday. He looked a lot younger than her.]**

That one girl I mentioned who works in a department store (Ito Yokado) who looks like Maggie McGuire was working again tonight. Oh, she's so cute. What a babe; I want to date her so bad!!! Sweetness.

I hate the Japanese way of doing things. The wife always has to be home when the husband or kids are,

[she also has to ride in the back seat of the car,] and the kids never get disciplined. [It's] a nation of wimps.

Monday, February 11, 1991—Day 405

We decided to have P-day tomorrow, since lots of stuff had to be done today. There was a roller-skating activity for everyone, as this is/was a national holiday. [By "everyone," I don't remember whether I meant church members, Eikaiwa students, or both.] Beforehand, [at the church,] Poulsen and I watched as much as we could of his copy of one of the [animated] "Space Battleship Yamato" adventures. The last time I'd seen that was in 5th Grade, where it was really big. The English version was known as "Star Blazers." [It was an] awesome cartoon.

Kyoko Kani was the first one to show up. Others came, and we took off [to the skating rink]. We didn't skate right off; there was an obstacle course-like course that we all went on that was plenty long. Having been through the Marines, it was nothing to me.

[We] ate, roller skated, then went back in Kyoko's car (she's totally sweet) for Yasuda's lesson. [He] had a yotei ([which is Japanese for] "baptism date") set for this month, which obviously didn't come to pass, but he's still cool.

I probably shouldn't say this, but [regarding] Endo Shimai, a fuke lady whose son we're teaching; her daughter came today too. Her daughter has a very nice body.

I suppose I'm not the super missionary I'd fantasized myself as being. Why not? I guess there's a difference between fantasy and reality, sadly.

Tuesday, February 12, 1991—Day 406

After benkyokai we watched the rest of "Space Battleship Yamato." I hadn't totally finished writing letters, so I wasn't able to concentrate on the cartoon like I otherwise would've liked to due to the fact that I had to finish writing, etc. [Its theme song has a] catchy tune; It's still in my head.

Coming back from mailing letters, we pulled alongside a car while waiting at a railroad crossing. A lady in the back seat [saw us and then] reached forward and locked the door. Heck, are we *that* scary? The Japanese are insecure to a fault, and stupid too. Poulsen and I were both pissed off.

[We] visited Oshita, and nothing else really exciting happened today. It sure was easy to feel the Spirit at home [in America while] thinking about being a missionary. I don't feel it so much now, and now I actually *am* one. I guess it's due to all the stress and disillusionment. I'd better quit worrying so much about myself; I don't think it works too well.

Wednesday, February 13, 1991—Day 407

[We] had a pleasant lesson with Matsushita-san and her sister. They both gave us each Valentine's Day gifts. We learned later that her sister, Yamakawa Shimai, called her old branch president (Yamaguchi Kyodai from Fukutoku) and talked about the past 10 years. She said [that] she can't go back to church 'cause she's a bad person, but he said a quote that I hold most dear:

"Man was not made for the church,
the church was made for man."

Then he told her to go back [to church]. She was so happy that she cried, and she just had to call and tell us (that she was so happy).

[Incidentally, Yamaguchi Kyodai, her former branch president with whom she had this conversation, was the person paired with Poulsen for the doubles portion of the bowling

tournament back on Day 389.]

The only other things I could detail are battle updates of my war against temptation, yet that would detract from the day's highlight: That train crashing and all, delaying us on our initial appointment, through which we ended up meeting her sister—folks, for the first time,

IT'S A MIRACLE!

Valentine's Day, 1991—Day 408

Last night near 11:10 or so I heard lots of sirens and all. They were really close, so I woke Poulsen up and we went to see what the matter was.

There was a house on fire nearby, and lots of fire engines were around trying to put it out. We went to look, realized we didn't have his camera, then went back to get it.

[We] Came back and moved closer into the large crowd that had gathered around. **[It was a]** big fire. They were able to get it under control after a while, so we went home. It was near midnight by that time. With all the excitement that had gone on, I wasn't able to study this morning without falling asleep.

[We] went by this morning, and it was destroyed by the fire. **[There's something else interesting about this fire that I'd be remiss if I didn't mention: That day, or perhaps a day or so previous, we had been housing in that exact same area. I was highly agitated by the much-ruder-than-normal way in which people were rejecting us. It got so bad that I made up my mind to dust off my feet (Mormons will get that reference) the next time it happened, when Poulsen wasn't looking.**

For the life of me, I simply can't remember whether I actually went through with it—my mind is a blank. In addition, I can't be exactly sure of the precise house that caught on fire, but from our vantage point, it *looked* to be in the same spot at which I was angriest, which would've made it the place where I dusted off my feet, assuming, again, that I actually did it.] The house next door, not five feet apart, wasn't even touched. **[And I never saw another house fire in Japan again, either before or since.]**

At the church, Poulsen taught Tsutsumi and Noguchi Shimais a few dendo tactics (they're stake missionaries). Tsutsumi Shimai dendoed **[i.e., she served a mission herself]**, and **[according to her]** things have changed *lots* over the past 10 years or so. **[There was]** no working with the members back then, etc.

[We] gave banana bread to Ata- and Hibino-san.

[At Eikaiwa, we] had an outstanding Valentine's Day party. Kyoko gave me a tape of "Space Battleship Yamato" music, and she even gave me several pages on which she'd typed out the lyrics. How sweet! We four gave her her birthday gifts **[her birthday must've fallen on or around that day]**, yet she in turn gave us gifts. She was wearing a short red miniskirt. **([Underneath it, she had on] white underwear with at least one blue or black stripe, I think.) [She's a] cute girl.**

[Another student gave me a pair of socks with individual "sleeves" for the toes. Think of them as gloves for your feet; you can wear thong sandals while wearing those socks. I've never seen such socks in America. I still have them to this day.]

The guys took turns throwing each other into the air. **[Why, I have no idea.]** We made valentines, ate food, played a game at first, etc. Why, I don't know, but Kyoko had come 45 minutes early and had waited around that long before we got there. Talk about a dedicated Eikaiwa student! (She's 24.)

It was a great party. **[It's]** too bad you weren't there.

Friday, February 15, 1991—day 409

Today (after some hassle) we four met up with the two people from the library about how things will go for our panel discussion. They'd better not ask about my green card or I'm in big trouble, not having registered **[my residence in Inuyama]** (in order to save space on the back **[since they write all your addresses there]**). **[That's]** probably a dumb reason, I know. So I spent most of the day worrying about that, and also thinking of cover stories in case things get hot.

[I should've been smart enough to ask missionaries who had been there longer than me what they did once the space on the backs of their green cards got filled up. Once I finally got around to asking Poulsen, who had been in a few more areas than me, he told me that they simply affix a new sticker over your old one and continue writing from there. Stupid me, spending all that time worrying for nothing!]

Nine foreigners are coming, all Americans except for two Indians. They said **[that]** there are c. 550 foreigners in Inuyama. **[It's]** interesting how they didn't invite the Brazilians or Koreans. They say that the U.S.A. is **[racially]** prejudiced, but they're *far* more prejudiced than we are.

[Looking back, a more charitable assumption for why the Brazilians and Koreans weren't invited is perhaps because the organizers wanted speakers who were proficient at English so we'd all have a common language to speak.]

We had an AB **[or "after baptism"]** lesson with Masato (Watanabe). We'd never seen AB lessons before this, so we did an extremely poor job. **[When missionaries practiced the discussions, they always used lessons 1 through 6. They never did pass-offs using the AB lessons.]**

It rained **[for]** most of the day today.

Saturday, February 16, 1991—Day 410

It rained from a cloudless sky for much of the day. The open panel thing went pleasantly; I got away with it!

We went upstairs and sat around several tables arranged in square fashion, and they went around asking **[for]** our opinions, comments, complaints, etc. When it was my turn, I said that if they wanted to internationalize Inuyama, **[then they must]** educate the populace to where they know that Christians and foreigners *are* human beings.

There's some other American missionary here from some weird religion, and he makes money and doesn't know the language. Some missionary.

Quite a few Japanese folks were there, including the mayor. There were volunteer interpreters on either side of us, too. Poor Reed insisted on speaking Japanese in spite of the fact that no one could understand him and they all begged him to speak English. In the M.T.C. they'd told him to always speak their language, so he used that logic. Later he came to understand the error of his ways, i.e. when someone asks "please," they mean it.

Sheesh, I thought **[that]** we (except for Reed) had bad attitudes, but we were short and to the point. Some other foreigners were quite long-winded. (One chick's name was Lanell, like my aunt **[on my father's side]**. I thought she was the only one with that name.) Crud, they had a lot of complaints. **[The other missionary guy complained about the Japanese's condescending attitude. As an example, he talked about how he tore out one of the walls of his apartment in order to make some repairs, and all his Japanese acquaintances were utterly amazed, saying "You can do that? All by yourself? Without any help??"]** It looks like, when you come down to it, that we four like Japan the best.

Later we split up into groups for free talk. Poulsen really let them have it about the Japanese's coldness in regard to foreigners. **[He talked about how they're fascinated by all things western, but when it comes to western *people*, the Japanese don't want them around.]**

At the end I wanted to rap with a few other foreigners, but spent all my time talking to a lady a year older than my mom whose husband is a Buddhist monk. **[She's a] cool lady.**

Got a letter from Denise in which was a picture of her and Theresa. **[It was the]** familiar old face, all over again. Rather skull-like.

[We] housed a lady tonight **[whom]** we'd met at Shibata-san's house. We rapped a little about Nostradamus's prophecies. He says the war will be over in April. Whew, that's a good eight months before I get home.

Sunday, February 17, 1991—Day 411

Directly after church we went to the train station to meet a few friends from Poulsen's old area. Before this, Sister Suganuma, our Brazilian member who knows Japanese, brought another female friend, a chick about our age. Thomason and Poulsen taught her a pick-up lesson, and the girl is totally golden. Sheesh, Brazil must be easy.

Here are the folks who visited us: Hiroko-chan and "Masa dude" (a nickname), two that were recently married, and Brother and Sister Yamamoto, Poulsen's two baptisms. Hiroko has a yotei set. They were on their way to visit the missionaries who first contacted them. When I first heard about this, I was a bit on edge, 'cause once you transfer, you're supposed to be gone, i.e. not be receiving calls from members and such. **[No]** letters, either. Poulsen seems to be on a two-year vacation in that respect.

However, once I got to know the four of them, I quit caring. Holy cow they're awesome people. It gives me hope knowing that people like that really are out there.

They first took us to Atomboy Sushi, Poulsen's favorite **[restaurant]**. He pigged out. **[This was quite a unique restaurant. There were four sushi chefs busily making sushi (of course) in the center of the place, and they were placing the sushi they made on plates that they in turn placed on a constantly rotating conveyor belt that went all around the restaurant. You'd simply watch for something to catch your fancy and you'd grab it off the conveyor belt. At the end of the meal, the waitress would count up the number of plates of each color—the plates' colors corresponded to the price of the sushi type that had been placed thereon—and then charge you accordingly. Talk about my dream restaurant! Sushi constantly coming at you on a conveyor belt. . . a little slice of Heaven.]** Sister Yamamoto told me about her first contact with the missionaries, and I learned a lot. What they did obviously worked.

[She described it like this: After she answered the knock on her door, they told her that they had a message about families, and then asked her if she thought that families were important. When she answered "yes," they continued from there.]

Holy Moses, I'm the smoothest talker I've ever met. I can whip any apology around into a compliment for the person apologizing. Or maybe I'm just openly brown-nosing.

Next we all went to Little World, an open-air museum of man, take that how you like. **[A better descriptor would've been "open-air anthropological museum" with replica buildings, huts, etc. In one building was the actual table at which the treaty was signed that ended the 1905 Russo-Japanese war.]**

I was right from what I judged from Poulsen's pictures—these folks don't know the restrictions on physical contact for missionaries, or else Poulsen doesn't care **[most likely both]**. Hiroko put her arm in mine for

a picture, and had me put my arm around her for another one. Her husband took the picture, of all people.

I was cold; in our rush from the church I'd had no time to grab my overcoat.

Interestingly, the Yamamotos like Poulsen's loud, obnoxious voice. Taylor is up there in his place, and he has a quiet voice which they say is hard to hear. Holy cow, I was under the impression that a quiet voice was a virtue and loudness was very bad. **[Also,]** from what I hear of the ways **[that]** other missionaries teach, knowing my way, I'm going to be some kind of awesome, indeed.

They played rap **[music]** in the car, one song of which I hadn't heard in over three years, since the Marines. Sister Yamamoto's favorite is heavy metal, especially Def Leppard. **[Is she a]** cool lady, or what?

They also say that my Japanese is way better than Madsen's is. Oh, that's good news for sure.

Talk about a good friend. Only halfway through, Masa dude and I were on hugging terms. He told me to call them when I transferred to let them know where I'm going. It's against the rules, but I don't care. This isn't nearly all, either. Man, Poulsen was right about them. I *really* love those people. I don't think I've ever liked someone so much so fast before in my entire life. No joke. I could go into a lot more detail about all the good things said back and forth.

[I really can't emphasize that enough. "Clicking" hardly does it justice. Have you ever met four people for whom, an hour or so later, you truly felt like you'd take a bullet? As corny as this may sound, if I was still a believing Mormon, I'd feel like I knew them from the pre-existence.]

Tonight at **[the]** Tsutsumi's we got to look at all their family albums. Fun, fun. (One picture was of her in the tub with one of her kids. Why the Japanese take those, I don't know. **[This reminds me of some sage advice that my trainer, Elder Horrocks, told me nearly a year earlier: Avoid looking at family albums in Japan, since there's nearly always one or more of the mother nursing one of her kids. Of course, this one was of her in the tub, not nursing, but the relevance of Horrocks's advice was obviously the same.]**)

Boy I tell you, today was certainly one of the most positive, uplifting days of my mission so far. **[It was]** probably my last blast as **[a]** junior.

PHOTOS 050



L-R: "Masa dude," me. This picture (and the two following) was taken at Little World.



Me holding up Little World brochures. With their backs to us, **L-R**, are Poulsen, Yayoi Yamamoto, and Yoshio Yamamoto.



L-R: Hiroko, me. This was the aforementioned shot, taken by her husband, in which she placed her hand in my arm.

Monday, February 18, 1991—Day 412

[We] had a lesson with Matsushita-san this afternoon. She got a letter today from a fuke member which said that even though she's **[i.e., the fuke member is]** not a good member now, the gospel is still true and listen to and believe the missionaries. Too cool! Fujisaki Shimai, who had been fuke for 10 years before, wrote a letter to her sister **[i.e., to Yamakawa-san]** and had Sister Tsutsumi give it to us to give to her. The Kawamuras also dubbed some Etsuko Miyasato music for her. **[Etsuko Miyasato was a member and returned missionary who produced and distributed her own LDS-oriented music. It was actually quite good, believe it or not. I later, along with Spencer, saw her perform some of her music at a fireside at the Utah Valley University Institute not long after I came home.]** It's great how they're all rallying for these two. Her sister even went all the way to the church yesterday, but didn't have the guts to go in. Next time.

Since we'd had that lesson, we took the rest of the day off as P-day. Jodi sent me another picture of herself. All systems are go, but how mature is she really? She came across to my mom as being very mature. I'm looking forward to being with her for real.

Tuesday, February 19, 1991—Day 413

I didn't get my transfer call; Thomason did. He's going to the Southernmost part of the mission. I hear **[that]** there's another transfer on the 7th (of March), however.

I've been a little looser with my money lately. I'd better watch it.

The library folks had us four do a mini-Eikaiwa for **[some]** hotel employees. A grand total of five came. A couple **[of them]** were cute babes.

[We] made dinner here with Yuji, and it went late so we had Thomason go with Tsutsumi to Oshita's for an AB lesson. Can you read my writing? **[Now a moot issue since you're reading this online, of course.]**

Jodi, Jodi. She'll be fun to meet. I wonder how this will turn out?

PHOTOS 051



Front row: Our five mini-Eikaiwa students, none of whose names I remember.

Back row, L-R: Poulsen, Thomason, Reed, me.

Wednesday, February 20, 1991—Day 414

I found out **[that]** there's no transfer 'till the 28th of March—**[That'll mean I'll have spent]** six months in Inuyama. So I've been down all day, knowing I have five weeks left. I've been junior for way too long. Maybe part of it (me feeling down) is because I'm so sick of being cold and 'cause we had essentially nothing **[happening]** all day. Winter's been going on way too long.

[While we were] leaving, the Jehovah's Witnesses showed up just as we left—so I couldn't talk to them. Now they know where we live. There were five that split into two groups. Among the group that didn't head to our apartment was Hashimoto-san, one of the two **[whom]** Koyanagi and I met **[back on Day 372]**. The three had just walked up as we were leaving; we said "hi" and continued on our way. **[It's]** too bad, I love a challenge.

Got a letter from Rhonda. She says **[that]** she loves me and she's counting down the days. (She *really* loves me.) She was going to move back to Georgia and live with her sister who's filed for divorce, but **[she]** prayed and got a strong answer that she should stay in Utah (dang it). **[She definitely got the wrong answer, since while still in Utah she ended up marrying a foreign guy who turned out to be abusive and smacked her around quite a bit.]** I'm glad **[that]** I've got 10 months left. I guess it's better **[that]** Jodi lives so far North after all. But my folks would get really turned off fast if I got all these calls from Rhonda. One or the other had better get married before I get home, or I'm in big trouble. What

about the airport at home? What about the report/homecoming? I guess I'll push myself off that bridge when I get to it. I don't like the two-timing game; I tried it in High School and it didn't work. #1, it's dishonest; #2, you can only keep it up for so long.

You ask: What about Theresa?

I answer: Who cares?

I'll only have less than nine months as senior—**[which is]** my lifetime dream. I'd better work hard and pack it all in.

Thursday, February 21, 1991—Day 415

[We] had a good lesson with Matsushita and her sister. Crud, Poulsen uses low-level Japanese. Oh well.

[Later, we] met with Ata and Hibino for another good lesson. When are they going to convert, dang it? **[Every once in a rare while you'll get an investigator who likes what they hear and enjoys listening to the lessons, but for some reason has no interest in actually joining. This was baffling, since every missionary resource, pep talk, M.T.C. class, etc. universally tells you, in no uncertain terms, that when people finally feel the Spirit they'll invariably and automatically want to join (or words to that effect). It was confusing to discover that the real world isn't quite so cut-and-dry.]**

This took up most of the day. At Eikaiwa, I was told that I looked like Richard Gere on two separate occasions. They each said that they liked him a lot. I spent some time rapping about actors, actresses, famous people, etc. with Tomoko and others.

Coming home, we got smarted off to **[by a group of high-school age kids]** one too many times, and Poulsen turned his bike around and asked a kid if it's a good thing to be making fun of us. He said it was, kept smarting off, then Poulsen grabbed him and **[yelled in his face and then]** the kid quit. Next he told the kid to go home, and fast. The Spirit went right out the window, but he and his friends caught on. Poulsen had been wrestling around at Eikaiwa, therefore he was a bit worked up. **[It was]** not an everyday occurrence. It sure breaks the monotony, however.

[As for me, I was worried for the rest of the night over the possibility of getting a visit from the police. Luckily nothing of the sort happened.]

Friday, February 22, 1991—Day 416

We've split Okusan Eikaiwa to where two missionaries do it. This week it was our turn **[to teach]**. I had my class play 20 questions and each person picked a famous person and we all had to guess **[who it was]**. Today someone had picked me as their famous person. We played it last night **[at our regular Eikaiwa]** too, and someone had picked me there, too. I'm famous!

We went to visit Baba-san, the lady who was Christian and nice to us. She had a 23 year-old daughter there who was pretty cute. The lady said that she wanted her daughters to meet us, so we were wondering. At any rate, she told us that her daughter's boyfriend never paid a lot of attention to her; **[he]** just went and drank sake with his friends. So she told us to cheer her up. Ugh. Next she asked Poulsen if he liked Japanese girls. The dreaded question!! He looked at me all surprised, then explained that since we don't date we don't think about that too much. Why? 'Cause if we dated, **[then]** that's all we'd think about and dendo would soon be forgotten.

I've decided that it's more fun and feels better to be bold and come out and say why we don't date. It's fun to watch their spirits drop but the respect rise. I'm going to keep this lesson in mind rather than let myself be tempted from here on out. **[Yeah, right!]**

While Poulsen was playing a T.V. game, the lady explained her theory, how God puts different people in

different countries to save people, i.e. Joseph Smith in America, Confucius in China, etc. **[And how, according to her]**, different paths will all lead to the top, etc. Suck, I hate that train of thought. It's the convenient way of thinking, I realize. Sheesh, human beings sometimes make mistakes, you know. Not every church you make **[up]** will magically become true. Stupid people.

[On the way home, Poulsen actually *praised* her attitude. He said, "Wasn't what she said awesome?" I almost fell off my bike. If, as she says, "all paths lead to the top"—in other words, all religions lead to heaven; she even made hand motions of paths leading to the top of a mountain—then what's the point of being a missionary? If all religions have the same endpoint, then what was the point of us knocking on doors or stopping people in the street? You'd think a *missionary* would realize the folly of such a way of thinking far sooner than anyone else; the fact that Poulsen went so far as to *praise* her for it nearly knocked my socks off.]

Earlier, I found out that the daughter was 23, and I said, "**[That's a]** good age, isn't it?" The mom went off the deep end, saying, "are you praising my daughter?", etc. In order to dig myself out, I said that I said it because it's my goal to turn 23, 'cause I may die in war at **[age]** 22. **[It was a]** bad move; I got **[myself]** in deeper. I said **[that]** I was a Marine, and like your typical Japanese **[person]** she was shocked and said, "But you can't kill people!!", etc. I explained that I went in **[to the military]** for growth and discipline, not to kill people, etc. I thought she understood. Simple, eh? Not to the Japanese. **[They have]** no patriotism at all. **[They literally "did a 180" following World War II.]**

Later I found out that when the Grandma came in later, she found out I was in **[the military]** and started to go off, but the mom told her to not say anything about it to me. I guess she didn't understand after all.

Holy cow am I getting sick of always holding my tongue to avoid argument. I'm going to come right out and tell it like it is with this war thing if I hear it from anyone again. Is it the grace of God, or was I naturally born 100 times smarter than everyone else??

PHOTOS 052



L-R: Poulsen, me, and four of Baba-san's six children. Notice her cute 23 year-old daughter in the front; the photo doesn't do her justice.



Front row, L-R: Grandma, Poulsen, me, the 23 year-old daughter, and the remaining two youngest kids that weren't pictured in the photo above.

Back row, L-R: The eldest son, one of the other daughters, and Baba-san herself. The other daughter at the far right of the first photo isn't in this picture; she must've been holding the camera.

Saturday, February 23, 1991—Day 417

I felt better today. We saw an old grandma digging in the trash, too.

[We] met with Fujisaki Shimai and a dude she **[had]** talked into doing sign language for a deaf couple she knows (lesson-wise). He'd had a bad experience with Christian churches, 'cause when he was young he went to some Catholic Eikaiwa or something and they threw out all those who weren't good at English.

[Kind of defeats the purpose, doesn't it?]

We asked him if his kids wanted to go to our Eikaiwa, and he told us **[that]** they couldn't join our church. Poor guy, he thought that if they went **[to Eikaiwa]** we'd make them join. How many other people think that way **[and thus don't accept our invitation]**? Plus, he was surprised **[at]** how bright and happy we were; he had the image that we were all dark and serious, anyone having anything to do with religion. He must've met Koyanagi.

We waited around for a lesson to which the guy didn't show, and a few minutes before we had decided to leave, who showed up but Matsushita and Yamakawa Shimai? We all poked around a little, sang the first verse of "I Am a Child of God," then asked Yamakawa Shimai (the formerly fuke sister) how she felt. She said, "The words don't come." The Spirit was there, and *strong*. God must really rejoice when his lost children decide to come back.

Tonight we went and visited Oshita's mom and the Yoshida family. The latter was a pleasant visit indeed.

[Assuming I'm remembering the correct family, Mr. Yoshida praised the American way of thinking. He talked about how, in Japan, when someone in a group is questioned, they'll pause and look around and attempt to figure out what the group believes before answering, whereas in

the United States a person, no matter how young, will speak up and say exactly what he or she thinks regardless of anyone else in the group.]

Sunday, February 24, 1991—Day 418

There was a big stake conference in Fukutoku today. Good stuff. We went all the way forward and set up a translating machine so **[that]** Suganuma Shimai could translate into Portuguese for her husband and a few others who had come. I ended up sitting next to Matsumoto Shimai from Fukutoku.

One of the Quorum of 70 dudes who spoke **[W. Eugene Hansen]** said that there are 23 stakes in Japan. **[That's]** pretty impressive! I hadn't thought of that. If all the fukes came back, man would we be big. **[There are]** 10 missions in Japan right now, by the way. **[There's]** one temple.)

Afterwards, we had to go down and run off a few Eikaiwa chirashis, so I didn't have time to stand around and rap like I wanted to. However, I did get to talk to Rikki for a little bit, not as long as I thought I would've. also, I talked to Rie-chan, the one from Ogaki. She told me to hang in there and all, but **[she]** didn't really want to leave, I could tell. So I sat and rapped with her as long as I could.

Next I met the same Eikaiwa triff from way back when—see Days 72 and 176. I had some more guts this time, so I asked her why she hasn't joined **[the church]** yet. (She goes to all the activities, it appears, but isn't a member.) She says that the members are bad, so she won't join. I went and said that the church is for imperfect people, etc. but none of it helped. Judging members is a serious blockade to one's own personal development. I hope **[that]** she grows up sooner or later.

Poulsen called and said **[that]** we had to go, so as I was making my way over, I shook hands with Maruoka Shimai who had been sitting close by. **[She's a]** babe. Sister Smith was close by, so I had to shake her hand and all before I could talk to Maruoka Shimai like I wanted to. One thing led to another and I was out the chapel doors before talking to either of them.

By the way, Lon Hall was there, too—with a full beard and a Japanese girl. He remembered **[that]** I was in the military and had wondered if I was in the Middle East or not.

Downstairs, I met Ito Kyodai (or whoever), our fuke guy. He's now totally active. **[He's]** the one Horrocks, Oviatt, and I worked on.)

Not to mention Yamaguchi Shimai: Yamakawa Shimai had called her last night and told her how they went and visited the church building yesterday, and how they were about to leave until Poulsen opened the door.

I'm glad I've developed the habit of speaking this way—**[Yesterday,]** as they were in the chapel, I said something to the effect of, "This is *your* church." I thought nothing of it at the time, but they both remembered that one statement, went **[out]** to the car, and cried.

On the way home, I cried myself just thinking about it. **[It's]** amazing how the Spirit backs up everything that's said selflessly, with an eye single to the glory of God. And how much the Lord blesses with the Spirit those who do and say just that. I felt that at that time I did just what the Lord would've had me do—and I feel **[like]** I was blessed with a greater endowment of the Spirit for doing what the Lord couldn't do himself, He having not been there. **[Does that]** make sense? I've learned a great lesson today.

A subplot of note—Hibino had flipped the mission president off and told him **[that]** we taught him **[how to do]** that, so we lectured him for a long time and made him call the president and apologize. During that **[conversation]**, he asked the president and he said **[that]** I was for sure out of here next transfer. **[It's a]** good thing **[that]** the president has a good sense of humor (meaning the flip-off incident).

Monday, February 25, 1991—Day 419

Had a record of one letter to write all day (to Rhonda). Got no letters later, so that was nice. Wrote a postcard to Rikki of my own free will **[in other words, I didn't need to do it in response to a previous one from her]** in order to cheer her up. I wrote it on a musical light-activated wooden postcard they'd given to me (and the rest of us) after teaching Eikaiwa at the welfare center for hotel employees. I'd had a dream about Rikki earlier this week which reminded me to write to her. I can't really tell you how the dream went, though. :-)

Took a long nap, too.

[We] went to a sento **[i.e., the public bath house]** again tonight; **[it was]** my first time in 9 and 1/2 months. This was set up to where the old lady **[who owned the place]** could see right in to where we were dressing from the desk. **[Most if not all other sentos were set up the same way: The front desk was situated so that the cashier, nearly always a woman, could take money from the people entering and also pivot in her chair to serve anyone in either gender's dressing room—i.e., she had full view of both the men's and women's dressing rooms, whereas nobody actually in any room could see into any other room.]** I'd mistakenly brought a towel that was too big, and the lady came in, told me it was no good, and **[literally]** took it off me. So there I was, naked in front of her and her daughter-in-law **[who looked to be]** about 30+ years old or so) at the front desk. **[How many females worldwide can say that they've seen a male Mormon missionary naked?]** She went and got me a towel **[that was]** the right size.

It was a nice sento trip. Man, I feel clean.

Then we were back in **[the dressing room]** again, going from naked to dressed right in front of the daughter-in-law. In fact, I chatted with her for a while in only my garment bottoms.

Missionaries have been going there for many a year, so they've **[i.e., the employees have]** seen many a nude missionary. The grandma there likes missionaries and lets us go for free and usually gives us food. Remember, all this male/female stuff is part of the culture here, so it's okay to go there. That's how most are set up, with the worker lady able to see into the dressing area. **[It was a]** pretty funny experience. Memorable, too. The old lady told me **[that]** I didn't look American, dang it.

Well, it looks as though we've sent tanks over into Iraq.

Tuesday, February 26, 1991—Day 420

Gads, Reed has bad Japanese. I thought that I was doing good **[at Japanese]**, but Poulsen doesn't study anywhere near the rate I do, yet he somehow knows seemingly every word and lots of kanji. **[This was most likely because he'd memorize a number of new words every day, whereas I'd focus on the grammar. Perhaps his was the superior approach.]** I'd better be far better **[at the language]** than he is by the time I'm out his length.

Made cookies, received war news, followed up on Hibino-san, passed out chirashis door-to-door for a new Eikaiwa, etc. Tonight Tsutsumi Kyodai said **[that]** my little brother Ethan looks like Koyanagi. I said, "Uh-oh, that means I'll have to kill my little brother."

Wednesday, February 27, 1991—Day 421

[We] had a good activity with Matsushita and Yamakawa at church, where they showed up and about all the female members came and made lunch. They all became friends, which is good, 'cause it'll be far easier for them to come to church having met so many of them.

[We] followed up and had a good visit with Ata-san. **[We]** met with Yuji later. Poor guy; life—and his too uncertain future—is getting him down. Can't we all relate?

I never thought I'd be able to say this, but man, *I study like a mad dog*. This may border on being out-of-

hand. I prefer studying to eating. My head's swimming right now.

[It's] all in the name of gaining good Japanese.

Thursday, February 28, 1991—Day 422

It rained and we were pretty miserable. Dendo wasn't profitable and the day went extremely slow. It was one of those days.

I went on my fifth Z.L. split, **[this time]** with Cantwell Choro. We headed out to Eikaiwa at the last. Somehow it had gotten considerably smaller **[attendee-wise]** than before.

I was rapping with Christensen Shimai and she said I must've had girls all over back in America, the way I'm so happy and outgoing. She told me **[that]** Maruoka Shimai told her I have a lot of girlfriends. Uh-oh. **[A good missionary should never have that said about him.]** Plus, I found out **[that]** Maruoka Shimai (Miyuki-chan) is 25, soon to be 26. **[That makes her]** a year younger than Rhonda.

I'll admit, I certainly do have fun with these Shimais.

Tonight I sat and rapped with Pollard (from Nishio **[he had replaced Biddulph when Biddulph transferred out]**) and Anderson Choro all about bike wrecks and all. Sheesh, I've had a *boring* mission! I was up 'till 12:45 **[a.m.]**—a record.

Friday, March 01, 1991—Day 423

I slept in 'till 8:05. After that, the junior zone leader and I talked for a long time about my dendo strategy. We weren't out of the apartment 'till 11:30 **[a.m.]**.

[We] had a ½ hour lesson with a really humble guy. It was only the third principle of Discussion 1, all about prophets. He'd been reading the Book of Mormon and asked what baptism was. Cantwell went into how it's the way we get cleansed from sins, then I went in and added how it's the ordinance whereby we join the church. His face lit up, and Cantwell went ahead and made a yotei. I haven't seen one of those made in a long time indeed.

Back home, I'd gotten a postcard from Theresa, of all people!! She says **[that]** she's working on what's now a 16-page letter for me, and it's still growing. She closed with "Love always" or "All my love" or something like that. That'll be interesting to get. Yep, I'm looking forward to some serious lip action when I get home, I don't care who from **[as long as she's female, of course!]**. She says **[that]** she misses me very much. Yeah, right.

[We] had a meeting at **[the]** Tsutsumis' which lasted 'till past ten. It's becoming a bad habit.

Saturday, March 02, 1991—Day 424

[While] Riding **[our]** bikes, one guy yelled at us that thanks to America, we all have hope now (or something to that extent). **[He was referring to the results of the first Gulf War.]** Nice guy!

[We] went to Konan city with Kizawa so that Poulsen could add to his cartoon book collection. We went to two used book places, both of which had pornos in them. Fetch, my one big addiction in life. **[It's]** my hardest temptation to avoid—I usually don't.

[We] sat and rapped with Kizawa's family back at his place. He's got a cute 21 year-old sister.

Yesterday, I received the Iraq war comic book / cartoon that I had Imai buy for me **[I'd given him the money to do so, of course.]** The Japanese are really into cartoons, and true to form they invented one for this war, too. I hear it's over now. I'm glad I'm **[merely]** reading about it instead of **[actually]**

experiencing it, that's for sure.

[We] had a new Eikaiwa at a new place by Baba-san's. I opened, then taught the kids' class. **[When Reed sat down with his own class, the very first words out of his mouth were, "A little more about myself . . ."** We all heard it and laughed.]

I've been too strict **[for]** too long. I'm gonna forget it, loosen up, and have some fun. It's back to fuke for me. My whole mission has generally *sucked* so far, so being serious doesn't work. **[And so the pendulum swings yet again.]**

Sunday, March 03, 1991—Day 425

I didn't study today, but still felt good. Church went well, although **[it was]** a little chaotic; loads of Brazilians came. A lot more happened (**[for example,]** Nakayama Shimai loves my attitude and I've changed my mind about her), but I don't feel like writing it. Wow, I like these Brazilians; they're cool.

[We] had a great dinner at Baba-san's. **[We finally]** met the husband.

Poulsen's folks have given him everything and paid for **[it]** all. Gads, my whole mission—and my life—has totally sucked so far. Oh well, **[for]** fluent Japanese and lots of women when I get back **[it's a]** small enough price to pay.

[Where did I get the idea of "lots of women when I get back?" Was I referring to the popularity of RMs in Utah?]

PHOTOS 053



L-R: Poulsen, me. We're eating dinner at Baba-san's house again. Behind us is a display that's traditionally put out every "Girls' Day," March 03. It represents the emperor and empress at the top with their attendants on descending rows.



Poulsen, Bob the cat, and me.



Front row, L-R: Baba-san's youngest kid, Bob the cat.
Back row, L-R: Me, Poulsen, Baba-san, and her second youngest kid.

Monday, March 04, 1991—Day 426

I got that long letter from Theresa. **[It was written on]** one side each, **[had]** small pages, but **[was]** 20 pages long. Reader, (grandson, granddaughter, wife, or whoever), I can't begin to explain what a complete and utter wench she is. Thoroughly and totally. I'd love to explain it to you, but it'd piss me off worse than I already am. Suffice it to say **[that]** she's the kissing bandit, and she unreservedly listed all

my shortcomings and how everyone else is better than me at everything and in every way. Then she has the nerve to tell me **[that]** she loves me and wants me to write. Talk about nerve. Now my big problem is how to respond. I want to keep her around so **[that]** I can end up trashing her hard. **[It was]** pretty stupid of me to write all up and down about her at the beginning of this journal like I did. I was just trying to shrug off our destiny: Breaking up.

Tonight we saw one of our Brazilians (the #1 cutest) in the store. She had us have our pictures taken with her. She had a bunch of friends with her—they had only a few words of Japanese, and I have no Portuguese—so it was a bit strained, but yet a very fun diversion.

Theressa. What a joke. This is a job for the "THREE GUYS IN SHADES!" (**[which is]** Daren's and **[my friend Eric's and]** my motto.)

Tuesday, March 05, 1991—Day 427

Got a letter from Jodi. On the last page, she wrote a big, heartfelt "I LOVE YOU!!!" That was enough to bring me out of my rut. Pure sincerity. She sure has Theressa beat. To Hell with Theressa. She (Theressa) enclosed a note telling me to call her right away concerning Denise, who's in a lot of trouble, supposedly. Maybe she wrote it just to get me to call. No such luck; I'd rather not break the rules. **[Although I *did* bring it up with Poulsen and asked his advice on how to proceed.]** I'll send her a postcard, having the bitch *write* the stupid truth to me. Jodi—**[she's]** sweet and true. No deceptions **[out of her]**.

'Twas a warm day today—it's been a long time. A prelude of things to come?

[We] met our Okawa-san fan again. She let me borrow another English book **[i.e., another book of his in English]**. In exchange, I had her commit to continuation of the Book of Mormon.

Wednesday, March 06, 1991—Day 428

After a lesson with Matsushita-san, we stopped by Konan on the way home and I picked up a ton of old "Space Battleship Yamato" picture books. It came out to ¥3,050, which I regretted, but now I think it's cool. Looking through them made me want to draw pictures really bad again. **[I was quite a prolific illustrator up through Junior High.]**

At Ata-san's house for a lesson, Poulsen was saying how he liked to make things—banana bread, cookies, etc. Ata-san said, **[very loosely translated,]** "you like making babies too, right?" Risqué, but very funny, that Ata-san.

Tonight I sat down and drew a picture which I'd had in mind for a long time. I colored it, too. Studying kanji must be giving me a steadier hand, 'cause I finished the whole thing, coloring it too, in 1½ hours. **[This was]** far less, less than half the time it would've taken **[me]** normally.

Well, it looks as though I've been in Japan **[for]** a year.

Thursday, March 07, 1991—Day 429

[We] had zone pass-offs. Sister Maruoka passed off to me. What a perfect face she has. Needless to say, I was in ecstasy. Ohh, what a cutie. **[She's]** lots of fun, too. Next I passed off to Miles and Brough—I played senior.

[We] ate pizza as a foursome at Gifu on the way home. **[It was a]** nice break.

I tried to buy some fake glasses for a new style thing, but they turned out to be the kind that get dark in the sun, so I took them back only a little bit later. So much for that experience.

I forgot my scriptures at the bank, dang it. Oh well, maybe someone will read from them and get converted. **[The old saying "hope springs eternal" is more true for a missionary than perhaps for anyone else on earth. I'm completely serious.]**

Eikaiwa was fun. Lots of new folks—older ones—came. Was asked how we could speak Japanese so fast, and I came out and said **[that]** it was **[due to]** help from God. Felt the Spirit; **[it's]** too bad they didn't have more interest.

Friday, March 08, 1991—Day 430

[Today we] had a lesson with Matsushita and later Shinobu. The highlight of the night was an Indian dinner we had at a nearby restaurant. It was for all of us foreigners from the panel discussion. It was lots of fun—spoke to some folks across the table about the stuff we don't do, i.e. smoke, girls, etc. One guy asked about hormones, etc., and I said that we're human beings, not animals, so we can control it (**[I said it]** all in Japanese). The lady across the way was impressed with how we keep it within family bonds only. **[That is, within husband and wife bonds, of course!]**

I was sitting next to our overweight American friend who was at the panel—she's *big*. **[She was in Japan because she was married to a Japanese guy.]** Yet she paid me the nicest compliment I've received in a long time. The conversation turned to the Marines, and in describing our role she went into flowing terms about how elite we are, etc., how great we are and how tough we are, etc. I thanked her wholeheartedly afterwards.

Later, Uma Bakshi, from India, came up and we rapped. She's so open-hearted! Wonderful lady. She said that we're her two younger brothers, etc. **[She said]** lots of cool stuff like that. Like, "we were sitting apart, but our hearts are very close." **[Is she a]** cool lady, or what? Totally friendly. **[She was married, so you know that what she said was platonic and therefore sincere.]** The **[Japanese]** word for foreigner is "gaijin." Man, you've gotta love those gaijins.

Saturday, March 09, 1991—Day 431

My problem is **[that]** I hold grudges too long. Probably my biggest fault, if you can consider it one, is that I take myself too seriously.

I listened to a Def Leppard song while Poulsen was getting cleaned off (in the "fud" **[which is missionary slang for "O-furo"]**) this morning, and boy did I pay **[for it]** today. I fell asleep later **[in the morning]** and didn't study, and I fell asleep during break and couldn't study again. Now I'm just plain pissed off.

[We] found a fuke's house, then ate some sushi at Atomboy. **[We]** had our new Eikaiwa, then went over to Baba-san's, who lives nearby. Crud, I got picked on quite a bit for my lack of Japanese skill. The Japanese are so tactless! Reader, you've literally got to experience it to believe it. **[It's]** amazing.

They also said **[that]** I look Japanese, which thing pisses me off to no end. She made a big deal out of it whenever I looked up a **[Japanese]** word in my dictionary. Sheesh! Gimme a break! I can handle quite a bit, but too much pushes me over the edge. **[In retrospect, I should've just asked them, in English, if they'd like to continue the conversation in English if my Japanese is so bad. Hopefully that would've driven the point home.]** I hate admitting it, but I'm still human. Crap, I'm really paying for that Def Leppard.

Gads, what a totally useless, worthless life I've led so far. I'd better switch tracks somehow, and *fast*.

Make me senior!!!

Sunday, March 10, 1991—Day 432

[It was a] pretty busy day at church today. Poulsen ran a baptismal interview for Sister Suganuma's

husband; **[it]** took 10 minutes compared to Koyanagi's two hours plus.

I gave another talk today. It was on faith, just like the one in Okazaki.

[We] had a nice visit at Kizawa's. His big sister (my age) is pretty cute.

Poulsen was pretty impressed with an English-speaking chick **[who was Japanese]** who sat next to him at the dinner two nights ago. She'd heard a few of the discussions before. He talks about her, but I just think it's funny. **[It was more than clear that he wanted to go out with her.]**

Monday, March 11, 1991—Day 433

Wrote a few letters, then went over to the "church" **[referring to the rented building that served as one]** and met Imai-kun, who had rented "Gundam," a cartoon he wanted to watch with us. **[It featured enormous, anthropomorphic battle-bots with human pilots. The plot was about human colonies on the moon at war with the humans on earth, with both sides using these as the main staples of combat.]** He was supposed to come over to our place, but got sick and couldn't, so we were late.

The cartoon took all the rest of our time, and I found it **[to be]** extremely boring. What a waste. **[Poulsen, for his part, was a huge anime fan and was really getting into it, to the point of making catcalls at the main bad guy.]**

Next we rode the train to Gifu for an F.H.E. activity with all the missionaries in the zone and lots of members. Maruoka Miyuki **[remember, in Japan last names come first]** had me record a message for her on a tape she was making. I was the first one; I felt honored.

All four areas **[in the zone]** had a specific responsibility. We led the group in a game, the squirt gun game. It went over well.

At the end, Maruoka Shimai had Sister Christensen snap our picture together. Honored again.

Okay, I'll admit it. I've liked chicks before in here, i.e. Nagae Shimai, Jodi, Theresa, etc., but I'm still human, missionary though I am. I'm sure it's a passing thing, but I'll admit that I'm madly in love with Maruoka Shimai. This isn't true love or anything yet, we haven't been around each other enough; but it's certainly a crush supreme. Oh, I love that woman!!!

PHOTOS 054



Sister Maruoka and me. Is she a doll, or what?

Tuesday, March 12, 1991—Day 434

During benkyokai we three **[Reed most likely didn't participate]** vented our frustrations on what a screwed-up country this is. You've got to experience it to believe it. Even the first missionary here wasn't

too fond of Japan—it was Heber J. Grant. **[Legend had it that he said—perhaps in jest—that Japanese was invented by the Devil to keep the church from taking root there.]**

[We] followed up and had a good visit with Monda-san, whose son we're teaching. **[This son was a friend of Oshita and of the Noguchi kids, each of whom had already been baptized.]** We found out **[that]** he walks to church—an hour's worth!

[We] visited Baba-san, then Oshita and his mom. **[Sister]** Maruoka's still a babe.

Wednesday, March 13, 1991—Day 435

[We] went with Tsutsumi Shimai to a "lesson" with Matsushita-san. We were expecting to just rap with her about some problems she was having. Then she said **[that]** she wanted to hear a lesson! Totally unprepared, we went with what we could.

Later, after eating, she said **[that]** she wanted to talk to me alone. We were all expecting it, 'cause she told Tsutsumi Shimai that over the phone. You see, she's having lots of family problems, and she's had them in the past, too—first with **[her]** parents, now **[with her]** husband. No one else involved has ever had family/parent, etc. problems—not Tsutsumi Shimai, not Poulsen, and not her sister—like hers except for me. So I was/am the only one that could/can relate. Now I know why I've been here **[in Inuyama]** so long!

She next changed her mind **[about the venue]**, and we all went for a walk. We two went up ahead a ways in order to talk.

She talked about how great the member husbands are, but at her place it's totally different. They never talk things out. Plus she's had lots of problems while still living at home, i.e. **[she was]** disliked and rejected by **[her]** parents, etc. (her sister appears to have been favored).

After going a ways we sat down on a canal bank. I still didn't catch a lot of stuff, dang it, but I guess it did the job.

I got the feeling **[that]** she just needed someone to confide in, for when she got done she still hadn't asked me anything. However, as expected, I fully understood her feelings. So I went ahead and asked what she wanted to hear from me, e.g. my life story, my opinion of hers, or whatever. I forget what she answered, but I went ahead with a quick life story, touching on our common bad experiences. Then I told her **[that]** I agreed fully with her plan of action, i.e. wait and see what happens. Next I said that people are people and don't always do good things, but you can always, *always* count on the Savior. I had the feeling this morning that I should bring my flips, and luckily I didn't ignore that instinct, for I used them when talking about Christ.

I said that she's here to save *her* soul, and that her willingness alone to go all the way with the gospel, regardless of the fact that her husband may not let her after all, counts just the same to God as if she had. If she *could*, she *would*.

And I ended by hitting *hard* on the fact that she's the only reason Poulsen and I came to Japan, she's the purpose of our lives as missionaries here, and how she's our eternal friend and that we'd never, *ever* let her down—we wouldn't and won't ever do/say anything negative to, for, or about her. (Did that make sense?)

I honestly believe that, albeit verbally, I showed that woman more sincere love than I've ever shown another human being in my whole entire life to date. And the Spirit was there strong—thus showing that the Lord approved of my words enough to back them up as eternal truth.

That's really a self-worth booster—having the Lord put his stamp of approval on the things you say. **[It]** really gives you the feeling **[that]** you're part of the divine team.

She gave me a long, warm, and sincere thanks at the end. I could tell **[that]** she meant it. Yes, people want love more than logic, by far.

I hope it turns out all right. How did/is it affect/affecting her? I'm not sure how perfect I was, but as the Lord says, "Open your mouth and it shall be filled." I'll bet she doesn't get love, real love, showered on her like that every day.

Enough said for today.

Thursday, March 14, 1991—Day 436

[We had] another zone taikai—in Gifu. Talked to Sister Maruoka on the way up. She had been looking forward to seeing me at the zone fun activity in Ogaki the one time we stayed to paint the church (see Day 321). That made me feel good. **[That said, why didn't we just attend the activity and put off painting for one day? We four missed out on some fun, and I missed out on seeing Sister Maruoka one more time, dang it. Did we simply not get the word about it, I wonder? As it stands, I never got another chance to visit Ogaki.]**

She later did something rude. As she was walking out of the room where we all ate lunch, Pollard Choro wanted to ask her a question and so he called out her name. She didn't bother looking back, but simply said, "Yes?" and kept on walking. Rude! She said something rude to Brough as we practiced for the Christmas taikai back on Day 338. He had a hard time reading his part and said, "That was hard!" She read her part and said, "That was easy!"

Oh, Miyuki, how could you? **[Elder] Price [who replaced Thomason]** said **[on]** Tuesday that there's some **[Japanese]** sister in this mission who admits **[that]** she wants to marry an American—he thinks it's her. **[As luck would have it, she later *did* marry an American.]** Hope! Who knows, maybe I only liked her for her looks and for her voice. **[And thus appeared the first cracks in the edifice of my supreme infatuation with Sister Maruoka. They wouldn't be the last.]**

And that's today.

Friday, March 15, 1991—Day 437

I forgot—Sister Maruoka's Romanized Japanese testimony is in this month's edition of "Paradigm," the mission's monthly newsletter. Plus, before we all left **[the zone conference]** yesterday, we gathered for a group shot—I did my "Shades Salute," the thing I did at the Christmas taikai picture. Soon *everyone* joined in with the same thing! It's become famous!

[We] ate some more Atomboy Sushi and had a lesson with Shinobu. **[We all]** played volleyball tonight. In place of studying, I spent all my time reading a Newsweek **[that]** Pollard Choro gave me. Mom sent her latest U.S. News & World Report installment, too.

For service we walked around the little park outside our place and picked up trash for an hour.

Tonight I admitted to Poulsen how I like Maruoka Shimai.

Yesterday my tire had blown a flat, so I went and got it fixed. As a parting favor, I gave the lady a Book of Mormon. Did that flat happen for a purpose?

Saturday, March 16, 1991—Day 438

I don't feel like writing in here.

I forgot my nice watch at volleyball **[last night]**; came back today and it was gone.

Saieki-san, Price's 30 year-old investigator (female), has the hots for him big time. We told him about it (we found out from Kawamura Shimai, who referred her), and he was surprised but handled it well.

It rained all day, making dendo miserable. **[We]** had an activity at the church with members and all; it was a talent show.

Sunday, March 17, 1991—Day 439

I forgot—yesterday at the library, I went to give two girls who were studying English some chirashis, and one asks me what the word "make out" means. I thought they were joking, but I gave an honest answer: "It means kissing long and hard." They **[gave me a weird look and then]** laughed, then I looked at their sentence **[in the book from which they were studying]**: "We made out the figure of a, . . ." and so on. You know, the "distinguish" meaning. So I explained that it had two meanings. They probably quit believing my first meaning, but that was quite a rare question to be asked, right? **[As you can imagine, I was never asked that question again.]** One for the journal.

I don't feel like writing, so here's the summary: Branch taikai, baptism-kai at Fukutoku **[remember, "-kai" means "meeting"]**, where I found out that the two sisters there don't like Gibson at all, ha ha; both of which Matsushita-san went to. **[After the baptismal service I asked her what she thought of it, and she said, "it was complicated."]** Kondo Kyodai from Fukutoku taught a spiritual Sunday School. I gave a little talk on baptism at the baptism-kai. It was Suganuma's husband who was baptized.

[It was a] good day today. **[I'm]** sorry **[that I have]** no energy.

Monday, March 18, 1991—Day 440

Bought myself a new watch. **[We]** taught some folks who had been learning English at **[the]** city hall previously but had their class cancelled. Sumiko was there, too—**[she was]** one of the people who originally invited us to the foreigner panel. I remembered her full name, remembering the magic contained therein **[a nod to the book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*]**—and she's pretty excited. She told me before I transfer to come to her work and she'll give me a "gift" by which I'll never forget Inuyama. Poulsen played it up on what that may mean. Plus she said **[that]** she likes Richard Gere, the actor I look like. Now I'm wondering what this gift is.

The problem with Saieki-san has gotten really huge. It's become a soap opera. It's late—11:30 p.m. Sorry.

Tuesday, March 19, 1991—Day 441

[We] sat around and chatted, then had Saieki-san's baptismal interview. (We gave blood again before this. **[It was]** my first time in a long time.) She passed with flying colors. After that, Price went and had a heart-to-heart talk with her about liking him. They had to be by themselves, or it wouldn't've worked, obviously, which put poor Reed a little on-edge. Oh well.

Woke up an hour late (6:30 **[a.m.]**) on account of my clock having been set wrong. Still got in the normal amount of studying, which has been a long time.

For all this time **[that]** I've been out **[here in the mission field]**, I still haven't figured out squat. I'm just as ignorant about dendo as when I came. Price reassured me that everyone else feels the same way, too.

Nope, a mission isn't all I expected it to be. I'm far from happy.

Wednesday, March 20, 1991—Day 442

[We] taught Matsushita, then [we taught] Ata and Hibino. It rained again today. I've been praying for more study time / to get my study goals accomplished, and it looks like the Lord is blessing me with such.

[We] ran into Maeda Keeko again, the one [whom] Poulsen met at Maharaja for gaijin night. Poor guy, he likes her. She had a friend inside the nearby store whom I didn't see—too bad he [Poulsen] didn't suggest going on a double-date, considering [how] he hadn't eaten [yet]. I think he almost did. I would've given in.

Thursday, March 21, 1991—Day 443

Since today was a national holiday of some sort, we and a few Brazilians and some members went to [the] Monkey Park again. I ended up spending way too much money on video games, which made me feel really bad afterwards. However, I also bought a little kanji book-keychain which I think is really cool. Poulsen had one, so I needed one too.

Back at church, Kawamura Shimai returned from shopping in Nagoya. Poulsen had asked her to buy a kanji book for him (and gave her the money with which to do so) like the one [that] I was given by the Americans that long while back. Yet when she returned, she gave Poulsen back his money and gave us four all copies of the same book. Now I've got another copy of the same book that I don't know what to do with. We should've explained from the start that I've got one, but this is just one more event to prove that you just can't outgive the Japanese.

After Eikaiwa, Kyoko took down my address so she can write me once I'm back in America. I hope to get correspondence going so I don't lose my Japanese or kanji ability.

[Although I haven't lost my Japanese ability, my proficiency with kanji is gone with the wind, unfortunately.]

Friday, March 22, 1991—Day 444

[It] rained again today, dang it. [We] had a boring [Okusan] Eikaiwa, with the exception that Endo Shimai showed up.

We thought [that] we had volleyball tonight, but we'd been told wrong. So we had to wait and apologize to the folks who showed up. Harada [the zone leader] came for a split with Price. Poulsen and Harada played ping pong while I told Price all about the Marines. He'll probably join. Those were quite the days, all right.

Got a letter from Theresa telling me about Denise. She's been writing lots of bad checks and got arrested. Lot of good I could've done from here. She just wanted me to get the real story first before any rumors got to me. She tells me [that] her [Theresa's] boyfriend is active duty Marines, so I'm not so worried. She says [that] she'll be married to him and living on his base by the time I get back, but I know what it's like if you're on active duty. I don't think they were together (eight days) long enough for him to go through all the trouble. He just recently left for Boot Camp. They could, of course, get married during his leave after Boot Camp, which would be a totally unwise rush job. I'll write her a nice letter just to keep her keeping me informed before he gets back. I'm quite sure [that] she'll still be around (if not from the heart) when I get back, then I'll be able to play cat and mouse and really waste her badly. [It's] selfish and immature, I realize, but a fun leisure sport.

Saturday, March 23, 1991—Day 445

I feel pretty down. It rained badly this morning, but in late afternoon [it] cleared up miraculously. [We] visited Momotaro Shrine again, 'cause this is basically my last chance to do so.

[We] went and visited Kiki-san, the lady [whom] I met after the gaijin panel (see Day 410). Afterwards, we gave her a Book, [which was my] first time in a long time. I can't say much without Poulsen

interrupting me.

[We] had our Saturday Eikaiwa again. One guy I was rapping with said he was interested in religion, etc. So I offered him a Book and he accepted. So afterwards, when I was explaining the story, I felt the Spirit very strongly. **[It was]** like a supreme power source welling up inside. **[During]** times like these, you know it's the divine influence of the Holy Ghost, 'cause you just can't get that feeling from anywhere else.

[We] visited Baba-san again, who lives close by **[aren't you getting tired of me reminding you of that?]**. Sheesh, she sure is trying hard to marry her daughters off to us. American men are superior to their Japanese counterparts **[in the husband department]**, I'll admit. Sorry Baba-san, but I prefer American women—by *far*.

[It's] interesting how Poulsen thinks **[that]** I need everything explained to me. It's hard being junior, having to suck it up and sit there and listen whenever your senior is telling people his stupid opinions on how America is and everything else. Can't wait 'till I go senior so I can finally tell things as they really are.

Sunday, March 24, 1991—Day 446

Saieki-san's baptism was today. In the halls of Fukutoku **[chapel]**, I ran into a girl whom I recognized from before, one of the Yaginuma's **[kids]**, I think. She said verbally that she was going to shed tears, having gotten to see me again. Not literal, of course, but the thought alone impressed me to death. **[Although it looked like she was about to literally shed tears, amazingly enough.]** Last week, I'd ran into a different girl, some 15 year-old who had recently been baptized when I first showed up **[in the mission]**. She lives in the Atsumis' building, but for the life of me I can't remember her name. She, too, said (last week) that she was *really* happy to see me again. She attended the **[baptismal]** service last week and had a picture taken of me, too. **[It's]** amazing, all these people who appear to really like me, and me never having known them much.

Poor Ono Miko Shimai. She's soon to be admitted to a hospital for some reason, to stay for 3½ months. She was crying pretty hard before the baptism started.

I talked to another kyodai in the hall beforehand. Lon Hall, who said **[that]** he'd never marry a Japanese **[woman]**, ate his words last Thursday in a ceremony at the church. The girl was only baptized the day before. For him, you figure. Good ol' Lon.

In the parking lot, Reed introduced himself to Kito Kyodai, our reactivated dude. **[It's]** interesting how things develop (i.e., who meets whom) as time goes by.

Waved goodbye to Rikki as our van pulled out. **[It's]** probably the last time I'll ever see her in mortality. **[I was wrong; I saw her the next Thursday.]** She wished Price and I a good P-day.

Good ol' Saieki san. So sweet. Our newest member.

Monday, March 25, 1991—Day 447

Spent all this morning packing. Later took a four-hour nap; if I was smart I would've studied. **[I had]** no letters to write today, probably the first time ever. Only answered a postcard that came today from Woodward Shimai, no big deal.

Taught a fun Eikaiwa tonight. A bunch of kids were getting out of a party as we left, acting all idiotic to us. People get brave when they're in groups. **[(They were)]** using English sarcastically, that is; etc.)

[I've received] no letter from Jodi yet. **[In my]** last letter, I asked **[her]** if it was okay to use the word "delicious" in regard to each other. She hasn't answered yet, so I'm afraid I pissed her off. I've got to quit taking risks like this, regardless of the fact that she once wrote that nothing I said could possibly turn her off. Oh well, watch me get a really nice letter from her tomorrow.

Tuesday, March 26, 1991—Day 448

My transfer call finally came. I'm going up North, to Takefu. And yes, at long last, I'm finally going senior. Yay!!

The president asked for my feelings on the subject, since I'll be in the same district as Koyanagi. **[He was the district leader over the area to which I was transferring.] [It]** looks like he **[President Smith]** knew about all the problems. He **[Koyanagi]** goes to the same church I do, too, dang it. The president told me **[that]** he's changed quite a bit since he's been up there, but **[that]** he's still the same ol' Koyanagi. Strange, **[it]** looks like I could've had a say in the matter. But you figure **[that]** the president could've sent me anywhere, but he still chose there, so why argue with the Lord's anointed? I'm taking Biddulph's place, as a note. Plus, right on schedule, the areas **[in which I serve]** have gotten progressively smaller. I hear **[that]** Takefu is smaller than here. **[I'd heard correctly.]** There are two Shimais in the area, too. Rats, **[that means there are]** no female investigators for me. **[Not that I wanted to hit on female investigators, of course, but that there would be that many fewer potential people to teach.]**

[We] went to Matsushita's for the last time. They were telling me (in imperative form Japanese) not to transfer. Sheesh, they looked pretty sad. We ditched the lesson, 'cause with all that on the mind I doubt either of them would've learned **[anything]**. I'll miss her. She said **[that]** she'd get baptized, though. Good thing.

[We] later met Nakayama Shimai and went to a restaurant where she fed us steak and pizza. Suzuki Kyodai was there, too. After, she said **[that]** she'd send my mom a homemade kimono. Mom'll freak.

Said good-bye to Ata-san, who later said that our cancelled appointment for tomorrow is o.k. after all. She seemed sad, too. Said bye to Hibino-san, then Monda-san. Since Monda-san's is two houses down, when Hibino-san's daughter came home, they both brought some cool Japanese coasters over as a gift. They seemed sad, too.

[We] went to say goodbye to our Okawa fan, but she said some stuff about America that really pissed me off, so we left. **[You]** try to do something nice, and what happens? Speaking of which, for most of the day I was bemoaning the fact that I was going to be in the same district as fetchin' Koyanagi. Sheesh, **[you]** try to be a good missionary, and what happens? God's punishing me for some reason. This is becoming almost humorous. **[It]** kind of makes me wonder what's next.

At least Poulsen's friends from Tsuruga go to church there, i.e. the Yamamotos. That's exciting. He's jealous. It's great; I'll **[already]** have friends there.

PHOTOS 055



L-R: Yamakawa-san, me, Matsushita-san. Trust me, they look better in real life.

Wednesday, March 27, 1991—Day 449

[Today was] my last full day as [a] junior.

We started early, helping Price move over and all. **[The mission president had decided to move sister missionaries into Inuyama. After talking things over with Poulsen and weighing his options, he'd decided to move the sisters into Price and Reed's apartment and move the two of them into our apartment, making our 2-man living space into a 4-man living space. There was nowhere near enough room for four people, so I was glad to be transferring.]** Next we met Huber Shimai at a nearby train station (from Gifu) and she and her companion helped clean up, move, and all. She **[had]** lived in Takefu as well. I'm taking Biddulph's place. Can I fill his shoes? But hey, he's a pharmacist in the Army, I'm an infantryman in the Marines, so you can find the answer to that question easy enough.

[We] waited around for the **[moving]** company to pick up my stuff, but they couldn't make it, those dorks. In Japan the company doesn't go by you; you go by the company. So we left it in the hands of Price and Reed as we went to Ata's for a final dinner.

Monda-kun was there, too. He's only 13, yet he acts like (and is as tall as) an adult. **[We]** spent a lot of time there.

[We] later ate at **[the]** Tsutsumis one last time. Partway through, Matsushita-san called and we chatted. **[She's a]** cool woman. She went on about how she can't forget me since I was one of the first two missionaries to ever teach her. She also thanked me a lot for all I've done for her. I reinforced all that had been said and done as best I could as a parting measure.

You know, it's nice, because I *finally* feel as though I've been a tool in the Lord's hands. I finally know that my presence here in Japan has made a difference.

Toward the end, it sounded as though she may have been crying. I'm not sure. I'll never forget her.

Yuji came with us to eat, too. Said goodbye to him as well.

In the mail, I got an entire magazine from Mom, detailing the **[Gulf]** war and how it ended. The "100 Hours War" it looks like. One I missed. Plus, there was a wedding announcement from Kelly Shaffer. She's married! Refer to previous **[pre-mission]** journals, #6 I think, for lots of details on her. **[In short, after Heather and I broke up, I wound up meeting and getting hot and heavy with Kelly in October of 1988. She was a BYU student a year older than me. Over the next few months she twisted my heart, tore it out, and stomped on it. A year later she attended my missionary farewell and apologized.]** It didn't say **[whether]** they were married in the temple, though. It figures. She must've dropped it off at my place, and in turn Mom sent it **[to me]**. The guy looks like a geek.

I also got pictures sent to me from the D.L. in Fukutoku (Gibson's companion). **[It]** looks like the Shinodas finally developed the pictures of Horrocks and me in kimonos.

Now Inuyama, and my term as junior, are all said and done. And now, at the last day, I found out **[that]** I've made a real difference.

Yet there's a new challenge up ahead in Takefu—as senior companion.

PHOTOS 56



L-R: Hibino-san, Poulsen, Monda-kun, me.



L-R: Ata-san, Poulsen, Monda-kun, me.



Front row, L-R: Poulsen, two of Ata-san's kids (I can't remember if she had any others), some other kid. I don't know if he was hers of if he was a friend of one of her sons. He doesn't look like the other two, so I'm guessing the latter.

Back row, L-R: Monda-kun, me.



Me with Ata-san's boxer statue.



Me with Ata-san's youngest kid. He had a bad habit of reaching up and grabbing his mom's breast when he could get away with it.

Thursday, March 28, 1991—Day 450

[We] got ready, then left for the honbu (mission home). Like last time, we were the first two there. He's getting a green bean in my place, so Poulsen had to be in early for that training. **[This "green bean" would later be in the same Japanese class with me in college. He told me that Poulsen was one of the strangest people he'd ever met. I can see where he's coming from; Poulsen was, like I said, heavily into anime and had decorated the apartment with lots of posters of it right before I transferred out, for just one example.]**

There are a lot of new folks this month, so the place got *packed*. Rikki and Sister Morita were there, too. And yes, Sister Maruoka was there as well. She gave me that picture she had taken of us. Since this just may be the last time I see her **[I was wrong about that]**, I had her give me her address so I could write to her once she's home.

Lots of folks **[were]** there. I was feeling a bit—I don't know. "Sad," maybe, knowing **[that]** it wouldn't last forever.

One of the A.P.'s time ran out as A.P., so he was going North too. So we went with him on the train. There I talked with a guy who had gone to Marine Boot **[Camp]** but had been given a medical honorable discharge really early into it. That was fun, talking to him.

On the way, the lady **[sitting]** next to me bought a cup of coffee and then gave it to me. Ouch, I felt extremely rude, having to reject her gift. **[Now that I'm no longer a believer, I feel even worse about it.]**

[It was a long train ride. I was feeling quite a lot of pressure and self-doubt, because not only was I going to a brand-new area, I was becoming senior companion, and dendo would pretty much be up to me from then on. I remember looking at my reflection in the window, asking myself if I was really ready for it.]

On my stop, I was in the last car so **[that]** Biddulph could find me and take my place, 'cause I had bought a ticket for further than where I was going to give to him so he could get on the same train as I left. **[Per our instructions from the mission home, he had bought a mere boarding pass and handed it off to me.]** There was no time for formalities; I jumped off, handed him his stuff, and he jumped on. Then I met my new junior companion, Frehner Choro. A couple other friends were there **[at the station]** too, sad to see Biddulph go. **[Remember, Biddulph had come to Takefu on August 30 of the previous year, so he'd been here for seven months, which is a long time by mission standards—plenty of time to make lots of friends and become quite attached.]**

[We] went back to our apartment. My stuff had beaten me there, which was nice. Just like **[what had happened when I went to]** Okazaki.

[We] went to a City Hall Eikaiwa, and on the way Frehner Choro stopped a guy and made a return for tomorrow, just like that. I was seriously impressed. Are people up North simply nicer than they are down South? So I've heard. **[I needn't have been that impressed, because Elder Frehner had simply invited him over to eat spaghetti and play games. The intent was, of course, to pick him up for the lessons later. It didn't take me long to become instinctively uncomfortable with such a tactic, so I never pursued it myself. It wasn't until much later—after my mission, in fact—that I learned that this is a classic form of deception called "bait and switch."]**

Upon getting there, it had been cancelled. So **[we went]** back home (**[which was]** only a short **[bike]** ride **[away]**) for more unpacking.

[We] went to our regular Eikaiwa next. Clark Shimai is here. Remember her from the M.T.C.? She's getting less and less concerned with how her hair looks, I can tell.

The Eikaiwa here is pretty scarce. However, more people showed up tonight than usual.

Then **[it was]** back home for more unpacking. Frehner's a really hard worker. He's got good Japanese, too. I just hope **[that]** I'm ready for this new challenge. It's a bad feeling, not knowing who or where anybody or anything is. **[It turns out that I was more right than I realized at the time. At one point during the train ride, it pulled up to a stop and then backed out onto a different line (or something like that). It had eventually turned North again, but I thought it had continued back South. The sky over Takefu was constantly overcast for the next two weeks or so, so I couldn't orient myself by the sunrise or sunset. Therefore, for two weeks straight my sense of direction was 180° off—I thought that South was North, and vice-versa, and that West was East and vice-versa. Never have I been more disoriented in my life.]**

[And thus ended my year plus as junior companion, my six-month stint at Inuyama, and my two months with Elder Poulsen, all at once. Elder Poulsen was quite a quirky guy, for certain. For example, he had an annoying fake laugh that he'd trot out whenever something was funny. Also, when we were talking to someone and I attempted to get a word in edgewise, he'd motion me with his hands to hush up. Plus, when we went streeting, he'd rarely stop people. You could tell that

he wasn't too comfortable talking to people during housing, either.

Of course, fair is fair, so it's more likely than not that I had—and still have, for that matter—annoying personality quirks of my own.

That said, however, I'd be remiss if I didn't discuss Poulsen's strengths, of which he had many. Pretty much the entire time I was with him I was chomping at the bit to go senior myself; that's nearly all I thought about. If I had been smart, I would've used the extra time to pay better attention to Poulsen and observe how he did things. For one thing, he had an amazing ability to live in the present, focusing on the good and ignoring the bad. He was so good at this that he told me that he'd never had a negative experience. Now, I know this wasn't entirely true, since I observed him getting pissed off or annoyed at something every so often, but still, the overall mindset allowed him to escape most if not all stress. For another thing, he was very people-focused and could relate to others quite easily—which is arguably the most important trait that a missionary can have. This people-focused quality ensured that he was a great listener; I could unload my problems and concerns and he'd listen without passing judgment.

Had I spent less time thinking about myself and used the time to learn from him, I would've avoided an unfathomable amount of stress and worry in the upcoming months. The remainder of my mission would've had quite a different tone and flavor—a vastly more positive one, I imagine. The fact that I didn't recognize—and take advantage of—such a fantastic learning opportunity is a big regret of mine.]

Friday, March 29, 1991—Day 451

[Today was] my first full day as [a] senior. Gone is six months in Inuyama—and a quarter's worth of my mission.

[We] met our dude [whom] we met yesterday and took him over for spaghetti and checkers. He had to go home and do homework (he announced) before we had time to approach him about the gospel. He's half Chinese and speaks both [Chinese and Japanese] fluently.

While riding our bikes, a dude pulled up and asked if we were Mormons (he was in a taxi). It turns out [that] he was a member and was out today looking for the church. It was a job-related transfer that took him here three months ago, and he hasn't found a church since. So he got out and we walked back to the church and showed him where it is. Yes, yet another episode of God's guidance! May I receive much more of it!

I was feeling *really* depressed during [our] break. As I prayed for inspiration to find people before we left, I shed a few tears, asking for comfort. I feel so lost, so alone.

[We] rode around town a bit, looking for folks. I bought a basket for my bike, 'cause we're on a new system where you leave your bike at your old apartment [and your replacement begins using it. This was to save the money it otherwise took to ship your own bike whenever you transferred]. I'm going to miss my loyal, trusty gold 10-speed style bike. [Most missionaries have mountain- style bikes.] Now I'm on Biddulph's [bike].

[We] visited some kids and made some returns. Heck, Frehner's got good Japanese; [he's] far better than I was at his length [of time]. I can tell [that] he may not really know who's senior around here. Doing it all himself, interrupting me, etc. Maybe he's just trying to get me settled in, showing me around and all. We'll wait and see.

Saturday, March 30, 1991—Day 452

We had to make cookies this morning, so we did. It rained miserably for most of the day. Earlier, though, we went and saw a member off who's moving to Tokyo.

Today I had a lesson. The *real thing* this time!

It was with a guy I met who'd seen Biddulph off. A fellowshipper was there, too—one who'd been found and taught and baptized by Biddulph. I was feeling pretty desperate, because it was playing for keeps this time. No more practice. Beforehand, I was almost crying, because my lifetime goal was *finally* realized—Me, in charge of teaching the Gospel of Christ!

Okumura-kun was his name. The lesson went well, thanks to the Lord. I taught him about the restoration of the priesthood and showed him the appropriate video. He seemed to understand, and at the end he gave a thoroughly outstanding prayer.

I was excited; Frehner was impressed. Usually the guy is really tough. Frehner says that maybe this transfer is what it took to get him moving and progressing. So, I'd count my first experience at teaching Christ's gospel **[as]** an outstanding success.

[We] taught Matsumoto-san too, whom I'd met at Eikaiwa. The lesson went well; he understood lots, but he didn't accept the baptismal commitment. We'll see what we can do. (We'd taught him the Gift of the Holy Ghost and Obedience to God's Commandments.)

[We] rode around looking for people we knew, but **[we]** got rain-drenched and came home early.

I think I'm beginning to get used to this. The Lord has thankfully kept me busy thus far.

As a note—this morning I cried, knowing **[that]** I may never see Matsushita-san again and remembering how much I was able to help her. What a priceless feeling, having been a tool in the hands of the Lord.

PHOTOS 057



L-R: Kayo Koizumi, who was baptized the next day; me, Elder Frehner, Sano Kyodai. This is at the train station, seeing Sano Kyodai off to Tokyo.



L-R: Me, Sano Kyodai, Frehner.

Sunday, March 31, 1991—Day 453

[We] went to church, and for the first time I did dendo chosei shukai as **[a]** senior. Sat next to Koyanagi—you'll freak, but it really was good seeing him again. **[We were in the same district and attended the same branch, but he was based in Sabae, the next town to the North.]**

Met the Yamamotos again. That was cool. **[To give you an idea of how dedicated these two were, they not only attended church in their hometown of Tsuruga, but they also attended church a second time each Sunday in Takefu!]** It's nice, having taken another step, i.e. met the members. This place, a branch, isn't any bigger than Inuyama was.

We had a baptism (the sisters') up in a different area. **[We went to the closest ward building with an actual baptismal font].** Frehner was to perform it. There are two branches in the building—one of which is for Americans. Holy cow, it was strange seeing gaijins who are members but not missionaries. I was able to chat with a few of them for a minute. It's been a long time, . . . man, it was strange.

I sat next to Sister Yamamoto during the meeting. She usually does all the talking; her husband is the silent type.

I don't totally know why, but I cried a little bit before and then during the confirmation. Afterwards it was a bit tougher to hold back. Sister Yamamoto let me use her handkerchief.

She went up to say the **[closing]** prayer. When she came back, I let the floodgates go. You see, I've finally, finally, finally accomplished my goal of becoming senior companion, . . . which has been my only real, true goal for several years. The Lord didn't have to make me senior companion, . . . but He did, which means **[that]** I have the responsibility now of teaching God's children the Gospel of Christ. Put two and two together, and that must mean that Christ trusts me with His gospel. *He trusts me!*

Reader, the feeling just couldn't be described. Few, if any, times have I ever cried so hard in my entire life. Plus, this has been the most emotional transfer I've undergone yet. Maybe I was a little weak from the stress. Plus, there hasn't been a true sunny day yet since I've been here—**[it's been]** nothing but dark and gloomy. Therefore, having the Yamamotos there was a serious relief. I just can't believe that today was only the second time I've ever seen them in my life—it feels more like we're eternal friends,

and I told them that. It was such a good feeling, such a good atmosphere when we all met. I let them know how great it was, having friends like them. They returned everything I said, i.e. **[they]** agreed that they felt the same way about all. Several times I was sobbing so hard that I couldn't even speak. She assured me that it was okay, it was the Spirit which I felt. She had shed tears at the baptism; she was crying again now. I didn't care at all who saw me and who didn't.

I still can't figure out why I was hit so hard with the Spirit today. For the first time in my life, I can almost swear that I knew someone **[i.e., the Yamamotos]** from the pre-existence. The immediate atmosphere of eternal friendship was right there from the very beginning. I've never experienced this type of thing in my entire life.

The whole thing was indescribable—I don't know what or why it was then, and I can't figure it out now, either. What an experience.

PHOTOS 058



Front row, L-R: An investigator or friend of the sisters whose name I don't recall (you'll hear more about her later), Nobuko Kunisada, the woman living in the apartment above ours whom Biddulph found and baptized; Frehner, Kayo Koizumi, another a girl whom I don't recognize, Sister Lori Waters, Clark's junior companion; Matt Chynoweth, Koyanagi's junior companion.

Back row, L-R: Sister Clark, a girl whom I don't recognize, Koyanagi, me.

April Fool's Day, 1991—Day 454

Went shopping and got myself a long-awaited bag (for scriptures and all) and also some food. I've been nearly starving the past couple of days.

[We] had a seven year-old neighbor kid come over to visit. **[I guess the kid was in the habit of coming over to hang out for a while every P-day. This time he brought over a handheld video game to show us, but I was so wrapped up in letter-writing that I didn't pay much attention to him, letting Frehner do the talking. The poor guy was probably just looking for positive role models, but he never came back, perhaps due in part to my stand-offishness. I feel rather bad about this.]**

I've had a cold today, with a pretty bad runny nose.

Lots of campaigners were driving around yelling their names out of loudspeakers. **[Apparently local elections are pretty big deals, at least in that part of Japan. Would-be politicians made a big spectacle out of the whole thing. When they weren't riding around in vans with loudspeakers mounted on the top, with people in the back calling out the politician's name and encouraging people to vote for him, they'd be walking around town with a large sign-toting entourage in tow, sporting a big white sash and wearing white gloves, shaking hands with everyone they encountered. Needless to say, I never saw anything even remotely like it in America, either before or since.]**

[We] had a "lesson" with Hideki **[an Eikaiwa student of ours]**, who called all the shots. Afterwards, we had a small dinner with the sisters and some members. It was in order to pick up one of their friends.

I hope I can hack this senior stuff.

PHOTOS 059



Front row, L-R: Me, Sister Waters, their friend they were trying to pick up, newly-baptized (Sister) Kayo Koizumi.

Back row, L-R: Sister Clark, (Sister) Nobuko Kunisada.
Clowning around after the dinner.

Tuesday, April 02, 1991—Day 455

Thankfully, the Lord has been keeping me busy. **[We]** had a lesson with a rather strange older dude with whom Frehner had booked an appointment. We were only able to show a video, but he accepted a return appointment, so why argue?

[We] had another lesson with a dude named Keiji. **[He's a high-school age kid with]** no self-confidence. **[We]** taught baptism, but when he didn't accept **[the baptismal commitment]**, we explained what the Gift of the Holy Ghost was and how it could help, and then he accepted. He's a pretty slow dude, e.g. it'd take him forever even on yes/no questions with the answer right in front of him in my flipcharts, so we consider it a really weak yotei, yet it's the first one **[that]** I've seen made by the Lord through me as senior **[companion]**. Had I not identified the Spirit like I did, it probably wouldn't've gone over.

[We] taught an A.B. lesson to the lady above us [whom] Biddulph had baptized. [It's] the first one I've ever taught as senior.

Clark Shimai, from the M.T.C., is the senior sister in the companionship here. I hear [that] the sisters will be pulled out of here by the end of May [at the] latest, since they're only supposed to be here temporarily anyhow. I'm highly looking forward to that day, 'cause I'll get all their investigators, ha ha! [I don't know why such arrangements are ever labeled "temporary," since they almost never are. The sisters were still there when I transferred out. For all I know, they might still be there even now.]

Oh, the tender mercies of a just and loving God.

Wednesday, April 03, 1991—Day 456

[We] met with our half-Chinese friend again, Honli, and rode our bikes to Sabae, Koyanagi's town, to go bowling. The place didn't open 'till later, we found out, so we met up with a couple of his friends and hung out at a nearby park and then went and played video games. Ah, my familiar vice. Honli saw two Books [of Mormon] in my back basket and was surprised, so I told him [that] they were the presents we'd bought for them and subsequently placed three copies.

[After this, we] finally got to go bowling. During it, I had some folks order the same "Wink" video (on the video juke box) that had been playing on day 302. I gave them the money to do it, 'cause I was afraid to order it myself. I had it played twice, as a matter of fact. I bowled a 119 on my second game, too.

Honli stuck with his friends for more fun, but we had to get home, so we didn't get to set an appointment with Honli like we wanted to. Back here we taught an A.B. lesson for Koichi, Okumura's fellowshipper.

The Lord has been keeping me busy and I love it!!!

PHOTOS 060



L-R: Honli, his two friends, me.



L-R: Frehner, me, Koichi.



L-R: Frehner, me, and Sister Takama, a stake missionary.

Thursday, April 04, 1991—Day 457

We've been getting some better weather lately, which is good.

[We] had zone pass-offs here. Later, while riding to a member's house to show the shimaïs [where it was], they both tried to go up a car ramp onto the sidewalk, but *both* of them wrecked in the attempt. Seeing one shimai wreck is quite rare, but two, right in a row, *has* to be a record. Luckily neither [of

them] were hurt.

[We] taught Okumura again, and he told us right out that he didn't want to be baptized. It'll be tough from here on out.

[I got] another letter from Dan. He preaches far too much. How can I put an end to it and stay friends?

[We] taught a fun service Eikaiwa at the shiyakusho [which is Japanese for "city center"]. One girl said that she watched "Anne of Green Gables," then one guy came out with a very quotable quote:

"She is higher level than me. I only watch Robocop II."

Frehner and I laughed hard.

I had had the junior zone leader get me a couple of imitation samurai swords. **[Purchasing two swords may seem redundant at first glance, but the samurai typically carried two swords at once, a "katana," the standard sword that you see in the movies, and the "wakizashi," a short sword used as a backup in case the katana broke or you became disarmed. So references to having two swords indicated both the short and long versions.]** He brought them to Eikaiwa 'cause they were having a baptismal interview. They're awesome—Now I've got swords! **[I still have them to this day.]**

Friday, April 05, 1991—Day 458

I'm finally getting to know who's who around here. It's nice, me finally having the B.R.T. **[an abbreviation, once again, for "build relationships of trust"]** in with our investigators.

[We] had lunch with a dude we knew **[whose last name was "Yamada"]**, and he told me that Steve Clark, one of the lead guitarists of Def Leppard, had gotten sick and died about three months ago. No way, that's too terrible to be true! **[Yet it was true regardless. He died on January 08, 1991 of complications related to alcoholism. My favorite band has never been the same since.]**

[We] taught our older friend, Susumu Ogawa **[the "weird dude" I mentioned earlier]**, who always was trying to speak English and got off on tangents. However, during the course of the discussion, he grew a little bit. **[What made me think I could accurately judge something like that, I wonder?]** It was exciting.

[We] taught Keiji again. We've got a yotei, but I'm afraid it's just 'cause he hasn't the confidence to reject it. We don't know if he's in it heart and soul or not.

We also taught two A.B. lessons in one day, although the first one was just a discussion of Jacob 5 at Koichi's request. **[It's]** a record.

Saturday, April 06, 1991—Day 459

It rained again today. After various lessons and appointments (one lady **[named Tako-san]** stood us up), we went and got Keiji to go up to Fukui **[again, this was the closest town with a bona fide baptismal font]** for a baptism kai. Okumura came too, along with Hideki. I think these are the most investigators I've ever had come to a meeting. Man, the Lord is blessing me.

Keiji's really silent. Trying to talk to him is like pulling teeth. Frankly, I don't know what to do about him.

It was the sisters' baptism. **[Taki Hanaya was the name of the baptizee.]** At the place, Masa Dude and Hiroko were there! Too cool!

It was a good **[baptismal]** service; the Spirit was there. After the meeting, Masa invited me to come and play in Tsuruga. He said **[that]** we'd go to Atomboy Sushi again.

We'd ridden the train up, but got a ride back to Takefu with Yamada, the dendo chosei shunin ([i.e., the **ward mission**] leader.) He'd treated us to lunch today, too. Next we rode with Keiji in the rain back to his house. And no, still no word from Jodi.

Sunday, April 07, 1991—Day 460

Ogawa came to the first meeting of church (not Sacrament Meeting) with the worst breath imaginable. Our member we met on the street was there for Sacrament Meeting, and he sat next to me also, . . . **[he had]** the same nasty breath! How, I wonder? **[I now know that the phenomenon is "smoker's breath."]**

Koyanagi bore his testimony and I was really impressed. His conversion was quite remarkable, involving dreams, etc., which thing I didn't know.

Thanks be to the Lord, I'm beginning to gain a swing on how to be senior. I don't quite feel so much **[akin to]** the fish out of water like I did when I **[first]** got here.

Monday, April 08, 1991—Day 461

Got up and really cleaned this place. The honbu is supposed to pay our bills for us, but they haven't got our account done up yet, so we had to bounce between banks, transferring the money from one account to another. I'm glad **[that]** I learned how to do all this before I went senior. Came back and cleaned some more, then wrote some letters at the last minute.

[We] taught Ogawa-san. He said that when he prayed he didn't feel anything special. Later we found out why. When we had him pray at the end, he simply recited the instructions on prayer! **[In other words, he looked at my flipcharts and read aloud, "Address our Heavenly Father. Say what you're thankful for. Ask for what you have need of. Close in the name of Jesus Christ."]** So we had him do it again, this time putting in his own thoughts and feelings. Now I can say **[that]** I've actually had an investigator do that. **[It wouldn't be the last time, believe it or not.]**

[Later on,] right after the prayer before Keiji's lesson, I did the same thing I did in the M.T.C. that long time ago—let one rip. I was embarrassed. Frehner couldn't stop laughing. At least Keiji laughed, too, lightening him up a bit. The Lord works in strange ways, right?

Tuesday, April 09, 1991—Day 462

Ogawa pulled another trick. He said that Playboy is more exciting than the Book of Mormon 'cause of the good stories and the pictures. **[Hard to argue with him.]** That's the first time I've had an investigator say that. **[It would be the last time, too.]** He next asked if we ever read Playboy. Not too often, bud.

He's not your normal Nihonjin (**[which is Japanese for a]** Japanese person). He'll come right out and tell you what he thinks, **[as opposed to most other Japanese folks who hold their true thoughts and opinions in reserve,]** e.g. in regard to the resurrection: "I can't believe it; whoever says that tells a lie."

I let the sisters take home and read that insulting letter from Theresa. I wonder how they'll like it?

Tonight they started Institute at church, and the Yamamotos were there. Yoshio, the husband, asked me to assist in a blessing, so I did. I attempted to anoint, but I read the wrong Japanese paragraph and consecrated the oil, dang it!!! Oh, reader, it embarrasses me just thinking about it. So I had to do it again and messed up there, too. Gads, I feel like a loser.

Wednesday, April 10, 1991—Day 463

I'm on a split in Sabae with Koyanagi. Yep, seems like old times. After walking around the same little zoo

we saw with Honli, we went to a hotel and met the Shimais in order to make Eikaiwa tapes to which you can call in and hear an English lesson. **[I wonder if anyone actually called this "English lesson hotline."]** Koyanagi would look and translate after each sentence, but he screwed up a bunch of times without knowing it.

It's funny; both the sisters want to set me up with their friends (in America).

[We] went and saw a glasses museum **[apparently Sabae is known as the glasses capital of the world]**, then went and got some nice fake glasses made up for me. **[My intent in having them made was to look older and thus hopefully be taken more seriously.]** They're great; I think they make me look more serious. I think they make me look better, too. It was tough getting used to them at first, but I ended up placing a Book with them on, so why argue?

I haven't been able to study in a long time. I'm way out of form.

Thursday, April 11, 1991—Day 464

Benkyokai was painful again, having to listen to Koyanagi's half-baked know-it-all philosophies. All talk and no action. Talk about someone with absolutely no grasp whatsoever of the real reason we're out here.

Back at home, he accompanied me to Keiji's lesson, with me playing senior this time. He was more cooperative than I expected. Koyanagi more or less tried to get the yotei out of him, but he couldn't, either. **[This is bizarre—I'd written earlier that we already had a yotei. Had I completely forgotten about it?? I must be missing something here.]**

[We] taught Susumu Ogawa again. He likes Waters Shimai, which is dangerous. **[He was also at least twice her age.]** He's quite weird; he may be a bit off his rocker. Frankly, I'm worried about teaching him. I honestly don't think that bringing a crazy fool into the church would be doing the members a favor. **[The branch president himself was keenly attuned to this problem too, as you'll hear about later.]**

Finally, *finally* got a letter from Jodi. In it, she told me **[that]** she wasn't offended at all and that I worry too much. It was a most exciting letter, too, for sure.

I let Frehner read the one from Theressa. He was seriously amazed and said, over and over again, "I'd kill her!" Yes, that wench needs a serious attitude adjustment.

The sisters had a lesson and didn't bother coming into Eikaiwa until 40 minutes later. C'mon girls, a promise is a promise.

Dang it, I want some *real* investigators.

Friday, April 12, 1991—Day 465

[We] rode out a ways with the Shimais to show them where a member lived. Clark Shimai asked me about the Marines on the way.

Having ran out of things to do, we housed for a few minutes. No one ever even came to the door. Now I can say **[that]** I've done all the standard dendo methods as senior.

[We] showed Ogawa the movie "Ancient America Speaks," which gives lots of archaeological findings proving the Book of Mormon true. **[Hah!]** **[We]** asked him about it after, and he said that someone probably made it all up. I felt like continuing the lessons wouldn't help him a bit, so right there I decided **[that]** we'd take a break from teaching for a while. I think he's going to need some time without us in order to get things straight. He'll grow easier without us from here on out, if at all.

[We] met with the Masudas, a mom and [a] 23 year-old daughter. They're Buddhist, but they like our teachings, so they're listening. That's about it. The Spirit was there, and I jumped on it. Here's something you'll like: The daughter especially is confused, and I asked her if she's ever prayed about it. They hadn't. So I tried to get them to make the commitment, but they had hang-ups with the Buddhist way of praying. So, bringing out the big guns, I promised them that if they prayed the Christian way tonight, they'd hear an angel's voice.

They got serious at [the sound of] that, [you could've heard a pin drop,] but [they] still wouldn't commit. Sorry, but we got home 1/2 hour late and I'm writing fast. It'd be tough to explain on paper that whole "lesson."

Saturday, April 13, 1991—Day 466

[We] met with Tanibata, our "Robocop" friend, and he drove us out to the Sea of Japan. Yay, now I can say I've seen it! He bought us some great sashimi, too.

[A few more comments about him: He was rather high-up in the city government; I never learned what, exactly, his title was. Also, during the previous city center Eikaiwa, we got into a conversation with him about what sort of clothing the Yakuza, or Japanese mafia, wear. Lo and behold, when he arrived to pick us up, he stepped out of the car wearing everything he told us that those people wear! We all got a good laugh out of it.]

I can't believe I didn't mention it, but during the ride I tried to invite him to hear the lessons, but he told us that family obligations prevented him from switching religions. So he couldn't take us up on it.]

[We] tried to do a lesson with Honli, but the sisters were using the VCR so we couldn't watch the video he brought, dang it.

[We later] visited a guy who spoke 100+ miles per hour in bad Japanese. Asai-san was his name. He rapped about the usual Buddhism and confusion and all nonsense, but like so many other Japs, he wouldn't really give us a chance. They'll go on for hours, but when it comes to trying and seeing, they'll never go for it. Nope, these folks aren't Americans.

PHOTOS 061



L-R: Tanibata-san, Frehner, me. That's the Sea of Japan in the background.



Here's a phone card showing a different stretch of the same coastline, probably no more than several miles away from where the above photo of us was taken. Yes, it looks much better when the weather is good.

Sunday, April 14, 1991—Day 467

[We] had two investigators [come] to church—[is it] a record?

[We] met with Honli later and watched a movie about a guy's trip to the afterlife—[it was] really weird. [Since it dealt with the afterlife, Honli must've thought it'd be right up our alley, so he brought it to show us.] Poor Frehner felt fuke, but we accomplished our purpose, for we booked a teaching appointment for Wednesday. Nope, I'll never let a guy get away without shokaiing him for *something*.

[We] did a little kaiin dendo [i.e. "member-missionary work"] with a guy [whom] Durham [had] baptized who's now fuke. [Elder Durham had been in my first zone and was Frehner's first senior companion, albeit in a different area.] He may come to some upcoming activities; we may have succeeded. [It was] my first experience with kaiin dendo as a senior.

Monday, April 15, 1991—Day 468

I made another tape for Jodi. This time it turned out okay. [The] problem is, I spent so much time making it that when a batch of letters came for me, I didn't have any time left to answer them all effectively. Other than that, it was a very productive day.

Got a letter from Chris Bain. [It's] funny how some people don't know what we're (missionaries) not supposed to read or think about. Also, Frehner heard the people on the level above us going at it loud and hard. I was inside making the tape and didn't hear it, dang it. [Specifically, he heard a female voice saying, "Hayaku! Hayaku!" which in this context means, "Faster! Faster!"]

The members and us had a Family Home Evening at the church later. P-day went too quick.

Tuesday, April 16, 1991—Day 469

After district benkyokai, Koyanagi and I sat for an hour writing some important stuff on Eikaiwa chirashis while the junior zone leader went to go get a haircut. I can now understand where he's coming from; he [Koyanagi] wants to do the Lord's work seriously and be as professional as possible. Had I not waited so long after the Marines to come out [on a mission], I'd be the same way, . . . in a bad way.

[We] continued our split and streeeted for an hour. We discussed who was cute out of the [female] missionaries of both races. Since I'm American, I can't tell who's cute and who's not with clarity from among the Japanese [sisters]. The reverse holds true for Koyanagi.

Later, in the city building, we met a bunch of Thai dudes.

[We] had a special lesson for Ogawa-san. [Hadh'n't I earlier stated that we were taking a break from teaching this guy? Did I somehow forget and book another appointment?] Frehner pushed and pushed so he'd get mad enough to come out with his real feelings. It worked.

[Switching subjects a little,] my philosophy worked. I was able to hear a word used that I'd never heard before and know exactly what it meant by the root words. Thanks be to my study of kanji and the Lord's help. [The word was "seichi," the Japanese word for "holy ground."]

[We] met with our barber for a lesson. He only meets rarely and can't [meet] again for another few weeks. [Morikawa-san was his name. I would later draw the conclusion that he was merely taking the lessons to continue getting the missionaries' business in his barber shop. In other news, his father, who worked in the barber shop with him, was a World War II veteran and had been captured by the Russians in Manchuria. He spent the next ten years in a Soviet P.O.W. camp, during which time his family never knew if he was dead or alive.] Okumura's become busy, etc., and Matsumoto has, too. All our investigators are slipping through our fingers. We both feel like going out and getting brand new ones and ditching the old.

Wednesday, April 17, 1991—Day 470

Today we went out and seriously *worked*, and I believe [that] we were blessed accordingly. We taught a regular lesson, a special lesson, and an A.B. lesson. We housed and jitensha dendoed [i.e., "bike proselyted"]. We placed two books and made a return. Honli accepted a return appointment after Discussion 1, so we made a pick-up, too.

Tonight we had maybe a half hour left after our A.B. lesson, but we went out on the streets anyway on the off-chance that there'd be someone out at 9:00 **[p.m.]**. We'd gotten home 15 minutes early last night and I felt guilty for not even giving it a chance, so tonight we showed some faith, and "whamo," made a return appointment.

So we really worked today, showed faith, and the Lord blessed us. I feel really good. From now on, the challenge will be to keep working, even if the Lord *doesn't* bless us with immediate success.

Thursday, April 18, 1991—Day 471

It rained miserably today, and after playing a golf T.V. game at Keiji's we came home, dried off, and I worked on the area book. **[An "area book" stayed in the apartment and primarily contained record sheets on previous and current investigators. This was so that senior companions newly transferring in could immediately be brought up to speed on things.]** I didn't get done nearly the amount that I should've, however.

Eikaiwa was rocking and rolling. **[It's]** a highly dramatic improvement over when I first showed up, three weeks ago. 19 people were there. **[It was]** lots of fun.

Friday, April 19, 1991—Day 472

[We] had a zone taikai today, at Takefu for a change. This is the first time I've ever had one in my own area. I found out that Madsen and Van Cleave are still juniors, too, in addition to Gibson.

We were hungry, so afterwards we and the shimaïs went to McDonald's for my first time of my mission so far—**[the last time was]** over 15½ months ago, maybe more (not including **[what we appropriated from]** the trash cans). **[It's]** the closest I've come to a date yet, the four of us. The place was expensive, but really good. **[When discussing the little things we Americans take for granted but miss when living abroad, I never fail to bring up McDonald's. A trip to McDonald's barely registers on the radar of people living in the United States as any sort of privilege, but when you can no longer afford it or it's otherwise unavailable, McDonald's cuisine becomes the sweetest delicacy humanly imaginable.]** I didn't get all my fries or Coke finished before we had to leave, dang it.

Back in the M.T.C., did I ever mention Clark Shimai as being cute? I thought so then. I even thought about her a few times in Inuyama. (Yep—see Day 56.)

[We] taught Honli a successful lesson, and we made a couple more returns. We can do this; with **[learning]** Japanese out of the way I feel **[like]** we can do great from now on. I'm beginning to like this senior stuff.

Saturday, April 20, 1991—Day 473

[We] rapped with the military guys who recruit out of the bottom floor of the church building. **[Like Inuyama, the branch simply rented a floor of a certain office building; Takefu's branch wasn't populous enough to merit its own structure.]** Finally, I met someone with an attitude on war that I like! **[Interestingly, they all wore civilian clothes, since—according to they themselves—the military, even their own, has a bad reputation in Japan.]** However, the guy we mainly talked to had an attitude on religion that I didn't like at all. He was so far gone, it was no use even talking about it. **[In retrospect, I wonder how many people thought the same thing about us?]**

[He did say one thing that proved prophetic, though. He mentioned how we all change as we get older, and said that Frehner and me would also have different attitudes about religion several years down the road. We of course vehemently denied it. I can't speak for Frehner, but he was 100% spot-on in my case.]

We were supposed to do service at the library by playing with little kids, but our guy (Yamada-san) didn't

show up in time and we found our way into a mini-gaijin panel, like the one in Inuyama, but a bi-weekly or so thing. There was only one American there, however (or foreigner, for that matter). They asked me what one of my impressions of the Japanese people are, i.e. the differences between them and us, and I had a hard time deciding what to say due to the fact that it's not good to rip them down in front of their faces. I tried to sidestep, but it didn't work 'cause they got specific. So I griped about their attitude on war and the military.

Later we went to Takeuchi's place, a fuke member. The shimais showed us where he lived earlier today. **[We]** met with him, and as things went on we got into the gospel and his baptism and so forth. 'Twas a bit awkward at first, but thanks to the Lord it turned out really well and the Spirit was felt. He gave an extremely sincere, impressive prayer afterwards, and I've got high hopes for him. The Lord really helped—heck, He did it all. Now I'm beginning to believe in this fuke dendo stuff. It can be done.

Sunday, April 21, 1991—Day 474

There was a huge taikai in Kanazawa for everyone up North, members, missionaries, etc. We got Ogawa-san to come with **[us]**, hoping **[that]** the five-man baptism kai afterwards would help him. The mission president spoke there, and after it ended I saw him rapping with Ogawa for a minute or two. How 'bout that!

Nope, the baptisms (one of whom was Van Cleave's) didn't affect him at all. On the way home in the branch president's car, I asked him what he thought of it all, and he said, **[in English,]** "Mysterious!"

[I nodded off during the rest of the trip, but not before seeing Ogawa engaging in a rather animated discussion with the branch president. I found out later that Ogawa was complaining to him about us being pushy and asking for commitments, etc.]

Back at church, the shibucho (**[which is Japanese for]** branch president) had a talk with us about him. He's worried (as we are) about what kind of member he'd make. He proceeded to describe Ogawa straight down the line. Man, that guy has the power of discernment! He politely asked us to drop him if he doesn't show any real interest fast. It must be tough to ask missionaries that, since that's our responsibility—teaching. I can appreciate his point of view and we agreed wholeheartedly.

[We later] went to Keiji's and had an honest talk with him. He doesn't seem serious at all, either. We gave him a choice—continue meeting **[with us]** or take a break. He chose to take a break. **[That's]** fine by us.

[We] visited an investigator from a few years back. No results. **[He was a]** nice guy, but that's about it.

It's interesting, having American sister missionaries in the same town. It had been 10 months, and even then it was essentially all Japanese sisters.

Monday, April 22, 1991—Day 475

[It was] a highly profitable P-day. I fought the temptation to sleep, and really went to work hard on my Bunpo list—**["Bunpo" is Japanese for "grammar"]**—and got all the initial numbering done! Now it's only a process of refining, double-checking, and then writing up the master copy itself. Soon, folks.

[We] met with Ogawa for what was the last time. He came right out at one point and said that half the reason he meets is to kill time. **[I'll never forget that comment. Frehner asked him why he bothered to meet with us, and he answered, in broken English, and I quote: "Half to learn, half kill time."]** So we did some last ditch review and testimony-bearing and that was that. After he left, I looked up at the standard picture of Christ, and the expression on his face seemed to be telling me, "You did your part, you did your best, and I'm very pleased with you."

Thy will be done, O Lord.

Tuesday, April 23, 1991—Day 476

Worked on my list all morning, then after district benkyokai there was too much time wasted, in my opinion. Running around with Koyanagi trying to get him a haircut, etc.

[We] worked hard housing, but [there was] no concrete result.

Got another letter from Theresa, the silly wench. She doesn't know where to quit! Telling me [that] she wishes she could marry all of "us" at the same time, the order in which she loves all of "us" by preference, etc. [She'd met and seriously dated a few different guys by this time.] Frehner doesn't know how I can sit here and wait, not sending her a nasty reply. I don't really know either, other than knowing that it's a choice between a cookie now and a Cadillac later. If I ditch her now, I can't wring her neck eight months down the line. That's worth waiting for.

[We] taught Honli, who had a lot of questions about life after death, etc. I felt bad going so far off track, but it was for his benefit, so I went ahead and got advanced.

[We] had a pleasant visit with a guy named Ogawa [also], who on the way to drop us off took us by a place where the Mafia work. [In other words, the entry to their hovel.] Now I can say I've seen that, too.

I'm sorry [that] this entry's so weird. I'm not concentrating too hard.

Wednesday, April 24, 1991—Day 477

Stratton called all the way from the Honbu just to wish me a good day. Now is that a compliment, or what?

We did "danger dendo," putting Eikaiwa chirashis in the baskets of every bike in the train station. Holy cow, we passed out a ton. We'll see the results tomorrow—I hope a lot [of people] show up.

[We] housed again with no real results. Lately we've been bashing our heads trying to come up with better dendo methods. We're hurting for good ideas.

It rained, making dendo all the harder.

We just so happened to house our way to a cheap ice cream cone place [that] we frequent. So we gave in and went inside and had some.

[We] went with the shimais to visit a guy in the hospital, then went to Fukui for a baptism kai. It was Koyanagi's investigator. [Her name was Yoshie Nakajima.] She was crying pretty hard; she was truly converted. She'd been taught all six lessons by elders way back, though.

Thursday, April 25, 1991—Day 478

[We] visited [our investigator] Ogawa's place this morning and looked at all his old pictures. That was pretty interesting, seeing him when he was young. [One set of pictures was pretty bizarre: He had a number of them with his best friend and that friend's new wife on their honeymoon—apparently this friend had invited Ogawa to come along!]

[We later] tried some housing. Poor Frehner, he was a little off about the fact that I've never gotten rejected too rudely yet, while he's gotten it bad a few times so far. I chalk some of it up to my [fake] glasses, some of it up to the fact that I'm way less worried about the language barrier.

[We] visited our fuke guy who works a sushi store. [This was Sabi Kyodai. The sisters had told us

about him and suggested that we visit him.] We got into his reasons for not going to church, etc. That was good, 'cause it's one of the few times I've seen fuke dendo get past the B.R.T. stage.

[We] had another "picture night" at Eikaiwa which went over really well. The sisters were so appreciative that they called me out of the blue tonight to tell me thanks. Another great compliment, right? This is all too cool!

Friday, April 26, 1991-Day 479

[We] did a lot more housing again today. I like to jazz things up with my sense of humor, which sometimes gets Frehner laughing pretty hard. **[It used to get Reed laughing, too.]** Yep, it's about time to start making this fun.

Beyond that, things were pretty regular.

Am I really doing anyone any good out here?

Saturday, April 27, 1991—Day 480

We baked banana bread this morning and took it around, giving it to people as we housed. You'd be surprised **[at]** how many people refused even so simple a humanitarian gesture as that. Whether it made a difference or not I don't know, but we did make a return.

A little while later I was shokaiing a kid really well, and his dad comes up saying, "We don't need it, we don't need it" really rudely. That ticked me off; I should've pounded the guy.

We sure did work hard today. Frehner says that we've housed way more in the past two days than he and Biddulph ever did the whole month **[that]** they were together.

[We] went to a sento tonight—a really nice one. Another couple of women (first the daughter, then the mother) were at the desk in plain sight of the **[men's]** dressing room.

Sunday, April 28, 1991—Day 481

Yamada Kyodai gave us a Chinese Book of Mormon for Honli. This is so cool; I just can hardly wait to give this to him.

[We] taught Nobuko the last part of her last A.B. lesson with Takama Shimai, a stake missionary. That was the first time I've ever done it with one.

We kept ourselves busy with lots of streeting and housing tonight.

Monday, April 29, 1991—Day 482

Today, at least the first part, was profitable in that I got a lot done on my bunpo (**[which is Japanese for "grammar"]**) list. I spent too much time answering letters, though.

[We] went to the kid's house with whom we'd booked an appointment on Saturday, **[his name was Masataka Miyoshi,]** but his mom answered. She said he was sleeping.

It was raining, so we had to get our rain suits on (**[called]** "kapa"s **[in Japanese]**). We took a little too long, 'cause the dad came out all rudely and asked why he hadn't been consulted about the affair. I was nervous at first, but he was an idiot, so I decided to play with the guy. He said **[that]** his 16 year-old was still a child, how they had their own religion, and other stuff. So I turned it around and shokaid him even though he was mad at me; **[I was]** playing dumb and **[all]** that. I invited him to church, invited him to Eikaiwa, tried to book a return, etc. I even offered to bring him some banana bread later. He was mad

the whole time, yet I still had fun with him.

[In retrospect, I can see his point. If I had a minor child, I would be miffed if a couple of religious people had booked an appointment with him or her without my consent, too. We didn't think anything of it at the time, but now I strongly feel that missionaries should be instructed to not purposely approach anyone younger than legal adulthood without his or her parents' permission.]

We came back **[to the apartment]** and I called up some old investigators. One couple who had joined the Protestants let me in on what the former missionaries did wrong. I had asked, 'cause we must've screwed up if they didn't get baptized. That turned out to be an interesting conversation. **[It]** turns out **[that]** the guy had been there at the mini-panel on Day 473.

I hate it; people can tell **[that]** I'm a foreigner right off by my voice when I talk to them on the phone. Jeeez, the Japanese are a bunch of frightened rabbits. Many **[of them]** have no common sense. **[They have]** no tact. **[They're]** rude. There are many exceptions, but they tend to be quite a bit more degenerate than us. **[Perhaps "backward" would've been a more accurate—not to mention politically correct—word. My apologies.]** Then again, Theresa's American, yet she's not too full of common sense, either.

Tuesday, April 30, 1991—Day 483

I was pretty bummed out over last night at first, but after benkyokai I felt better. **[We]** had a meeting set with Takeuchi Kyodai, but he went to the church while we went to his house, thus we missed each other, dang it.

Honli is such a stud! You've gotta love him. His having lived in China has sure made a difference.

After **[our]** break, I really didn't want to dendo at all, but I made a return, which cheered me up.

'Tis a tad hectic. I'm sorry.

Wednesday, May 01, 1991—Day 484

We've embarked on a new program where we're going to keep all the rules, and by doing so we expect to see a baptism or more out of it. I'm having my doubts about it, though.

[We] went to Sabae to make the Eikaiwa tapes, then walked around Nishiyama park with Koyanagi and companion to see the flowers.

[We] dendoed, but didn't find anyone with a brain.

[We] had a meeting with the shimaïs to divide up the fukes. We were pretty depressed about our lack of success, though. We asked them how they did it. **[It]** looks like shimaïs show love better than elders do. **[Ain't that the truth! I'm of the opinion that if the church was really serious about gaining converts via the missionary program—as opposed to just churning out RM drones loyal to the organization—they'd encourage women to serve just as much as they encourage men to serve, they'd allow sisters to begin serving at age 19, and they'd allow sisters to be zone leaders, A.P., etc.]**

[We] did Family Home Evening for the Honda family, a part-member one with all girl children **[two of whom were twins]**. 'Twas fun.

All this lack of success (except for Honli) is pissing me off. I'm built for *success*, dang it, not this trash.

Thursday, May 02, 1991—Day 485

[We] had zone pass-offs in Fukui. Since it was raining when we got home, I did phone dendo and met a cool lady ([a] former investigator) who considered us to be "like angels." Now that's a welcome relief.

Another guy [with the last name "Yoshizawa"] skipped [out on] his pick-up lesson. That's four so far. A grandma saw us on the street and came up and gave us food. Cool!

Another fairly cool Eikaiwa came and went.

Friday, May 03, 1991—Day 486

We had a trip to the beach/picnic with the kaiins [i.e., the members] today. The shibucho (branch president) said not to invite anyone but those close to baptism and kinjins [Japanese for "golden people," used as missionary slang for "golden contacts"], so we invited Honli. The sisters had *four* Eikaiwa students come, 'cause their investigators couldn't. It was due to a lack of cars vs. people that he made that rule. In fact, half [of] his family didn't go due to that fact. We had told a bunch of Eikaiwa guys [that] they couldn't go, so when the sisters showed up with all these people I wasn't too pleased. They're always late to everything, too. Yep, they're a pain at times.

Honli and us had a lot of fun, though.

Saturday, May 04, 1991—Day 487

There's a very interesting theme for today, no doubt.

We went with the sisters (who were late) to a fuke member's place in Sabae and helped her plant her rice paddy. The Sabae guys were there, too. There weren't enough boots, so most of us worked barefoot in mud halfway to our knees. Now I can say that I've done it; [I've] worked in a rice field in Japan. Ouch; at the end, Sister Clark sure looked "nice" in her turtleneck.

Had a letter waiting for me from Jodi. In it, she mentioned that her friend has the "legs" but she has the "curves." Oh la la! The "curves?" I can hardly wait now!

Tonight during housing, a chick answered the door but her top was unbuttoned way down past her sternum. The way she was reaching out to hold the door open (they open to the outside in Japan), I could see right inside. Holy cow. Needless to say, I tried my hardest for as long as I could to keep her talking. It lasted a while. [It] turns out [that] she's cousin to Yamada Kyodai. Cool, eh? She shifted positions early on so I couldn't see much for long, but still, it got one excited. ([She had on] a slightly pink bra, I think.) She was dang cute, too.

Of course, when the day began I hadn't the foggiest idea that the theme of the day would become this, but what with Sister Clark, Jodi, and Yamada's cousin, what do you think today's theme was/is? *Right!*

I don't know where all my spirituality's gone, either.

Sunday, May 05, 1991—Day 488

After church we visited Sabi Kyodai, a fuke dude who works a sushi joint. He had the movie "Leviathan" on, so it was tough to concentrate. [It's a] good show.

[We] visited Isa Kyodai, too. [He's a] good guy, but fuke.

Housing just isn't effective. We're digging for better ideas.

Monday, May 06, 1991—Day 489

[We] went really early to get picked up by Tanibata-san and taken to his place. We helped him straighten

the trunks of trees **[that]** they grow to sell the wood for. **[Let me explain further: His father owned some land on a steep hillside, and the trunks of the trees would grow a bit outward, then up. We strung ropes around the trunks, anchored the other ends to something solid, and then ratcheted the ropes tight to bend the trunks so that they pointed as close to vertically as possible.]** We didn't work nearly as long or as hard as I thought we would.

Jodi had sent me a picture of herself, but she'd told me to not look at it 'till today. She was sitting on the bed of her new dorm with a serious look on her face, as seductive as ever. **[She has a]** nice body. Yum, yum!

[We] visited Hirai Kyodai and felt the Spirit. We affirmed that we were his friends and he could rely on us. **[He's]** another good guy, like Takeuchi. I should do fuke dendo more often.

Tuesday, May 07, 1991—Day 490

My mom's birthday's today. She's 42.

I don't know what the **[mission]** president is thinking, but he's passed on orders to where all we do for finding time is street for this week, house next week, kain dendo the next, and finally a balance at the last. 'Twill be interesting. So we did lots of streeting and gave out two Books.

I got a letter from Grandpa S_____ (mom's dad), and for my **[own upcoming]** birthday he sent a hundred bucks. That's well over half a month's pay!

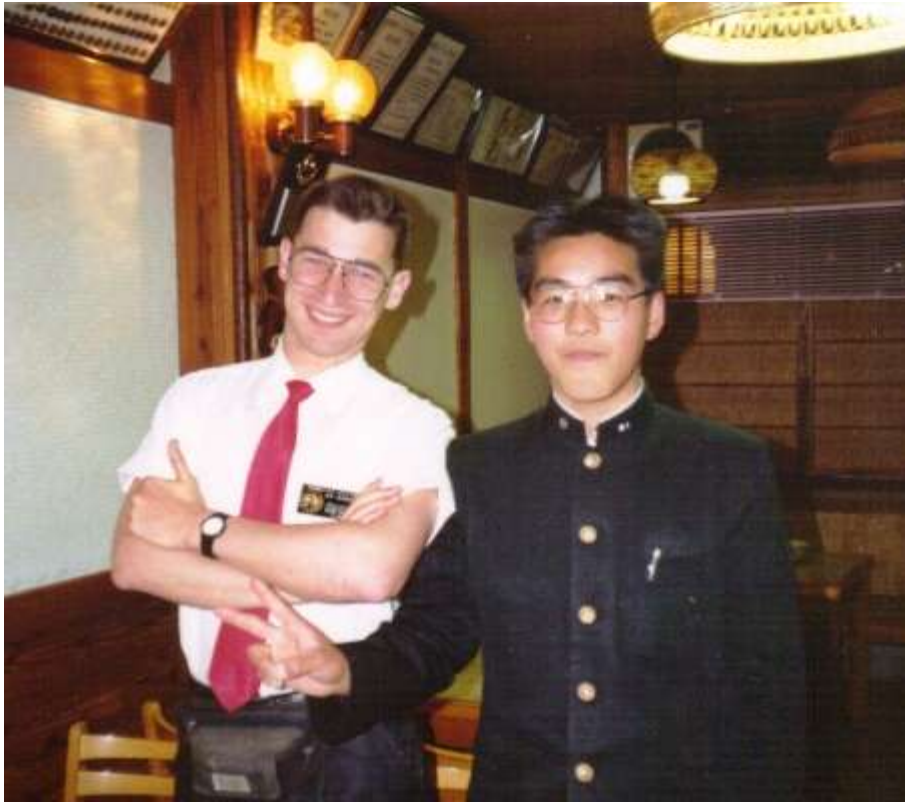
Honli didn't want to be baptized, 'cause he says **[that]** he doesn't want to join the church. It seems solvable, though.

We both got haircuts today. Before Institute at the church started, we walked into the room. I was in my solid blood-red tie and short-sleeved shirt. Sister Yamamoto saw me and said, in English, "You look so sexy!" That caught me off guard, to be sure. I'll have to wear this **[tie]** once I'm back in America.

PHOTOS 062



L-R: Me, Frehner. This is inside Yoshida's; we're eating our cheap ¥100 ice cream cones (about 80 cents at the time).



L-R: Me, Koichi.



L-R: Me, Koichi, Frehner.

Wednesday, May 08, 1991—Day 491

[We] visited Ogawa for a pleasant visit; now I'm on a split with Koyanagi here. At first I complained, yet

now it's okay. We tried to get my bank note from Grandpa changed, but it's like pulling teeth. The first bank, where I've got my account, couldn't do it at all. What a pain. I have to wait a week or so, and it looks like they're going to slice off a huge chunk for themselves. I should've remembered to just send it in to the Honbu, dang it. And the bank note was written out for an exact amount of ¥, too. I'm pissed. **[At the same time, I was extremely lucky to have Koyanagi—a native speaker—there with me, 'cause he did all the talking with the bank employees. I was totally lost with all the specialized banking jargon and wouldn't've gotten anywhere on my own.]**

Koyanagi gave a book and I made a return through our streeting, even though it rained a bit off and on.

[We] had a lesson with our barber. We're only meeting once a month, but he's doing well and feeling the Spirit strong with the Book of Mormon. **[He has a]** good attitude, too. Koyanagi was great and let me take the whole lead 100%. **[It was a]** good experience.

Thursday, May 09, 1991—Day 492

[Koyanagi and I] went to Sabae to exchange dodes, then **[Frehner and I]** came back for more ineffective streeting (jitensha dendo). **[We]** taught a fun Eikaiwa later.

[Today we] got nothing accomplished—what a waste of a day. (Gads, those sisters are undependable.)

Friday, May 10, 1991—Day 493

[We] went and visited the lady **[whom]** we phoned **[back on]** the 2nd. **[Her name was Yoko Okamura; she's the one who said that we were "like angels."]** She's quite beautiful; **[she]** did dance and modeling before, too. She's married and pregnant with kid #3. She's 29.

We got to know her a bit, then the talk went to the gospel. She has a great attitude and is totally on our side. There were a few points in our way of thinking that didn't agree, however, but we used lots of tact. **[She's a]** cool lady. She'd go along with everything if she could (especially attend church), but her husband is "hantai," or "opposed." Dang, it seems like no matter what we do, Satan always counters it perfectly. I mean it.

Anyhow, we went on for 2½ hours total, all about the gospel, truth, the right way, etc. At the end we read 3 Nephi 17:15-17 and I about lost it. I'd gone on for so long hitting *hard* on love, caring, happiness, joy. . . everything that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. I guess **[that]** at the end it finally sank in. It's tough to explain. All I want is for someone else's life to be touched by the gospel, so at the end I was seriously fighting back the tears. Frehner later said **[that]** he **[had]** noticed, so I guess she must've too. I bore testimony later. I hope it made a difference.

I don't know how I was feeling directly after. 'Twas one of those "super spirit" experiences. Writing **[about it]** like this, especially at this hour, can't possibly do this justice, so I won't even try. I've never even come close to crying in front of an investigator before this, today.

Then, **[it was]** back on the streets for more of the same.

Saturday, May 11, 1991—Day 494

Today was certainly a day to be remembered as one of those mission-making experiences. We'd been invited to a sit-in gaijin panel **[at the library]** like before, this time on religion. The same American Protestant girl was there and her friend, a guy from France who was Catholic. **[We had met him on the streets a few days earlier.]** There was no way on Earth **[that]** I was going to lose by forfeit to a bunch of Shintoists and Buddhists, so you know for sure **[that]** I wouldn't've missed it.

Frehner waited outside and had a few adventures of his own, what with the place full of triffs studying and one by one trying to get up the guts to go sit by him.

My strategy was to only speak when spoken to, thus enhancing the quality of each individual thing I said. As a result, I said very little, but what I said hit hard.

Lots and lots was said, **[The entire discussion took place in all English,]** but the group got quite impressed with how much I'm sacrificing just for this message. One broad pissed me off when she said that it's not so big of a sacrifice for us since we're young and can handle rain and snow and we get so much joy from the work anyhow. Argh. **[Looking back, she had a point. Going halfway around the world when you're single and haven't yet embarked on a career is quite a different ball game from going halfway around the world and temporarily abandoning wife, children, and career in order to do so. Plus, perhaps all the emphasis on the "joy" of missionary work—as opposed to the "sacrifice" of it—can indeed backfire like it did this time.]** However, the hostess gave me a lot of hope when she said that hearing about all we go through for this makes her wonder all the more what we're all about.

One Buddhist girl posed a question for the rest of the group **[i.e., her own group]**. She said that since Buddhists believe in Heaven and Hell, where does reincarnation (which they also believe in) come in?

While the group spoke amongst themselves, the **[two other]** Christians were amazed about how little they know about their own religion.

Later it came to how we **[Mormons]** used to practice polygamy, and I effectively answered that to the satisfaction of the group with no further argument.

One old hag (who tried to make us pay to get in at first) told me that she has a friend who's Christian but has told her to stay away from Mormons and that we're not Christians. I told the group the real name of our church and told them that yes, we are Christians. It surprised everyone, including the Protestant **[lady]** and **[the]** Catholic **[guy]**.

Later it got into how they are Buddhists but many **[of them]** undergo Catholic weddings. The Catholic **[guy]** was freaked out over that, since they said he was a real priest and he said that no priest would marry **[i.e., perform the marriage ceremony for]** a non-Catholic. They said that they convert **[to Catholicism]** the day before or so, then re-convert to Buddhism two or three weeks later.

[It was funny how that last part went down: Upon hearing that the bride and groom convert to Catholicism the day before in order to have a Catholic wedding, the French guy asked them, in full jest, "So then what do they do, convert back the next day??" The host lady looked around for affirmation, and then answered, in all seriousness, "No, I think they stay Christian for—two or three weeks?" At which the rest of the group nodded and agreed. Needless to say, the questioner remained wholly unimpressed.]

I'm used to such idiocy, but the two foreigners were utterly amazed. The girl was curled up in her seat with her hands in her face and said **[to me]**, "You must have so many stories!" I said, "The stories I could tell you!" The Catholic guy had his arms across the table and his face was buried in it and he looked over at me slowly and said, "I wish you luck!" I said, "Thanks, I'll need it!"

By now the two **[other Christians]** were getting a full taste of how these people *really* think (or *don't* think, **[as the case may be]**). Ever after could be heard under the breath comments like, "Amazing!" or "Unbelievable!" The two were shaking their heads the whole rest of the time.

At the end, I decided to drop a bomb 'cause I knew it'd amaze the other two Christians. I said, "Before we go, I've got one question. If most Buddhists believe that once you die then that's the end and **[there's]** nothing more, **[i.e., no afterlife, then]** why do you pray to your ancestors?"

That hit hard. After a little more conversation, one **[of them]** said, "That's just another one of the contradictions." French guy: "Obviously!" Host lady: "We just don't think very much about things like

that." French guy: "I can tell!"

So it all ended like this: Both non-missionary Christians were utterly flabbergasted, the Mormon missionaries seemed like angels from on high, and the Buddhists seemed like utter incompetent fools. Yes, yes, that's the ending I was aiming for. It honestly couldn't've worked out more beautifully. It all worked to my/our advantage. The funny thing is, I don't think the Buddhists realized what fools they looked like at all. Typical.

[As I mentioned before, we had met this French guy on the streets a few days earlier. He was a tourist and was totally enamored with Japan and all things related thereunto. I wonder if his opinion of the country changed after this encounter?]

What a success this turned out to be, eh?

[We] met some Filipino guys later. They thought **[that]** we didn't believe in Christ, either.

[We] had a pick-up lesson with a real cool dude, but he can't meet again 'till August. Dang, always, there's something that keeps us in check. We were really feeling it as we had to go out on the streets and do it all over again.

Sunday, May 12, 1991—Day 495

Honli came to church today. We had a lesson afterwards and asked him how he liked the meeting, and he said he didn't like it 'cause he dislikes meetings and school-like stuff like that. I don't know how we'll resolve *this* concern. What can you say? So we're both beginning to lose hope on Honli, too.

[We] went to Kojima Hiroko's baptism kai. Remember her from when they came down to visit us in Inuyama **[back on Day 411]**? Well, 'twas a really spiritual event. Facer Choro was there, the guy who first found the Yamamotos. He'd gone home, but now he's back. He'd gone senior at six months in Japan and never took a break the whole time. He saw loads of success, too. For the life of me, I can't figure out how he did it.

Monday, May 13, 1991—Day 496

[We] had an appointment with Takeuchi this morning. **[I later]** got a lot done on my **[grammar]** list. Spent a fortune on food, too.

[We] went into a store to buy some stuff, me some white-out and Frehner some flipchart material. We met an older Eikaiwa student and he insisted on buying our stuff for us! His job had relations with the store, so I guess that's why. I saved 300 yen; Frehner saved about two sen (**[which is]** 2,000 **[yen]**). **[He saved]** more, if you count the fact that he almost bought it from the Honbu.

[And thus took place a very rare occurrence in Japan—someone buying our stuff for us. Now, the conditions in the Provo, Utah mission are legendary: Apparently, missionaries there rarely, if ever, pay for *anything*. Rumor has it that they'll be in the grocery store or a restaurant and before they can hand any money to the cashier, some random member will pretty much always come up and say, "Don't worry about it, Elders, it's on me!" How would it be?]

Had a tire blow-out, and gave a Book to the guy who fixed it. Was I meant to have that happen tonight?

Tuesday, May 14, 1991—Day 497

[We] went with the Shimais to meet a family whom they may refer to us. The husband has interest, but not the wife.

[We] had a small lesson with Ogawa. He may want to be baptized it seems. During this, Junichi, one of

our **[High School-aged]** Eikaiwa kids, came to **[the]** church. He wants to meet tomorrow and play, it seems! He's bringing a friend, too. Wow, that was quite the surprise.

Called a fuke member who's now a Jehovah's Witness. Through various phone calls, we managed to go to their Bible study meeting tonight. You can imagine the looks we got as we went in! Tonight they were studying the Revelation of St. John. Hardcore stuff. **[It]** looks like they take it pretty literally.

[Interestingly, it seemed as though every last one of them—including rather small children—had a Watchtower-issued illustrated Book of Revelation with them for this lesson. Even though it was full-color, all the parents were allowing their kids to draw in and color these books. I guess the concept of defacement took a back seat to wanting their kids to gain an affinity for Watchtower-issued publications.]

At the end we were able to rap and make a bunch of friends. What do you bet **[that]** they won't be so quick to slam the door on us, **[what with]** them trying to put across the good impression that they are. We bet we'll meet one of them **[while]** housing this week. **[What made us think *that*?].**

Wednesday, May 15, 1991—Day 498

[Today was an] interesting day, to say the least. **[We]** travelled up to Sabae for the tape-making only to find out **[that]** the room with the equipment was being used (we'd ridden **[up there]** with the shimaïs). Back home we made a return with the nice lady who lives beneath us.

[We] went to meet Junichi, but when he got to the church he had to go pick up his "friend" at a different eki (**[which is Japanese for]** "train station"). **[It]** turns out **[that]** he had one male and two female friends he'd invited to our place. It was raining, so what else could we do but let them all in? Thus, we had to violate one of the most serious rules of any mission—no one of the opposite sex in your apartment. **[When trying to resolve this pointed ethical dilemma—either violate a strict mission rule or leave a horrible impression by turning away guests into the rain—I looked at Frehner and asked, "What should we do?" He gave the standard, time-honored junior companion answer: "You're the senior!"]** All **[of them]** were 17 except for one 18 year-old.

We ate, rapped, and played all sorts of games. Frehner got a couple of good pictures. Sheesh, the Japanese aren't too shy about body parts. Junichi was teasing one girl about the small size of her breasts, and she was trying to counter by saying **[that]** they were the opposite (in all English). **[He said, "Small bust!" Then she said, "Big bust!" and then it repeated.]**

[We] built some good friendships; I feel good about the experience. Oh, how very, very, very few girls on planet Earth can say that they've actually been inside a **[male]** missionary's apartment!

Later tonight we went to the Christian church across from our apartment building. We first met a Norwegian lady who speaks good English. **[We later found out that she ran a Christian preschool as well.]** She asked if we were saved, then she went into the typical spiel about how all you have to do is believe in Christ to be saved. She'd lived in Japan for 38 years with only a few breaks in between, yet her Japanese was—literally—no better than ours. Chalk one more up to the power of God.

[It's almost enough to make one believe in Mormonism all over again. It's downright uncanny; the entire time I was in Japan, I never encountered a single foreign missionary who had better Japanese than we did, no matter how long that person had been in the country. Even though none of us missionaries had been in Japan for more than two years, our Japanese was *always* at least equal to—but usually markedly superior to—theirs.]

[We] hung out **[for]** a half hour, then two more people, a couple (male/female) it looked like, showed up. We then started their Bible study class.

They began to pray at the beginning, then they really began to get into it (**[saying things like]** "Amen!")

[and] "Oh!"). Next the phone rang. The lady went and answered it, then came back for me! Who in the world could it be? As she led me to the phone, she said that someone was really mad, asking if two foreigners had gone in there. Before I could pick up the phone, they'd **[already]** hung up. Weird, really weird. All this during the prayer.

At first, we had the scriptures and common sense that would've blown her out of the water, but it wouldn't've helped the situation, so we kept quiet. **[It was a]** pretty unprofessional meeting. Now we can see one thing: The J.W.s have the doctrine but not the love; the Protestants have the love but not the doctrine. **[It was an]** interesting day, indeed.

Thursday, May 16, 1991—Day 499

[We] took banana bread around for lots of follow-ups. It's no fair; we go and dendo our guts out **[with no result]**, and whenever we go past the church the shimais always have some golden contact stopped right in front of the church.

[We later] taught a tough Eikaiwa, and around 9:00 **[p.m.]** Kondo Kyodai stopped in from another room to remind us of our curfew. Oh, how totally sweet. He thought **[that]** we had to be home at 9:00, not 9:30. Gads, these kaiins always take it upon themselves to see that we're always following the rules. Yeah, thanks for minding my business. **[As I said before, a missionary in the Provo mission summed up the phenomenon best: "Every member a mission president."]**

My 22nd Birthday—Day 500

Koichi met us at the church and presented me with a nice present: A brand-new pair of shoes!! Ouch, that had to have taken a bite out of his pocketbook. They're really nice. After that he asked me a bunch of really deep doctrinal questions. I answered them all, but I hope I didn't fry his mind. By this time, the sisters and Takama Shimai were there, too.

[We] housed out 77 doors today. Not a single Book or return.

[We] went with Kondo for a home teaching appointment **[with a man named Brother Nakai]**. At the guy's house, he was rapping with the mother first, and the T.V. was left on. Showing a supposedly freshly-murdered girl **[it was a drama, not the news]**, the camera panned down and showed the *whole* upper-half (no clothes). Yep, they show that on T.V. in Japan. You'd better believe it was impossible to concentrate **[for]** the rest of the night.

I'd told a few people (at the doors) that it was my birthday, but none **[of them]** seemed too impressed.

So much for my birthday. I'm now 1/5 of the way through the 20s. We didn't do anything for it, either.

PHOTOS 063



L-R: Me, Frehner.



Front row, L-R: Koichi, Sister Waters, Sister Takama.
Back row, L-R: Me, Sister Clark.

Saturday, May 18, 1991—Day 501

Yes!

[We] went on a hike with Honli, 'cause I felt that continuing the lessons wouldn't help him at all. Afterwards we asked him his feelings, then when I was about to ask him what we should do from here [on out], I felt better of it and bore testimony and committed him to try Moroni 10:3-5. I sure hope [that] he does it and gets his answer to what we should do from now [on].

Earlier, coming back from housing in this one neighborhood, I felt [that] we should go by this one solitary house we passed earlier. There I found [out] that a Mormon kid had home stayed there from Utah three years ago! Instant B.R.T.! So I used that as best I could, but the lady still rejected the offer to listen. And I was inspired, even!

[We] had an appointment with Takeuchi Kyodai, but beforehand we had an hour with which to house, our last one. So we hit an apartment complex. We got kekkoed hard a couple of times ["kekko" is missionary slang for "reject,"], which got us a little mad, as usual, but then Frehner said that if we could get just one cool person out of the place, then he wouldn't care how rude the rest were. So I began banking on that.

On our second to the last door, we knew that if we shokaid someone then we wouldn't have time for the last one, so it was essentially our last door. There was an Amway sign on the outside, which I know a little about [one of the co-founders is my third cousin, twice removed], so I used that to B.R.T. really hard. The woman there I had woken up, it seems. We read Moroni 10:3-5 and she wanted the Book 'cause one little part wasn't enough to really understand (she said). So we gave it to her. At the end, she accepted a return appointment for next Tuesday! Hah! At our very last door of the week, [we made] a return. She's so cool; I hope and pray [that] this works out. Needless to say, we both were excited.

Oh yeah, I got an interesting letter. Heather Larson wrote me. She was my girlfriend during U.S.M.C. training. She's the first and probably only girl I've ever really *truly* loved. You see, I called and invited her to my farewell, and she didn't come. So she, after all this time, nearly a year and a half, wrote me a little 3x5 card with an apology saying she was sorry [that] she was rude and ignored me. Sheesh, she must've been carrying that guilt around for a while. She thought she was tricky 'cause she didn't leave a return address, but I still have hers memorized, so I'm going to write back to her anyhow.

A return! Argh, I/we want this to work out so *bad*! Please, Lord, please!

Sunday, May 19, 1991—Day 502

During dendo meeting, the shibucho came in and advised us to drop investigators that are just taking up our time. Bueler [Koyanagi's new junior companion] came out and shared the scripture in 3 Nephi about forbidding not, etc. From there the feeling went really bad, 'cause a challenge had been laid down. [I really can't emphasize this enough. Bueler read that scripture in order to contradict everything the branch president had just gotten done saying. To make matters worse, Bueler went on and on about how the gospel is for everyone, etc. Sure, what he said was correct, but it didn't alleviate the fact that the gauntlet had been thrown down—something that's anathema in Japanese society anyway—right there in church. All of us were there: The branch president, Brother Kondo, all six of us missionaries, and possibly Sister Takama, the stake missionary, too.

The tension was such that I simply couldn't look up. My face was pointed at the floor the whole time. I managed a quick glance up once, and Koyanagi wasn't making eye contact with anyone, either.] They both talked it over later, but I hope [that] the member-missionary relations aren't hurt.

This starts our week of Kaiin dendo. I later stayed in the apartment and called up fukes with no success. Crud, [it] looks like we'll be scraping for things to do this week.

We've finally given up on Ogawa.

[We] had a fun Family Home Evening at the Kitagawa's tonight. **[And a good time it was. Seemingly every active member of the branch was there, along with all the missionaries. I taught them all at least one party game which went over quite well.]**

This morning I made the final corrections on my all-powerful, almighty bunpo list. My dedication I write tomorrow, then it's off to be copied. Yes, it looks as though the long-awaited day has finally come! **[I was wrong about that last part. It turns out that there was a lot more formatting work that needed to be done on it. The fact that I didn't have access to a computer—nor the skills to use one back then—made it take all the longer.]**

Monday, May 20, 1991—Day 503

Wrote the dedication/opening notes, now the master copy **[of my grammar list]** is done.

Joe **[a nickname]** and Emi Kitano are a family we're trying to pick up, and so today we went with them to a mountain with a bunch of their friends to dig up wild vegetables. Yep, loads of fun. **[It was]** interesting; it sure wasn't a Mormon circle **[of friends]**, that's for sure. The conversation went to the color of gaijin's pubic hair, etc. Oh, brother. **[When they asked what color it was, I replied, "purple." That shocked them until I said that I was only joking.]**

Got a **[birthday]** package from Mom. **[It]** wasn't as cool as last year's, but oh well.

[We] went to Kondo Kyodai's to rap about kaiin dendo, but he didn't have enough time for us to bring up him shokaiing his friends, etc. **[Sometimes I wonder if they plan it that way. When they know that the missionaries are coming over for some purpose other than dinner, do they plan to be busy so that they won't have to hear the missionaries pressure them into introducing the church to their friends?**

At any rate, Brother Kondo was a convert. He was older, so chances are he joined the church after he had already been married. With obvious frustration in his voice, he made us both promise to never marry a non-Mormon.

He also talked about being a kid and seeing a wave of American bombers fly overhead and then firebomb Fukui, the next major town to the North.]

Later we went and made our copies of the list.

[We] met with **[the Hirano family,]** our neighbors downstairs. It took a long time, 'till 10:30 **[p.m.]**. I don't have a lot of hope for the dad, but I think the mom can be worked on. Their daughter is an old investigator of Biddulph's.

PHOTOS 064



L-R: Yasuyo (the nineteen year-old apprentice), Emi, Me, Frehner, Joe.

Tuesday, May 21, 1991—Day 504

This morning I got a phone call from the [mission] president. It turns out that Frehner's going to Tsuruga, replacing [Elder] Baggs. [I had known him from the M.T.C.] Guess what? I'm getting a new companion. *Really* new. Fresh from the U.S.A. or wherever. [I was wrong; he was from Canada.] I sure hope he's cool.

Brought my copies of the bunpo list to benkyokai. Hey, they were a hit! Some pretty tall predictions were made. Who knows; this list might fly after all!

[We] went and taught our pick-up lesson with our really cool lady [the one into Amway], Nakanishi-san. She was so cool. She had a good attitude. For a change, it felt like teaching a *real* investigator, just like all the Missionary Guide examples. [There's] one glitch—her relatives are pretty hardcore Soka Gakkai. She couldn't make a return appointment 'cause her husband might get mad if he found out [that] we were meeting. She said she'd come to church, though. Oh, I hope she does. She'd even read a lot of the Book of Mormon, too, which is an extremely nice break from the normal.

Got another letter and a birthday card from Theresa. She's gone spiritual. Her boyfriend (active [duty in the] U.S.M.C.) asked her to marry him, too. It'll be in August at the earliest. Yeah, right.

[We] went to the Jehovah's Witnesses' [meeting] again. I'd received my English J.W. Bible in the mail today, too. I'm just going back again to return their stuff. I prefer the light, I realized.

There's been some trouble lately with member-missionary relations in Tsuruga as well as here. Nope, Facer shouldn't've come back. Sheesh, it's nice to not be involved when there's trouble. Frehner and I are completely out of it. [I don't think I found out what the deal was with Facer, but I found out what the other problem was. Apparently Elder Baggs was always, *always* hitting up the Yamamotos for every little thing: For rides, for help with investigators, whatever. Apparently they were spending so much of their time helping him with missionary stuff that they didn't have any time for themselves. Yeah, I'd be frustrated, too.]

Wednesday, May 22, 1991—Day 505

This morning we went to Sabae to make Eikaiwa tapes. I got to sing the Eikaiwa song that I made up. Neat, eh?

[We] visited Sabi Kyodai, Isa Kyodai, and later Ogawa Kiichi (**[nicknamed]** "Burt"). **[Sabi Kyodai usually hooked us up with a little bit of sushi when we visited. Luckily for me, Frehner didn't like sushi, so he'd always slip his portion to me under the table. This meant that I always got double the sushi—cool, eh?]** *All three times* the conversation was on the price of land in Tokyo and other related economic subjects. **[It was established that the land in Tokyo alone is worth more than all the land in the United States. Or was, at least.]**

[We] rapped with the Kitanos, Joe & Emi. Is Emi trying to set me up with her 19 year-old apprentice?

Tomorrow, **[I get]** a bean!

Thursday, May 23, 1991—Day 506

Rode with a bunch of folks to the honbu. Once there, the place was packed. Dropped off Frehner in Tsuruga along the way. I showed a copy of my list to the folks on the way down, and they loved it too.

Once there, I ran around like a chicken with my head cut off, wondering if I'd missed bean training **[i.e., training that a senior companion must go through right before he's matched with a brand-new missionary, a.k.a. a "green bean,"]** what forms I needed to get, what I needed to pick up for who, etc. I never just kicked back and chatted with the group. I don't do that often; usually I bounce around everyone trying to greet everyone in turn.

The president introduced me personally to my new companion, Elder Depeel from Canada. Holy cow, he was in Oviatt's old ward! He saw his homecoming! Unbelievable. **[It]** looks like I'll get to write to the guy after all.

I gave my copy of my super-duper bunpo list to the president for his opinion of it. He said he'd look it over and see. Ouch, I hope this flies.

Dang it; looking back I should've sat and rapped more. Dang it!

It was Harris's dying day. **[I.e., the day he went home.]** Amazing. Now one **[former senior companion]** will "die" each month 'till they're all gone. Poulsen was there, too.

Yep, now I'm a trainer. I hope I can do this. I'd better see success!

[And thus would begin the tragic saga of Elder Depeel.]

PHOTOS 065



L-R: Me, Frehner. This was the morning that Frehner transferred out.

Friday, May 24, 1991—Day 507

[We] went around everywhere trying to visit fuke kaiins. Gads, it was hot today.

Poor Depeel Choro was feeling pretty depressed today. I don't blame him; I feel bad for him. Your first day has got to be a bit stressful. **[In his case, it was his first time away from home.]**

[We] visited again with Nakai-san. He had a bunch of pictures of Sisters Huber and Yogi, Waters, etc. Gads, seeing some of the old bunch really brings back nostalgic memories.

By the way, **[yesterday]** I was paid a couple of really nice compliments. Christensen Shimai told me that at the shimai taikai it was said (I guess) that all the shimais want to serve in the same district with me. I hope I got that right. For sure, on the specific side, Sister Uthagrove told her flat out that she'd always wanted to be in the same zone or district as me.

On the train **[yesterday]**, a dude **[more specifically, a fellow-missionary named Nolan Porter]** asked if I was in the Marines. I asked **[him]** how he knew, and he told me **[that]** he could just tell I was a Marine or at least something. That's fetchin' great; after being a civilian and then a missionary for so long, I thought I'd lost the look. I guess not! OUTSTANDING!!!

Frehner. What a stud. I'll miss him.

Saturday, May 25, 1991—Day 508

[Today we did] more of the same, going around finding fukes. Not a single one was home.

[We] went with Yamada Kyodai to a tabehodai, or an all-you-can-eat place. **[It specialized in meat. You'd go there and have all the meat you could eat.]** He chose to take us there for his appointment that we booked with him. We rapped about various things, especially about my current lack of success. **[We talked]** all about dendo, etc. Got a little sick on the way back.

This thing made us a half-hour late for our appointment with the Hiranos downstairs. We knocked on the door; the lights were on but no one answered. Uh-oh, now I'm worried.

Nobuko and Sister Takama came down from upstairs to give us frozen yogurt. Cool! They advised me to "make a family" when I get home. Maybe they feel bad 'cause they as of yet aren't married. I feel kind of bad for them; they're cool women, both. **[However, knowing what I know now about how wives typically fare within Japanese marriages, I don't feel bad for them at all for still being single.]**

Sunday, May 26, 1991—Day 509

There was some kind of music festival going on in front of the shiyakusho, making dendo hard. **[We]** met some of the folks we teach Eikaiwa to.

Later during housing, we had five minutes before having to leave for an appointment with Isa Kyodai, and we stopped off at a nice-looking house. In the yard was a girl I recognized. She invited us in, and we met the dad. **[It]** turns out **[that]** he knew the sisters, and the daughter **[the one we recognized who invited us in]** had heard a discussion or two. **[She was the leftmost person in the front row of the picture in PHOTOS 58.]** We told her that we had to leave for another appointment, so we asked if tomorrow was okay. He looked at her with the typical "Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde" look that the Japanese get when religion is brought up. He had her tell us that she can't join **[the church]**, and she started explaining why she couldn't join. Then he said, "It's not that you *can't* join, it's that you don't *want* to, isn't it!?"

What a jerk. He seemed cool at first. We'll be able to go back tomorrow it seems, but only as friends. I hope it's okay after all. We told the shimais about the experience. They say it's a long story, so I'll find out tomorrow what went on at first. Not that it'd make any difference anyway, but tonight I can honestly write, "To be continued!"

Monday, May 27, 1991—Day 510

Yet again our P-day gets shot to heck. Ikeda Kyodai took us up to see Eiheiiji, one of the two grand capital temples of Zen Buddhism.

[It was located up in the mountains. The mist amid the lush green was like something out of a fantasy novel. The whole complex was utterly enormous—think of a multitude of ornate and ancient temples all interconnected and open to the public.]

It was also the place where monk recruits received their training, so they were going about their daily routine of sweeping, etc. right there among us tourists.]

Holy cow, it was amazing. There were tons of similarities between that and our own temples, symbolically speaking. **[Brother Ikeda pointed them out; I would've missed them otherwise.]** The three levels **[of the afterlife]**, "angels" guarding the way, the godhead **[there were three statues of the Buddha enshrined at each waypoint, implying some sort of trinity]**, the veil **[in front of each such set of triple statues]**, even some of the garments that were worn or represented. My point of view just

took a 180° turn. I had thought that all that stuff was just made up by Buddha, but now I know that there is some link; somewhere in Jacob 5 they talk about the main tree and three separate branches. One **[branch]** we **[already]** know of, i.e. the **[peoples of the]** Book of Mormon. Yet what about these other two **[branches]**? **[Is one of them]** Japan, perhaps? Man, I can't wait to find out the truth behind all this. We're out dendoing every day, yet I wonder what kind of history we're standing on top of out here?

[Eiheiji was a place I'm definitely glad I got to visit. The complex is impressive beyond measure and is, quite literally, unforgettable. I shudder to think of the dollar value of the place.]

Got an outstanding letter from Jodi. Went to the bank and found out **[that]** they slashed ¥4,000 off my ¥13,248 from Grandpa. That's almost a *third*!!! Beyond that, I can't even pull it from the account. What a stupid idiot I was for not thinking to mail it to the honbu. If I only knew then what I know now. Stupid fool. Gads, I hate that bank. I was so pissed I couldn't write Jodi back.

[We] met with Takeuchi and Kondo Kyodai. **[He]** showed up like we asked him to. He laid it on the line about going to the temple, etc.

[We] went back to the girl's house **[from yesterday]**, and the mom met us and said **[that]** the girl was feeling bad and couldn't meet, which you know was a lie. She was telling us **[that]** she wouldn't join, but we could go over and play if we wanted to, as long as we left religion behind. She kept saying, "Dame" **[which rhymes with "Dante;" it's a strong Japanese word for "no go" or "no good"]** in relation to Mormon Kyo **["kyo" being the Japanese suffix equaling "-ism"]**, which she didn't realize pissed me off. Wench. Kill her.

[We] met with Hirano and Takahashi. **[It was]** not **[under]** the most ideal of circumstances. I can't even find the dang bank book now. *Argh!* I'm about to *kill* someone! How much more do I have to take!?

Tuesday, May 28, 1991—Day 511

After benkyokai I wasted too much time making an Eikaiwa tape with Bueler. He had a lot of complaints about Koyanagi **[his companion]**, so we both rapped about those.

[We] dendoed quite a bit today, so I'm feeling a bit better. **[We]** met another fan of Okawa Ryuho, and the guy had just bought two of his books. I used that as B.R.T. to give him a Book of Mormon. A friend of his rode up on a bike, wearing Ryuho Okawa paraphernalia. As an exchange for the book, they got my address and promised to send me an English book of his. Great, I'm getting literature from all the **[religious]** greats.

Wednesday, May 29, 1991—Day 512

[We] went to a meeting at the Christian church this morning. Yuck, what a bad feeling. I've had it; no more apostasy dendo for me.

[It] turns out **[that]** Depeel and I have a whole lot in common. He's got a really realistic attitude about dendo which I like. Plus, he was into freestyle biking at home, which impresses me to death. **[He had several photos of him and a few others performing freestyle bike stunts—really difficult moves—in front of a big crowd of people.]**

Got a letter from Theresa. She's getting all repentant, but her attitude still needs adjustment. **[It]** kind of shocked me; I'd better repent of all that stuff quick.

[We] worked hard today, but don't have too much to show for it.

Thursday, May 30, 1991—Day 513

Hey hey! We made a return **[while]** housing today! Hah!

The financial secretary put ¥40,000 into my account for Depeel's bike. We found him a used one still in great condition, really cheap. Talk about lucking out.

[We also] rapped with a girl from Finland on tour with an orchestra here.

[We] visited Emi, and she tried to set us up with her female apprentices. Ugh. **[Oh to have *not* been a missionary!]**

[We] had interviews at Eikaiwa, and made two returns! Hey! Three in one day! Rock and Roll! Frehner and Koyanagi visited from Sabae on a split. **[It was a]** fun Eikaiwa.

Tonight Depeel gave me lots of Canada paraphernalia. **[I can't remember the exact details, but prior to entering the M.T.C. he had met someone who worked for the city or province government. When this person found out that Depeel was going to Japan, he gave him lots of Canada-related stuff to give out to people here. The most ubiquitous items were Canadian flag lapel pins.]** Cool stuff.

[It was] a very profitable day.

Friday, May 31, 1991—Day 514

One of our Eikaiwa guys came **[to his lesson]**! We taught and then picked him up!! A new investigator!!! It feels great.

It rained all day, so 'twasn't too fun. **[We]** got Depeel's bike and he celebrated with the leftover money by taking us both to McDonald's. Oh, sweetness.

Later we went to the Sento. **[It was]** Depeel's first time.

[We] met with the folks downstairs. The lady committed to pray. I sure hope she does. Much changing needs to be done, but they seem to be growing little by little.

Saturday, June 01, 1991—Day 515

This morning I prayed to be led to an area with someone willing or wanting to teach **[sic., hear]** the gospel, and felt impressed to go to a place called Takagi Cho up near the border of Sabae.

[We] rode around 'till we found what we felt was a productive place. **[We]** had a choice of two roads to dendo down, so we listened for the promptings of the Spirit and chose one.

After a while, Depeel got thirsty so we decided to do water dendo, where you ask them for some water and they give it to you, then you shokai them and they can't kekko you 'cause you've got their glass. **[Thankfully this was probably the only time I did it. It soon dawned on me that this method abrogated their free agency, so I didn't do it again.]** We did that with this one lady, and we felt good from the start 'cause she had that air about her. She couldn't meet, but since she'd been so nice, we gave her a Book. She went upstairs and brought down the Bible she'd received. Next, of all things, she went and made us food!

Upon her return, we talked all about the Book of Mormon, explained it, etc. She had a great attitude and was cooperative. Even though Depeel didn't understand, he really felt the Spirit, as I did. In fact, she even surprised me by using a line I usually use on people in regards to the Book: "If you don't try and see, you'll never know!" I told her that if she read the whole book, beyond fail her life would change. I felt the Spirit strongest during that.

Now, it looks as though she'll read for sure, plus she said **[that]** we could come by **[the]** week after next

and then she would have us explain any parts she didn't understand.

Too awesome! It worked! We were *led* to somebody! We left on a good note. All this and I didn't even get her name. **[I got it later; it was "Kawakami-san."]** Thank you, Father, for leading us today.

Tonight we kicked back and visited an English teacher from the U.S. **[whom]** I know. **[His name was Charles Jannuzi.]** It was interesting, speaking all English to a non-missionary American.

Thanks to the first experience, today was quite a memorable day. Much thanks will be given tonight.

Sunday, June 02, 1991—Day 516

[We] cut out early to teach our lady **[named "Tanigawa-san"]** with whom we'd made the appointment. Like an idiot I forgot my Japanese Bible, so I couldn't share the appropriate scriptures. This threw me off, and I don't think I taught very well.

The problem with the lesson plan is that they thrown down too much doctrine at the beginning which needs a deeper explanation than that given, in my opinion. **[The missionary discussions, at the time at least, were a one-size-fits-all affair. They probably worked great for a Christian audience, but for investigators with a Buddhist or Shintoist background, the material in Lesson One is like taking a drink from a fire hose. Think of it this way: If you were listening to a lesson about a particular Buddhist sect that was written with a Buddhist audience in mind, do you think you'd easily catch on to the basic assumptions right off the bat?]** From now on, instead of teaching them from **[principle]** 1.1 to 1.6 in order, I'll teach 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.2, and 1.4 in that order. In other words, instead of God—Christ—prophets—Joseph Smith—Book of Mormon—Holy Ghost, it'll be God—prophets—Book of Mormon—Holy Ghost—Christ—Joseph Smith. **[I did it that way once or twice at the most but soon switched back to the original format. This is because I didn't really feel the Spirit when I did it my own way, which in turn was because I felt guilty for assuming that I knew how to teach better than the missionary committee in the Church Office Building who had probably spent a lot more time and money figuring out the ideal way than I had.]**

I emphasized the Book of Mormon, and she said **[that]** she'd read it, but we couldn't get a pick-up. Dang it.

Later we went to the sisters' investigator's baptism. **[Her name was Maki Kurizaka.]** She was a chick with epilepsy or palsy or whatever and she couldn't hold her nose effectively for the ordinances and was choking on the way out **[of the water]**. She gave a long testimony later.

[We] got home and rapped with our guy in the hospital for a long time. **[We had been introduced to him by the sisters. He was there convalescing after an injury or something.]** Great, it seems like I've got stuff in common with the guy too.

Sister Yamamoto gave me a great compliment at church, saying that they were depressed when they got to church and found **[out]** that I wasn't there. **[I'm confused—if I wasn't at church, how could they have complimented me at church?]** They say that my bright attitude really cheers them up.

Monday, June 03, 1991—Day 517

Got a lot of letters written today. 'Twas nice. Wrote a good one to Jodi, too.

[We] had some good conversations with some people at the doors as we housed tonight. One time a guy seemed quite unfriendly so I was about to cut it short, but then I saw two old pairs of samurai armor **[on display]** inside which I proceeded to praise up and down. The guy's attitude changed, he got friendly, accepted a Book, and even said he'd read it. How 'bout that, eh?

Tuesday, June 04, 1991—Day 518

[The] night before last I got a call from Tsutsumi Shimai, asking a favor. Matsushita Shimai's baptism is this Sunday, and her sister is too shy to introduce her the way they usually do it, so she asked if I'd record my voice and send the tape. I spent all morning writing it up and taping it. On the back, I recorded a personal message for her, telling her to stand fast through trials and temptation and not go fuke.

Waters Shimai transferred there, that's how Tsutsumi Shimai found my number.

[We] housed and met a lady **[named "Kihara-san"]** who was looking for a gaijin to teach her and her friend's kids English. I said **[that]** we'd do it for free on Friday. I'm not a charity case; I'm planning on using it as a vehicle to shokai the smell out of the parents. I'd rather work than teach little kids English.

We gave a Book and got a great commitment to read from a lady who lives downstairs. Man, this apartment building rips!

Wednesday, June 05, 1991—Day 519

The president came up for interviews, which will be my last time from him. He goes home **[at]** the beginning of next month.

Really hammed it up with a couple of women at the door, and gave a Book to a 60 year-old lady who looked 40. At another door, a lady said **[that]** she didn't need the Book, then I said **[that]** she *did* need it—and after she died, she'd understand. She looked puzzled, but we were on our way out.

[We] taught Aoki a lesson that went well. **[He was one of the people we picked up for the discussions through conducting Eikaiwa interviews.]** He said some great things. **([For example, he said]** "If Joseph Smith really saw God and Christ, that's awesome!") He's got real interest; he's a *real* investigator! *Great!* (It's about time.)

Thursday, June 06, 1991—Day 520

[We] had zone pass-offs, where I/we were up in front of the crowd giving the example of teaching A.B. lesson 1.1.

The sisters (Clark, at least) took us aside and apologized, what with the way Eikaiwa's been going 'cause of them not being there on time, etc. I held back and didn't say a lot just to keep the relations good.

Prayed beneath the gates of a Buddhist temple to be led to a good area, and eventually we got there. I had no energy to argue with people, so I gave up easily.

[We] met one lady who was taking the lessons from the Jehovah's Witnesses. I shokaid for an hour, testifying about Joseph Smith, identifying the Holy Ghost, and on and on and on. She never accepted the Book, but I committed her to ask the Jehovah's Witnesses three questions the next time they meet:

1. If we can feel the Spirit nowadays,
2. If God will answer our prayers through the Spirit if we pray,
3. What John the revelator wrote *after* the **[Book of]** Revelation.

[Like most Christian sects, the Jehovah's Witnesses point to the last part of the Bible, the portion of the Book of Revelation wherein the author pronounces a curse upon anyone who adds to "the words of this book," as their excuse for rejecting the Book of Mormon.] [It's] sure to cook the Jehovah's Witnesses. I gave her a phone number so she could call when she gets interest.

[We] met another lady **[who was]** really friendly. **[She had]** cute kids. She wouldn't make a return, but she accepted the Book. She got a phone number **[from us]**, too. **[It's]** interesting; lately out of all the folks I've given Books to, they've all been giving pretty firm promises to read **[it]**. **[I]** Hope they all come

true.

Hashimoto, a lady at **[the]** shiyakusho Eikaiwa, is really sexy. **[She's]** built nicely. Yep, the things I'm looking forward to most when I get home are loud music and babes.

Taught Shokyu **[the beginner's class]** tonight **[at regular Eikaiwa]**, or tried to. Had a tough time.

Friday, June 07, 1991—Day 521

[I] Prayed hard to be led to a good area this morning and followed the promptings. Once in the area, I followed the promptings and picked a place to start that I believed would be profitable.

[Nobody was home at the first door we knocked on. As we were turning to go away, I noticed what seemed like an extremely old path leading up into the forest. I had the feeling that it'd be worthwhile to follow it, so we did.]

The path was, in part, made of stones inlaid into the side of the low hill in order to form steps. These steps were worn almost beyond recognition, so I knew they were very, very old.

The path led to a tiny clearing in which there were fifteen or so traditional knee-high, quasi-cylindrical headstones arranged into a square pattern. The first one I examined looked comparatively new, then the one next to it looked a little older, and so forth until the last one was so old that it had fractured and a large piece of it was laying at its side. It was so old that the inscriptions were totally unrecognizable and almost completely worn off.

I knew that there was some sort of history behind this graveyard and wondered what it was. Fortunately, it wouldn't remain a mystery for long.]

On the way, we stopped at a nice house, which house turned out to be adjoined to a huge Zen Buddhist temple. The lady we met turned out to be the priest's wife, and I followed the intuitions of the Spirit as best I could as to what to do next. I asked to be showed around, and she escorted us to the huge "chapel" and introduced us to her husband.

We had a friendly chat. **[During the conversation, I asked about the lonely graveyard in the forest. The priest told me that the temple in which we were then sitting was actually a rebuilt one; the original had burned down sometime in the mid-1800s and had been located a little farther west, not far from where the graveyard stood. The headstones belonged to each temple priest who had lived at and presided over the original temple, stretching all the way back to the early 1400s—before Columbus sailed to America!]** I talked a little about the **[Mormon]** temple, how we're the only Christian church that has them. Luckily I'd been to Eiheiji, 'cause then I was able to point out (in general terms) the similarities between he and I (temple-wise). We talked a lot about missionaries, church, etc. 'Twas fun.

At the end, we three were sitting on the chapel stairs inside the temple, and I thanked him for being so kind as to show us around. For his kindness, I gave him a gift. Guess what gift? Yep! I explained the Book of Mormon to him, and he accepted!!

Folks, this ranks up higher than does the Book of Mormon placed with the Moonie missionary. Of course, it was all the Lord and his guidance, yet he said *right out* **[that]** he'd read it. **[I gave a Book]** to a Buddhist priest, right in the middle of a Buddhist temple! **[That's]** one experience which shall not be forgotten.

Followed the promptings when deciding where to dendo next, and it worked—At the place we went to, we met a lady and got a return for tomorrow!

Yes, folks, the prayers worked out—we were *certainly* led and directed today. Felt the Spirit quite a bit

throughout it all.

We taught English to these women's kids like we'd promised. They didn't even so much as bring us out any water to drink! The Japanese always bring you something if you're a guest; we even taught their kids at *their* convenience using *our* time, but they still didn't bother bringing us out any kind of snack! **[In Japan, failure to do this is nigh-unheard of and borderline—if not outright—insulting.]** Talk about ingrates.

You'd never believe it: There were a couple of cars all decked out and equipped with loudspeakers parked in front of a building which was nearing completion. **[It was]** an Okawa Ryuho center, full of all his books. A whole building dedicated to the man. Sheesh, it's amazing how big he's gotten after just seven months. **[Or, more accurately, in the seven months since I'd first heard of him.]** **[It's]** scary. Truly a sign of the times.

Saturday, June 08, 1991—Day 522

Yes! As far as pure stats goes, this was the best week of my being senior yet, by far. The Lord's really blessed us this week.

[We] rode out for our pick-up lesson **[that we booked yesterday]**. She (Mitamura-san) did well and gave a totally outstanding prayer at the end. She even accepted a return appointment—a pick up!—but she can't meet again 'till Wednesday of week *after* next. Dang, that's a bad thing. We're still blessed 'cause of her, though.

[After this, we] went a little farther and **[at]** the first house we went to I talked to a guy in his front yard. **[He was about to begin his day in the rice fields. His wife soon arrived, dressed in her full rice paddy regalia—stereotypical conical hat, rubber boots, the works.]** We ended up rapping for a *long* time, and they ended up feeding us lunch! They didn't have any interest in the gospel, sadly.

[While riding along, I noticed a discarded kama—a hand-held scythe used for cutting stalks of rice, now most familiar to Americans as a standard weapon of the martial arts—in a cement ditch with shallow running water. Although the head was rusted and the wooden handle in poor shape, it was too cool to leave alone, so I took it with me as a souvenir.]

[We] met another strange guy later who accepted the Book without thinking twice. He'd had a stroke, leaving him blind on his left side. We booked a return for Monday, once all his folks get home.

After getting home, shopping, eating, etc. we went over to the Matsumotos', whom we told we'd visit tonight. They weren't home yet, so we went over to the matsuri (festival) from which they were returning.

[It was a] cool matsuri. As we were leaving, we ran into the Miyajis, the couple with whom I'd booked the appointment a long time ago. The guy said he'd come to church!

[Later on,] at the Matsumotos', the guy said **[that]** he liked reading histories. The magic word! So out came the Book of Mormon, and they thankfully accepted. He said to come by later and we'll talk about it. Who can ask for more than that?

As I was contemplating the great day/week that the Lord had blessed us with, Poulsen called from the Honbu. **[He'd since been called to be a member of the mission staff.]** Today was Matsushita-san's baptism. Poulsen performed it. He said **[that]** the whole thing was just incredible. He said that everyone was surprised to hear my voice once Tsutsumi Shimai started the tape. He said that when she heard my voice she immediately started crying. I can't remember exactly the way he put it, but from what he said it seemed like that tape was just the greatest thing ever and it made/left a serious impression. He also said that once it was time for her to bear her testimony, she couldn't do it 'cause she was crying so hard. (He also said he was impressed with my Japanese. **[I told him that I'd "cheated" by writing everything down beforehand and reading it off into the tape recorder, but he countered that even the written**

words had to have come from somewhere.])

Yes, it can happen, even in Japan! It feels so good, knowing that the Lord used me as a major player in the whole event.

[Over the years, I accidentally conflated the first part of yesterday with the first part of today in my memory, partially because we'd dendoed in the same area both days at about the same time. As a result, the events—finding the ancient graveyard, giving Book of Mormon to the Buddhist priest, making a return with Mitamura-san, getting fed by the husband-and-wife rice farmers, finding the kama in the ditch, and giving a Book to the guy who'd suffered a stroke—stuck out in my mind as the single most successful day of my mission. It was like the whole day (which was actually two different days) was charmed from the start, as though I'd drank a Felix Felicis potion (from the Harry Potter books) beforehand.]

PHOTOS 066



Me in front of one of the wooden guardian statues at the entryway of the same Buddhist temple complex from yesterday.

Sunday, June 09, 1991—Day 523

Our dude didn't show [up] to church, neither did our older pick-up lesson from Eikaiwa.

Tonight we went to Sabae to watch Koichi with his High School band in concert. They were extremely good. **[Japanese students are essentially forced to get involved with some sort of extracurricular club or other. Once they do, they practice unmercifully every weekday and a few hours every Saturday as well. All the practice certainly paid off, for I was blown away by how good they were. They were, quite literally, just as good as any professional symphony orchestra.]**

We had to leave early for a lesson with Yoshikazu (Aoki), to which he didn't show. Crud, it would've been great to see the whole thing. Okumura-kun was in the band too; we haven't seen him for two months. I was sitting by Frehner and Brimhall up from Tsuruga.

Earlier, we met a guy from France working a shop at the Matsuri. **[He was a]** cool dude; **[he had]** lots of insights. **[He also had]** good Japanese. **[That last part was an understatement; this man's Japanese was *amazing*. He spoke it just as good as any native.]**

Monday, June 10, 1991—Day 524

Had only two letters to write, leaving me with lots of free time. P-day went way too fast, dang it.

[A] lady at the camera shop asked if I was going to get a Japanese wife. She was surprised when I said no. **[I was wrong.]** Japanese women are inferior, dang it! **[How's that for an embarrassing blanket statement?]** I hate getting asked that **[question]**.

I'm sick of holding back just to spare people's feelings. You're not supposed to cut others down, and by saying you're right you're indirectly implying that they're wrong. Enough of that—out goes my testimony from here on out, no holds barred. I'm just too sick and tired of having to endure others' incorrect philosophies and attitudes!

Tuesday, June 11, 1991—Day 525

[We] visited our lady out in Takagi cho, Kawakami-san. It was a little awkward at first, but she and her daughter-in-law saw "Our Heavenly Father's Plan" and I think that was cool. I invited her to hear the six lessons and she said it was cool, but she has outside (literally) responsibilities and can only meet when it rains, dang it. As we left, she said that she'll be praying for rain tomorrow. Cool, eh?

[We] visited our dude, Miyoshi-san, in the hospital and he said O.K. to hearing the lessons, too.

[We] went and saw Joe and Emi, and talked with Joe **[for]** a long time. He's got a lot of good things to say, and he'd make a great kaiin (member). They later took us out to eat near the place we've been dendoing lately. Never could get around to a discussion about the discussions, dang it. Oh well, all in the name of B.R.T. We'll get to it soon enough.

PHOTOS 067



Me clowning around with my replica samurai sword. Pretty cool, isn't it?

Wednesday, June 12, 1991—Day 526

Decided to read "Day of Defense" which I'd borrowed off Frehner, but that broke my schedule and so I felt disoriented all morning.

While dendoing, we surprisingly made a return with an older guy.

Later, we gave a Book to an awesome lady, but before we left I decided to point out Moroni 10:3-5. **[It was a]** bad decision, 'cause her husband came down from upstairs and was all pissed **[off]**. He told her that they/we didn't need it, but she didn't want to give it up and said **[that]** she wanted it. Quitting while we were ahead, we left. Then she caught up to us just after we'd taken off and told us that her husband had commanded her to give it back. She was literally visibly disappointed to see it go. So were we, for I thought for sure **[that]** she'd read it. Darn, what a jerk **[her husband is]**. He'll get his. He'll burn. As for

her, I hope and pray **[that]** she'll get her chance and soon. I feel so bad.

Prayed and followed the Spirit to yet another place, and ended up placing a Book. Placed one on the way back for Aoki's lesson on the streets of Takefu.

[We] taught Aoki (Zenzo) the first part of Lesson 2. Was the Spirit there as strong as I'd hoped?

Yep, things are looking up, thanks to the Lord.

Thursday, June 13, 1991—Day 527

It rained today, so we got to visit Kawakami-san. Holy cow was it ever guidance that one day, for boy did she ever say some awesome stuff. For instance, she said that since we've left everything behind just to come here and share this, not to mention the fact that we're so young and could be doing so many other things for ourselves, then what we have must really be something. I.e., to become so happy as to be willing to do this much to share it; well, she wants to find out what it is. I told her that as we progressed through these six lessons, then she'd come to realize it for herself, the joy to which we refer. Talk about the Spirit being there strong!

She later asked *how* we "helped" people, then went on to say that she has a friend who's troubled over her high-school aged kid. Her friend's really strong in her own faith, but she says that her friend could probably use the joy of which we speak. She'll call up and arrange things. Holy moly, a possible *investigator* referral, this early?

Kawakami-san is *awesome*. I can see her being baptized.

[We] placed another Book in the region of the apartment, and later had a party at Eikaiwa. **[It was]** pretty fun. We ended up with a lot of the leftovers, so we're styling.

Sure hope all **[of]** our investigators read the Book, feel the Spirit, and become converted.

Friday, June 14, 1991—Day 528

[We] had a big zone taikai up in Kanazawa; **[it was]** probably the last time I'll see President Smith in the mission **[I was wrong]**. Dorrough, who's now A.P., had been looking over my list and was impressed.

[It was a] fairly fun taikai, but I didn't learn much. Heard about the history of the church in Japan, which was good. Proctor and Van Cleave were there, too. Proctor is junior zone leader in a different zone. Madsen and Gibson are in the same apartment in Ichinomiya now. Madsen's *still* junior!

Hisako Miyamori was there, and I told her I'd go visit her once I got back to America. She said O.K. **[To this day, I still haven't visited her. Oops!]**

[We] rode with Brimhall and Frehner back. **[They're]** fun guys. **[Part of the journey involved riding the bus to the train station. The bus driver was being really belligerent and yelling at the folks who were embarking and disembarking, berating us all over when to pay and when not to, etc. Finally, when Elder Depeel got up to him, Depeel called the guy a "prick" out loud. This sent Frehner into paroxysms of laughter that made the whole incident even funnier. Ahh, those were the days!]**

Also, at the taikai they showed us "Called to Serve," a church video about missionaries that was recently made. Holy crud was it inspiring. Wish I had a copy. Better yet, wish I could remember the feeling it brought so **[that]** I can use it in my day-to-day dendo.

Saturday, June 15, 1991—Day 529

Today is my brother Ethan's and also Theresa's birthday.

[We] went with Charles, our American friend, biking all the way to the ocean. [It was a] mother of a ride both ways. We went with him 'cause we want to pick him up [for the discussions]. At the end he cut out in order to visit a friend, so we didn't get to shokai him, dang it.

[Next we] went and visited the Kitanos, 'cause her daughters are up from Tokyo to visit. She requested it.

Then [it was] onto the train for Fukui for a baptism kai—[it was for] Koyanagi's last investigator. [He was a teenager named Hideki Sasaki.] I'd been asked to give a talk. I began preparing for it five minutes before it started. [Thus I had come full circle. I was shocked and amazed back when Oviatt told me that he could prepare a talk in Japanese only five minutes; now, a little over a year later, I was in the same position.] I prayed for help and got it, 'cause I received several good compliments later. One said [that] she learned; another said [that] he felt the Spirit. I spoke on the first four principles and ordinances of the gospel.

PHOTOS 068



L-R: Bueler, me, Depeel, and Koyanagi interrupting the "Shades Salute" by attempting to rest his scriptures on my erstwhile outstretched arm, dang him.

Sunday, June 16, 1991—Day 530

After church, the shimais had two investigators who each insisted on meeting at the same time, so we took over one—[ours was for] a 60 year-old lady of Chinese heritage. Bueler and Depeel were passing off, so Koyanagi and I went in. Koyanagi was being only halfway serious and wasn't too worried about her feelings, what with laying it on the line about Buddhism and all. I learned quite a bit; I'll use it from now on (the examples, etc., [that I] learned). Once again, I've got to quit being a wimp and come right out and say the right answer when others are wrong.

While riding around, we talked to our friend who works a home computer game shop. He's quite different from most Japanese [people]; he asks lots of questions about the purpose of life, etc. He wonders. We

don't have an appointment set, but I look forward to meeting with him.

While poking around the new Okawa Ryuho building, we got invited in. Depeel was extremely reluctant, but oh well.

A bunch of people came out of nowhere and began milling around. **[As a]** matter of fact, I was *given* a paperback English copy of the third **[book]** in his series. Remember how I borrowed the first two at various times in Inuyama?

Lately there have been commercials of his stuff on T.V. Oh boy. But now, they told me that in March it was made into a religion. Already it's got more members than our church does total.

Yep, it's a religion now. **[It's]** truly a sign of the times.

Zenzo **[Aoki]** brought his girlfriend to his lesson tonight. Earlier he'd told us that she said he was getting brainwashed, so he brought her to show her one way or the other. It didn't run as smoothly with her there, but it went a lot better than it could've.

Monday, June 17, 1991—Day 531

[It was a] good day today. Had only two letters to write, which left me with some good reading time. Read a lot of "Day of Defense." Made copies of the **[grammar]** list for the Fukuoka and Sendai missions.

Later we met the shimais here and got picked up and taken to a tabehodai, the same one as before (**[it was my]** third time **[eating there]**). Told them about Okawa Ryuho on the way. They agreed—**[It's]** scary. Ten people were there **[at the tabehodai]**—fun stuff.

I feel pretty good.

Tuesday, June 18, 1991—Day 532

Of all surprises, the **[mission]** president called this morning—I'm transferring. I was only here as long as I was in my first area. Short. Dang, and things were really looking up, too. Joe (Kitano) told the shimais **[that]** he wanted to get baptized, Miyoshi in the hospital said O.K. to **[hearing]** the discussions, Aoki was feeling the Spirit, Kawakami was rockin' and rollin', and Mitamura was meeting. I'm going to hate to leave. I could be in my next area for six months, 'cause that's basically all I have left. I'm going to Meito-Kita, Kitajima Shimai's area. I wanted to go there, too! That was Frehner's first area; he loved the ward there. When he was pulled out, so was another guy, so since then the apartment has had only two **[missionaries]** in it. **[My companion's and my arrival would bump the number back up to four.]**

My companion will be Elder Seegmiller. Harris was his trainer; he's been here **[for]** three months. I've talked to him a few times; he seems pretty cool. Anyhow, we're both going in at the same time and opening our companionship from ground zero. Thus, anyone we find will be totally ours.

Even though it didn't rain, Kawakami-san called and wanted to meet, bless her heart. *She called us!* Love that woman. We showed the Joseph Smith video and finished Lesson One. **[It's]** interesting; Depeel can't really understand what's being said, but he can feel the Spirit there regardless. Miles Choro is taking my place here as a new senior (**[in other words,]** he's barely going senior). **[Elder Miles had also taken my place back when I transferred out of Okazaki.]** So I hit hard on listening to the message regardless of who's teaching **[it]**.

I'd gotten my new address off Frehner **[although we were no longer companions, we were still in the same district]**, so I went home right after and started packing. At 6:00 **[p.m.]** it was all sent off. I'm sure it'll beat me there.

[We] had a little party at Institute for Koyanagi. Therefore, I got to see most of the active kaiins before I left.

Wednesday, June 19, 1991—Day 533

[Today we] taught Mitamura-san again. She's cool, but her husband hates religion in general and won't let her do anything about it (she's asked before). Dang it! We're going to continue, though (at least Miles is).

[We] visited [the] Kitanos for the last time. At the end, I took Joe aside just the three of us and made a pick-up lesson appointment. Love that dude. I finally got it done, which is good. The gang was all there from our trip to the mountain. [It's] sad to say goodbye. Joe gave me a free haircut, too.

[We] met with Takeuchi for the last time at the church later. Koichi stopped by and gave me a wind chime.

[We] taught Zenzo the rest of [Lesson] 2. He didn't accept a yotei, but he said [that] he'd join if he knew it was true. He said he'd pray.

[It was a] pretty quick three months. [It's] too bad I'm leaving. Suck, I'll miss a lot of these folks.

PHOTOS 069



L-R: Me, Depeel.



L-R: Me, Depeel.



L-R: Me, Koichi.



L-R: Me, Koichi.

Thursday, June 20, 1991—Day 534

Gathered my stuff and said goodbye to Depeel. **[He's a]** good guy; I'll miss him. Miles got off **[the train]** and I got on, then **[I rode]** down to Nagoya. I never bothered talking to Koyanagi the whole transfer. Miyamori Hisako Shimai is now dying **[i.e., going home]**.

'Twas a *huge* transfer. Waters Shimai was up to get Jew Shimai. Waters Shimai went into depth about how everyone loves me up there in Inuyama. She said that Matsushita Shimai just absolutely utterly loves me. **[Remember, Matsushita Shimai was married, so it was 100% platonic.]** Waters unreservedly related the information, which I really appreciate. I was on cloud nine.

Dorough Choro went and passed out the bunpo list to the four **[green]** bean trainers. It's on a trial basis; they're going to call back the trainers to get feedback on how they like the list. MacKillop and Lowe were

two of them; they were really impressed. Dorrough came back and said that he was getting some rave reviews already. Bailey, my replacement in Inuyama, was awestruck and said **[that]** he's *got* to get a copy. Waters says she needs one *now*. **[Is it]** a hit . . . ?

[It was a] fun, fun, fun transfer.

On the way out, I ran over a tiny piece of glass on accident and got a flat **[tire]** 30 seconds away from the honbu. **[That was]** pretty quick, eh?

[We] waited around the four of us 'till our stuff got here, then went on a split to two various Eikaiwas. **[The ward to which I was assigned, Meito-Kita, shared the same chapel with the ward in which the mission home resided. Therefore, all the excess missionaries of the mission home staff covered the regular Thursday Eikaiwa in that building. The other two elders in our district lived in the next town to the east of us, Seto, and ran their own Eikaiwa in a building there. Therefore, I was often in limbo when it came to the Thursday Eikaiwa, never knowing which one was "ours."]** I went to the one at the honbu. It needs improvement.

[And thus ended my three month stint in Takefu and, simultaneously, the single most successful month of my mission. I would never again have nearly that many investigators at one time.

There's a semi-mythical force that we Nagoya missionaries sometimes identified as "bean power." To explain, it seemed like whenever a companionship contained a missionary fresh from the M.T.C. and still with his trainer—i.e., a "green bean"—that companionship would see a lot more success. Well, Elder Depeel was the lucky charm that gave us bean power during that last, most successful month of mine.

Here are some final thoughts about Takefu: What made missionary work tough "down south" was people's lack of a Christian background combined with religious apathy. What made missionary work tough "up north" was people's lack of a Christian background combined with still-strong Buddhist influence. Nevertheless, I discovered, firsthand, that success, counter intuitively, does *not* depend on the sheer number of people living in an area. It's just as easy to see success in a small town as it is in a big city.

Also, Takefu was on the Sea of Japan side of the Japanese Alps—where the bulk of the population *isn't*—so it was a lot more rustic than the areas down south. For good luck or to ward off evil spirits or something, people would very often nail fish heads to the side of their doors—something I *never* saw down south. In addition, a few of the older homes still sported dirt floors.

I've mentioned how, in Japan, vending machines are quite literally *everywhere*. Well, near the entryway to the branch building, there was one machine that had one button that dispensed Mountain Dew, my favorite drink. Pure, unadulterated, literal Mountain Dew—not diet, but the real thing. Never at any time did I ever see another machine anywhere that carried it, so you can be sure that we hit it quite often, as much as our meager missionary allotments would allow. (Another single button on a single machine dispensed Fanta green apple, which was also a hit with us.)

Last of all, there's an experience I had in Takefu that I never wrote about in this journal but look back on with regret. One day, as we were leaving the branch building, I saw the exorcists going down the street (for real—hear me out). This must've been some sort of Shinto thing. Anyway, three guys would go door to door to each business, and for a little money one guy would don some sort of large, ornate dragon's mask and cloak, then do some sort of dance and/or posturing while the other two would play music or something. I asked the mask dancer what he was doing, and he smiled and replied, matter-of-factly, that he was getting rid of the evil spirits.

Me, being a Mormon Missionary with a religious superiority complex, purposely laughed out loud. I didn't say anything else before we rode off. I don't think the guy reacted badly or got mad or

anything, but to this day I severely regret what I did. What gave me the authorization to be so self-righteous? Just because I disagreed with his metaphysical worldview, what gave me the right to arrogantly laugh out loud at the poor guy, especially since he'd been nothing but polite during that brief encounter of ours? What made me think that *my* views on the efficacy or necessity of exorcisms were right and his were wrong, especially since, as a Mormon, I believed in evil spirits too?

If I had the chance, I would love to find this guy, bow down as low as possible, and sincerely, unreservedly apologize for my short-sighted, self-righteous act. Like I said, I very, very much regret the whole incident.]

PHOTOS 070



L-R: Me, an unidentified Eikaiwa student, and Elder Gregory Little. The "Shades Salute" had apparently gone viral.



L-R: Elder Little, me. The girl who took both of these photos was named Tomoyo Kurokawa; you'll hear a lot more about her later.

Friday, June 21, 1991—Day 535

We rode out and after a lot of time and effort found our way to the honbu, then **[it was]** on to Fujigaoka, the famed streeting basho **[which is Japanese for "area"]** about which I'd heard so much from Frehner. **[Fujigaoka was the terminus station of one of Nagoya's East-West train/subway lines; that's why it was so populous.]** **[It was]** pretty crowded; I was quite surprised. **[It was]** geographically small, but good. Stopped lots of people compared to what I'm used to, but saw no success. **[We]** ran into the sisters from Meito-Minami. Chandler Shimai is one of them. **[My new area, Meito-Kita, had no sister missionaries assigned to it, which would later work to my advantage since I was therefore allowed to teach female investigators.]**

[As for Fujigaoka itself, just like the chapel, we shared it with the missionaries assigned to the adjacent district, Meito-Minami (that's how we ran into the sisters from there). This included the missionaries on the mission home staff—therefore, similar to the Thursday night Eikaiwa, the place wasn't entirely "ours."]

[We] felt our way back, shopped, then took a break. Later I prayed hard to be led to someone, then rode around the streets out **[in]** front of the apartment. Two Books and one return! **[It's]** a return for tomorrow morning, what's more. Talk about being blessed! He'd better show.

[It was only my first full day in the area, yet that just might've been our most profitable dendo

experience in front of our own apartment the whole time I was there. Our apartment wasn't near any town centers or appreciable landmarks, so the sidewalks were rather sparse. For that matter, our apartment wasn't near any church property, rented or owned, either. Therefore, if we booked a return appointment anywhere within our own area, we didn't have any "home turf" close by in which to meet. We had to hope that they were willing to either A) meet in their own house, or B) travel quite a distance to meet in the church building. If neither of those worked, we had to get creative.]

Among other things, we found an awesome video game place. Hey hey, activities for P-day! [At the time, home video game consoles hadn't quite entered the mainstream, so the only real option back then was the old coin-operated machines. I loved those things, so I unfortunately ended up succumbing to the temptation to play them on days other than P-day.]

I'm getting to like this place already.

Saturday, June 22, 1990—Day 536

[We] went to another Eikaiwa [one of two small unauthorized ones that previous missionaries had set up, the one on Friday afternoons was called "Sango Eikaiwa" while the one on Saturday afternoons was called "A.B.C. Eikaiwa"—The "A.B.C." stood for "American Benkyo Club"], then went with Kobayashi-san later to her house for lunch. [We] spent a long time there. I've heard a lot about her from Frehner; we'll see what happens. She's an old [i.e., a "previous"] investigator; MacArthur [the other senior in our four-man apartment] said we could try and re-pick her up if we wanted. By the way, MacArthur and I went to the same High School.

Called up Kitajima Shimai and rapped for a while. Man, that woman cares for me more than my own mother does. [They're the] same age, too. She also told me that some member in Gokiso really "likes" me, whoops, that's right, Fukutoku. I wonder who. . . ?

She invited us out to sushi, but I would've felt fuke for playing so much, so we went out and dendoed instead. [We] saw no success, but did meet a woman who was Baptist. We couldn't get anywhere with her, but bore a mean testimony that's sure to be held against her at judgment day.

[Many of you returned missionaries out there might remember the picture of the Bible with a bunch of arrows radiating from it, and a Book of Mormon with a single line running through both it and the Bible. As you know, this was supposed to represent that a correct direction can only be determined if its line has two points in common, which of course is supposed to indicate that we need the Book of Mormon in order to correctly interpret the Bible.

Well, I showed the woman this picture, and she nonchalantly pointed to a random arrow radiating from the Bible and said, "that's the correct one, so we don't need a Book of Mormon." So much for that object lesson!]

Sunday, June 23, 1991—Day 537

Today was ward conference, so a lot of people were there who weren't from this ward. Among them were a few people from Okazaki. 'Twas good seeing them again. In particular was Tanaka Shimai, whom Harris and I visited before I transferred. What a good friend she turned out to be! She said [that] it was a blessing to have met me again.

[We] rode home in the rain and I wasn't too pleased. [We] rode to a Kentucky Fried Chicken and waited for 45 minutes to take Daines' bother-in-law back to the apartment. [Elder Christopher Daines was the junior companion within the other pair of elders living in our apartment.] He [the brother-in-law] was here visiting for a couple of days; he left today.

[We] walked around the streets for a couple of hours and placed a Book. What a day. I don't function

well in the rain.

Kitajima Shimai said yesterday that there wasn't a day that went by in which she didn't think about me and how I was doing at least once. She said that she prays for me, too. Wow, I guess **[that]** being a sweet guy pays off after all!

Monday, June 24, 1991—Day 538

[We] sat around for quite a while wondering what to do. A member then wanted to take us bowling, so we went. Before that, though, I'd found out that VaNae Beeston is in MacArthur's ward, so I wrote her a letter asking her for Sister Evans' address, **[who was]** her M.T.C. companion. I wrote how gorgeous Sister Evans was, using lots of adverbs. Either one or both **[of them]** will undoubtedly flip out when she/they finally read it. I'll bet VaNae hands the actual manuscript over to her. (See the middle of Day 53!)

Instead of bowling, I just played video games. **[It was]** mother expensive, too.

Later, after a little hassle, we were forcefully invited to go out to eat by the same kaiin, Suzuki Shimai, a spunky little kaiin. To make a long story short, we decided to eat up on the roof, and when rain fell again, we went back down by our door, under cover. They had an investigator from Seto there, and of all things, out of the blue I just took a wild, wild guess as to what her **[last]** name was—and I was absolutely right! **[It was]** "Yoshimura." I will remember this little success story for quite some time.

Since it was raining, we didn't leave 'till we had to, then it was off to Kitajima Shimai's house. She gave me a really nice bag for dendo **[which I still have]**. We looked at a lot of her pictures. 'Twas a lot of fun. **[It]** turns out **[that]** the member who likes me was from Gokiso after all. It was none other than our Eikaiwa triff from long ago—see Day 418.

It turns out **[that]** she was a member after all—why she gave me that story, I don't know. Here's the recent story: A couple of weeks ago, as Kitajima Shimai was leaving work, they happened to run into each other. They chatted for a while, and the subject of me was brought up. They wondered where I was, how I was doing, etc. She (the young one) said that she wants to be with me, Shades Choro, forever. **[It was]** something along the lines that it would be great to be with me always. Kitajima Shimai agreed.

She **[Kitajima Shimai]** also invited me to be her guide on a trip to the East Coast **[of the]** U.S.A. She'll even pay. **[It's]** worth considering, eh? She said that her little sister got married, but it's too bad she didn't meet me first. She also tried to get me interested in marrying a Japanese girl. She even said I could marry her daughter. (She's only 16, though. I asked.)

[It was] a very fun, pleasant visit.

PHOTOS 071



L-R: Sister Kitajima, me.
The dendo bag she'd given me is by her knees.



L-R: Seegmiller, me.
This was taken outside, just prior to our departure.

Tuesday, June 25, 1991—Day 539

Yes! At first I didn't want to dendo at all, then went down to Fujigaoka and gave out three Books. [We] went back to the honbu for refills and gave out one more! [It's a] new record: Four Books in one day. Many [people] didn't accept one; I don't know how many times I gave the Book of Mormon overview. Nine? Ten? Plus, I've figured out how many Books I *personally* have placed on my mission so far: 87.

Wednesday, June 26, 1991—Day 540

[We] went to lunch with Kobayashi upon her invitation. Afterwards, we got into a big discussion about religion, truth, etc. I knew and asked all the right questions to get her thinking. Three things happened as a result:

1. She promised to read the Book of Mormon.
2. She said [that] she'd look into and really research her own religion to find out what she really believes in, which can only be good, for maybe she'll start seeing the contradictions, etc.
3. She's going to introduce us to her sister, who knows enough about her own religion to maybe answer our questions. Good, another contact. Perhaps we can get her thinking, as well.

Other than that, we worked hard with no real result.

PHOTOS 072



Me, Seegmiller, and a friend of Kobayashi's who was also a student at "A.B.C. Eikaiwa," one of our two local unsanctioned Eikaiwas.

Thursday, June 27, 1991—Day 541

The Jehovah's Witnesses were outside our apartment building ready to dendo it, and I identified them. Seegmiller asked [me] how I knew, and I said [that] I could smell them. **[This was obviously a joke; the real reason was because they always assembled in groups before splitting up into pairs, always wore brown leather overcoats, the women always wore brown dresses, and they always carried small document satchels with them.]** We went upstairs to verify, and it was verily true.

[We] had a tennis activity later, and it was so hot [that] I didn't feel like doing anything [afterward]. **[The activity was Kobayashi's idea and arrangement; she was responsible for all the tennis playing we did.]**

[Later on, we] went to the honbu Eikaiwa again and met a girl who is a member but usually lives in Hawaii. I shouldn't think about girls, but it's tough to help. She said [that] she usually goes to Meito South **[which is the English translation of "Meito Minami," the name of our adjacent ward]**, but she'll go to Meito North **[the English translation of "Meito Kita," the name of our own ward]** this next week. Who cares, though? Why did I write that?

Set a record today: Usually I can't stand them, but I took three cold showers at various times today. **[I did it to stave off the oppressive heat, not for any other reason].**

PHOTOS 073



L-R: Seegmiller, Kobayashi-san, me in my "Punkwheat" T-shirt, and Fukuoka-san (a friend of Kobayashi's and a student at "A.B.C. Eikaiwa," the unauthorized Eikaiwa we taught on Saturday afternoons).

Friday, June 28, 1991—Day 542

Was so wasted, dead tired this morning—I didn't want to go on living. At a service Eikaiwa **[one of two unauthorized ones we taught, "Sango Eikaiwa" in this case,]** there was a little party, and I drank a can of Jolt **[Cola]** beforehand which effectively woke me up.

[We] followed up on some referrals. One was a Soka Gakkai. Argh! My mortal, arch-, sworn enemies. Them and the Jehovah's Witnesses.

[We] passed by a Toyota place and got to sit in their car/space/vehicle simulator. 'Twas cool.

Later, **[we]** ended up playing with kids before following up on a house. Shokaid one's mom, but fetch, these Japs are unresponsive.

A bosozoku was by the apartment this morning, getting us all mad. **[A "bosozoku" is a person who rides a motorcycle around town without the muffler, usually in the middle of the night, in low gear, revving it up as often as possible. They'll often ride in groups, maximizing the noise level and waking everyone up. Often the bikes are "tricked out" and stylized quite a bit. If you've ever seen the movie "Black Rain," at one point it featured one driving slowly toward the camera brandishing a sword, if memory serves.]** Killed a cockroach in the apartment, too. Crud, my writing *sucks!* **[It's]** probably 'cause I don't feel like writing.

Saturday, June 29, 1991—Day 543

Was tired today—dead, dead tired. Didn't even want to move, much less dendo. Went out and did it anyway, and even though we didn't push ourselves and did lots of window shopping, three Books and three returns were made. We were/are feeling pretty good. Yep, the only returns of the week were made on the very last day, no less.

Hit a landmark today: I've now given out as many Books as the year it is. 91.

Some women at A.B.C. Eikaiwa said **[that]** I looked better with my glasses on. I thought so.

Sunday, June 30, 1991—Day 544

Yep, Meito-Kita is a good ward, all right.

Coming back, a lady pulled out in front of Seegmiller and he slammed into her really hard. At first she was saying a bunch of stuff about how riding down the street like that is dangerous, etc., then she looked at the dent in the side of her car and said, "If that's all it is, then that's okay" as if it was our fault. She was the one who pulled out and then froze up; **[it's]** her fault.

Had a chance to see the new **[mission]** president for a little bit before he went in for church. Yep, President Ames.

[We] saw the first part of "Anne of Green Gables" with Kobayashi-san and one other woman from A.B.C. Eikaiwa **[whose name was Kazuyo Nakamura]**, but we had to cut out early to keep another appointment, so I felt really bad about that. **[We were watching it in a theater, and they had paid our way, which made me feel doubly guilty for leaving. Holy cow, I had no idea "Anne of Green Gables" was so long!]**

All the missionaries, **[from]** Meito South and North, were invited to a lady from Eikaiwa's house **[whose name was "Matsuda-san"]** for dinner. We were the only ones from Kita there, but the shimais were **[there]** and also the entire honbu staff.

One guy, the son, knew the shimais really well, so he was quite responsive. He'd been to America for a while, so he'd been Americanized and he admitted it. Upon being invited to hear the lessons again from us (Chandler extended it), he said yes. He said a lot of good stuff which was really encouraging. **[He was]** still a bit messed up in some essential ways, but we'll see what we can do.

PHOTOS 074



L-R: Me, Seegmiller.

This was taken for use on the ward's bulletin board.

Monday, July 01, 1991—Day 545

[It was a] gloomy P-day, **[it]** rained all day. Our first pick-up lesson **[whose last name was “Idaba”]** didn't show **[up]**; we'd had a place in Fujigaoka picked out.

'Twas a temptation to flirt with some chicks who were passing out flyers to promote the opening of a barber shop. Dang, I can't wait to flirt again. Agh, I'm dying to flirt with some Japanese chicks! Kiss me! XXX!

Not a single Book or return, dang it.

Tuesday, July 02, 1991—Day 546

Our second pick-up lesson **[whose first name was “Tomohiro”]** didn't show **[up]**. **[We]** did various things later. **[We]** helped the new **[mission]** president move things in for a half hour before district benkyokai.

As we began dendoing, in a video store was playing the movie *Dead Calm*, which I'd seen the first part of twice, but never the end. **[The first time, I was watching it in a theater, and the projector kept jamming up and burning through the film. They finally gave up, cancelled the movie, and gave us free return tickets.]** In fact, it was right on the part I'd left off at. So we stood outside and watched the rest. Heck, I'd been wondering how that show ended for two years plus.

[We] went and got our hair cut for one coin as had been promoted **[yesterday]**. Used my cool personality to **[the]** fullest extent, and at the end every last worker who wasn't cutting hair came out to see us off and say goodbye, about nine girls or so. The one who cut my hair and whom I met last night and with whom I got into the most "B.R.T." with was Ohashi-san—remember that name (a note to myself). If I wasn't a missionary, I could've gone very far (potential-wise). **[Sometimes you just get that certain vibe from members of the opposite sex. When I left, she said, "Afterward, let's meet up." The sexual tension was unmistakable. Never did I want so badly to *not* be a missionary.]** Dang. Japanese chicks are so easy to pick up on!!

Wednesday, July 03, 1991—Day 547

[My mission is] 75% gone. **[I'm at the]** 3/4 mark.

For a twist **[we]** went to Fujigaoka and split for one hour. MacArthur made a quick return, which depressed me. Went home and prayed for guidance—**[We]** went to a place and was guided to a 22 year-old girl with whom we made a return. Before finding her, I was about to complain about life and my circumstances, but I got the impression to wait 'till after dendo. Sure enough, a return. Thank you, Lord.

[While poking around a Buddhist temple, we] met another Buddhist priest and went into his house, and **[we]** discussed religion a bit. **[There was]** not enough time to give **[him]** a Book. Before him, we met a Soka Gakkai (SGI) **[which stands for "Soka Gakkai International," sort of like how "Latter-day Saints" is abbreviated "LDS"]** who invited us to the meetings. I think we'll go with him Monday.

[We] went bowling **[for a ward activity and]** met Jenkins, **[a returned missionary from Nagoya]** who went home six months before I went into the M.T.C. **[He's a]** cool dude; **[he has]** good insights. **[He's a]** former A.P. His Japanese A.P. dude completely housed out Takefu when he was there, going by the map.

The Shikano sisters were there, too. **[They're]** fabulous babes.

Jenkins brought us some milk later, just like we needed (he asked). Cool dude, eh?

Gads, these entries are getting choppy-sounding. Probably because it's no longer a new thing.

Independence Day, 1991—Day 548

[We] had zone pass-offs. Met Stuart Choro, who went to Okazaki as Sparks' junior zone leader after I left. He says **[that]** Sugiura Shimai is now fuke, except for when she comes to church to pick up on elders. In stake conference she gave a talk, and during it she said that she's never felt the Spirit. **[Also,]** she told someone that she went to a party where you had to leave your bra at the door in order to get in. Dang, someone needs to take her aside and give her a long talk/have a long talk with her.

[We] went to Sakae for a 4th of July party for gaijins with Kobayashi and a friend. 'Twas cool, but it rained hard. It had been over a year since I'd seen it last. Saw Barry from Inuyama there. Rapped with him for a while. A girl came up and told me that she'd gone to Eikaiwa in Okazaki when I was there. **[She's a]** cute chick; she wanted my name card; I gave it to her. She wanted me to show her around Utah once she went to America. She wanted to stay at my house; I said she could. She gave me her address and told me in no uncertain terms that I *mustn't* lose it. Cute chick. She was hitting on me hard; it was great. **[Her name was Maki Tanaka.]**

[We] later found a booth where they were giving [away] free three-minute phone calls to America. I decided what the heck, so I called Mom—[it was the] first time I'd heard her voice in 16 months. [Among missionaries there's an urban legend that it's okay to call home twice a year, on Christmas and on Mother's Day. Nowhere is this spelled out in either the "White Bible" or the mission rules, so I figured that mission presidents worldwide just didn't have the heart to squelch this urban legend and therefore turned a blind eye to this little bit of rule-breaking. I wanted to keep the rules, so I never called home at all, be it Mother's Day, Christmas, whatever. This time, though, the prospect of a free phone call was too good to pass up.] 'Twas 2:00 in the morning for her; she had no idea who I was at first. I woke her from a sound sleep. She almost hung up 'cause she thought it was a prank. But we chatted really quick for a minute or two. Then my time ran out and I had to hang up quickly. I bet she went back to sleep, woke up, and thought it was all a dream. Yep, [it was an] eventful day—I called Mom.

[We] went to Eikaiwa later. Kobayashi bought us food at McDonalds first, though. I was told four times today that I look like Richard Gere.

The girl I met last week [her name was "Kyoko Tanishita"] goes back to Hawaii on Monday night. [She was a student at BYU-Hawaii.] She gave me her address and she said [that] she's glad she met me. What fun! Score two addresses in one day!! Ouch, I am such a sweetheart! I called Mom today, too—what a landmark. Even though it was late, Mom said it was worth it.

PHOTOS 075



Front row, L-R: Unidentified Eikaiwa student #1, me, Elder Kiyoshi Harada (who was my former zone leader in Inuyama and now A.P.).

Middle row, L-R: One of the Shikano sisters (the younger one), Kyoko Tanishita, Sister Kuroda (from our ward), Sister Kanbe (from the ward adjacent to ours), "Puppy-chan" (a nickname presumably given to her by missionaries, of course).

Back row, L-R: Elder Grant Hanks, Elder Gibson (one of my two M.T.C. companions, as you'll recall), Elder Poulsen (my sixth and final senior

companion; as you'll also recall). All three of them were on the mission home staff.

This was taken after Eikaiwa at the ward building (which itself was adjacent to the mission home).

Friday, July 05, 1991—Day 549

We went to eat and then bowled with Kobayashi and a few others like we'd been invited **[to do]**. Bowled my high score to date: 155. Too cool, eh? Later I found a new way of holding a ping-pong paddle (with all five fingers around the circumference) and discovered **[that]** I'm not so bad as I thought I was.

I'm beginning to feel like it's degenerated to too much playing and not enough dendoing. For not having any investigators, we sure seem to have a lot to do.

Made up for it tonight by praying hard, finding a place, then placing two Books. I was a little sick at first, but after meeting the last of the two guys and feeling the Spirit really strong, I felt a lot better. **[It's]** interesting how it works that way.

All I want is to be a tool in the Lord's hands.

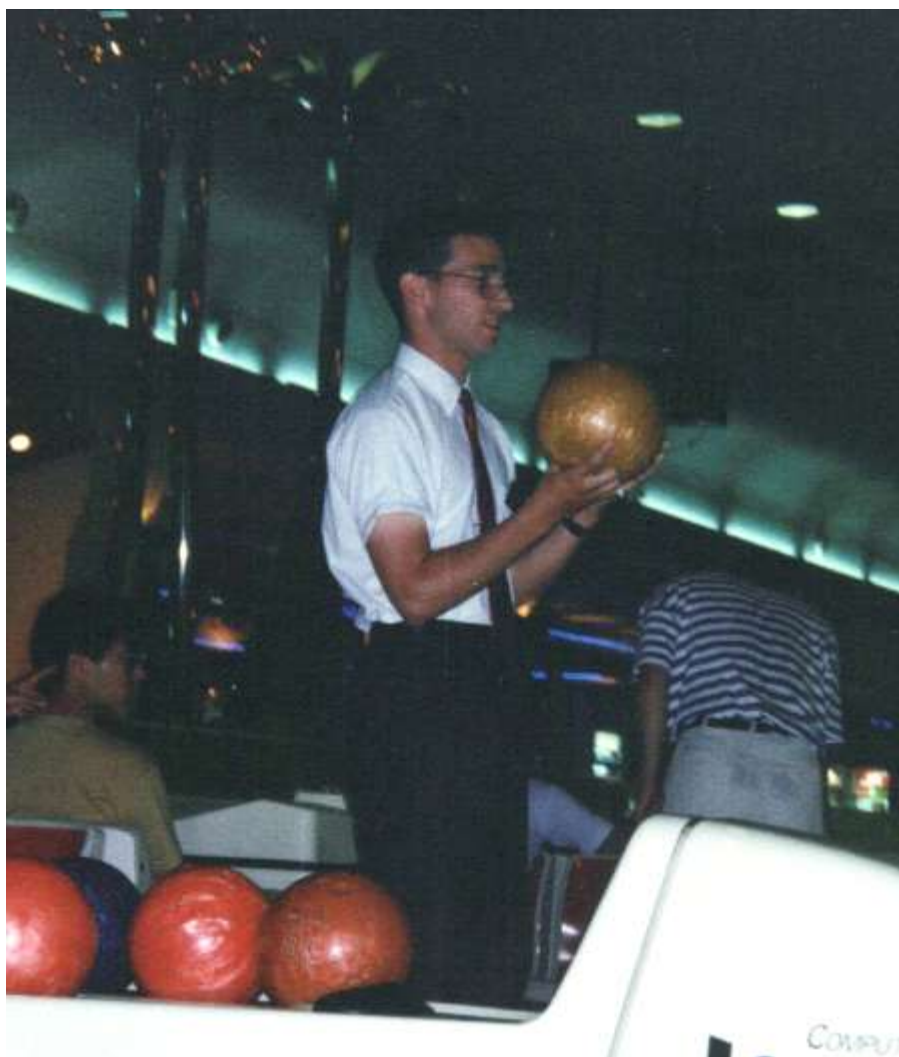
PHOTOS 076



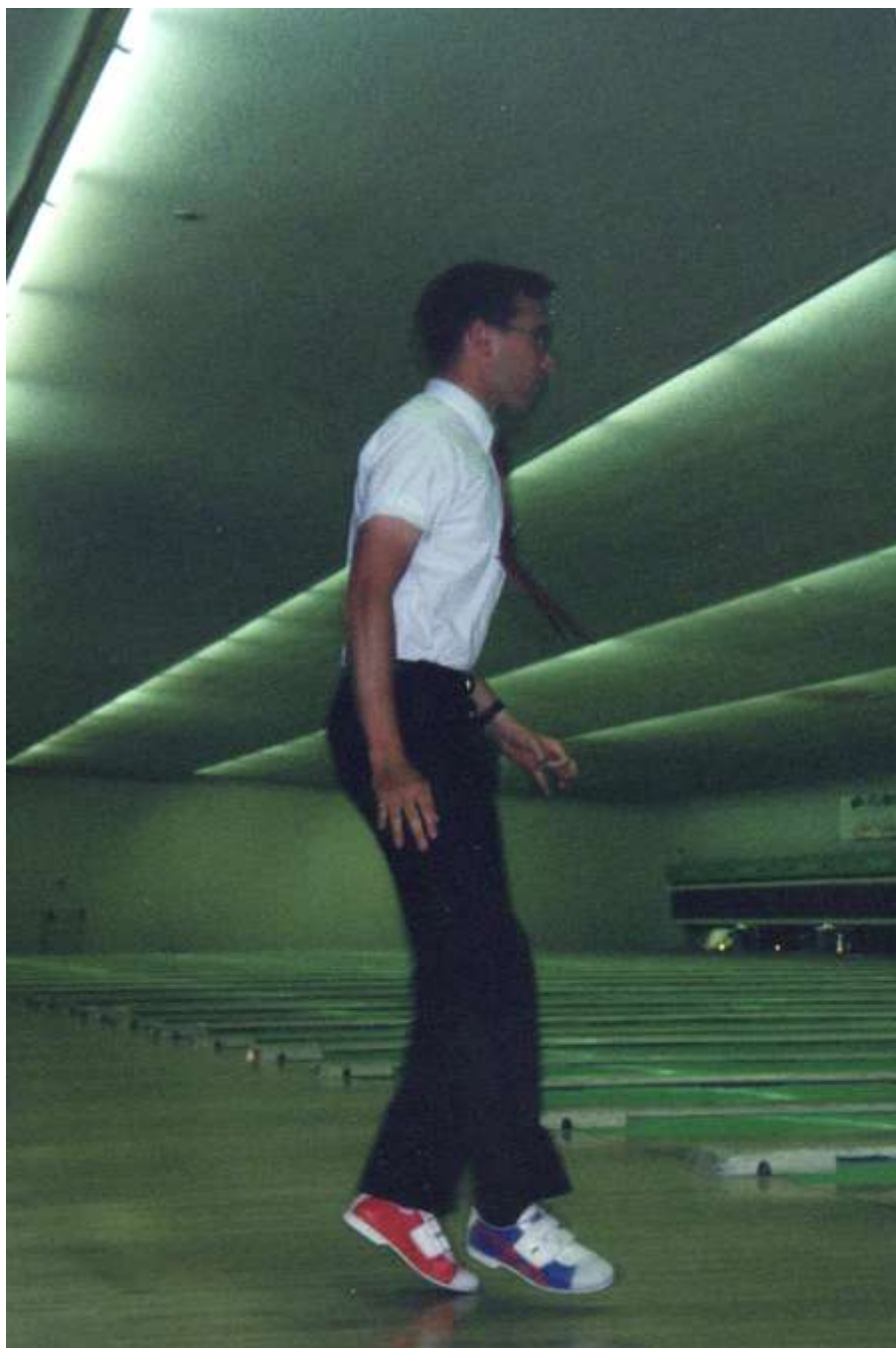
L-R: Kazuyo Nakamura, me, Etsuko Yamauchi.



L-R: Kazuyo Nakamura, Maki Fukuoka, me.



The set-up. . .



. . . and the release.

Saturday, July 06, 1991—Day 550

[We] had A.B.C. Eikaiwa, [then] went shopping, [then] took a break. After that I prayed *really super hard* for direction as to where to go, and got the impression to go South. [We] got to our place, looked around, prayed a couple more times, and decided to start with this one house.

[We] talked to the wife a little, then her husband showed up. [It] turns out [that] he heard a pick-up lesson or something way back when. He believes in God, too. He took a Book right off and made an appointment for next Saturday.

Holy cow, talk about divine guidance! Out of the whole Meito-Kita area, the *first* house we went to ended up yielding a return with an entire family!

Thank you, Father.

At a different house, two older ladies let us in and did some traditional Japanese dances for us. They wouldn't accept a Book, though.

[We] rode by a Christian church later and decided to go to one of their meetings on Wednesday. As we rode off, a lady started talking to Seegmiller. **[It]** turns out **[that]** she's one of the members. She saw the "LDS" stuff and must not've equated it with "Mormons," 'cause she was all friendly. We're stuck now, 'cause she's telling everyone that we're coming and she said that they'll all be waiting for us. Oh, boy. There are refreshments afterwards, at least.

[We] had dinner with some members **[the Yamada family]** right after that.

PHOTOS 077



Front row, L-R: Daines, me, MacArthur, Seegmiller.
This was taken right after A.B.C. Eikaiwa, of course.

Sunday, July 07, 1991—Day 551

The time for church changed, so now Meito-Kita meets in the afternoon. Let me tell you, it was nice, not being rushed on Sunday morning for a change.

At church, Kitajima Shimai showed up with a friend—none other than Junko Masaka Shimai—that one girl I've been mentioning through all those cross-references (see Day 538).

When she saw me, she about lost control due to sheer joy. I don't think I've ever had anyone so happy to see me in my life.

I went and sat between the two of them during Sacrament Meeting. After the meeting was over, I was, between the two of them, *showered* with compliments the likes of which I've never experienced **[in]** my

entire life to date. Things like, I'm the perfect missionary, etc. I can't remember it all, but I was credited with nearly every human virtue known to mankind. I almost cried from happiness. Holy cow was I amazed—a little politeness goes a *long* way, doesn't it? **[That last comment was referring to my actions in the past—more on this in a moment.]** Junko asked me what my purpose in life was, and I said it was to become Christlike. She said I was already there.

[This whole thing merits a little more attention. Now, Junko was the very definition of supertriff, while I imagine that Sister Kitajima's missionary hobby was a little annoying to the other elders—In the latter case, I sure got that impression from Horrocks.]

Anyway, I didn't let any of that bother me and was determined to treat everyone equally. Being a missionary, it was my goal to treat everyone like Christ would've treated them—at least, to the best of my ability, flawed human being that I was. At any rate, ignoring their reputations and treating these two with courtesy and respect (instead of the smug dismissal that they may have been used to) quite obviously made an impression. If you add on the fact that—forgive me—neither one of them was physically attractive, it might've been the only positive male attention either one of them had had in who knows how long, if ever—especially when you consider how chauvinistic Japanese society is—thus adding to the enormously positive impression I apparently left behind.

So, my point is that all the things they said about me weren't because I was some sort of supremely outstanding missionary, the compliments merely stemmed from the way I'd treated them in the past.]

Afterwards, Tanishita Kyoko was in the halls, so it was tough to juggle the two of them. There was a fireside afterwards, and the entire crew from Okazaki showed up. Hayashi Shimai was a bit early, so I got to rap with her for a bit. During that time, a male member came up and said **[that]** I sure was talking to a lot of girls—I'll marry a Japanese girl, he said.

That hurt. You can't win.

[American males are, for whatever reason, substantially more attractive to Japanese females than their Japanese counterparts are. I'm quite sure that comments like this stemmed from base jealousy.]

Maki and Emi **[from Okazaki]** are married now. May 13th **[is when]** it happened.

I would've rapped with the Okazaki crowd, but I had Spuds MacKenzie, **[the nickname of]** the guy from dinner last Sunday showing up, and I had to consult with Maruoka Shimai about it. I'm teaching him and his fiancée together on the weekend, but she's teaching his fiancée (Machiko) on weekdays, and Spuds is being taught by Sakahara Choro on weekdays also, 'cause she lives in Kasugai and on weekdays he works and lives in Okazaki. **[There are]** three missionary sets involved—**[it's an]** interesting situation. It'll be tough to coordinate it all (for me).

Maruoka Shimai could tell that something was the matter, so she asked about it. I didn't quite know myself. **[I'm sure it had a lot to do with not having any investigators, which certainly wore on my self-esteem. Sort of like a missionary midlife crisis.]** She ended up chatting with me for quite a while about taking care of myself, etc.

Our couple showed up a little later, and we taught them about prophets and Joseph Smith. We had to go up into the honbu to use a video machine. It felt good to be teaching again. They had all the right answers to everything.

Directly after, the honbu guys and us went to another person's house for dinner. **[Sister Kanbe's house, to be exact.]** They were pretty impressed with us when we left earlier than the rest—we've got a much longer way to go, but usually **[in the past]** the Meito-Kita guys left last anyway.

Today was a landmark: I've never been complimented so much in my life as **[I was]** today.

PHOTOS 078



Front row, L-R: Gibson, Harada, Poulsen, Seegmiller, Elder Yamada, me, Dorough (whom I knew from Inuyama; he was A.P. by this time).
Back: Two unidentified kids and Sister Kanbe, our host. She was a member of Meito-Minami, the ward adjacent to ours.
This snapshot contains three of my current and former companions (Gibson, Poulsen, and Seegmiller, of course).



L-R: Yamada, me, Dorough, Hanks, and one of the unidentified kids.

Monday, July 08, 1991—Day 552

Still no mail from Jodi. It'd been three weeks when I transferred here, and I've gotten nothing since. What's the deal? **[In retrospect, it's pretty obvious what the deal was, right? Yep, she'd met another guy.]**

[We] went back to Sakae to go last-minute souvenir shopping with MacArthur. **[This was outside our area, so we were breaking the rules.]** I rebought that one book of mistaken English that Japanese folks wrote that I'd bought back in Fukutoku and that I'd lost later. **[It was called "Gems of Japanized English."]**

On the train over, I met the same girl that I met in Fukutoku when I was a bean. . . . See Day 446. Her name's Sayaka **[and she's the second one I mentioned on that day; she was the then-fifteen year-old who'd recently been baptized.]** She was pretty happy to see me and vice-versa. **[It]** turns out **[that]** she rides the train out past our place every day for school.

In the bookstore, I ran into Morita Shimai. **[That's]** two Fukutoku kaiins in one day! It was from her that I found out Sayaka-chan's name.

Back at home, MacArthur and I rode all over creation trying to find an extension cord to borrow off a member. **[We]** never could find the place, so the member went and got it from her husband's work for us. **[The]** fact of the matter is, Suzuki Shimai brought over yakiniku for us and wanted to eat it on the roof. **["Yakiniku" means, literally, "cooked meat."]** She brought **[Aki]** Yoshimura over, and MacArthur invited another member, Inoue Shimai, over. We were up there on the roof rapping until 11:30 **[p.m.]** or so. Oh, we're so fuke! **[That wasn't the only reason I was fuke. At one point I had my feet propped up on another chair, and Inoue Shimai was resting her hands on my knees.]**

I was told **[that]** I look more handsome without my glasses. Maybe I'll quit wearing them, after all. **[The]** problem is, I've heard it both ways now.

Tuesday, July 09, 1991—Day 553

For the first time since the M.T.C., I broke the rule and wrote a letter on a non-P-day. I wrote to Jodi to find out what the heck's going on, i.e. why she quit writing all of a sudden.

[We] went to Kobayashi's for a discussion on Buddhism. It'd take too long to explain, but her friend was there and we pretty much got all the cards on the table. At the end, I gave them honest, severe warning of the consequences of not joining the church. **[It]** felt oh so good to give an honest, tactless warning for a change. They're *completely* warned now, and it'll for sure stand against them on Judgment Day, provided they don't pull their heads out first.

[We] went back **[to the mission home]** for training and interviews. During my interview with President Ames (my funnest interview to date), he said some stuff that surprised me. He said **[that]** my Japanese was excellent—get this—and he said **[that]** I could get by without studying it any more **[for]** the rest of my mission. He said **[that]** I need to work on my spirituality—he said **[that]** I need to read the New Testament to really get to know the Savior.

Holy cow, has my study method changed 180 degrees. From here on out, my spirituality comes first. **[This is a]** landmark entry here.

Gettling has a class across the way kitty corner **[from our apartment]**, so he yelled "gaijin!" from across the way. He ordered pizza and came and ate it with us. We had a good chat. **[It]** turns out **[that]** they're coming here to film a major motion picture with Tom Selleck—"Mr. Baseball." **[In the film, the Japanese team that Tom Selleck joins was called the "Chunichi Dragons." They're a real-life, factual team based in Nagoya.]**

[We] had an hour left when Gettling left. Instead of dendoing like we should've, we went down the block and played video games. I'll probably regret it.

Wednesday, July 10, 1991—Day 554

Once again, we decided to go to a Christian church. [It] wasn't so freaky this time [around]. At the end, while eating, one old Jap dude said that in order to get to know us better, it'd be good for everyone to know our beliefs. So he looked from this book he had and started into our story. He brought up the Book of Mormon and said it was in opposition to the scripture in Revelation that says "no new scripture," and he then, in classical tactless Japanese style, said to the whole crowd of 6~7 people (besides us) that our religion was false, then turned and said [to us] to quit our church and join the true church of Christ.

I was so pissed I was about on the verge of ripping his limbs off. Yet in front of the whole group I said to him, "Quit your apostasy-filled sect and come over to the true church of Christ!" **[Yep, two can play at that game.]**

[It's] too bad I had to do that in their church, which wasn't too polite, but they could tell I was pissed, so no one did anything. The guy next said that we were young, we should study more and learn the truth. What an idiot. Way to treat your guests. He did say a few things later that cooled me off, i.e. that we're so young and yet we still come out here and serve God instead of partying like most kids our age do, and how nobody in their church would/could ever do that. He was right on that point. He said [that] we were "erai," or "great," "respectable," whatever the word is in English. I went to talk to the guy later and show him my flips about apostasy, the Book of Mormon, etc. It was like talking to a brick wall, of course.

Next a senior missionary ([an] old guy) from America came over and we continued our "discussion" that we'd started earlier. Man, these Christians are hung up on grace. We went 'till 2:15 [p.m.] around in circles; the guy would rarely let me get a word in edgewise. **[One thing I remember is how he read us a scripture from the Bible, probably about grace being free, and then I responded with (if memory serves) the scripture that says "faith without works is dead." He probably wasn't expecting a 22 year-old Mormon to have a comeback, so he backtracked and started into, "Well, in order to understand that scripture, you have to understand the context, . . ." which is the age-old symptom of defeat. Anytime a person tells you that something means something other than what it says, you know that they're foundering.]** Something good came out of it, though; I promised to read and study the New Testament (hah!) and he said [that] he'd read the Book of Mormon. So we took them a copy later (he and his wife).

[We] went for our pick-up lesson with our 22 year-old friend from last week—Matsubara Hiroe—and had an amazing experience. One for the memory.

Since we'd first met her, she'd read the *entire* Book—[She said that she] didn't understand it the first time, so she read it *again*. She prayed about it, too, and felt a warm feeling. She said she felt that God had answered her prayers.

We heard her mom yell at her. She held her index fingers up to her head like horns and said that that was her mother. Because her mother is a devil, she couldn't meet as planned, and she probably can't ever meet with us.

Can you believe it?

[She] read the whole thing, not once but twice, prayed and got an answer, yet due to her mom [she] can't meet. All before the first word of [Lesson] 1.1!

We believe her about her mom, 'cause Hiroe never went to high school, doesn't open the door for strangers (at least she didn't at first), and doesn't/can't go out at night. That's not normal; I'll bet her mom dominates her. **[I found out much, much later, from her mother, that she'd had a brain tumor years**

earlier. That must've accounted for both her failure to attend high school and her mother's protectiveness of her.]

Later tonight we saw Kitajima Shimai on the bus. A girl walked by and started talking to us; **[she was]** pretty cute. **[It]** turns out **[that]** she's a fuke member. She said **[that]** we could go visit, though. She even said "please." **[We would later take her up on it and eventually got to know her quite well. Her name was "Kaori Aoyama."]**

We got dogged on another pick-up lesson **[with a guy whose last name was "Kawamitsu"]** tonight.

Thursday, July 11, 1991—Day 555

They had a pizza party at the A.B.C. Eikaiwa place and both Eikaiwas showed up. It was a going-away party for MacArthur. **[It was]** lots of fun; later we went to one of the women's house to watch the video of Seegmiller's sister's wedding that was sent to him.

[At one point in the video, his mother told one of his younger siblings that the video was for Seegmiller in Japan. The sibling asked, "Do they have VCRs in Japan?"]

[I] Got four letters today. One from Rikki, at long last, one from Jeanie Hancock who's now a missionary at the M.T.C., and a wedding announcement from Dan, which is more than my own mom sent me at her wedding. **[In fairness, my mother didn't have any wedding announcements printed. They just ran off and got married.]** Mom wrote me, too. **[It]** turns out that Rourk, my stepdad **[her ex-husband, of course]**, is married now. Apparently his wife wears the pants in the family. According to Mom, between Rourk and his wife all is not well in Zion. Oh well, we'll wait and see how **[it]** all turns out. **[When I went to visit them after my mission, it turned out that both my mother's impressions were incorrect. Fancy that.]**

Seegmiller and I went to the Seto Eikaiwa. They made me "teach" the kids' class, but other than that it was a lot of fun.

PHOTOS 079



Foreground, L-R: Nakamura-san, Daines, an unidentified Eikaiwa student, Fukuoka-san, me giving the "peace" sign.



Group photo #2.



Group photo #3. These folks sure took good care of us.



L-R: Me, Daines, Seegmiller, MacArthur.
We're rapping to "Popcorn Poppin' on the Apricot Tree."



More rappin' to the beat.



And a final group photo. Once again, this was MacArthur's farewell party. He was about a week away from going home.

Friday, July 12, 1991—Day 556

After Sango Eikaiwa we went with Kobayashi to meet her sister, **[who's]** supposedly well-versed in Buddhism. We went to meet her, and she'd read a couple of books in preparation for the occasion. **[We]** kicked back with her for a while at first, but in the end she couldn't explain the contradictions any better than anyone else. (I know them all. There's not a Buddhist on Earth that I can't throw into mass confusion.)

[I feel a bit bad about both of these meetings—this one and the one with Kobayashi's friend several days earlier. I was meeting with these folks ostensibly to have my questions about Buddhism answered, but my ulterior motive was to point out the contradictions in their religion—thus tearing it down to an extent—so that they'd be less wedded to their own religion and therefore more open to mine.]

I justified it by reminding myself that I did technically have questions about how they resolved the contradictions. Even so, I allowed a little bit of deception to creep into my dendo, so I regret it.]

[We] ended up spending a grand total of 7 and 1/2 hours there. (I was on a split with Daines all day, by the way.) We all ended up becoming very good friends in the process. She'd gotten a Book from before, but we weren't able to make a return appointment after all.

[It's] frustrating. When He'll get around to it, I don't know, but only God can unlock the hearts of these people.

Saturday, July 13, 1991—Day 557

[We] went by ourselves to A.B.C. Eikaiwa, then went and taught our guy we'd made the appointment with last week. His wife entertained a guest and didn't listen. I tried my new **[teaching]** order like I wrote before, but after **[Principle]** 1.3 (prophets) the Spirit wasn't there strong enough, so I went back to 1.2 (Christ). Had to do a rush job at the end which I later regretted, and couldn't get a return right then. We

agreed **[that]** I'd call later.

Dang, I could tell **[that]** it'd been a long time since I'd taught. **[I was]** a bit rusty. I feel bad.

[We] had a lunch/dinner with a couple **[of]** A.B.C.ers. **[We]** later went to a—get this—Girl Scout campfire upon the invitation of Kobayashi. **[She was a leader or advisor of some sort in the organization.]** **[We]** ended up rapping with some of the "Rangers"—girls **[who are]** sophomore in high school age. **[We all]** went down to a nearby house with the crowd and rapped some more. One girl's name was Keeko Yuasa—put that into Japanese pronunciation for a good laugh. **[It sounds vaguely akin to "kick your ass." She wondered why I laughed when she told me her name and was confused when I had her repeat it. I should've controlled my reaction better, poor girl.]**

Before we left, I made them promise that if in 5–10 years two missionaries come to their door that they'll let them in. **[I was surprised by how readily they agreed to do this.]** Future missionaries will certainly thank us.

PHOTOS 080



At our early dinner with the two A.B.C. Eikaiwa students and their kids.



And again.

Sunday, July 14, 1991—day 558

The Yamamotos and Hiroko & Masa Dude came down to see Poulsen for his last Sunday in Japan, so I saw them all this morning.

[They encouraged me and Elder Forrest, nicknamed "Mori" (the senior companion serving in Seto, the adjacent town in our district) to play hooky from church and go with them to wherever they were taking Poulsen. (Mori had been Poulsen's junior companion back when the Yamamotos were taking the lessons.) Neither of us took them up on it, since we could tell that it was Poulsen's day.]

Also, since Poulsen was a huge Anime fan, they brought him a TON—almost literally—of manga books. I can only imagine how much money it must've cost to send them all back to America.]

Junko was there again today.

Church is fun; **[there are]** a lot of people to talk to.

[We later] taught Spuds and Machiko. **[We found out that]** they got a picture of themselves into a modeling magazine.

Poulsen, bless his heart, had been on a split, seen a model of the "**[Space Battleship]** Yamato," and bought it for me! Sweet guy.

[We] got ourselves lost at first, but ended up going to the Pedersen's for dinner tonight. They're a 1/2 Japanese/New Zealand family. **[The husband was from New Zealand; the wife was from Japan. Sometime later, the husband and I had a conversation about his mission to the Navajo Indian reservations. I couldn't believe how easy he had it: They would tell someone what a baptism was, ask them if they'd like to be baptized, and the people would agree, all before hearing a single word of Lesson 1!]**

My attitude sucks lately. It needs adjustment.

I should've written more, but oh well.

Monday, July 15, 1991—Day 559

We'd planned to go to the Monkey Park with Suzuki Shimai and Aki-chan (Yoshimura), but the skies looked a bit too cloudy to trust, so we hung out in Sakae again instead of continuing on. **[We]** ate pizza at Shakey's again.

When 6:00 **[p.m.]** rolled around, we had no other appointments, so they invited us to continue playing. We went to a hill in a forest, borrowed a flashlight, and climbed to the top.

I was up at 1:45 **[a.m.]** in order to write letters, due to the fact that we were **[going]** to be busy all day.

Tuesday, July 16, 1991—Day 560

I was about sick and tired of all the fetchin' stress, so I decided I'd quit worrying and take it easy, at my own pace. **[How many times have I made *that* resolve in the past?]** I'm sick of it all; I've got to start enjoying myself and have a little joy for a change.

[I] spent a lot of time calling old investigators and setting up appointments with members. **[That last part was Seegmiller's suggestion; I was more about knocking on doors all day. He ended up being right, for the acquaintances we made wound up serving us well later on.]**

[We] went out and looked for Kurita Makoto Kyodai, but we couldn't find him. **[Remember, he was the one whom Oviatt and I met in Sakae and whom was later baptized after I transferred out. Although he lived in Meito-Kita's ward boundaries, I still hadn't seen him in church.]**

Wednesday, July 17, 1991—Day 561

Spent time this morning listening to some tapes on Joseph Smith. **[They were]** really spiritual.

[We] played tennis with Kobayashi and friends, then ate at her place. **[We]** visited a member going to America—actually, we met her at **[the]** church. **[We]** called her yesterday; she's super strong. She'll be **[back]** at BYU **[soon]**; we can meet again. **[Her name was Misako Miyachi. She gave me a tape of some of her music; it was very good. And yes, I did meet up with her at BYU after my mission. In fact, my first date after going home was with a girl I met through her.]**

Two thoughts hit me lately. #1, I'd better use these kaiins while I'm still in such a good area; it'd be a waste to let this opportunity go to waste. #2, I'm like a bow that was left strung too long and lost its spring. I stressed out my whole mission so far; now I've lost all **[my]** energy. I'm a total waste right now—you can tell by my writing.

Thursday, July 18, 1991—Day 562

[We] went to transfers so **[that]** Seegmiller could meet his best friend who came in today. **[His name was Elder Jayson Bybee.]** 'Twas a lot of fun. Chandler, Fisher, and Uthagrove all died **[i.e., went home]** today. Poulsen died, too—now *all* my seniors are dead. MacArthur died also. So did Thomason. Also, sad to say, so did my dear, sweet, beautiful Maruoka. Oh, I love her! I'm sad, but I'm writing her next P-day.

I was finally written to by Jodi. She was at a different address and really busy, but she still loves me.

[We] went to one of our appointments with a member family. **[We]** visited with them, got to know them, and uplifted them spiritually, I think.

Scott Choro is here now. **[He was a month ahead of us in the M.T.C.]** He had Koyanagi for a month after me. Holy cow, things were not good there.

PHOTOS 081



Sister Upthagrove and me in the mission home, taken just before she returned to America. She mailed me this photo and wrote the following message on the back:

"This is our one and only picture together. I thought you might like it since you told me you didn't have a camera in Japan. :)"

What a sweetheart, eh?

Friday, July 19, 1991—Day 563

On our way to visit a kaian, a car pulled out and hit Seegmiller, crushing his basket. I said, "pretend you're hurt!" **[Not to get money out of the driver, but to teach him to watch where he's going next time.]** He wouldn't. The guy was all worried, and he got our address and said **[that]** he'd send us however much it'd take to fix it.

We were late to our appointment 'cause of that. We went to Kai Shimai's place, and when we got there she was breast feeding her kid, right there in front of us. I guess the Japanese aren't so bashful about that type of thing as we are.

'Twas a bit of a distraction (you know me, hint hint), but she quit soon enough.

[It's a] lucky thing we went over, 'cause they were baptized back last April, but to this date **[they]** have only heard one or two A.B. lessons. **[I was wrong; they had been baptized the April before last, back in 1990.]** The father has gone fuke. We're going to continue the A.B.s A.S.A.P. **[Was it]** God's guidance?

She gave us a hair accessory she'd made for us to give to Matsubara Hiroe, but Hiroe wasn't home (**[or]** so her mother said).

[We] stopped by Kobayashi's, then went home in the rain and made kaiin dendo appointments, the 30-minute deals we've been doing. One sister was extremely surprised that, out of everybody, we called her of all people. I got the impression **[that]** she was quite impressed.

Later, our guy who'd rammed Seegmiller called and wanted to meet us and give us the cash directly. So we went to the spot where we'd wrecked, and he gave us the amount of money to replace the basket plus a package of Calpis drinks. **["Calpis" is a brand of soft drink—sold either canned or concentrated—that's quite popular in Japan. I myself love the stuff.]** **[He was]** such a cool guy; I really regret wanting to make him worry by having Seegmiller fake an injury. As a return favor for taking his time, we gave him and his wife a Book of Mormon. **[Again, was it]** God's guidance?

[There were] no hard feelings at all. It went well. If he reads **[the Book]** and gets converted, it'll be great. He'll have an interesting conversion story.

Saturday, July 20, 1991—Day 564

Holy mother, Dan Clyde's no longer a virgin. **[His wedding day was either that day or the day before.]**

Mathis Choro is now **[the]** junior zone leader. I went on a split with Ethington, the zone leader. **[We]** went to go visit a guy **[named Fujihara-san]** and re-pick him up **[Ethington had been a junior in Seto several months previously]**, and were able to make a return, thanks to Ethington. The guy totally has his beliefs in left field, however. The guy was in our investigator record **[book]**, but it turns out **[that]** he rightfully belongs to the other guys.

[We] stopped off at McDonald's, then later talked some more about dendo. Ethington has some good insights; it was a really helpful split. **[One thing he said is that housing, streeting, and member-missionary work are like the legs of a stool: Remove one of them, and the other two fall over.]**

Back at home, the other two guys were there, too. We had a few minutes, so we got to talking about "Wink," then Maruoka Shimai was brought up.

Holy cow does Ethington have a strong opinion of her. Whoa, she's far more of a wench than I thought she was. **[According to him,]** she was calling the honbu every night, she was oppressing her companions, faking illness, not working at all, there was talk of her and Hansen Choro exchanging rings at some future date and she didn't deny it when confronted **[oh, the betrayal!]**, and apparently her district leader, zone leader, and Stratton wanted her out of the zone so bad it hurt. Even the new **[mission]** president heard about her and didn't even want to talk to her. He (Ethington) and Stuart Choro, her district leader, both feel extremely, extremely sorry for the one guy that ends up marrying her.

I think there was some other stuff too, but I don't quite remember it all. **[That alone was enough, I guess!]** Whew, that sure will save me a lot of trouble being hung up over her. I thanked him for being so honest.

[We later] went and met with a **[female]** kaiin **[named Ryoko Okina]**, then ate dinner with Hanai Kyodai & Shimai and their kids. It's been a long time. **[They lived in Okazaki when I was stationed there and**

had since moved to Meito-Kita.]

Frehner called tonight about a copy of the "list." He's gone senior. Guess who his first junior is? None other than Depeel Choro! Oh boy, **[there'll]** be lots of Shades Choro stories going on up there. I love both those guys, though.

Sunday, July 21, 1991—Day 565

I asked Yoshioka Shimai, Maruoka's last dode, about her. I can tell that everything Ethington said was true. However, Yoshioka Shimai herself is a cute, sweet treat of the nicest degree. **[She's]** from Osaka, the babe. **[Osaka, the second largest city in Japan, had the reputation of being a hotbed of beautiful women.]**

[We] went back to **[the]** Kais to teach an A.B. lesson, but her husband was being quite belligerent. **[It was]** not enough to piss me off, however. Oh well, **[it's]** his salvation.

[We] went to Kitajima's place later. Holy heck, Junko (the triff with whom she occasionally has contact) thinks I'm #3, right in line after God and Christ—made all the better 'cause you can see me. Apparently she wanted to expose her whole soul to me and lay it all on the line, but Kitajima told her not to 'cause I'm in the middle of dendo. So instead she just had her relay another message, I forgot what. **[It had something to do with]** love and affection, to be sure. She's got money saved and can go to America anytime, but she's waiting 'till I'm back before she goes. If I'm there, she may never go back, so she told Kitajima. Kitajima Shimai herself said that if she hadn't been born 20 years earlier than me then she'd dedicate her life to me.

Whoa, holy cow do I get bombarded with compliments of the highest and most intense sort whenever either one of them are around. It's a solid fact that Kitajima Shimai loves me more than my own mother does. Yes, a little effort to become like Christ goes a long way, for sure. **[I have]** firsthand experience. Yet as far as Junko is concerned, I told Kitajima Shimai that my #1 goal in life was to become a missionary, and now that I am one, there's nothing I can do with or about her. God first, girls last (action-wise).

Monday, July 22, 1991—Day 566

I woke up too late today, dang it. However, I listened to music while writing letters, which sped me up quite a bit.

The other guys wanted to watch **[a videotape of the]** NBA **[specifically, Michael Jordan playing for the Chicago Bulls]**, so we went to Suzuki Shimai's to watch it. **[Since I'm not into sports,]** I wrote **[to]** Cloward Choro and listened to "Wink" while they watched. The other two had gone to the honbu and got the tape. **[On the way over, I whined and complained like a little kid. When Elder Scott offered to go back home with me so the other two could go on and watch, I realized how immature I sounded, so I clammed up and went along. I still feel bad about having acted like such a baby.]**

Later Aki-chan came over with a tape of "Die Hard 2," and so we all gave in and watched it. Later tonight the other two guys felt bad for being so fuke, but Seegmiller and I really enjoyed it. **[It was a]** totally good show.

[We had an evening appointment with a new member named Shino Watanabe, to which we were more than a half-hour late because we couldn't pull ourselves away from the movie until it was over. Oops.]

Okay, so I'm fuke.

Tuesday, July 23, 1991—Day 567

Baird Choro, the guy before Frehner in Takefu, is now Mori's dode in Seto. He'd wrecked and banged up his knee, so they had to ride the train and we just had benkyokai here. We ended up just talking about everything; it was fun.

We four had been invited over for lunch at a member's place. I was the one who had originally picked up the phone, and I got the wrong name. So I led us four to the totally wrong member. What do you bet that poor sister was surprised! All four missionaries just show up! So we got it figured out between us four, then covered our tracks and got out of there. **[The woman on the phone was Sister "Kuroda." I mistook her for Sister "Kubota," a different member in the ward.]**

[We all] spent three and a half hours at the kaiin's house once we finally got there, playing games, etc. **[It was]** a little too long for my taste. **[While there, I saw the book "Everybody Poops." I was so shocked that I knew there was no way it could ever be sold in the United States—it just *had* to be a Japanese thing. Imagine my surprise several years later when I saw that it had indeed been translated into English and was on bookshelves in the U.S.A.!]**

[We] went and followed up on a "referral" later which we'd gotten in the mail and was quite vague. **[We]** couldn't catch him; we'll get back to him later.

[I] called lots of kaiins for more appointments. One **[of them]** said **[that]** it was the first time missionaries had called him since he was baptized some 16 years ago. He was pleased to hear from us.

PHOTOS 082



Me at the member's house. What can I say, dendo can get pretty tiring.

Wednesday, July 24, 1991—Day 568

[We] did a bunch of stuff. Gave a Book to the [Buddhist] priest we met. [He's an] interesting guy; he doesn't like religion. Fetch, these Buddhists.

[We] went and visited Goto again upon her request. **[This was Kobayashi's sister, if I recall correctly.]** She'd found a few more answers and passed them along. She more openly admitted that religion was a hard thing, and she would like to believe in God. Plus, she said **[that]** she respects anyone in a religion and doing it for real. We said **[that]** we loved her (as a note) later.

[We] visited Sugai Kyodai, a really old guy who got baptized 5~6 years ago. **[That's]** almost unheard of for older people. **[This guy had been in the Japanese army during World War II. He was a lieutenant (junior grade) who served in China. As an officer, he had an authentic samurai sword which he graciously showed us and allowed me to handle.]**

[We] ate dinner at the Yamaguchis'. Seegmiller likes the girl, [who's] 20 years old ([named] Megumi). Cute.

It's so hot, none of us have any energy. I haven't studied for real in a long time, especially Japanese. My schedule is so off. I can't even wake up on time anymore. **[In my defense, the temperature affected everyone else in the apartment the same way.]**

Thursday, July 25, 1991—Day 569

[We] helped Kobayashi weed her garden, then played tennis. I'm getting lots better. [We then] went and ate over at an older kaiin's house. **[Her name was Kiyoko Ota. While there, I sat down in the closest seat, which just so happened to be her husband's regular chair. He wasn't home, but she nevertheless warned me that he'd be upset if he found out that anyone else had sat in it. I guess the guy thought it was his personal throne or something. Bizarre.]** She kept on feeding us and answering the phone, so we couldn't talk like we would've liked to. Seegmiller and I talked a bunch about Mormon chicks and what they will do, [and] also about corruption at BYU.

[We next] cut out for Eikaiwa at Seto. [I] got flirted with a little. [It's] hard to explain, but I could "feel the heat" if you know what I mean. I guess I let myself get a bit flirtatious, too. It's my nature. I haven't streeted or housed in weeks, now this flirting bit: Have I totally forgotten about dendo? I'm getting to the point where I no longer sense that missionaries are apart from it all. I no longer feel a spiritual edge; on the contrary, this just feels like life as usual, this calling. That's life, nothing more. All that enthusiasm of being a missionary is totally gone with the wind. I feel like I no longer really care about much of anything.

Spiritually dead, that's what I've become.

PHOTOS 083



Front: Seegmiller.

Back, L-R: Three Eikaiwa students, Asuka-chan, me, Aki-chan, Elder Baird.

Friday, July 26, 1991—Day 570

[We] had a bit of a party at [Sango] Eikaiwa, food and stuff. [It's] Summer vacation, so lots of kids came.

I let Seegmiller sleep, so **[our]** break went way over. We were punished for it, 'cause we went to the totally wrong place trying to find Shimizu Shimai's place. **[There were two areas on the map with the same name. Addresses in Japan are notoriously random and non-intuitive.]** Our time was cut way down 'cause it took so long to end up finding it. **[She's a]** cool chick, though. She and Miyachi Shimai were the ones who sang with Gettling during that fireside we took Setsuko to last Summer.

[We] went to Okina Shimai's place 'cause we'd been invited for dinner. She wasn't even there! She never showed up, either! So we just went back and played video games. Gads, I'm getting worse, not better, at "Top Landing," **[which I]** first encountered on my first P-day in Japan **[back on Day 69]**.

I'm losing all touch with dendo. Christ, dendo, and the LDS church don't even feel like a major part of my life anymore. I feel **[like I'm]** off in my own little world. I'm in a pit and it'll take a miracle to dig myself out. I don't even feel worthy to pray anymore. If my mission had to end right now, what would I think? Has my mission changed me at all?

PHOTOS 084



Me blindfolded and carrying a bamboo pole during the morning's festivities at Sango Eikaiwa. Notice the folks in the background keeping their distance. Can't say I blame them.



In Japan, instead of breaking open a piñata suspended from the ceiling, you break open a watermelon lying on the floor.



Other than Seegmiller and Daines in the front, and me and Scott in the back, I don't remember any of these people's names, sadly.

Saturday, July 27, 1991—Day 571

This morning, a guy came and delivered what turned out to be a videotape from Koichi of the concert of his that we went to **[in Takefu]**.

A cute 19 year-old chick came to A.B.C. **[Eikaiwa]**.

Got home, shopped, and couldn't figure out what to do, so we tried housing (gads, these Japs are a weak race **[and I hereby apologize again for my political incorrectness in my youth]**). It rained, so we went back home. It let up just as we got back. We ended up staying in for several an hour as I cleaned the kitchen and Seegmiller slept.

[We] had a pioneer day party at the church. Before it started, I met Yoshioka Shimai and her new green bean companion, Henmi Shimai. They're in a three-way **[companionship]** with **[Sister]** Durrant. Anyhow, Henmi met Maruoka in the lobby of the Tokyo temple a few days ago. Cool, eh?

Yoshioka and Henmi look a lot alike. Both are babes. **[They're]** sweet and utterly feminine.

I gave a talk when it got over. I spoke for five minutes or so on pioneers. **[It's a]** tough subject, since there's not a lot of stuff on them other than factual data. **[This was made all the tougher since I have no pioneer ancestors whatsoever—my mother was a convert.]** So I spoke on how they sacrificed all—including their lives—for the church. Would we be willing to do the same?

[I] got a few compliments later.

Baird paid me a good compliment. We **[originally]** met on the way down to get Depeel, and he said that ever since then he really wanted to be my dode ("companion"). Now that's a compliment!

When I got home, a package full of cookies was waiting from Jodi. What a hon. Things are hot.

I feel a lot better tonight about everything.

Sunday, July 28, 1991—Day 572

Another bunch of meetings took place at the church, and I saw Eguchi from Fukutoku and Yoko from Okazaki.

I had to go to the honbu for something, and there Dorough Choro showed me something grand: In a drawer were 40+ copies of the bunpo list, ready for distribution. There was one page missing, plus I've discovered a few glitches since then, so I have to go in tomorrow and fix/edit a bit before distribution, but I'm still very happy.

[We] went to the Kais with the intent to teach an A.B. **[lesson]**, but **[we]** ended up eating and talking with them and the Suzukis instead. **[That was]** all the finer with me, 'cause the husband was/is a bit too belligerent for me. **[For]** example, he had a cigarette in his mouth when we first saw him, passing him on the stairs.

Monday, July 29, 1991—Day 573

Today was an all-around success in every way. I couldn't get to sleep last night, so I just got up and wrote a hot letter to Jodi. Then I went back to bed.

Got up and the first thing we did was go to the honbu and correct the glitches in all those copies of the list. I even brought one home and sent it to Mom, asking her to type it up.

We went, the four of us, to play video games. I met a dude who was good at "Top Landing," and I learned a bunch from him and ended up kicking butt myself. **[I got]** 294 points. Kicked some butt on this Street Fighter **[II]** game, too. Hah! **[It was a]** good day at the games.

[We] went and dropped off the Book of Mormon we'd promised to our college professor **[whom we'd met, his last name was Honjo]**, but we couldn't meet him personally and thus had to use a middleman.

[In the evening, we] went and visited an Iguchi Kyodai, who at the end of the visit gave us a bunch of stuff he'd gotten sent to him from America. **[It was sent]** from a sister in Hawaii, who is there for college. Yes, **[she's]** none other than Kyoko Tanishita! She'd sent him the stuff before she came back for her visit, thus before she'd met me. I asked if she and he were boyfriend/girlfriend, and he said only so-so, just that they'd done stuff together a few times before. Her letter to me was great enough, so I'm not too worried.

What a coincidence, eh? We've got a little love triangle going on here. What fun! **[Love triangles are fun?]** I asked how old she was. Get this, folks: She's 33. Now that's the oldest person with whom anything's gone on at all **[with me]**. Yep, you've gotta love those older women. I know I do.

Tuesday, July 30, 1991—Day 574

[We] had a makeshift benkyokai without Mori, in which my dode gave an awesome spiritual message in which he shed tears.

After this we went to a place and those guys donated plasma while I sat and drew/wrote a message in this booklet they had in which, while waiting, you could freely write what you wanted. **[People are really big on donating blood in Japan. Missionaries often get in on the action too, especially in areas where there isn't a formal weekly service project in place. They'll count, or attempt to count, giving blood as their weekly service.]** I drew two missionaries and a big "Book of Mormon" display. I also wrote orders, ordering the reader to talk to the missionaries. I also said that the Book was from God, **[that]** the missionaries know the purpose of life, etc. Good stuff. I got it copied before we left.

[We] walked over and visited Sister Palmer **[whom I'd first met in my first area, if you recall]** who'd had a baby yesterday. She was looking well.

[I] got another letter from Heather Larson, in reply to my reply. She's living in Salt Lake [City].

[We also] taught an A.B. [lesson] to Kai Shimai.

[We] visited the Hoshinos, a family whom I had seen visit Inuyama a few times. [They're] nice folks. The wife was in some kind of accident or has some kind of disease to where her skin seems to be peeling off. [I later learned that it was due to some form of vitamin deficiency.]

[We] got back [to the apartment] and there was a singing contest [taking place] in the parking lot next door. We looked over, and who was singing but none other than Gettling! When he was done, they came [up to him] with a microphone and asked [him] how long he'd been in Japan. He pointed to us and said that first he came as a missionary like us.

I'm looking forward to getting back into some real dendo.

Wednesday, July 31, 1991—Day 575

Kobayashi and Yamauchi had invited us to eat at the Hilton, so as we rode the train out there I rocked and rolled the whole train car with my outgoing personality. I'll admit it; I'm a sweetheart.

[We] had a buffet at the top of the Hilton. [It was] good food indeed. [The view was remarkable, too.] Our waitress, Yoshida-san, had quite the body on her.

Everyone went home [afterward], but Seegmiller and I cut out and rode the subway to see Palmer Shimai again, who'd invited us back for when she'd have her baby [whom they'd named "Lena"] in her room. [She's a] cool lady.

[After that, we] went home, took a break, then followed up on some folks. One guy, an investigator from way back, committed to read the whole Book. Maybe that's all he needs.

I wish I knew who the heck will end up reading this.

Thursday, August 01, 1991—Day 576

Prayed and went to an area but found no one. Felt like we'd failed, and went to a store to buy something to drink, then met a girl working there who'd lived in America for a month. [We] gave her a chirashi.

[We afterward] played tennis, and I kept getting the impression that maybe *she's* the one we were supposed to meet. So while the juniors went off to Suzuki Shimai's place, I took Scott and we went back to the store and rapped with her to get to know her better. [It] looks like she'll be coming to Seto Eikaiwa next week. I'm gonna hit her hard for the lessons. [Could she be] my first baptism. . . ?

[We] went, the four of us, to [Eikaiwa in] Seto and watched "The Little Mermaid" in English. [It was a] good show.

Wow, that Aki-chan sure is a babe.

Friday, August 02, 1991—Day 577

[We] ran errands, [then] found out that Dorough forgot to give copies of the list to the zone leaders during the zone leader taikai. Those things are rare; it may not happen again while I'm around, dang it!

[We] visited Yamaguchi Shimai with the intent to watch her copy of "Called to Serve" so we'd be pumped up for dendo. Her T.V. and VCR are out of commission, so we couldn't.

Oh yeah, [we] stopped by Matsubara Hiroe's place and she seemed glad to see us. She's got a talent:

She can draw pictures, too. **[I was/am something of an artist, hence the "too."]** She even gave us a postcard she'd drawn—she'd made it just for us and was waiting for us to go by so **[that]** she could give it to us. I gave her the hairpiece from Kai Shimai and she gave us a homemade bead mermaid to give to Kai.

We loaned her Seegmiller's video. The situation promises to get better from here; she really opened up to us today.

[We] went and dendoed, and—wait; first I prayed hard for the area, of course—met a lady whose husband stayed for 20 days with a Mormon family in St. George. **[We]** got their phone number so I can call back.

There was a house **[that]** I felt for sure was the one we were meant to go to, but no one was there the first time, so we hit it again before we left **[the area]**. **[We]** talked to a lady through the intercom, and to break the ice I said **[that]** I had something to give to her. So she said to just put it in the mailbox. So we stuck in a Book and left.

Oh well, we were inspired to go there, so I know it'll turn some kind of profit. Baptism? You know **[that]** we're going to follow up, no matter what.

[We] had a cool A.B. lesson with Kai. **[We]** gave her her mermaid **[from Hiroe]**.

Saturday, August 03, 1991—Day 578

What a bummer of a day. Shokaid Nakamura-san to hear the lessons, but she said **[that]** she had no interest. I was bummed ever since then.

Prayed for an area and got what I thought was direction to follow up on that Book of Mormon placement **[from yesterday]**, but the lady through the intercom rejected us cleanly. **[We]** tried to follow up on the Fords, but the guy was busy and wouldn't talk. Followed up on a referral from way back, gave what I thought was an ultraclean shokai, but she wouldn't accept. Begged and pleaded and appealed to every emotion imaginable, but she still wouldn't accept.

Riding away, I admitted something to Seegmiller that I'd been thinking about all day. "Nihonjin" means a Japanese person. I love the members, but as far as the general population goes,

"I hate Nihonjins!"

Seegmiller said that that's exactly how Harris felt. **[Harris, in addition to being my senior, had also been Seegmiller's senior at some point previous to me.]** He said that if it weren't for some of the members, he'd hate every Nihonjin alive.

Gads, what an attitude problem I have. **[Being in the missionary business, I had a strong tendency to judge people solely on whether they were interested in my message or not. Plus, being so heavily invested in Mormonism, I tended to take rejection personally. These two traits combined to give me a very unhealthy tendency to think negatively about people who didn't have any interest in listening to us. The more times I was rejected in one day, the more judgmental I became, as evidenced by this journal entry, for example.]**

[We] had a dinner appointment with the Shikama family. The husband is in the Japanese military.

Sunday, August 04, 1991—Day 579

Church came and went (Junko came), and we cut out early to go with Mori to his farewell party. **[His mission was just about over; he had less than a week left.]** **[We]** stopped by their apartment **[it was]** my first time **[visiting it]**, and he had a boom box **[that]** he'd bought and a "Hysteria" CD **[that]** he'd

borrowed. He cranked it on. **["Hysteria" was my favorite album by my favorite band.]**

Went to a person's restaurant for a good meal and sat next to Aki-chan. Since I'd never been to "karaoke" before (where you sing along with the music with a microphone), we all decided to

CONTINUED IN VOLUME II

[At this point, as the above implies, I reached the end of the last page of the first volume of my missionary journal. Have you ever seen those brown missionary journals that they sell in Deseret Book? You know, the ones that claim that its pages are about the same length and width as those of the golden plates? Well, mine was one of those. The pages are 6 and 3/4" wide by 8" tall.

They come in two varieties: A ring binder to which you can add your own custom number of pages, and a bound volume. My first volume was the former; I'd gotten it for Christmas from my mother (I think) and I bought lots of extra pages and stuffed it full of them until the rings were bursting at the seams. My second volume was the latter style; it was given to me by one of my senior companions—Cloward or Poulsen, I can't remember who—once A) he'd decided that he wasn't going to use it, and B) I began worrying that I wouldn't have enough pages to cover my whole mission.

My first volume consisted of 462 pages. (That's 231 physical pages, each written on both sides, of course.) Even so, events would soon unfold in the second volume that made everything that took place in the first volume seem trivial by comparison. In fact, were I still a believer, I'd say that all the events that transpired in Volume I were nothing more than mere *preparation* for what was to come in Volume II.

Most people know that sister missionaries serve only a year and a half compared to elders who serve for the full two years. That said, since Sisters Chandler, Fisher, and Upthagrove had entered the M.T.C. the same day I did, as you'll recall, it's amazing to me that they had each gone home a full two and a half weeks earlier than this entry. The true bread-and-butter of my mission didn't even *start* to take shape until after theirs were already things of the past. If my mission had ended the same time theirs had, this blog would be finished. What would I have had to show for my mission? Sure, I would've experienced a new culture and seen more of the world, but whose lives would've been changed? Would I have been able to say that I did anyone any real, lasting good? If you look back over the pages of this journal so far, you'd have to agree with me that, at the end of the day, the answer would probably be "no."

That said, my mission only started to really matter beginning in Volume II, so although I'd written about "turning points" a few times in the past, hindsight reveals that this break from one volume to the next really does represent a true turning point in my mission.]

CONTINUED FROM VOLUME I

go. Once there, I rocked the place singing the Chibi Maruko Chan song. ["Chibi Maruko Chan" was the name of a popular cartoon series at the time. For all I know, it might *still* be popular. Anyhow, by "rock the place," I was dancing around, rolling on the floor, kicking my feet in the air, etc.] Later, another song was going on, and it started showing the lady in the shower. Wow, it showed *lots*. Everyone started freaking out, and then it showed her in some lingerie, fondling herself (top-only exposed). **[Mori himself just sat there and laughed.]** Someone ended up hitting the cancel switch after that. Whoa, that experience was quite something.

By the way, I found out that yesterday Kobayashi told Scott that she's ready to hear the lessons again—and this time she feels **[like]** she's more prepared.

Well, over 3/4 of my mission is gone, and my big journal is now full. **[It's the]** end of an era. It's time for new beginnings. The face of/my concept of missionary work has changed dramatically between the

beginning of this journal and the beginning of the last one. The first time around, I was filled with uncertainty; now I know exactly what's going on. The unknown is no longer a factor.

All in all, evaluating all the goings-on in my last volume, as far as my own personal growth and the good of mankind goes, beyond learning a new language, I accomplished little more than nil.

PHOTOS 085



L-R: Seegmiller, Kyoko Nishikawa, Rieko Yamada, me, Aki-chan. This was taken during dinner.



At the Karaoke place. I think Rieko looks better with her glasses on.



Me bringing down the house with the "Chibi Maruko Chan" song.

Monday, August 05, 1991—Day 580

[I] got 335 on "Top Landing" and landed four planes in the process.

[We] visited a family [the Yamada family, to be precise] where the husband is hantai ([i.e., a] non-member [who is opposed to someone's membership or activity in the church]), so the wife doesn't go to church. The oldest daughter just quit going, but the younger one is active. Gads, why is one [family member] always hantai? It never fails.

[We] went with Suzuki Shimai and Aya-chan to dinner with the other two. Back at home, Daines and Seegmiller got into an egg fight 'cause Seegmiller nailed Daines from seven stories up with one (we're on the seventh floor).

Looking back, all the officialism and professionalism of the M.T.C. is now gone with the wind. [It's] hard to believe [that] it's all the same mission. My my, how things change.

Tuesday, August 06, 1991—Day 581

[We] had a zone taikai, our first with President Ames, and his first of his life. [It was] pretty good. I was a bit bummed at first, but after a while I got to feeling pretty good. [It] looks like there will be a few changes in the mission from here on out.

[Did I really mean "few changes" as opposed to "a few changes?" I distinctly remember President Ames saying, regarding implementing changes to the mission, "if it's not broken, don't fix it."

As it turned out, both interpretations were incorrect. He ended up instituting a *lot* of changes. "Micromanagement" was apparently the watchword. In fact, by the time I left, it was hardly the same mission on which I'd "cut my teeth" nearly two years earlier.]

They ran zone pass-offs together, so at the end we had that. We passed off to Henmi Shimai. What a sweetheart. Sweet, sweet, sweet. She gave me lots of compliments on my flipcharts and had me give her my business/name card.

The whole thing went way late, and later it was raining, but we still went out to hunt down a referral.

[We] couldn't find the place, so we asked directions at a convenience store. Get this: Two of the customers, a girl and her little sister, volunteered to take us to the local police box and look up the address there since we couldn't find it on the map. We walked [to it], and once there it was hilarious 'cause the girls were giving directions and seemed to know more than the cop did.

[I really didn't do that last part justice. The scene was like something out of, say, a Steve Martin comedy, made all the funnier because it was taking place in real life right before our eyes.

Picture this: The cop was, I'd guess, roughly in his mid- to late fifties. The girl who had led us there was about twelve. After taking a look at the address we had, he pulled out one of his official police-issued maps and fumbled around with it, but became very confused and started making educated guesses as to the best way to proceed. The girl—about twelve, remember—stepped in and corrected the cop, saying things like, "no, that's not it," and "no, that can't be right." She put her index finger on the map and traced around on it, pointing things out to him like streets, landmarks, etc.

When this happened, I expected the officer to get irritated with her for insolence or for otherwise wounding his pride. To my surprise, he went along with it completely, bending over the map and looking down as she explained things to him. To top it off, his comments were priceless: He was saying things like, "Oh, I get it now" and "Yeah, I guess you're right!" I nearly broke out laughing.

So there you have it: A twelve year-old girl knew more than a grizzled veteran of Nagoya's finest. Sleep tight, citizens!]

[We eventually] found the place, but there wasn't enough time to actually visit them.

Once [we were] home, I was on the phone with Mori, and he told me [that] I was one of a kind. Admittedly, I love that guy, too. Coming from him, it means a lot more.

Wednesday, August 07, 1991—Day 582

Since Daines is probably transferring, a few A.B.C. Eikaiwa-ers and Mori & crew went bowling. I sucked.

[After this, we] were invited to go to "Asakuma" restaurant for lunch. There was only one [that] I knew of, so I went there and led the other three on bikes. Unfortunately, they meant the other/another one, [i.e., another, much closer franchise,] and after waiting [a long time] they called [around] and found

out where we were, then came over. Gads, was I embarrassed and mad at myself. **[Of course, it didn't help that our hosts—Kobayashi and Yamauchi, if I recall correctly—went *on* and *on* and *on* about it.]**

[We] had an A.B. **[lesson]** with Kai, then went over and met with Aoyama Kaori chan. **[She's the inactive girl we met while streeting in Fujigaoka.]** Holy cow, what a fun visit. She's coming with us to a gaijin party on Saturday. She even invited us to go do something during the two national holidays during September. She even ordered us pizza. How cool! She's 25.

Thursday, August 08, 1991—Day 583

I've about had it. We've done way too much playing. They (A.B.C. **[Eikaiwa]** folks) didn't want to watch it on a regular Saturday **[session]**, so we showed them "The Little Mermaid."

[We] went and played a long session of tennis later. Gads, **[we did]** almost no dendo at all. I'm beginning to feel it. As rough as it **[i.e., dendo]** gets, I'm getting to where I feel **[that]** it's better to **[just]** do it than to not do it, no matter how legal not doing it may be.

Went to Seto Eikaiwa with Daines, but our girl didn't show up (from last week).

Oh, the place with whom we left a Book, well, they sent it to the Eikaiwa address and now I've got it again. Fun, fun.

Friday, August 09, 1991—Day 584

[We] dropped by Hiroe's, and she let us in this time. We even chatted with her mom. We asked about the videos and how she liked them, and she said **[that]** she came to think about a lot of things. Great, all systems **[are]** "go." **[We also]** went in and played a few card games with her. We've even got a time set to do it again on Tuesday. I'm planning on hitting/stressing the lessons at that time.

[We] had to leave earlier than I wanted to for lunch at Kobayashi's, dang it. After that, we rode to the honbu to drop off our President's letters. **[We]** rapped with Gibson and Amini **[another member of the mission home staff]** for a while. Man, things get really interesting in there. Strange stuff. Stats from decades ago, etc. **[Amini was cleaning out filing cabinets filled with old, obsolete records. In addition to papers full of statistics, he was withdrawing and discarding excommunication records from years back, etc.]**

Came home and had a letter from Mom which irked me in a few ways. She (while I thought she knew better) asked which was harder, **[the]** Marines or a mission. **[It was the]** Marines, 10,000 to 1.

[We four] ate dinner at a member's **[home]** later (Matsushita Shimai).

I feel like I'm becoming one of the problem missionaries. Where's all that firm resolve I had so much of *before* I became a missionary?

Saturday, August 10, 1991—Day 585

[We] had a lesson with **[Tamao]** Asai **[the guy whom we met after praying hard for an area, the first door we knocked on]** at 2:00, for Lesson Two. I learned today that I've learned and changed a lot. Asai said at the beginning that since he and millions of other Nihonjins had been raised on the Shinto theory of "8 million kami" (gods), that he's found our Mormon concept of one god to be very hard to believe.

[That's the diametric opposite of our Western religious sensibilities, isn't it?] He said a lot of other stuff about how everyone else believes **[that]** they're the correct religion, etc. All through it, I sensed that he really wanted to know one way or another. Plus, he didn't believe in that silly Mt. Fuji ("all paths lead to the top") example. Also, he was straightforward with us and polite about his feelings, saving us much guesswork. That I really appreciated.

Plus, remembering what I learned about not making others over in my own image, I kept in mind the fact that I've had experience and experiences galore for years on end throughout my involvement in the church, while he has yet to have a single experience whatsoever. He's going on what he knows, which is essentially all he can do.

With all this in mind, I was able to empathize with and love Asai-san all the way through. It was great. We ended up loaning him the video with "The First Vision" and "Ancient America Speaks" on it. In fact, I invited him to come to church tomorrow and see what *real* Mormons are like **[as opposed to fake Mormons like us missionaries??]**, those who've gone through the whole conversion process themselves. That way he'd be able to see the end result **[for himself]**.

He accepted! He's coming to church tomorrow! **[We]** never taught him a word from the Lesson Plan, just discussed **[things]**, but I'm 100% happy. Wow, I feel like I've come a long way in my attitude. I'm excited.

Kaori-chan came to the gaijin get-together. She brought a friend of hers **[named Hitomi]**. Surprise surprise, her friend turned out to be a girl who came to volleyball in Inuyama one night, or maybe two nights. She was one of the ones **[whom]** Reed, Barry, and I met that one night we encountered the weird guy. Wish I could find that place in my journal; it'll be hard.

Talk about a small world! Of all people Kaori could've brought!

The thing wasn't much to speak of, but it was okay. **[The event started out with a video or slideshow presentation of a natural disaster that happened in Bangladesh, followed by the presenter giving a plea for money for disaster relief.]** **[We]** met a few folks. One girl told me **[that]** I looked like Richard Gere and came up and essentially gave me a hug, albeit weakly/jokingly. 'Twas fun.

Kaori-chan showed a new side. She *loves* little children and is really good with kids.

Our hours don't show it, but sincere progress is being made.

Oh yeah, got a letter from Jodi. She told me about some of the new kisses she's going to teach me/do to me. She's got a car, so we can meet without a problem. She's going to take me on a date that she *promises* I'll never forget. Wheeee!

PHOTOS 086



L-R: An unidentified kid, Kaori facing away from the camera, Hitomi, me. We're waiting for the event to start.



Milling around the snack table. You can see Seegmiller at the very far right.



L-R: An unidentified guy, Kobayashi, me, Kaori facing downward. Notice how the guy, me, and Kaori have our names written on stickers, "Hello My Name Is"-style. I suppose I was so used to wearing my missionary nametag that I forgot that my name was already clearly visible!



Me and Kaori. She's finally facing the camera!



Me attempting to do a "Bon Odori" dance. ("O-Bon" is a quasi-holiday in early August wherein the spirits of the ancestors are said to return. People do traditional dances in order to please or appease them.)



A group shot of all of us. Can you pick me out of the crowd?

Sunday, August 11, 1991—Day 586

Kaori-chan came to church! Yay! I was hanging out on the front porch waiting for Asai-san, so she was

sitting there too. She said that were it not for the time Seegmiller and I met her in Fujigaoka, she wouldn't've been there/come today. Great, for the first time in a long time I feel as though my presence here in this mission has made a difference in some way.

Asai showed up after the sacrament. Seegmiller began to show his pictures to Kaori-chan, but I wanted Asai to hear the talks without distraction, so halfway through I had to ask them to keep it down.

Asai stayed for all the meetings. I tried to make a return, but it looks like he wants some time to himself to think it all over. He said **[that]** he came with the intent to get his questions answered, but now his questions have only multiplied tenfold. In parting, he asked us to call him again, so I know he's not trying to ditch us.

[This was] the first time **[that]** I've had an investigator to church in a long time.

Tanaka Shimai from Kasugai (see last year today) showed up.

[We] went to the Shiraiwas' for dinner, and **[afterward]** they showed us a movie, one of the cartoons I learned about from Poulsen. **[It was "My Neighbor Totoro."]**

I'll keep you informed on the progress with Kaori's reactivation.

One of the Sisters went to Hawaii recently and met Kyoko. Kyoko told her to look for a "strange" missionary here. Great, **[so]** that's what she thinks **[of me]**.

Monday, August 12, 1991—Day 587

Got up at 1:30 **[a.m.]** to write letters. Wrote to Jodi; also answered Mom's question as to which was harder, **[the]** U.S.M.C. or **[a]** mission. I told her that comparing a mission to the Marines was like comparing Romper Room to Hiroshima.

[We four] went to the Monkey Park with Suzuki and Aki-chan. **[It was located in Inuyama, my third area.]** Saw all the old familiar buildings from way off.

One chick accidentally hit me in the crotch as she turned around, so I acted like it hurt really bad. She was all embarrassed.

[We] ran into some Filipino chicks who were pretty dangerous, ready to pull the moves. We avoided them. **[Were they]** prostitutes, perhaps?

Found out later that Aki-chan smokes. Scratch her from the babe list. Only Mormons occupy it from here on out. What a dork I was.

PHOTOS 087



L-R: Me, Aki, Scott, Daines delivering the smack down, Seegmiller.

Tuesday, August 13, 1991—Day 588

[We] went to Hiroe's and played a few games. Sure enough, she was looking much better, especially in the clothing department. She said a couple of things that made me sad, such as "I look like a badger, too" and later she implied that pictures of their cats were more important than pictures of her. I firmly assured her that such was not the case.

[Even though I'd been in Japan for nearly a year and a half, my proficiency with Japanese wasn't anywhere near a native's, of course. Even at this stage, I very often had to exercise my skill of judging when something being said to me was unimportant enough to just nod my head and act like I agreed, whatever it was. Right at this particular moment, and in all the years afterward, I was and am very happy that I was straining to understand and listening hard enough to know what Hiroe was saying when she was making her self-defeating comments. God forbid that I had actually nodded my head and said "yes" to any of the above.]

Her mom ended up fixing us lunch.

As it came time to end, we rapped about the lessons again. After some planning, it was decided that we'd meet at a different place, away from the house, tomorrow. I'm excited!

Back at the house during our break, something struck me like blue bolts from Heaven. I was standing around and something caught my eye on Seegmiller's desk; it was a letter that he'd been writing to his folks. I couldn't help **[but]** notice what was written. He was talking about our lack of success, and **[saying that]** most of it was due to his companion. **[Blaming the senior for lack of success is a time-honored tradition of junior companions. Unfortunately, it's pretty much always true.]** He wrote that I had no tact and scared people off, and that I got really mad when people didn't believe or think the way we do. **[He]** also **[said]** that I didn't love the people at all, and as a matter of fact, by the way I complain about them, I probably hate them.

Say *what?* I have no tact? Holy cow. And all this was written *after* the experience with Asai-san. No matter what, if there weren't some sort of truth to it all, he wouldn't've written it, so I can't deny a whole lot. **[I'm glad that I'd matured to the point that I could say that. If I'd just gotten angry and denied everything he wrote, would I have been able to learn, change, and grow? Probably not.]** He may not know Japanese too well, but is that really the impression I give off?

That was the straw that broke the camel's back. I felt like a total loser all the way to Fujigaoka for dendo, and I told Seegmiller that. I get the idea that if I'm going to be teaching the gospel of Christ, **[then]** I'd better start living the whole law—and that means loving everyone. Tonight I made a point of looking around and finding the good points in everyone.

It's time for a new beginning. The first two months of Takefu were nothing; the third **[month]** was great. **[Here in Meito-Kita,]** neither one of us were transferred **[after two months]**, so we're about to embark on our third month. Now it's time to be blessed. **[It's]** time to love, really sincerely love, everybody, regardless of how they treat me.

[It's] funny; for some reason Seegmiller said tonight that he can tell that I really love Hiroe and Asai. That didn't seem to coincide with **[what he'd written in]** the letter.

Wednesday, August 14, 1991—Day 589

[Today was a] complex day. Had two splits with Scott 'cause Seegmiller and Daines wanted to dendo together for their last time. **[Daines had been in that area for five months—he came from the M.T.C. to Meito-Kita at the same time I went senior and transferred to Takefu—so it was almost inevitable that he was about to transfer.]** Housed with Scott, came back, and with Seegmiller met a lady **[who lives]** close to the apartment. She didn't seem too interested in religion at first, but she let us go into the place where she was working and help **[her]**. She's a seamstress. There we found out **[that]** she believes in God and has interest in items of religion after all. **[She's a]** cool lady; we became good friends. **[Her last name was "Hayakawa."]**

[We] met Hiroe and went to a little café and looked at more of the pictures she had drawn; she's got real talent. **[From what I remember, all of her pictures were in "anime" style. Every Japanese person I ever met who had artistic talent was always able to draw anime.]** It was too noisy there, so we went to a different place, a cake shop.

It's one of my weaknesses, but I find it *really* hard to strike up a conversation and/or act natural around her. **[I'm sure part of it had to do with the fact that, thanks to not having attended school for who knows how long thanks to her illness, she'd had very little social interaction.]**

We got into **[Lesson]** 1.1, but the lady at the place was really rude and asked if we were working, saying that the store wasn't a place to work, and if we weren't going to order anything else then please go home **([said very]** rudely).

Sheesh, and we were the only three **[people]** in the place, too. So we ordered something else just to shut her up. I would've gotten pissed, but I didn't want to leave a bad impression on Hiroe.

So we finished up **[Lesson]** 1.1 **[and]** then left. I felt like it went poorly, 'cause of that and all the background music.

She accepted a return for next week, so technically our **[number of]** investigators just doubled. She's **[officially]** meeting with us now, so we've hit a milestone.

[Had] another split with Scott, and we took food over to our lady **[i.e., with Hayakawa-san, whom Seegmiller and I had met a few hours earlier]** for a break for her and then **[we]** helped her for another couple of hours. **[It]** looks like this may just go somewhere.

Back with Seegmiller we hunted down **[an inactive member with whom I'd spoken on the phone,]** Nakayama Yumiko, but couldn't find her place, so I called. She said that if I came over she'd "komaru," **[the English equivalent of which would probably be something like, "be up the creek without a paddle,"]** **[since]** she's got no faith. Gads, she's stubborn. **[Actually, it was me who had called her a few times on the phone trying to reactivate her—during each conversation she'd been too polite to just brush me off or hang up on me—so I was the stubborn one, not her.]** So we just rode home. And I still can't figure out why all these people go fuke.

I found it much easier to love the Japanese people today. **[It was a]** pretty successful day, too, 'cause a pretty solid pick-up was made and we also met a really promising contact.

Thursday, August 15, 1991—Day 590

[We] went, the four of us, and bought a teddy bear for Megumi Yamaguchi who's going to Hawaii on the 21st. Then **[it was]** off to transfers. Once there, the buch (**[i.e., the mission]** president **[short for the Japanese word "dendobucho," which of course means "mission president"]**) saw me and with a stern, grave as death face, looked at me and said words to the effect of "you don't need to be here, do you." **[He was right: Since neither Seegmiller nor I was transferring, my primary purpose in going there was just to hang out and catch up with my fellow missionaries.]** Crud, I was scared. So I said that I knew he'd be there and I needed to ask him a question, which was true. **[Although it was technically true, it nevertheless wasn't my primary motive for being there—not by a long shot. I more or less had to save myself by coming up with something fast.]** He seemed a bit skeptical, but I asked anyway. Here's how it went:

He said in **[the last]** zone taikai how the only baptism he ever saw went fuke right afterward, but he feels pretty good about his mission. I wondered *how*. He said **[that]** it'd take a long time to answer, **[so]** call tonight for an appointment.

Reed went senior up North this transfer. Brough and Mori died today. After that little incident with the president, I wasn't able to have as much fun. **[It was also the last time I went to transfers when I didn't need to. Regardless, President Ames soon made a rule against doing it.]**

[We] left and dropped the **[teddy]** bear off at **[the]** Yamaguchis'.

By the way, Madsen went zone leader in a different area. That's a sure sign that I'm getting old. Harada died today, too.

Went with Ishida, the new junior zone leader **[and our new apartment-mate]**, to Meito Eikaiwa, where I was talked into "teaching" the kids' class. The president's two littlest kids came up later, and later Miki Kato (from Fukutoku but who's **[working as]** a cook in the honbu) came up to look for them. She and I were the only adults there. **[It was a]** rare opportunity. Temptation.

Man, that Henmi Shimai has a superbly firm handshake. **[It's]** not Nihonjin-like at all. **[Most other Japanese people, especially women, have handshakes like dead fish.]**

Oh yeah, got a postcard from Heather where she ripped me a new one for correcting her spelling in her last letter. I deserved it.

From here on out, the blessings **[will]** come rolling in. **[I probably said this because I was about to begin my third month in Meito-Kita, and my third month in Takefu was, by far, my most successful.]**

Friday, August 16, 1991—Day 591

[We] had tennis again. **[We]** streeted without success later, then met Kaori-chan at the church. She took us back to her place, and her folks fed us. I got to eat lots of sushi; it was great. **[They're a]** cool family.

There was a bunch of stuff going on on T.V. about World War II, which was pretty interesting: Hearing about the war in Japanese, in Japan, in a Japanese person's home and being an American. [It was a] totally different perspective from what I'm used to.

PHOTOS 088



Me taking tennis WAY too seriously. Note also the Def Leppard hat and the "Punkwheat" t-shirt.

Saturday, August 17, 1991—Day 592

They invited us at 6:30 in the morning, so we all headed out at 7:00 a.m. to play softball with the Meito-Kita (North) ward against **[the]** Meito-Minami (South) ward. I sat aside and just studied.

[We] went just the two of us and taught A.B.C. **[Eikaiwa]** in the Japanese-style room.

Got another letter from Kyoko, plus Mom sent me the typed-up bunpo list in a couple of different forms so I could make corrections and pick out which form I like. Man, it's beautiful. I can hardly wait to see the finished product, all typed and pretty.

[We] went to Nagakute **[the township directly south of us]** for their 20th Anniversary bash. **[I.e., the 20th anniversary of it being incorporated as an actual municipal entity.]** We were given a couple of "matsuri" vests; **[they're]** really cool. **[I still have mine.]** Placed two Books, and met another girl with interest in Christianity. **[And thus that last sentence marks my first mention of Mika Yogo, the person who would eventually become the single most important individual in this entire missionary journal, by far. You'll hear much more about her as this journal progresses.]** We're meeting with one of the guys and the girl when the party continues tomorrow night.

An example of inspiration: As we left for the big event, we had two Books between us. We haven't given **[out]** more than two Books in one day in a mega-long time, but halfway out the door I felt that I should go back for one more. Well, we gave out the two, and then met our girl who'd been taken to a Christian church when she was in America and had interest. I showed her the last copy of the book, and she said **[that]** her friend has a copy. She didn't know anything about it, so I pulled out the last one and explained, saying **[that]** it was the best book on Christianity ever written. (Felt the Spirit really well up with that.) She didn't take it 'cause she can borrow it from her friend. Yet if I didn't have that last one, I wouldn't've been able to explain it with 1/4 as much **[of a]** punch. You know, a picture is worth a thousand words.

See? Inspiration to bring a third Book!

Sunday, August 18, 1991—Day 593

Spent the morning correcting and proofreading the copy of the list that Mom sent me.

Translated for the first time in a long time for a Canadian dude **[named Hal Salway]** who took Brother Pedersen's place when he left (at work). This was in Priesthood meeting.

Rapped with Shimizu Yuka after church, along with Megumi **[the one for whom we bought the teddy bear]** who's leaving to study in Hawaii soon. Yuka had nothing but good things to say about me due to my memory and the fact that I carry out what I say I will. You see, she found out (somehow) that Kyoko and I have been writing **[each other]** and that I reply faithfully, while most people just say they'll write but never do. I said **[that]** I've gotten three letters from her so far; that's more than Yuka has gotten.

[We] tried to visit the Yamamoto family again, but couldn't find the place, so we decided to call and tell them, but once I picked up the phone I looked around and realized **[that]** we weren't too far away **[from them]**. However, by that time, had we gone over, we would've been really late, so I called and cancelled again. Dang, I hate not keeping appointments.

[Then it was] back over to the Nagakute matsuri for more fun. We met our guy soon thereafter **[his last name was "Katagiri"]**, and he went to get us some shaved ice treats. While he was gone, a lady came up and wanted us to do the "Bon Odori" dance with the rest of the crowd, but we said **[that]** we were waiting on a friend. She asked if we'd eat some shaved ice, but before we could say anything she was off.

While she was gone, Mika Yogo, our girl with interest, came up with a few of her friends. While talking to her, the lady came back, then the guy came back, both carrying shaved ice things. **[It was a]** really awkward situation, but we successfully got it all divvied up.

The lady talked to the guy **[Katagiri-san]** for a while, while Seegmiller kept Mika occupied. To make a long story short, Mika is going to call this week for a lesson, and we're visiting our guy on Saturday. We essentially just strengthened the relationship with all parties concerned.

Remember the lady who danced for us the day **[that]** we met Asai? Well, she was there tonight, too.

At the beginning in a different **[geographical]** part **[of the event]** they had a singing contest going on, and we heard the M.C. call for Asai Tamao, who is none other than our own Asai-san. He wasn't there, though. **[It was an]** interesting coincidence.

Monday, August 19, 1991—Day 594

Got up at 3:30 **[a.m.]** and wrote all my letters. Went and played video games later and did a lot better at "Top Landing." Some guy was really good at "Street Fighter II" and he was nice enough to show me a few of the tricks.

[We later] had a nice picnic at Shinrin park with the Seto guys and Suzuki Shimai and Aki-chan.

[We] had a devotional with all of us here at the apartment and the Seto guys; **[this is]** one of the **[mission]** president's new programs.

[After this, we] went with Baird and Hansen for more video games. **[Elder Baird had been Mori's last junior companion in Seto; he went senior when Mori went home. Elder Hansen was Baird's first junior companion. Interestingly, they'd been best friends since before their missions back home in Las Vegas.]** I landed seven or so planes on "Top Landing," scoring 499. **[It's]** my high **[score]**. Tried the tricks on "Street Fighter II" and got quite far. Yep, **[it was a]** good day at the arcade.

Oh yeah, Yogo Mika **[once more, in Japan, the last name comes first]** called for a return today, after all. I'm excited to teach her; she seems like the gospel type. It's dangerous to predict, however.

I can tell already **[that]** I'm not going to want to transfer out when I do.

Tuesday, August 20, 1991—Day 595

After benkyokai I was called into the president's office and we chatted **[about the question I asked him back on Day 590]**. Afterwards I reviewed all the proceedings with Seegmiller. It'd take too long to explain, but suffice it to say that I got determined to ditch those habits that were offensive to the Spirit. All the way home I was drawn out in prayer, asking for help. I got the impression that the closer I am to God, the less likely I am to do the wrong thing.

Guess what else? The president says that he's been getting reports from various sources that I've been fraternizing with the Shimais. I asked what that meant, female missionaries or members, and he said **[that it was]** members. Holy cow, it happened to me! **["it" = the mission president got a complaint about me, something I swore would never happen.]** He said **[that]** he wasn't too worried about that, 'cause that's a symptom, not a cause. **[According to him,]** something else is bugging me.

[We] met the wife of the **[local Buddhist]** priest on the way home, and she invited us over. So we went to the temple and stayed a few hours. How about that, Gorbachev was overthrown yesterday or so.

[We] visited our seamstress, and she says **[that]** she'll listen to the discussions, but it has to be while she's working. That's totally cool by us.

Wow, things are really picking up already. It's getting exciting.

Wednesday, August 21, 1991—Day 596

[We] rode to the Yamamoto's to write them a note of apology **[for cancelling with them not just once, but twice]**. Dang it, they'd given me faulty directions. **[There are]** few things I hate worse.

On the way, we stopped at a store for directions, and the lady there wouldn't talk for squat. **[We]** stopped by on the way back to get her to smile, but she wouldn't even speak when spoken to. **[It]** pissed me off. **[It was like we were a pair of gay black lepers with AIDS who had just walked into a KKK rally.]**

Oh, by the way, we were up and dressed and had benkyokai on time, the first time in a *long* time.

We'd gotten a fellowship for Hiroe's lesson, but Hiroe didn't show—**[it was]** probably because of her mom.

[We] went to **[Sister]** Kai's for an A.B. **[lesson]**, but ended up just messing around instead. **[We]** watched the end of "Tonari no Totoro" **[Japanese for "My Neighbor Totoro"]**, which we couldn't see at **[the]** Shiraiwas'.

[We] had volleyball [for the] first time in five months or so. 'Twas fun. Got to look at Henmi Shimai's pictures.

Thursday, August 22, 1991—Day 597

[We] got Seegmiller a haircut (note to myself: ASOBU SHONEN) which took a long time, then [it was] off for more tennis with Kobayashi and Yamauchi. Seegmiller and I are both getting better, by far.

We both went to Seto Eikaiwa and had fun. [We] didn't want to leave, [so we] stayed and rapped late.

Back at home, two of Ishida's friends came over—looks like they'll be a while. [They had ridden their bikes all the way from the Tokyo area.] Japan's a small country; people can do that with no problem.

[I hesitate to extrapolate on that note to myself, above, since it was my intent that no one know what it meant but me, but what the heck:

In Japanese, "asobu" means "play," the verb, while "shonen" means "boy." Put the two words together—"play" and "boy"—and what do you get?

The Japanese people have far, *far* less hang-ups about female nudity than Americans do, so quite often that magazine will be laying around in waiting rooms alongside all the rest of the magazines—an unthinkable situation in America.

At any rate, when Seegmiller sat down for his haircut, there was a wall between him and the rest of us in the waiting room. Lo and behold, one of those magazines was lying there on the shelf. The temptation was overpowering, so I decided to experience a little of the local culture and browsed it. When in Rome, do as the Romans do, right?

As you can imagine, it had quite an impact on me, a young man in the prime of his life who'd been without any meaningful female contact in well over a year and a half. On the flip side, I felt horrifically guilty afterward. I was deathly afraid that someone would find out and that I'd be sent home. In retrospect, it probably wouldn't have gotten me sent home had I been repentant—which I was—but at the time I was thinking of worst-case scenarios and was scared out of my gourd.]

Friday, August 23, 1991—Day 598

This morning we headed out early to do a once-yearly kid Eikaiwa in Seto at the culture center. Gads, there were a ton of kids there. A hundred? They were better (behaved) than I thought they'd be.

The Japanese are often surprised when you can use chopsticks. Heck, they're not all that hard [to use]!

[We later] had a good A.B. [lesson] with Kai Shimai. She's going to do kaiin dendo with us! [It'll be] a first for me!

[We] went and visited the Yamaguchis 'cause Megumi got a fever and couldn't go to America this week after all. There we watched "Called to Serve" again. Holy cow, I almost cried. Wish I had my own copy. Man, what a privilege it is to dendo.

[That evening, we] met with Mika at Fujigaoka. [We] went to another restaurant and BRTed for a long time; we're taking her bowling on her birthday [this] Monday.

We then taught her [principles] 1.1 and 1.2. [It's] amazing; she's got all the right answers and the right attitude. She doesn't smoke or drink tea, alcohol, or coffee. Wow. She even said this:

"I don't know anything about Jesus Christ, so please teach me!"

Wow, what an attitude. You go your whole mission searching for people like this. She also freely said that she can believe in a god like ours.

She's got lots of interests, hobbies, and skills. She's extremely well-rounded. She couldn't make a return due to her schedule, but we'll decide on it come Monday. Gave her a Book for her own at last.

Sitting there during the lesson, it really hit me: Me, an official, called and ordained missionary in my specific mission, there teaching the Gospel of Christ to a prepared soul whom the Lord had entrusted to my care—now *that* is life at its fullest. Heaven draweth near.

I can picture her in baptismal white. I can see her as a shimai easily. I wonder: Will her eyes behold the inside of a temple?

PHOTOS 089



L-R: Elder Seegmiller, Elder Baird, Elder Hansen, me. Note Hansen's psychedelic socks.



Me calling on someone to identify the butterfly.



Baird, Seegmiller, me, and Hansen revealing a little-known mathematical theorem.



Anyone up for a friendly game of Simon Says?



L-R: Seegmiller, Hansen, me, Baird, and two unidentified photo crashers.



When the event was over, this little toddler followed me around everywhere, wanting me to pick him up and hold him. No matter where I went, he was right on my heels. He didn't do this to anyone else. It was the damndest thing I ever saw. (In other news, our pint-sized photo crasher sure does get around, doesn't she?)

Saturday, August 24, 1991—Day 599

Didn't do a whole lot today.

[We] taught A.B.C. **[Eikaiwa]**, **[then]** went to get a cake mix to make for Mika 'cause her birthday is on Monday, then went to a going-away party in Seto for an Eikaiwa girl who's going to America. **[The party was held at the home of Kyoko Nishikawa, another Eikaiwa student there.]**

Just so happened to place another Book in the process, too.

Sunday, August 25, 1991—Day 600

I was really busy at church translating for the new Canadian couple, i.e. **[translating for]** all their interviews, one's setting apart, etc.

At the end, Tanaka Shimai from Okazaki was there for some Scouting activity. She was glad to see me and was really sweet to me. She and Shimizu Shimai are coming to America and they asked if they could come stay at my house. Sure! It'd be great having them.

[I later asked my parents' policy on this. They said that it would be okay if people I knew from my mission stayed with us, with the understanding that they'd be my guests and I'd have to be the one to show them around, etc.]

I surprised a bunch of people with my trick of wearing a short-sleeved shirt under my suit coat but also wearing long-sleeved cuffs that I'd cut off one of my long-sleeved shirts (to make it look like I had on a long-sleeved shirt after all). **[This was because it was mission policy to wear a suit coat to church year-round, even though we were otherwise allowed to wear short-sleeved shirts from May through October. This way, it would look like I had a long-sleeved shirt on under my suit coat, but I could strip the coat and cuffs off and transition straight into my short-sleeved "uniform" after church without having to go home and change.]**

[We] went and spent a lot of time with Kaori and her family. [It's] interesting: When she was a sophomore [in high school], she went to America and got a boyfriend while there on the trip ([he was] American). They wrote each other ever since, then two years later he died in a freak car accident. Pretty sad stuff.

Spent time tonight back at home making the birthday cake for Mika. [My task was to make the cake; Seegmiller's was to make the frosting.]

Monday, August 26, 1991—Day 601

After having some trouble getting the frosting to the right consistency, we were able to fix the problem (by adding pancake mix) and then [we] took off. [After Seegmiller screwed up the frosting by making it too liquid-y, he just said something like "I didn't do it right" and gave up. I was quite miffed; where was the "how should I fix this?" or "do you have any ideas?" It was just, "I didn't do it right" and then he was off to talk to Daines as though he hadn't a care in the world. Meanwhile, it was up to me to figure out how to salvage the situation.]

[We] met Mika at Fujigaoka, presented her with her cake, and sang "Happy Birthday" [to her] (she's 21). [We] left the cake with a lady in a store there [she was nice enough to let us leave it in their refrigerator during our absence—we couldn't necessarily pack it around with us all day in the August heat], then took the subway out to go bowling.

Fetch, it was an experience. [The place had, literally, 100 lanes. Although Mika is multi-talented to a fault, I discovered that bowling is the one and only thing I can do better than she can—unless, of course, she was sparing my ego by letting me win.] [After this,] we went to a nice restaurant, American 50s style [the franchise name was "Ed Debevic's,"] yet she paid that time around. It's a good thing, [because] Pepper (Seegmiller) and I didn't have enough [money] to cover it between the two of us. Yet it cost less than bowling had.

Back in Fujigaoka, she didn't really have a way of getting her cake home, and my [bike] basket was the only one big enough to carry it, so we took it and followed her home. [She and Seegmiller rode out in front, talking the whole way, while I brought up the rear trying desperately to avoid each of the bumps. Quite a long stretch was on a dirt road by a canal, making things that much more difficult.]

Once there, we kicked back inside her place for a few [minutes]. All the bumps and heat had *totally* ruined our cake. It was a sad sight. Yet she was still happy 'cause it was the first birthday cake she'd ever received.

[We] made a return [with her], so that's pick-up #3.

[As for] our seamstress, Hayakawa-san, her mother had gotten sick really bad, so she couldn't keep her appointment.

[We] went and tried to visit a referral, but met the mom who wouldn't answer straight and pissed me off.

[We then] went and helped Scott practice for a musical number at church with the [Meito-] Minami sisters.

Back at home, Mika called me to thank us for such a good time today. She called totally on her own [accord]—now that's above and beyond the call of duty!

Tuesday, August 27, 1991—Day 602

Today was zone pass-offs and a zone taikai. Learned a lot and was spiritually uplifted, too. Rapping with

Van Cleave later, it seems as though he's had lots of the same ideas, thoughts, and attitudes **[as]** I've had.

[We] didn't leave 'till later 'cause Pepper was being interviewed. Helped two sisters carry some of their heavy stuff to the subway station after that.

Madsen, Proctor, and Van Cleave are all going home a month early for Christmas. One guy, whom I don't know, is going home a month early and so will be joining us, I hear. **[This was Elder Brandon Southwick. He eventually returned and married Sister Yuka Shimizu, from Meito-Kita, whom I've mentioned several times so far and will mention even more as this journal progresses.]** Durrant Shimai is going to extend, she said. So only two of us (or three) will be dying together: Gibson and I. Maybe one more.

[I was wrong about that. I wound up extending, as well, so I went home the same time as Sister Ito and Sister Durrant. No elders "died" the same time I did. This means that although I entered the M.T.C. the same time as Madsen, Proctor, and Van Cleave, the three of them went home roughly two whole months before I did!]

Henmi Shimai let me borrow all her pictures 'till Sunday. **[Is that]** sweet, or what? True love? At any rate, I'm "planning on" writing her once I'm home. **[Why did I put that in quotation marks?]**

Got a letter from Daren, too. He's coming home in January also. I miss the guy. **[Somehow he was able to finagle things so he'd be home for Christmas, too, so he actually got back in December.]**

Wednesday, August 28, 1991—Day 603

[We] went and visited Hiroe for quite a while and made another appointment for tomorrow.

[We] had dinner with the Hoshinos, then came back and phoned. We've got three tachiais (**[which is Japanese for]** "fellowshippers") lined up for the rest of this week. It'll be a first.

The president says **[that]** music (LDS-) is okay for any day of the week now. Awesome! Felt much more spiritual today as a result.

Thursday, August 29, 1991—Day 604

I didn't feel like having benkyokai this morning, so I just let Seegmiller sleep since he'd fallen asleep again. That was my first mistake. I wasn't wearing my garments since we were going to tennis, so those two combined made it easier to succumb to the temptation to listen to "WINK" since I'd had church stuff on all morning. So I did, and had the feeling **[that]** we'd suffer as a result. We did.

Was on a split with Baird 'cause he'd wanted to for some reason. Hiroe didn't show **[up]** for her lesson again, even though **[Sister]** Terasawa had once more come to tachiai.

After that, I had *no* energy left and fell asleep and couldn't get up and out 'till two and a half hours had passed.

On Baird's suggestion we went and played Street Fighter II, and once we were done there was nothing else to do 'till Eikaiwa, so we played some more. Come to find out later that the reason he wanted to split is so he could see how shokais are done, **[how]** returns **[are]** made, etc. And here I hadn't shokaid a single person all day. I feel like I wasted both his time and mine. I feel like it was a total waste of a day.

We had to teach the kids' class again, and it was a madhouse.

Loaned Henmi Shimai all **[of]** my pictures and returned hers (**[but]** not in that order). Met a lady **[named "Masunaka-san"]** who's looking for a place for her daughter to home stay in America; I told her I'd write

to my folks and ask about it.

[We] left late (one girl told me **[that]** I was her "aijin," or the person she loves) **[I really wish I could remember who that was]**, and the two juniors were still in Seto, so we went and got them from Baird's apartment.

It looked like Pepper was a bit pissed, but it turns out **[that]** he's got a lot on his mind. He's got the feeling **[that]** he'll be transferring in three weeks, but he feels **[as though]** there's more he has to do here. It all has its roots in the fact that there are quite a few "kankei," or person-to-person, relation problems out in Seto. It doesn't involve me, so I won't detail it in here, but suffice it to say that it all makes me want to ditch anything even close to the edge and just be the best missionary humanly possible. There was no excuse for today, it just can't go on. (**"it"** = indifference and laziness.)

Friday, August 30, 1991—Day 605

Streeting this morning, I felt like it was a useless day and that I was just wasting my time. What a sharp contrast to the roller coaster ride it turned out to be.

This Mahikari woman came up to Seegmiller as we were sitting down for a break **[the "Mahikari" religion is a brand-new break-off from one Buddhist sect or other. They believe in the power to heal by directing mental energy through one's hands]**, and without seriously asking **[for]** his permission began to pray over him **[and]** then faced her palm at him and "cleansed his blood" like the Mahikaris do. She stood there like that for a minute or so, making us a bit nervous. At the end, I thanked her for cleansing his blood, then told her **[that]** I had a gift I'd like to give her in return—she accepted a Book of Mormon right off. Sneaky, or what?

[We] went to Kai's, then to **[Sister]** Kubota's with her so we'd have a tachiai. **[They lived in different buildings in the same apartment complex, so it was only a short walk away.]** True, it was an A.B. lesson, but still it's the first teaching exp—wait, we had a tachiai for Nobuko a couple of times **[back in Takefu]**.

Then **[it was]** off to visit Kaori at her office like she'd asked us to. **[She worked for a branch of the Burr-Brown insurance company.]** She was the only one there today, therefore it was okay.

We decided to go to McDonald's back in Fujigaoka for some food.

Wait—before anything else, earlier, after Seegmiller's blood was cleansed, Mika came up to us out of the blue. She was getting off a bus to go ride the subway, so it was a chance meeting. We hadn't seen her at first, so she could've gotten by without us noticing if she'd've wanted to, but she didn't, so I was impressed. That was above and beyond the call of duty.

Anyhow, in McDonald's, I looked over and lo and behold Mika was sitting at another table to my right eating with some guy.

I felt so nervous, 'cause here we were eating with Kaori. I was terribly worried, thinking that Mika might think that our purpose was to corner chicks and get them into restaurants **[our first lesson with Mika was held in a restaurant, remember]**.

We all waved as she left, though.

Next we did some consultation with Kaori, and it's now arranged that Kaori will tachiai for her. Called Mika to make sure no ill feelings were in the way **[I agonized over whether I should really do this; I was perhaps risking looking even weirder by taking our (second) chance meeting too seriously]**, and it turns out **[that]** she was going to call us **[anyway]**. We made all the arrangements **[for our next meeting]** from there. **[I also found out that the guy she was with was from China. He was staying with her family for a couple of days on some sort of home stay arrangement; she was in the**

middle of showing him back to their place.]

As nervous as I was, I got the feeling that that was too big of a coincidence. God must've known **[that]** it would happen, or else He arranged it that way. You see, it's become that we'll get to meet at the church, which is of course a far better teaching environment and a lot cheaper, too **[since you have to buy something if you sit down in a restaurant]**. Kaori will drive her back to her bus stop once we're done. Perfect! Looking back, had this all not happened, we'd still be meeting down in Fujigaoka as planned. Yes, **[it was]** the guidance of the Lord once again, I firmly believe.

Saturday, August 31, 1991—Day 606

With a little difficulty, we ended up finding Katagiri-san's place. **[We]** rapped with him and his wife; **[it's]** too bad **[that]** we could only stay **[for]** 40 minutes. He doesn't normally read books, but lately he's been studying the Book of Mormon hard and really likes it. He's read *half*. **[It's]** too bad **[that]** we couldn't make a return—I won't let this fish get away, though. (He's the guy from the Nagakute matsuri **[the same event at which we'd met Mika]**.)

[We next] met Shikama Kyodai at Fujigaoka, then went over for Asai's "lesson." My reason **[for bringing Brother Shikama along]** was so that Asai could hear a real convert's story, plus **[to have]** someone who knew the Japanese mind. Well, Shikama got off on tangents right from the start, **[which quickly convinced me that bringing him was a mistake,]** but they ended up rapping together. Asai's big problem is that if God is good, **[then]** why did He create evil? If not, **[then]** He didn't create everything after all. **[This sort of thing is]** normally easily solved, but he won't accept the answers we give. **[We made]** no return, again.

[Then it was] off to Kaori's (Shikama was once after her for marriage) for tennis. Hitomi came, too, from Inuyama. We didn't have enough rackets or a place, so we made do at a close-by park. They had a video camera and were filming us, which made me nervous 'cause they were going to show it to their boyfriends, both of whom are Sumo wrestlers. **[I'll bet you've never read a sentence like that before!]**

[After this, we all] ate at a Chinese place, had ice cream at a convenience stop, and listened to M.C. Hammer in the car everywhere in between. **[If I'm thinking of the right event, it was actually a Thai place. They ordered us some sort of soup concoction, and it was so spicy I couldn't eat it.]** There were two guys and two girls in the car, so I was a bit nervous **[since this was against the rules of probably every mission in the world]**.

Sunday, September 01, 1991—Day 607

Due to a cold I'd caught a couple of days ago, plus the fact that I'm on a 24 hour fast (I want to do it *right* this time), I'm not/I wasn't feeling too good. I came home early. I'm fasting so that Yogo Mika will be truly converted and receive the ordinance of baptism during the month of September, this month. I haven't eaten or drank anything in almost 24 hours; **[I have]** 15 minutes left to go.

September. Yes, I'm definitely serious about this.

Judging from Shikama Shimai's testimony today, yesterday's lesson **[with Asai-san]** was a *really good* experience for them.

Monday, September 02, 1991—Day 608

[We four] went to Meiji-Mura today, in Inuyama's city limits **[so we were breaking the rules by going outside our district]**. I wanted to see the place ever since I found out about it, 'cause it's got a moved cathedral-like church filled with statues of various Saints. We went in Nishikawa's car; Yuko and Rieko from Seto Eikaiwa **[also came]**.

[Later on, we] were going out to visit a family whom Shimizu Yuka had told us about who's fuke Mormon

and fuke Jehovah's Witness, both; but we ran into the other two **[Elders]** coming from the other direction, so we stopped and chatted until the time was up.

We're so blessed to have Mika as an investigator.

PHOTOS 090



Foreground, L-R: Yuko Kato, me with holes in my pants, Rieko Yamada, Kyoko Nishikawa, Seegmiller.

Background: Masakazu Ishida. He was Scott's new junior companion after Daines transferred out.

Tuesday, September 03, 1991—Day 609

Holy fetch, calendar-wise I've been a missionary for 20 months now. How 'bout that.

As everyone else donated plasma, I rapped with Gibson who'd beaten us there. Originally we'd been grouped with the December guys, hence the rumor that we'd be home for Christmas. But it changed before I got here and saw the list, so it's pretty sure. I land **[back in America on]** January 10th, around 4:30 p.m. (I think).

By drawing another awesome missionary display in the waiting book **[i.e., the guest book]**, I resisted the temptation to look through non-LDS magazines.

Stopped and played with some kids on the way to find Nakayama Yumiko's house. **[We]** streeted without success, then met Mika at the **[subway]** station and walked the rest of the way to church. **[We]** finished

Lesson One. Kaori came later to drive her home, and we all rapped for a while. Pretty casual; it was great. Man, she's a great investigator.

Wednesday, September 04, 1991—Day 610

[It was] another wasted day. Tennis took forever, then we took too long of a break. **[We then]** played video games at Seegmiller's request. Scored 461 on "Top Landing."

[We later] went to go visit Nakayama Yumiko, our fuke friend, but she wouldn't answer the fetchin' door. We knew she was there 'cause all the lights were on plus I saw her look out the peephole. While **[we were]** there, two of her friends walked up the stairs, saw us, froze, then ran back down. We went back down too, and they were walking swiftly away down the street.

"Nihonjin" means **[a]** Japanese person; "jishin" means confidence or guts. Gads, these Nihonjins have no jishin. **[It]** pissed me off.

[There] wasn't much time left, so we went to a different place and played "Street Fighter II" some more. Came back and called Asai-san and he dropped **[the discussions]**. Man, I feel bad.

Thursday, September 05, 1991—Day 611

[We] went and gave Kai her sixth and last A.B. lesson (she nursed her daughter twice in the meantime).

[We] came back and **[Hiroe]** Matsubara broke her appointment again. What to do with her, I don't know.

[We later] met with Mika again. She hadn't had an opportunity to watch the videos we'd loaned her, so we watched "The First Vision" and "Our Heavenly Father's Plan." Felt the Spirit; it was great. Shikano Yuko was there to tachiai. It was the first time seeing that video for all three of the others.

Mika is so totally cool. She's so cooperative. She's got a great attitude and the right answers—she's the kind of investigator that comes around maybe once your entire mission.

Physically she's extremely attractive, too—but this time around I'm determined to honor my call and keep my mission and civilian life separate. I've been waiting for this opportunity too long; there's no way I'm willing to risk it by letting personal feelings get in the way.

And with all this practice controlling my thoughts, I think it may be carrying over to other women as well. So this is how the Lord is teaching me to keep my thoughts in check perhaps—by flat outright giving me a cute investigator.

On the way back to the train station, we ran into Maki Tanaka, the girl I met at Sakae on the Fourth of July. Harada Yasuaki, the deaf guy from Fukutoku, walked by too.

After dropping her off, Seegmiller rode like a madman over to Seto where they were watching a movie **[during their Eikaiwa. I had a Hell of a time trying to keep up]**.

Friday, September 06, 1991—Day 612

Sango Eikaiwa started up again. After that, we hunted down **[the guy who had marked]** my 100th Book placement, but I couldn't get him to invite us over and plus he was working.

[We] went and streeted and saw nothing, so we decided to sit there and let them come to us like the Mahikari woman did last week.

It worked. 10 seconds later, a lady and her daughter sat down and we soon got into a conversation about how good my Japanese is. **[It]** turns out **[that]** she's Taiwanese; her husband is Japanese. Her bus

came, so I quick whipped out a Book and she took it as she ran off.

[We went and] sat down on a different bench, and as we were about to leave we noticed a girl sitting nearby and she began speaking fair English to us. We got to talking, and we noticed something funny. Sure enough, she's an inmate in the mental ward in the Nagakute hospital we know. **[I.e., we know the hospital, not the inmate!]** What the heck, she was on leave, so we rapped and she bought us some food and stuff.

[When she interacted with the food vendor, whom she knew personally, she of course reverted to her native Japanese. Although she was quite "off" when she spoke in English, she rattled off all the traditional formalities, etc. when speaking in Japanese. I got the impression that if our conversation had taken place entirely in Japanese, I might never have known she was any different from anyone else. It was the damndest thing.]

Maybe she's only emotionally unstable. Oh well, I figure **[that if]** she's smart enough to teach herself English, she's **[also]** smart enough to read and benefit from the Book of Mormon. So we went to give her one, but the only one left was the one Seegmiller had—**[in]** English. So we made an appointment to bring her a Japanese one by her hospital tomorrow. **[Her name is]** Goto Hiromi—interesting woman. She's 28.

Couldn't get through to our fuke Mormon/Jehovah's Witness, so we rapped a while with Shimizu Yuka's mother **[since they lived in the same apartment building]**. **[She's a]** cool lady. **[We]** found out **[that]** Yuka is 29. Hey hey hey! **[Why on earth did I write that?]**

Saturday, September 07, 1991—Day 613

After A.B.C. **[Eikaiwa]**, **[We]** went and gave the Book to Hiromi. **[She's a]** weird chick.

Called the **[mission]** president for permission to go to downtown Nagoya with Kaori 'cause she'd received tickets for some type of event **[you were always supposed to get the president's permission every time you went outside your zone]**, and the president didn't sound too pleased, like he'd been woken up from a nap. He really gave me the interrogation for all the details; it wasn't pleasant. **[I remember him asking about Kaori and me responding that she's an inactive member whom I'm trying to reactivate, which of course was true. He further pressed me, asking whether there was actually hope for her or whether I was just wasting my time (or something along those lines). He then went into a spiel about how, as he talked about last zone conference, we need to be spending our time on things that are more effective, not less effective, so which one was this, etc. Sheesh!]** He said to be back by 6:00 **[p.m.]**; we weren't.

[We] went in Kaori's car to the place; it was a small carnival-type of thing. **[It was]** not too terribly exciting. **[At one of the displays, a Korean girl was selling something or other. Her Japanese wasn't all that great. When I was about to depart, I asked if I could shake her hand—why, I have no idea. She said "no," which surprised me. It was probably the only time I've ever been declined a handshake.]**

Kicked butt at "Street Fighter **[II]**" later. **[We'd]** only had a little over an hour left after all was said and done, so I let Pepper choose between video games and streeting. **[Knowing him, what else would he choose?]**

Tell me: Is this journal at all interesting?

Sunday, September 08, 1991—Day 614

Had a dream last night that had to do with dating Shikano Yuko. Oh, the pleasures of dating. Saw Yuko in a new light today due to that.

After church I got into a light conversation with her and another female member, which worried me 'cause I don't want to be accused of flirting again.

Prayed mega-hard for an area again. Set a record: I was on my knees for 25~20 minutes, **[which is]** the longest prayer I'd ever given in my entire life.

[We] went to the place and went into a spooky-looking forest. **[We]** met a woman who's Christian, and next we met an American whose wife is Japanese. Fetch, it was weird giving the shokai in English. The guy was Roman Catholic and says **[that]** he respects guys like us. Although he doesn't agree with the Mormon point of view, he says **[that]** he'd love to sit down and chat with us. He's a teacher and school starts tomorrow, so he'll be really busy from here on out, and tonight the in-laws were over, so he couldn't. We offered him a Book, and after some consideration he politely declined.

Folks, I can't tell you how great it was, hearing a *direct* yes/no and full of tact. Good, clean *tact*. **[You've]** gotta love that American way.

[We then] met another older guy who'd gotten a Book before and read half **[of it]**, he said. Other than that, we saw no success—**[no]** Books, **[no]** returns, etc., nothing. That's the first time **[that]** that has ever failed. **[I.e., it was the first time I had prayed hard and felt what I thought was inspiration for the correct place to dendo but nevertheless failed to see any sort of success.]** I could've sworn **[that]** that was the place; I'm pretty confused.

Monday, September 09, 1991—Day 615

[We] had a big three-zone "asobikai;" I guess the English equivalent is a "play outing." We met in the big park where we'd always meet for tennis on P-day in Fukutoku. Not everybody showed up, but it was quite fun. **[It]** didn't last too long, but I rapped for a while with the Kasugai sisters, Yoshioka and Watanabe, about Maruoka. Yep, things must've been really bad **[when each of them was her companion]**. Oh well.

Ate too much at McDonald's later.

[Afterward, we] had district devotional at Baird's **[apartment]** in Seto. **["District Devotional" was something instituted by President Ames.]** I had no energy left to move, so he (Baird) called up Suzuki Shimai and asked if we could go over.

On the way over, Mika was brought up, and Seegmiller came right out and said, "One of us won't be around to see her baptism and I hope it's you." That didn't go over too well with me. I deserve it this time, **[i.e., the baptism,]** 'cause I've been doing the work and I'm so close to the end of my mission now. I think I deserve the blessing this time around.

I'm worried, 'cause on his planner where her lesson is scheduled he wrote a little shining heart. I made up my mind that I'm not going to let those kinds of thoughts get in the way. I can't let *anything* ruin this once-in-a-mission = **[once-in-a-]**lifetime opportunity.

At Suzuki's place I learned that Aki loves gaijins. We also watched "Aliens." **[It's a]** good show, but it made us late. Felt rather guilty; **[I'd]** better get dendoing.

Tuesday, September 10, 1991—Day 616

Finally got around to passing out Asai's Lesson One study guide to him. It's about time. I had a Japanese honbu elder write a message to him in Japanese 'cause I'm not so good at kanji. I had written:

"No matter what you believe in, if you don't pray to God, you can't get his answer."

We put it in his mailbox. By the way, I gave a little dendo lesson during benkyokai on the golden rule.

[We] housed for an hour, then went to Ota Shimai's for a lunch in honor of Jeff, Gettling's friend who's in the Reorganized church. She had us stay for a while.

[Back] at home, Seegmiller fell asleep for a couple of hours but I finally woke him up for one last hour of dendo. [We] didn't see any success, but it felt much better having gone out and done it than it would've [felt] otherwise.

Wednesday, September 11, 1991—Day 617

I'm almost too ashamed to write. We had the day all planned, then Kobayashi called and wanted to play tennis, so what the heck, we did. Baird, Hansen, and us went to her place later, and us three ended up falling asleep.

I got a headache back at home, took too long of a break, then at Pepper's suggestion [we] played video games. I did pretty well. ([I got] 470 on "Top Landing.")

I feel physically pretty bad. I no longer care much about eating or preparing food; I'm now more of a scavenger than anything else. That's probably my problem.

PHOTOS 091



Me and Seegmiller. I consider this the "signature photo" of my mission.



L-R: Me, Sister Kitajima, Seegmiller, Ishida, Scott.

Thursday, September 12, 1991—Day 618

I was sick this morning, so I couldn't do anything until 1:00 [p.m.]. Here's how out of it I was: I was sleeping in my *dreams*, too (sleepwalking).

[We] went to tennis for a couple of hours, then went and met Mika. We just reviewed her reading of the Book of Mormon; she hadn't understood much.

She's coming to church on Sunday!

Nobody else was in there, so I had to take over the kids' class [for Eikaiwa]. There was one mother in there, so I had to be a bit more careful, but the place was a madhouse as usual.

Met Man Shimai there [rhymes with "swan"]; she was down from Toyama to renew her visa. She's Chinese [from Hong Kong]. She gave me a call later and said a lot of nice things about me. I felt pretty good.

PHOTOS 092



L-R: Elder Amini from the mission home, an unidentified Eikaiwa student, Sister Miranda Man, me.

Friday, September 13, 1991—Day 619

For not **[having]** much going on, it sure was an eventful day. After Sango Eikaiwa, we shopped, went home, then I called as many members as I could, asking them to greet and shake hands with Mika so she'd feel welcome when she came to church. Contacted 13 members who all said **[that]** they would. Man, I sure hope this pulls off.

Ethington and **[his]** dode were here to split again to visit one of his old investigators. He used to be in Seto. When all six of us were in the apartment there would've been no way to concentrate, so I rapped with them and did most of the **[phone]** calling when it was just the two of us.

[Seegmiller and I] finally went down to the Palmers' for dinner. On the way, Seegmiller's **[bike]** chain broke and fell right off. **[We]** went and got it fixed and were still on time to meet Palmer Kyodai in Fujigaoka.

He drove us from there to his place since it was raining. Pulling in, I felt my pockets and realized **[that]** I had no bike lock key. Either I'd dropped the key, or I'd forgotten to lock the bike. I was worried all night.

Two of Palmer Kyodai's acquaintances from Canada were there. Sister Palmer had made lasagna on my request. It was a totally American-furnished house **[down]** to every detail. **[Everyone spoke]** all English. Holy cow, it was the most American atmosphere I'd experienced in a year and a half. **[It was]** totally (North) American.

Sadly, I got sick with diarrhea and couldn't finish it all.

[We] got a ride back to Fujigaoka, and I was almost betting on it (**[my]** bike) being gone. But my prayers were answered: As vulnerable a place and time as it was, my bike was still there. **[It was a]** small miracle. I was so happy and relieved that I didn't even care about the rain as we rode home.

I heard today that Frehner's seen a baptism already. **[He had just recently gone senior.]** Man, good for him. I need lessons. (No, that's *not* sarcasm!)

Saturday, September 14, 1991—Day 620

After A.B.C. **[Eikaiwa]** we had a dinner/party to which Baird and Hansen were invited and came. After it ended, I was carrying around a Book for that purpose, and one of them asked to see it and I ended up placing it for our only one this week.

[We] went to Katagiri-san's place for a lot longer time this time, but I wasn't able to shokai them. Since we've got the B.R.T., maybe we can next time.

Since a typhoon is in Japan right now, we got caught in a downpour and were drenched when we got there.

[We later] rode to Seto to meet Asuka-chan. **[From]** there we went (we four Meito elders) with her to her place for an outstanding dinner. **[We]** listened to some cool music upstairs (Eurobeat), then did a few fireworks afterwards. They drove us home, but we were still quite late. Today we got **[in]** 12 total hours—my record, I think.

Got a letter from Kyoko. She wrote me even though my letter didn't come last week. I think that was the reason **[why]** she wrote, 'cause she said **[that]** she hoped she hadn't written anything to offend me. How about that; I never knew my letters meant that much to her.

PHOTOS 093



Look hard, you'll see me and Hansen in the background.



L-R: Baird, Seegmiller aiming his camera, Ishida leaning back, me, Hansen.



L-R: Ishida, me, Baird.



A group shot.

Sunday, September 15, 1991—Day 621

[We] cut out of dendo chousei shukai early and got a ride down to Kamiyashiro, the subway station nearest the honbu, with Hanai Kyodai to pick up Mika. Baird's bike is broken, so he rode the train to Sakae and thence on to Kamiyashiro, so we met him there, too.

I'd called nearly all the rest of the kaiins before leaving the apartment, asking them all the same thing: To greet and shake hands with Mika. She was a bit late, so when we got to the church the meeting had already started. The Meito-Minami elders, the honbu elders, and others were all in the foyer. Mika's pretty cute, remember, and as we walked past they were visibly impressed. The president's oldest son was there, and he said, "What's the idea, bringing a cute girl like that in here?" I firmly informed him that she understands English. (She does; she's really good [at it].)

We three walked in, and it felt like all the attention, if not eyes, focused on us. [It's] understandable, 'cause virtually every member in the ward was keyed to our arrival.

The theme was appropriate and simple: "Father in Heaven." Two people out of three who spoke, she knew: Scott and Yuko Shikano.

[During the meeting itself, Seegmiller and I had a little disagreement. Mika was sitting in between us, and I whispered to her that as a non-member, she shouldn't take the sacrament. Seegmiller leaned in and contradicted me, saying something like, "Yes she can, they do it in _____ all the time!" He looked a bit miffed. For my part, I rather wished he'd saved it until after the meeting so as to avoid arguing in front of an investigator.

Regardless, I must've won out, since Mika didn't take the sacrament.]

Afterwards, people came right up and got acquainted with her. She was the center of attention; it was great. A few kaiins couldn't even get to her.

She only had time for opening exercises, so after they ([the] Sunday School opening exercises) were over I went to get a ride for her back to Fujigaoka. It was too cool; no sooner had I gone than she had a *big* audience around her. It was great; I loved it. **[Disaffected Mormons call this tactic "love-bombing." Even so, making someone feel this welcome is better than the alternative, right?]**

[We all] rode with Shikama Kyodai back to her bus station at Fujigaoka. She said that it was a great experience, or words to that effect. Mission accomplished!

Shikama Kyodai, on the way back, said that the general atmosphere of the ward has changed for the better since I transferred in, especially concerning dendo. Whoa, talk about a mega compliment! Felt great after that, as you can well imagine.

Transfers are this week, and I'm a bit worried. Seegmiller and I will have been companions for three months, so one of us is due to transfer. Seegmiller thinks **[that]** it'll be him. Both of our last areas were only three months, plus I'm worried 'cause of my "two months of trials, a third month of blessings, and then transfer" pattern. I'm scared, but we'll see. I've waited my whole mission for Mika; I'd hate to leave. I like the members; I want to die here. **[In other words, I want to go home from here.]**

We're practicing for a song, and it always turns out that we get into conversations with the female members of the chorus. My companion doesn't help things, and I'm worried that if someone keeps complaining to the **[mission]** president then it'll get me transferred. So that's a source of worry, too.

Those are the day's highlights, so why say more? 'Nuff said.

Monday, September 16, 1991—Day 622

Wrote Mom about Mika's experience yesterday. I'm worried sick about transfers, although Seegmiller's pretty convinced **[that]** it'll be him. **[We]** later had a party at Nishikawa's for whomever is leaving.

So much for that; here's today's *major* news:

BACKGROUND: Six months or less ago, it may have been in the train on the way to visit Matsushita-san from Inuyama, maybe it was up north; but in a train I saw a poster for "Trident," the school at which we four gave the presentations in Fukutoku (see Day 143). The picture depicts a group of people, Japanese and American, standing around a table. The foremost one is a Japanese girl, and when I first saw it I stared at her for a long time, 'cause she was so cute. I've admired it since then. I remember looking at it and wondering if I could ever marry a Japanese girl.

Anyhow, today we went over to Mika's to meet her folks, but ended up just eating lunch and hanging out. **[We]** met "with" her mom and met her little sister and her sister's friend. **[Her sister's friend had obviously never met a foreigner before. It was clearly quite a novelty to her, for she was smiling hard and peppering us with lots of questions. It was really endearing.]** There was one of those posters downstairs, but I didn't think too much **[of it]**. Later we went upstairs to look at her pictures of her trip to America, and there it was again, this time framed. Okay, this time I knew something was up. The reason I didn't recognize her when I first met her is 'cause she's lost weight since then. Yes, of all the one-in-a-multi-million to one chances, that girl is/was Mika!!! The one in the poster!!!

Can you believe it? It continues to freak me out whenever I think about it. **[It's]** amazing.

So *that's* where she went to school. She wasn't in any of those classes **[we taught]**, though. However, in one of her pictures was Carmen, the Filipino girl whose name I didn't know at the time, the one to whom I gave the Book, same day (143). Yep. Mika knows her.

Wow, what a day. What a coincidence. I can't wait to point it out to other missionaries **[the]** next time I ride the train. **[It's]** truly amazing.

[Here are a couple more occurrences of note: Mika showed us her backyard, and when we turned to go back inside, I saw Seegmiller grab her shoulders and give them a quick massage. Later, as we were looking at her photos, he said, "Are you ticklish?" and proceeded to try to find out. For better or for worse, I held my tongue and pretended that nothing was amiss.]

Tuesday, September 17, 1991—Day 623

Seegmiller said something this morning that pissed me off.

After benkyokai we were upstairs **[in the mission home]** giving our president's letters, and the **[mission]** president took me aside and said, "You're staying, Shades." He said I'm getting someone **[for a new companion]** who's been my companion before:

Depeel Choro!!

Holy cow, rarest of the rare, I'm getting someone I've been with before. Now here's an uncommon situation. I was totally thrilled, I love Depeel. **[At first, he explained that they made a mistake by pairing me up with someone I'd been with before. He essentially gave me the option of serving with him again anyway or just having him correct his mistake. Since I had gotten along with Elder Depeel so well anyway, I of course was more than happy for the chance to serve with him again.]** The president said to help him with his language, he's still struggling; plus to keep him smiling. Yep, that's Depeel. He said for me to help him with his Japanese because I'm "the language master." **[That's a]** cool compliment, coming from the president, right?

Gave blood, shopped a little at the international store, then came home for Seegmiller to pack.

Frehner called from Takaoka to get the address here. **[It was]** pretty cool stuff, we were both excited. I got to talk to Depeel again. **[He's a]** really good guy.

However, getting to the phone, I took a sliver into my toe **[that]** I had a painful time digging out.

Durrant Shimai is back down from Takaoka to be Henmi Shimai's dode again. **[Notice that this is the second time this entry that I've mentioned missionaries being matched with people they'd already served with once before. Yes, President Ames quickly started doing very strange things with missionary pairings. This wasn't the only thing; he soon began making people senior companions after they'd only been in the field a few months—a mere three months, in one guy's case, which would've been the equivalent of me going senior upon transferring into my second area, Okazaki, which of course would've been completely out of the question. Now, this practice would've been passable for Japanese missionaries, of course, since they already knew the language, but he was doing this to American missionaries.]**

Back in President Smith's day, a missionary was never companions with the same other missionary twice. Not only that, but people went senior according to their, uh, seniority only. When, for example, six missionaries went home, then the six juniors who'd been in the field the longest were promoted to senior. Of course, logistics ensured that it didn't always work out so cleanly, but that's essentially the way things worked.]

Nishikawa-san wanted a lesson for some reason from Pepper, so he went with Baird to do so. Hansen showed me a nearby video game place. "Street Fighter II" was double-priced **[¥100 instead of the usual ¥50]**. I can't believe it, but I let myself spend nearly a sen **[¥1,000]**. Unbelievable.

I would be feeling great right now, but I played games during dendo and didn't do much all day, so I feel low.

Frehner saw two baptisms in three weeks, plus **[he]** has another yotei. I asked **[him]** how he does it, and he says **[that]** he doesn't know.

Wednesday, September 18, 1991—Day 624

The only reason I'm writing today is due to tradition.

Today I felt like an American missionary. Since it's Seegmiller's last day, it was essentially a play day. Kobayashi fed us lunch, then she and Yamauchi took us and the Seto guys bowling.

[We] came back to the apartment with those two for some more food, then we all went to "Karaoke Mura" for more video games. **[Karaoke Mura—which in English translates to "Karaoke Village"—was the name of the local video game place I've mentioned several times so far.]** Man, I wasted a lot **[of money]**. It's not even funny. I've got to break that habit. **[At the time, video games were still my kryptonite.]**

With Depeel around, it'll be a lot easier to work hard and keep all the rules. I was trying to set an example for him before, so with him I'm in the habit.

[Maintaining] good habits (including spending). **[Keeping the]** rules. I've got to return. Good ol' Depeel Choro. Things are going to improve out the roof from here on out.

Thursday, September 19, 1991—Day 625

What a day. Kitajima was supposed to meet us downstairs to give Pepper some pictures, but due to the rain she didn't show **[up]**.

[It was a] bad rainstorm. **[A]** typhoon, in fact. Once at the train station, part of the tracks were out of commission, so I called the honbu and let them in on what's up—we'd be late.

So we took the train as far as it would go today, then walked to the bus stop. Incidentally, that "as far as it would go" station just so happened to be the place near where we dended back on Day 614.

Once the bus *finally* came, people packed on like sardines. We were two of the last ones on.

The thing crawled along at a snail's pace. We could've walked faster. **[The]** problem is, it was going to Ozone, a stop in my bean basho **[in other words, a stop in my first area]**, and I didn't know the way from where we were, **[since I had]** no map. So **[there was]** nothing to do but ride to the end.

[We] got there, then rode the subway into Nagoya Station. I was supposed to meet Depeel Choro there, so we searched all over, but it was **[a]** no go.

Finally we found Seegmiller's line, but neither of us had been on that line before, so it was a bit confusing. **[We]** ended up getting him on the right train (I think), then I was left by myself to search for Depeel some more.

Looked all over; it was a no go. I'd called the honbu from Ozone, but one of the A.P.s (Rasmussen) said **[that]** Depeel wasn't there yet, and once I found him to go straight to the honbu 'cause the president wants to talk to me. **[Rasmussen also added an ominous detail: He reported that the president had said, "There will be a whole new Shades Choro." I interpreted this to mean that I was in for a severe reprimand over something.]**

Holy cow, I was worried. Big time. We had an appointment with Hiroe that I had to cancel, so I was making phone calls everywhere. Got in touch with Dorough, and he said **[that]** Depeel was down there **[in the mission home after all]**. So I took the subway to the honbu, and inside I ran into Hanai Kyodai, so I had some quick explaining to do **[as to why I was alone without a companion]**.

You see, there's a new way of transferring, where everybody gets on their own individual train, not necessarily everyone assembling at the Honbu. Sometimes missionaries will be left alone in the process. **[This was yet another of President Ames' unwieldy innovations.]**

I rode a taxi from Kamiyashiro so no one would see me alone. Once there, the president was in a long interview with Depeel Choro, which worried me, 'cause maybe he was complaining and didn't want to be my companion again. **[The]** next thing you know, the president called me in, too.

Here's the situation: Depeel's been suffering from severe depression, and doctors in Salt Lake were mentioned. Apparently it'll be their decision whether or not he stays on his mission. The president said that they were going to call tonight late to tell **[him]** the results and that he'd in turn call us.

He had Gibson drive us home in his personal van. Since Depeel had ran out of money, he brought all of his luggage with him **[as opposed to shipping it like everyone else did]**. Hauling all **[of]** Depeel's stuff into the apartment had an air of nostalgia to it. **[Specifically, this was just like it had been back when he first came to Takefu.]**

All we did was grab our teaching stuff and go. Mika was late. We walked up there with another missionary we met who didn't know the way. **[Yet another late coming casualty of Ames' policy of having people find their own way during transfers instead of travelling with their companions.]**

We didn't have a whole lot of time, and Mika wanted to find out why we don't smoke, drink, etc., so we skipped over lessons 2, 3, and most of 4 up to 4.7 and taught her the Word of Wisdom. She committed to live it, although she can't give up alcohol, coffee, and tea (especially tea) all at once. She hardly drinks it anyway, so she can do it. I wasn't going to be too hard on her because it was such an advanced principle, but we'll monitor her progress.

[It was a very] spiritual lesson. Describing how God answers prayers, I about cried. **[It]** looks like she's getting answers. She prays not only at night but in the morning, too. Heck, that's better than me! And I've been a member for over 14 years!

She gave a *great* prayer at the end. Like a Mormon already.

We walked her back to Kamiyashiro station and skipped Eikaiwa, but we came back at the end to rap for a minute or two. Then we rode home.

Here are all the things I rode in **[or on]** today: A train, a bus, a subway, a taxi, a van, and a bicycle. **[That's]** a lot, eh?

[Although the moment was probably lost in the shuffle, today marked my last day with Elder Seegmiller. A few final thoughts about him: Out of all my companions, he was the one with whom I bonded the *least*, even though we served together for three months. Perhaps it was due to the fact that I was, at the time, rather strange. I was always second-guessing myself and constantly musing aloud on why I thought God transferred me there. Maybe he got sick of hearing me ramble. On the other hand, maybe our personalities were just too different. Perhaps it was both.

For my part, whenever I would suggest hitting the houses or streets, I could feel the resentment oozing off him, as though he'd rather do pretty much anything else but dendo. In his defense, maybe part of it was that he just didn't want to dendo *with me*, but that nevertheless didn't make it any easier to get out and work.

There was one thing he said that I never could figure out, though: He said that he had prayed for a witness of the Spirit and received it, so he knew 100% that the church was true—something that I myself had never experienced. Yet at the same time, he talked about other people bearing their testimony that they knew the church was true, but he said that that was only their emotions. This confused me: How could he tell that his own witness was genuine, but that others' witnesses were *not*?

Friday, September 20, 1991—Day 626

[We] didn't get it last night, but we got the call this morning from the **[mission]** president. The results are in: My companion is going home. It's a chemical imbalance that can only be treated in America. Therefore, **[it]** looks like he'll serve the remainder **[of his mission]** (maybe) in the United States.

It was *not* a pretty sight around here. **[After the other two elders cleared out, Elder Depeel went out on the back porch and sobbed uncontrollably. I just put my arm on his shoulder in an ultimately futile effort to console him. Let me tell you, it's not fun, seeing a grown man cry.]** We had Scott do Sango Eikaiwa by himself, and dendo was completely out of the question for most of the day. **[For hours, his constant refrain was how every other missionary could dendo, so why couldn't he; how every other missionary could adapt to missionary life, so why couldn't he; etc. I don't think I've ever seen anyone be so hard on himself. It was clear that nothing I could say would make him feel better—plus I thought he wanted to get it out of his system—so I pretty much remained silent, if I recall correctly.]** We got out in the evening and walked the streets for a while, though. **[He was a real trooper, stopping people to give them an introduction, etc. without me asking him to, in spite of the pall hanging over him. His Japanese had improved substantially, but I unfortunately failed to compliment him on it like I should have—something I regret to this day. It was probably the toughest time dendoing I ever had, since he still made self-deprecating comments. I felt terrible for him, but I felt utterly helpless at the same time. How could I convince him of his self-worth when he was being sent away from Japan nevertheless?]**

Poor Depeel Choro. He obviously doesn't want to be sent home. I feel so bad; my heart goes out to and aches for him. What a fate.

And on the selfish side, he was a very needed person around here; I'm going to be seriously handicapped without him.

This is my journal, not his, and since this whole thing is really personal, I probably shouldn't get into a whole lot of detail.

My mission has just taken a grim turn. The stark reality of this all sets in. Of course, the grim turn of my mission is nothing compared to the grim turn of his.

[And thus would end the darkest day of my mission, by far. Up 'till that point, I had at least some sort of control over my circumstances, if nothing other than goal or a direction, but today I was utterly helpless. Nowhere in missionary training are you taught how to deal with situations like this. For the first time since coming to Japan, I was completely clueless how to proceed. Hearing his extreme self-deprecation was painful, since I genuinely liked (and still like) him and thus disagreed with all of it.

But after all is said and done, there's no arguing that no matter how dark the day was for me, it was exponentially darker for *him*.]

Saturday, September 21, 1991—Day 627

Slept in too late, and after district training had breakfast with the Seto guys (Baird and Hansen).

Since Depeel has no bike, we had to *walk* to the honbu with my bike so he could borrow one of theirs. **[On the way, I told him the story of Mika and the poster in the train.]** Once we got there, we found out that his dad had called earlier to find out the situation and that he was going to call back. They were still on the phone after he called again when it was time to pick up Mika, so I took the new financial secretary, Hawkins Choro (also from Orem), with me **[to the train station]**. Once back at church, he was too busy to teach, so I got Ishizuka Choro, Oviatt's old junior zone leader, to come teach **[her]** with me. He gave a great opening prayer, then Depeel came in for the rest, which was good.

Man, she's easy to teach. **[She]** agrees with everything. It's just like passing off to another missionary. I tell you, she's prepared.

After taking her back, we ate at a curry place, then went back to the honbu for a dendobucho welcome fireside.

We were a bit early, so I asked Miles, Gibson's replacement, what happened to Zenzo, Mitamura, and Kawakami. **[Remember, Miles replaced me in Takefu when I transferred out, which of course meant that he inherited my investigators as well.]**

Zenzo never could/would meet again 'till August, and once August came they could never get a hold of him.

Mitamura had read almost to Alma, but of course her husband was hantai so she could never tell him about it. She ended up getting a job and wasn't able to meet anymore.

Kawakami's husband turned out to be a bit hantai, so she couldn't do anything much beyond listen, but then her mom got hantai and wouldn't let the missionaries go over anymore. **[Remember, in Japan the parents often live with one of their children until they (the parents) die.]** Before this, she had her sister sit in on a lesson or two; that's how well she must've been doing.

And that's where it stands. Fetch.

For the first hour of the fireside we were upstairs practicing our song, then later **[we]** went into the cultural hall where we ate a little and then sang it. The president did a little guitar duet with a couple of his sons. He sang a bit, too.

You didn't miss much.

PHOTOS 094



L-R: Depeel, Sister Kitajima, me. This was right before the new mission president welcome fireside began (or maybe right after it ended).



L-R: Me, Ishida, Scott, Yuko Shikano, Hideko Shikano. Here we're performing our song, of course.

Sunday, September 22, 1991—Day 628

Nobody was there for dendo chosei shukai, so we basically sat around. Church came and went, and some member **[Brother Mitsui, I think]** asked us to go to his house because he had a few questions about the Book of Mormon.

He asked about the ol' "add to or take from" part in **[the Book of]** Revelation, plus a little about the "666" thing. He ended up just talking, then making us curry, then talking some more. We were there until 8:00 **[p.m.]**.

[While there, his son played a lot of some "Mario adventure" game. No one else was there besides those two, prompting me to wonder if he was divorced or widowed.

This visit was also the time I committed the sin of ingratitude. Curry rice is a very easy dish to make (which, as an aside, makes it a very popular one among missionaries). I thought to myself, "He's keeping us here this long and is only feeding us *curry rice*?" I had apparently been spoiled by getting used to people going all out when they fed us. I had to immediately catch myself and remind myself that any meal that we didn't have to make ourselves was a blessing, and also that any meal, especially one prepared by a single father, represented someone going out of their way on our behalf.

Oh well, in my defense, at least I recognized my error and didn't allow myself to think that way again.]

We tried to go to the Matsuri in Seto, but by the time we got there it was over, darn it.

Daines called tonight. Since he's been senior, he's had two pick-ups. He's been senior for a week and a half only. Way to rip it up!

Monday, September 23, 1991—Day 629

This morning we met Mika and went to the Toyota car museum in Nagakute. Nagakute is bigger than I

thought. **[It was an]** interesting place; they had cars from their invention all the way up to the present. **[It was]** fun.

She next took us to a big park that turned out to be the place **[where]** we had that big field meet that got rained out back on Day 256. That park has a lot more to it than I thought, too. **[The 2005 World Expo would be held in that same park fourteen years later.]**

We later rode back by her house where we dropped her off and parted company. By the way, at the park we ran into the Hanai family again. Cool, eh?

Tonight was a big event at church where dancers from the Polynesian Cultural Center came and performed. It was pretty great. Members and missionaries came from all over to see it. Komura Shimai from Okazaki was there. I gave her my name card and she said **[that]** she'd write once I was home. **[She never did.]**

Rapped a bit with Van Cleave afterwards. **[He's a]** good man. He said **[that]** I was a bit weird when I first went senior. Oh well.

One guy there tonight was Udy Choro, who went senior after only three months in Japan.

Depeel doesn't want to stick around, 'cause his fate is sealed and he doesn't want to prolong the agony. ("Like a prisoner in his cell waiting for the electric chair," he said.)

The **[mission]** president came up and told Van Cleave's bean that if he wanted to leave an impression on this mission, then make something like the list I made. He asked if he'd gotten one; **[It]** turns out **[that]** he hadn't. The president had expressly told Dorough to give it out to all the beans, but in his dead state of mind he forgot. Oh well, **[it'll happen]** from now on.

PHOTOS 095



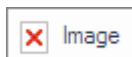
Depeel and me in front of a racecar. Do you like our shades?



Me in front of some sort of roadster.



Me in front of some (obviously) old-fashioned car.



Did the above image fail to load? That's because it's missing. This spot should've been occupied by a picture of Mika, wearing a blue sweater and shouldering a purse, but it's one of the many of her that no longer exists.



Me later on at the park.



The dancers from the Polynesian Cultural Center, performing at the church.

Tuesday, September 24, 1991—Day 630

[We] used some coupons and ate at a hamburger place with Baird and Hansen but weren't satisfied. [The place was called "Lotteria," a widespread fast-food chain. It and a place called "Mosburger" probably have the greatest market share—or at least they did at the time.]

Anyway, the lady behind the counter only filled my drink about 3/4 full. I asked her to fill it to the top, but she refused, saying that the amount was pre-determined. That's Japan for you: Employee flexibility is *not* a prized trait, so I couldn't exactly fault her for it.]

Got a haircut, and taught Mika.

One thought that has nagged me since yesterday was, "what if she's only listening [to the missionary discussions] 'cause she likes gaijins?" [She had had at least one foreigner boyfriend before.] Everything's been so perfect that I'm led to wonder. We only had time to teach Faith and Repentance, yet through that my fears were eased a bit. I think she's just golden.

Her mom's not hantai at all, but her dad's strict and is worried. I used that as an excuse to let the cat out of the bag and told her to tell him not to worry, 'cause the most important missionary rules we have are that we can't date and can't make/get girlfriends. She said [that] that was strict, but we said that it was a sacrifice and that teaching itself was a blessing.

Whew, now she knows for sure.

Wednesday, September 25, 1991—Day 631

Holy fetch, Baird and Hansen are transferring *together* to Tsu, the same place as Seegmiller. That's too strange for words. [This was yet another of President Ames' odd companionship-shuffling practices. Transferring both missionaries out of an area at the same time is borderline insane, since one missionary needs to remain in place in order to show the new one around. If both are transferred into a new area, then neither of them will know their way around—where their apartment is, where the streeting area is, where the church is, and the list goes on. Not to mention the fact that if two missionaries transfer *out* at the same time, then by necessity two missionaries must transfer *in* to replace them, so the problem doubles. This had happened to Seegmiller and me when we were both brought to Meito-Kita simultaneously, but fortunately we

had two others in the apartment who could show us around—otherwise President Smith probably wouldn't've done it.

Many years later I found out the reason why they were transferred so abruptly: The two of them along with Scott and his companion had ridden over to Nishikawa's house the day before (or so), and thanks to the heat, Hansen asked Nishikawa if he could take a shower. Baird thought it was an extremely bad idea, especially since Elder Scott was there, but Hansen was hot and sweaty (just like the rest of them) and therefore didn't care. She gave him permission, so he went ahead and did so. Sure enough, Scott must've told the mission president on him.] As for me, I'm getting a guy who's only been senior [for] a week. I think I know him; he barely left Okazaki. [The] problem is, the buch said that we're co-seniors. Ugh, that's gotta be the worst. I guess the buch didn't have the heart to move him back down to junior. [The] thing is, he'll only have one week [as a senior companion] vs. my six months, plus I'll know the area. I asked how we're supposed to do things, and he said for us to work something out. He said that next transfer we'll each get juniors again. Scary, 'cause that means that one of us will automatically be out. [I'd] better get Mika baptized first, 'cause I'll have been around the longest.

[We] went and ate lunch with Baird and Hansen at Kobayashi's. Came back and took a nap, then went out to street but met Kitajima Shimai as she was returning home. She immediately led us to a restaurant and bought us food. (She had to change her mind to the cheapest thing on the menu when she looked and realized [that] she had hardly any money left. [In retrospect, how could I have known that that was the reason? Don't worry, I'm beyond certain that had we not ordered first, we too would've ordered the cheapest thing on the menu. Better yet, had she told us that she was almost out of money, I'm sure we would have insisted on either paying ourselves or simply skipping the restaurant entirely. The fact that we stayed there must've meant that she had counter-insisted. Taking advantage of people whom I know are low on cash simply isn't part of my nature.]

[We] finally went streeting, but [saw] no result.

Well, Depeel goes into the honbu tomorrow. He'll be recuperating in Provo. Who knows, maybe he'll be there at my homecoming? [Wishful thinking.]

PHOTOS 096



L-R: Depeel, me with my new haircut, Hansen making faces, Yamauchi, Baird.



And again, this time with Kobayashi sitting in for Yamauchi.

Thursday, September 26, 1991—Day 632

As we rode to the honbu to drop Depeel off, I let him know that his being here made a difference. I sure needed his help. He's going to write to me for sure. I can't wait to see how American missions/missionaries stack up.

Gave him a big hug and shook hands as we parted company. I never went inside; the A.P.s just rode

down with me (one **[of them]** on the grandma bike **[that]** Depeel was borrowing) to Kamiyashiro to pick up my new companion, **[Elder Robert]** Bunnage. He's from Canada, also.

We went home, changed over, then went to tennis. Scott had brought the new Seto guys **[Elders McMurray and Garff]** by train.

After that, we went home, changed over, and took the train to Seto Eikaiwa. Those guys hadn't seen their apartment yet, so Nishikawa-san drove us there.

Back at home I found out **[that]** Depeel will be here **[living in the mission home for]** one week longer. Miles transferred out of the honbu after a week, and after a week of being senior Daines is down in the honbu as secretary to replace him. **[This was yet more of Ames' insane reshuffling habits. President Smith would've never transferred anyone after being in an area for only one week.]** Depeel will be with Daines helping out for a while.

Friday, September 27, 1991—Day 633

Due to a zone leader taikai, the other two couldn't go, so we two did Sango Eikaiwa by ourselves. **[It]** turns out **[that]** it was the monthly food party—**[a]** pleasant surprise.

[We] went to Nishikawa's and disassembled Baird's and Hansen's bikes and sent them off. Bad news; they all have to be *boxed* and sent off now. **[Beforehand, the moving companies would accept bikes and ship them as-is.]**

[Bunnage and I] hung out and chatted on the outside veranda back at home, then went to Fujigaoka and streeeted 'cause Kaori said **[that]** she'd hunt us down there. She never showed due to an incoming typhoon.

We met Daines, Depeel, DeTomaso (who's also going home due to an ulcer), and Hintze. They'd already been there an hour and given several Books and **[made]** one return between them. Hintze and DeTomaso continued to dendo while the others left.

Once we went opposite ways, and **[the]** next time we met they'd placed two more Books. **[That's]** five Books and one return in two hours for them, nothing in two hours for us. I felt like giving up.

We also met some foreigners, one of whom was chief missionary for an Islamic religion. **[I've]** never met one of those before. I've got his card; he said let's get together sometime. **[It]** sounds interesting. **[I remember his name: Magfoor Ahmad Muneeb. I tried to take him up on his offer some weeks later, but no one answered the phone.]**

Saturday, September 28, 1991—Day 634

The bunpo list came in the mail, but unfortunately there were a few mistakes. So **[it'll have to go]** back once more for correction. **[My mother was doing the typing and editing for me back at home, since I of course didn't have access to either a typewriter or a computer.]**

Shopped, ate lunch, then I decided to work on Salway Kyodai's talk. He's also from Canada; he replaced the Pedersens. Anyhow, he's giving a talk on Sunday and I have to translate. He gave me a copy last week so I could work on it in my spare time. Crud, **[translating]** from Japanese to English is one thing; **[translating]** from English to Japanese is quite another. It took me a long time to write it up.

[We] tried video game dendo again. I didn't spend hardly anything.

Gads, I'm going downhill. I'm becoming dead to the world. I feel out of touch. **[I'm getting]** no statistics at all. No investigator input; no Books. Yep, I'm showing signs of death already.

Sunday, September 29, 1991—Day 635

[It's] funny; the whole honbu staff was wearing these little Canada flag pins, compliments of Depeel Choro. **[Before he left on his mission, he had been at some sort of citywide event. He met the coordinator, someone on his city council, and told the guy that he (Depeel) was about to leave for Japan. This person gave him a huge handful of small Canadian flag lapel pins to give out to people. I of course received one the first time we were companions.]**

This morning Ishida and I spent easily an hour and a half to two hours getting the bugs out of Salway Kyodai's talk translation. I sat next to him on the stand. **[During the actual talk,]** I screwed up in a couple of spots, but I think it turned out okay.

Brother Ikeda motioned to me from the back of the room after that part was over, and I had to conspicuously run back there to find out what it was **[that he wanted]**.

[It] turns out **[that]** Masunaka-san, an Eikaiwa student for whose daughter I did a little research into home stay and E.S.L. (I forgot what that stands for **[but I remember now: "English as a Second Language"]**), was there inviting us to go over to her place and play.

So right after Sacrament Meeting we cut out and rode the short distance to her place.

There we ate **[and]** looked at pictures, then she said **[that]** she'd take us by car to anywhere in the area we wanted to see.

After some thought, I asked to have her show us the house **[that]** she grew up in. I was expecting to just be driven by there, but when we got there she stopped and had us go in. There we talked to her mother and nieces. We were her mother's first gaijins.

[They're a] pretty fun family. They gave us lots of cookies and drinks to take home.

[She's a] nice lady, Masunaka-san. She said **[that]** I could stay at her place if I ever came back to Japan for a visit.

Back at home we got into a big discussion and ended up never leaving the apartment again. **[It's]** fun, Bunnage Choro and I can talk really easily.

Monday, September 30, 1991—Day 636

Wrote to Kyoko and Daren. **[Later on we]** played video games; I'm getting better at Street Fighter **[II]**.

I found out that they had a welcome party **[for the new Seto Elders, McMurray and Garff]** at Nishikawa's last night, but I thought it had never been decided on. **[When Nishikawa first proposed the party to me, she asked when the best night would be. I had suggested the previous Sunday evening. For some reason I thought that she was going to contact everyone else first to make sure that that day worked out for them, too, and then get back to me. I had misunderstood; she had naturally assumed that that was the best day and simply told everyone else when the party would be.]**

To give you an idea of what we missed, I need to tell you that Nishikawa-san would really outdo herself with these get-togethers, even by Japanese standards—no small feat. **The amount and selection of food was never anything short of lavish.]** We were sitting around the apartment last night and could've been over there having fun. **[When Bunnage and I failed to show up, the Seto Elders called the apartment to remind us, but we were talking on the back veranda and thus didn't hear the phone.]** Yuko, Michi, Rieko, and of course Nishikawa-san were all there **([and]** looking really good, those two **[other guys]** said). ARGH! What a dork I was! I'd forgotten **[that]** we'd even talked about it.

Suck, what a bummer. **[I of course kicked myself over this for a long time afterward. Me not going was bad enough, but I had caused Elder Bunnage to miss it, too.]**

[We] rode out and went for Chinese food the four of us with Kitajima Shimai after that.

I feel really bad having missed the party last night (yes, I was definitely invited; we all were), but I'll admit **[that]** it sure gave me a lot of energy, being mad like that. **[This will sound very strange, but believe it or not, I still regret missing out on that party to this very day!]**

PHOTOS 097



L-R: Me, Sister Kitajima, Bunnage. I'd decided to "mix it up" by trying something other than the "Shades Salute" this time.



L-R: Sister Kitajima, me.



L-R: Me, Bunnage, Scott, Ishida.

Tuesday, October 01, 1991—Day 637

DEAR READER: MY MOST HUMBLE, HEARTFELT APOLOGIES FOR ALL THE WORTHLESS THINGS I'VE WRITTEN ABOUT WOMEN UP UNTIL NOW. Looking back, I can't believe I wrote all that stuff about Chandler Shimai, Maruoka Shimai, Nagae Shimai, and any others. Number one, I'm a missionary and should've been truer; number two, out of sight, out of mind. I no longer feel *anything* for them or anyone else whatsoever (whosoever).

Here's the deal: We met with Mika and had to lock **[our]** hearts as usual, and Bunnage and I got into a conversation about it on the way home. He agrees **[that]** she's cute, so we both have to lock our hearts, but we talked about how for me having locked it with her, it's getting easier to lock it as far as others are concerned. Easier, not necessarily easy. Plus it's dawned on me that once I'm back in America surrounded by pure American women, my own kind, **[that]** all thoughts of Japanese women will be gone with the wind. **[Wishful thinking on my part. The "forbidden fruit" appeal didn't die so easily.]** **[There's]** no use cluttering up my journal with them. Those thoughts are only temporary; this journal is forever—first things first, right?

Had an interview with the **[mission]** president. He said **[that]** I should ditch the two service Eikaiwas. I agree. **[Eikaiwa is]** not true Christlike service anyway.

Got a letter from Jeanie and Desirée. They both wrote. **[Desirée Johnson was a classmate of mine from High School; she and Jeanie had become missionary companions.]** They also sent me a picture of the two of them together. Yep, I'll definitely do what happened in that one dream I had and ask Desirée out to a nice restaurant. American women—there is no substitute.

It rained like a *mother*.

[During Mika's lesson,] I was worried about the time factor, 'cause we had to get in three principles in a short time, but it seems that praying in your heart works, as well. We got all done right on time.

She didn't make the yotei 'cause she said **[that]** she needs time to think about it. Just to keep her from putting it off, I asked her if she'd know in three days, and she said, "no problem" (or "of course," one of the two).

By the way, I did what the missionary guide said and asked her what she thought God would say if she asked Him **[whether or not she should be baptized]**, and she said, "Probably 'receive baptism.'"

Back at Kamiyashiro station, she opened up to us and told us about her boy problems. Guys are after her, all right. We gave her **[some]** advice and reaffirmed the fact that we were friends who could be counted on.

Awesome, she now trusts us enough to share her personal stuff with us! That can only be a good thing.

We didn't make the yotei, but for some reason I still feel good about the lesson. All the other guys here say **[that]** she'll get baptized for sure.

Aki-chan came by tonight wearing this hot, black outfit. Oh, was she looking good. After all that talk about locking our hearts, we didn't want to become hypocrites, so Bunnage and I both walked away from the door and out of sight. **[That may sound rude, but the other two guys were still there to talk to her; we didn't just turn our backs on her in mid-sentence.]** **[It was]** probably the first time I've ever intentionally walked away from a cute girl in my life.

Wednesday, October 02, 1991—Day 638

Today I hit the double-digits: **[I have]** 99 days left. **[It's]** scary. **[Once again, I was wrong about the time I had left. Little did I know at the time that the figure was actually 135.]**

[There was] a big zone taikai. **[We all]** had zone pass-offs, and we passed off to Weaver Shimai and she gave us a long list of things **[that]** we did right. **[It]** felt good. I'm glad **[that]** there are pass-offs, 'cause my skills are way above what they would've been **[otherwise]**.

[It was a] really spiritual taikai. I loved it.

Afterwards I told Yamada Choro how long I have left, and he remarked **[on]** how critical this next month

will be, for only these folks found during October will be prepared enough for baptism before I go home. **[It's]** probably God's way (through other people) of getting the message across.

I had to bear my testimony, too. The new program has us doing it in our native language. **[This was probably the only one of Ames' innovations that was an unmitigated improvement. Back in President Smith's day, we all had been required to bear our testimonies in Japanese, which of course hobnailed the North Americans who weren't very good at Japanese yet.]** I remarked how you've gotta love those Canadians. **[I had prefaced this by recounting how I'd had some really good companions lately; both Depeel and Bunnage were from Canada. I followed up by saying, "I think I was born in the wrong country." After this, Elder McMurray said that I was "one of a kind." I found out later that he, too, was from Canada.]** **[It was]** the first time I've borne my testimony in a zone taikai in over a year. **[It was at the]** same pulpit, by the way.

Yoshioka Shimai asked if I've gotten a reply from Maruoka Shimai yet. Nope. **[It was]** kind of embarrassing, having to admit to Shimais that I had liked one of them once, being as I'm a missionary and all. They (especially her dode, Watanabe Shimai) said that I was a good missionary 'cause every missionary suffers temptation, but I learned and grew from it. (Plus the fact that I've finished the Missionary Guide about four times.)

Thursday, October 03, 1991—Day 639

Didn't want to, but since they were expecting us we played tennis. **[It's a]** good thing we went, 'cause we were the only other ones who showed **[up]**.

Before that, we tried to visit Hiroe, but it was a no go.

[We] tried to look for some good service projects earlier also, but none were immediately available.

Figured it was about time we got rid of some of the ungivable Books of Mormon around here, so we decided to drop all **[of]** the ruined ones off in the telephone booths as we went to hunt down a referral. Lo and behold, one **[of them]** had the testimony of the Ashton family in it, a family who lived in my first ward in Utah. We lived next door to folks that lived kitty-corner from them—very close. The dad, Alan Ashton, is co-founder of WordPerfect. I made a copy of it **[i.e., of their testimony insert]** and will write them soon.

On our way out, we dropped by Inoue Shimai's place to invite her to volleyball on Saturday, but she wasn't there. So we knocked on the door next to her just to be sure. **[Just to be sure of what? I probably meant, "Just to be sure she still lives in the apartment next door."]** We knew **[that]** the people were home, 'cause all the lights were on and the power meter was going full speed ahead. Plus, we saw someone look out at us through the peephole.

No one answered. Not to be outdone by the weak Nihonjins, I kept on ringing the doorbell over and over. **[Although I didn't make it clear in the journal itself, I was hopping mad that we were flatly ignored like that. I thought, "What's so difficult about answering a damn door?" That's why I kept on knocking and ringing the doorbell: I was pissed off.]**

This was not my finest moment. In retrospect, my companion must've thought I was insane. I should've respected the occupant's right to not answer their own door. Yes, I'm ashamed of myself.]

Finally I decided to put a chirashi in the mail drop. I bent down and opened it, and some woman was crouched down in the genkan. I could see her feet and her bare rump from the side—the poor lady was naked. She must've been scared stiff of the gaijins. I felt really bad for having been so persistent after that.

I wonder how old she was?

Oh yeah—after tennis, we stopped by a military surplus store. Lots of Marine stuff was there, since so many Marines are in Okinawa. I got to explain things and answer a lot of questions to the lady working there. She was pretty impressed. I had my dance pictures with the dress blues and my **[military]** I.D. on me, so I had proof **[that I was legitimate]**. **[It was]** pretty nostalgic; all that's been a while.

Friday, October 04, 1991—Day 640

[We] finally got to visit Hiroe again. We took turns drawing pictures, and we got to see her pictures from when she was really young. **[She was a]** cute little girl. She was a regular part of society back then; it was good to see. I ought to give her more credit. I bet we're her ticket out of the life she lives—I hope this goes over. There's the potential for a major miracle here. We had to have been led there for a reason.

Our money came today, at last. Since Communism doesn't work, we're back to the old system of paying our own kitty (**[utility]** bills). Plus, the bike system has ended; it's back to moving our own bikes **[whenever we transfer]**.

[We] visited Inoue Shimai. She lives alone, and **[she]** had a boyfriend over tonight. (Hmm. . .) **[She didn't look any too pleased to see us, like we'd put her into a sticky situation.]** I wonder if she's starting to drop out **[of the church]**? Gads, I hope she hangs on. **[She didn't. This would turn out to be our last contact with her.]**

[We] went over to meet some folks from Bangladesh who moved in above the Kais. It was a bit of a surprise and somewhat awkward at first, but they invited us in and in the process they kicked out their Japanese teacher.

We talked for a while, and the wife brought us out some Bangladesh food—**[it was]** good stuff. **[We]** would've jiko shokaid, but they were soon to go to a friend's house and didn't have too much time. **[In Japanese, "jiko shokai" translates to "self-introduction." The nuance in that language, though, means doing a little more than just telling someone your name and shaking hands. It generally involves telling them about your hobbies and interests, perhaps showing them your pictures, etc.]** I wonder what they thought, two gaijins coming over to meet them without warning.

[We then] dropped in on Kai Shimai for the rest of the time we had.

Threw an egg and almost got another bosozoku tonight.

By the way, I cooked mugi for breakfast this morning. **[It's the]** first time I've had it since I was in the honbu as a bean. **["Mugi" probably most closely translates to "cracked wheat." Financially, it's the cheapest form of breakfast you can eat in Japan. For that reason, some mission presidents over there—but not ours, thank goodness—made it a mission rule that all missionaries have to eat it every morning. Of course, the cynical side of me guesses that such mission presidents most likely exempted themselves from that requirement.]**

Saturday, October 05, 1991—Day 641

[We] went to Katagiri's again. They were having another guest come over, so we couldn't stay long.

They've got a daughter who's going to college in Tucson, Arizona, and we saw a few pictures of her. **[She's]** pretty cute. Shokaid them, but **[they have]** no interest for now.

It rained again, so we couldn't do much. Looking at the member list, we got to talking about the amazingly high number of fukes, and we decided to play a little trick on one (just to see what would happen). So I had Bunnage pick a page number, then guess for a person on the page. I then called that person up and told her that missionaries worldwide had gotten the command from the prophet to contact

all fukes and tell them that the end is very near so repent now or go to Hell. She was a nice lady, but it didn't impress her too much.

[Yes, I had lied. Sometimes missionaries get the urge to be a little creative, since the daily grind is otherwise so predictable, and this incident was symptomatic of that. Nevertheless, I had employed deception, so I shouldn't have done it, of course.]

[We] had a volleyball activity tonight to which many **[people]** showed **[up]**, but I spent most of the time talking to Garff Choro, listening to his lifeguard and surfing stories. **[He was from Southern California.]** Cool stuff.

Sunday, October 06, 1991—Day 642

After church, we went over to Masunaka's again 'cause she'd invited us. I asked if she'd—whoops, religion just came up naturally, and she gave a bunch of dumb ass weakling excuses and philosophies, telling us that Nihonjins have a bias against religion (oh, really?), that if she joined **[the church, then]** rumors would go around the neighborhood (darn, can't handle that), and once religion is brought up, you can't stay friends (yeah, tell that to Mika). **[It]** turns out **[that]** she's got a Book of Mormon, but she doesn't read it 'cause it's too hard. It has specialized (?) words. Sheesh, too bad. Compare **[her]** to Matsubara-san, who's only been to Junior High but read the whole thing twice in one week. **[And if this wasn't enough, she said something to Bunnage that really pissed him off. She asked him how he could handle the cold, since he was from Canada and it was her understanding that Canadians' bodies are weak. Sheesh!]**

Oh, these Japanese are such gutless wonders.

Back at the apartment, we got to talking about the Marines and all and now I'm psyched up to go back. We'd gotten soaked on the way home due to the rain and I had no other clothes to wear, so we sat around a bit.

These Nihonjins amaze me. I've got to get out there working harder with them just to amuse myself.

I'm sick of the worry—I'm about at the point where I no longer care about anything. Honestly, who cares?

Monday, October 07, 1991—Day 643

Stayed up 'till 4:50 a.m. writing letters. Later we four ate lunch at Kobayashi's, then we played video games, Bunnage and I.

I learned a few tricks and cleaned house on "Street Fighter II." *Really* cleaned house. Next, on "Top Landing," I landed successfully all eight times—**[which was]** my goal. Scored 640 points. I was really excited. Yep, I cleared the game. I was pretty pumped **[up]** about today.

After district devotional (Mika'd had to cancel her lesson) we all went to a sento, **[which was the]** first time since I've been here. My bike pedal is on the fritz. They met a cool dude there who'd heard the lessons three years earlier.

Tuesday, October 08, 1991—Day 644

Since Scott had to go on a split and Ishida was taken out due to a cold, I was put in charge of benkyokai (we had it over here). Only three of us were participating, so I gave instructions that for benkyokai we'd all take a nap. So I pulled up my pillow and out I went until noon. **[In retrospect, that was a pretty gutsy move!]**

[We] went to Matsubara's and picked her up and went to Terasawa Shimai's place. Hiroe was wearing normal clothes and makeup, looking the best she has yet.

It was great, 'cause they two got along great from the very start. **[We]** spent a lot of time there. We never got into the lesson, which was fine by me 'cause Hiroe needs friends anyhow.

After that, we went to a big department store **[with Hiroe]**. **[It was a]** good sign, 'cause I'd **[mistakenly]** thought **[that]** she couldn't handle crowds.

Some women were talking about us (both **[of them were department store]** workers); I could tell 'cause they said the word "religion." I told them **[that]** they were right, and they were surprised that I knew Japanese. I went into a shokai from there, but Hiroe didn't seem to be too pleased when she saw that. Whoops.

[That wasn't all those two employees said. Although I didn't hear them, Bunnage did. They were making fun of and talking bad about Hiroe, which didn't please him too well.]

Back outside it had gotten dark, which made her worried due to the time. I hope things are okay.

At Terasawa's place **[earlier]** we looked at a few of her **[i.e., Hiroe's]** pictures, in which was a picture of Kai Shimai. Lo and behold, when Hiroe was in the hospital, so was Kai Shimai—they met each other there. Called Kai Shimai later, and she doesn't remember **[her]**, but like Hiroe, chances are she'll know once she sees her. Next time we meet, it's going to be at Kai Shimai's place. It should be good.

We'll see if we can't get back into the swing of things here.

Wednesday, October 09, 1991—Day 645

Got my pedal fixed (by replacing **[both of]** them) which had been giving me grief. **[We]** went to the honbu and did a few things, then it turned out that the sisters (Henmi and Durrant) were there making lunch with Aya, Masunaka-san's daughter. So we got to eat lunch at the church with them. It took a while, 'cause they were still preparing. Ishida was sick, so they had us pass a few things along to him. Heck, what difference does that make to this journal?

Came back and fell asleep. Later we housed, but in a different fashion: We've got these new chirashis **[that]** we're supposed to color and copy and give to all the houses **[that]** we'll end up dendoing, explaining who we are, etc. It made things interesting and even seemed to help with one guy. We're going to go back and give him a Book and hopefully chat for a while; he gave us a date to come back.

Back at home we colored the little characters on 25 more chirashis. **[We]** had fun with that. Oo, a color-kai (colorkai)!

Thursday, October 10, 1991—Day 646

Gave a Book right off to a guy, which set the mood for our entire day. **[We]** visited Goto-san again; **[it was]** pretty much the same as usual. She needs proof for everything. Can't say I blame her. **[She brought up a good point to Bunnage: She asked him why he's so convinced that Mormonism is true when it just happens to be the same religion in which he was raised.]**

Next we rode to Masunaka-san's place to head out to a party of sorts. Some American friends of one of her friends were coming and so they were welcoming them. I think the reason we were invited is 'cause we know both languages without difficulty **[and could therefore translate]**.

A lady and her daughter were there; the daughter is older than my mother. The grandmother and I chatted for quite a while.

Then came dinner and I ended up sitting across from the grandmother and another lady who'd showed up later **[who was also]** American). Lots of things were talked about, religion included.

It would be so easy **[to serve a mission]** in America! My main lady got to talking about how we all believe in Christ, all study the Bible, etc. Then she asked, "So what's lacking?"

For lack of a better thing to say, I said, "The Holy Ghost." Looking back, I should've said, "Authority."

What an opportunity to build! America—the land of easy dendo.

A Japanese lady asked me what the difference was/in what way do Buddhism and Christianity differ. I gave her a straightforward answer and said that they differ in every respect; there is nothing the same. 'Nuff said, eh? **[No, it probably wasn't "'nuff said." Although I was technically correct, I should've at least *tried* to answer her question with something more coherent, such as the different concepts of the afterlife and the attendant need for the atonement and a savior, etc.]**

The folks on the other side got to asking what we do and why we do it, and after discovering all the sacrifices of body and brain we make, they were highly impressed with the fact that it is all just to make others happier.

The American woman who showed up later (who is a practicing Presbyterian) said that she read that our church is the fastest growing religion. Great!

We got home late, but today we got hours **[i.e., reportable proselyting statistics]** out the yin-yang.

PHOTOS 098



Front row: Me.

Back row, L-R: Bunnage, Masunaka-san, an American guest (the aforementioned "daughter").

Friday, October 11, 1991—Day 647

All it's done is rain lately, so after Sango Eikaiwa we came home and took too long of a break.

After that, we rode down to the Salways' and gave her a copy of the translation of his talk. It didn't copy perfectly, so I sat around penning out the glitches. In the meantime, Ota Shimai came over for her English lesson, so we got to see her, too. **[Just as we were about to leave, Brother Salway walked in. I was sort of embarrassed, since we were there by ourselves with his wife—a big no-no. They**

were almost old enough to be our grandparents, so it was obviously innocent, but still.]

[We] housed out the place we'd given flyers to. [At] the first house we went to we gave a Book and made a return with a 16 year-old kid. [He's a] cool guy. I felt like quitting while I was ahead, but even though we saw no further success, I dare say that I actually *had fun* [while] housing tonight. Amazing.

Saturday, October 12, 1991—Day 648

After A.B.C. [Eikaiwa, there] was a matsuri nearby where we play tennis. It rained, so it wasn't too conclusive. Japanese folks don't discipline their kids, and I heard the "g" word ("gaijin") a few too many times and got pissed off. **[Japan isn't the melting pot that America is, so folks aren't used to outsiders. Quite often they'll see you, point, and yell out, "gaijin!" ("foreigner!") Even young adults do this, not just kids.]**

Due to the rain, we took another break that lasted too long. Ishida had Mathis' bean over on a split.

[We] went to the honbu to copy off some more introduction chirashis. There we talked to Hawkins and the [mission] president's son and his son's friend in the president's office. We chatted about girlfriends and missionaries and Japanese chicks and a few case studies therein. Fun stuff.

Hawkins already knows what's up with transfers. Gads, [it's] time again to worry.

We figured [that] the matsuri would still be going on, so after our semi-appointment went bad we went back to check it out. A few folks were sitting around, but the thing had ended. The people there had us come over and eat with them, and so we met them and chatted quite a bit. It was fun.

Heck, it's amazing how many Japs think that military service is mandatory in the U.S.A. However, they never ask, "What about the military?" if you tell them [that] you were a student [before leaving on your mission]. That's Japan for you.

[It was] fun stuff, but I knew that we'd be treated the exact opposite had we come in the name of religion.

[We] dended a bit more tonight, which made me feel a bit better than I would've otherwise.

Sunday, October 13, 1991—Day 649

Oh no; Shikano Yuko Shimai is going to New Zealand and she'll be there [for] a year.

After church we headed to what was left of the Owariasahi matsuri. **[Although the name of my area—and the ward—was "Meito Kita," Owariasahi was the town in which our apartment was located.]** [We] met the same folks as before and got a little more food and helped them clean the place up.

We later went to Kitajima Shimai's place and looked at *all* her pictures, which took a while. Ah, nostalgia.

[There] sure wasn't much to write [about] considering how busy I felt today. Chatted a little with Sherman Choro/Kyodai at church. [He's a] nice guy. **[After his mission ended, Elder Sherman returned to Japan and married the woman he baptized. There was an enormous social stigma against doing such a thing, but that didn't stop him. It wasn't until years later that I learned that missionaries back in the 1800s were actually expected to find some or all of their plural wives by converting them out in the mission field, marrying them, then bringing them back to Utah.]**

Monday, October 14, 1991—Day 650

Since Kitajima Shimai had given us a ton of old stationery, a few pages of each various type, I was in a letter-writing mood just to get rid of it all. I wrote [to] a bunch of people who still owe me a letter.

After district devotional we just went to the sento again (we two).

Ugh, **[I have]** transfer phobia.

Tuesday, October 15, 1991—Day 651

Well, it's done. Transfers are decided. Bunnage is gone, and my new companion is **[going to be]** a bean. Not just any bean, but the dreaded Japanese bean. I've heard nothing but horror stories about their type—taking over (or trying to take over) the companionship, etc. I'm *not* looking forward to this. I'll be polishing up the brass knuckles for the next few days. The fact of the matter is that he doesn't get here until a week after transfers, so I'll be in a three-way **[companionship]** with Scott and Ishida for that week, borrowing the honbu guys when necessary. **[The reason for the one-week delay is because Japan used to run its own M.T.C. There were 10 missions in Japan at the time, so the monthly transfers out of the Japanese M.T.C. didn't always correspond to the monthly transfers within the various missions.]**

Oh yeah, on the way to the church for benkyokai we saw a lady having car problems, so we helped her and pushed it out of the way. As we left, I told her that if missionaries ever come to her door, then please don't reject them—**[that alone would be]** ample payment.

[We] went over to Hiroe's, and her grandmother answered. She said **[that]** they were really thankful to us for being her friends and for taking her places, etc. Great! Sadly, though, she'd gotten a cold and couldn't keep her appointment, so we went to Kai Shimai's place on our own and visited for a while.

Since Bunnage is going to my bean apartment, we rode our bikes out there to show him around. Whoa, nostalgic. **[We]** went to Sakae, too. On the way back we passed a member, Yaginuma Kyodai, I think. He waved and all; I wonder what he must've thought? **[We were outside our designated area, remember.]**

It takes exactly 70 minutes from apartment to apartment **[by bike]**.

Wednesday, October 16, 1991—Day 652

[We] played tennis one last time for a couple of hours for Bunnage, then got taken out to eat. **[We next]** rode out to the church for our pick-up lesson **[with a kid named "Shinya"]**, but the guy didn't show **[up]**. We next went up to the honbu to get some stuff done, and while there the buch's (president's) son Daren told us all one or two of his many adventures. Gads, some people just seem to naturally fall into trouble. (A note to myself—key phrase: "Train dude hang-out.")

[With my apologies for forgetting most of the details, Daren's story went something like this: He and one of his friends were riding the train in Japan, and there was some sort of altercation between them and the train attendant. As the attendant was trying to physically restrain the friend, Daren jumped on his back and tried to wrestle him off his friend. Finally several more train attendants managed to drag them off the train, then took them to "the train dude hang-out." Once there, they found out that Daren's friend was the son of the Brazilian ambassador, then immediately "they were all kissing butt to him."]

Since today is probably my last full day with an American (North American) companion, I decided to celebrate and we played a few games. Shokaid a guy in the process, but it was a no go.

I'm really, really worried about how it's going to be from here on out. It's basically decided; I've got to be here at least one more month to train my bean and although I can't outguess the new buch, I'm sure **[that]** they won't transfer me out at only a month and a half **[of my mission]** left. In order for me to have one more companion after this guy, they'll have to transfer him after only a month and a half at the latest—**[which is]** not the usual thing, so I'll say **[that]** it's an easy bet that I die here and that my Japanese bean kills me (i.e., is my last dode and sees me go home). It's the new semi-policy to take

away any calling you may have had and give you a bean **[for]** your last little bit, and I guess this is mine.

Yep, I'd say **[that]** it's decided up 'till I'm dead.

Thursday, October 17, 1991—Day 653

We four rode to Ozone and helped Bunnage carry his stuff, and there we met Leach Choro and the other two who were there to lead him and his new companion to their apartment. **[It was a]** pretty sad feeling, knowing **[that]** Leach is dying and seeing my old basho again. Heck, he was there **[for]** five months and I remember riding the train down with him from up North.

Since it was raining really hard, we three just sat around the apartment and cleaned and rearranged.

Kubota Kyodai was called as the new ward mission leader **[it had been Gettling up until that point]**, so while Scott Choro taught Eikaiwa, Ishida and I met with him and chatted about all that stuff.

Wow, Hawkins, the financial secretary, knows Jeanie Hancock. **[They both had gone to the same high school.]** Hintze Choro, the recorder, knows **[both]** Rikki *and* Horrocks. **[The three of them had gone to high school together, too.]** Small world.

Oh by the way, remember Miura from Fukutoku? Well, he got married to his girlfriend, thus clearing him for baptism. Leach baptized him. His wife is soon to be baptized, and Miura's preparing for the temple. How about that!

[And thus ended my brief stint with Elder Bunnage as my companion. You might recall how the mission president paired us up as co-seniors, and when I asked him how we were supposed to run things, he merely told me to "work something out." Well, the first day we were together, Bunnage made it clear that he was the junior. I didn't try to push anything; he just insisted. I suppose this was because he'd only been a senior companion for a month previous to that, plus he'd been in the country for far less time than I had and hadn't been in the area, Meito-Kita, at all. So that made things easy.]

It was a bummer seeing him go, since we got along well and could converse so easily. Sure enough, a pattern had emerged: All three of my best companions were Canadian, and all three times I was only paired up with them for a single month each.]

Friday, October 18, 1991—Day 654

After **[Sango]** Eikaiwa we basically ran errands and dended a little bit. In an apartment complex of three small buildings where I'd passed out chirashis, not a single person was home.

Came home, called Mika, then went to the honbu and borrowed Hintze for Mika's lesson. The other two took off.

We showed her "The Restoration of the Priesthood," also Yamaguchi Shimai tachiaid. It went well, thanks to the Spirit. **[It]** looks like she wants to be baptized, 'cause she's come to realize that she likes the things that are written in the Book, **[she likes the]** church, and **[she likes]** the Mormon way in general. It's just that she doesn't know how to approach her folks about it.

Hey, that's headway. Hintze Choro is sure **[that]** she'll be baptized. It's a totally new life, so I can plainly see it taking a little time and effort.

Later **[on]**, 'cause Scott had a meeting, Ishida and I went out streeting, ate at McDonalds, and otherwise chatted and had fun. The meeting got out late, so we weren't home 'till 11:30 **[p.m.]** or so.

Saturday, October 19, 1991—Day 655

After A.B.C. (Ishida taught the beginners), we ran a few errands and then were picked up by Gomyo-san, their investigator, and he took us to Toyota for a concert put on by the members and missionaries there. Toyota is where Scott beamed. He was there for five months.

We had a lot of time, so we hung out at a huge department store on the streeting basho. Got into a few gospel/religion discussions with a few of the workers here and there, so that was cool.

At the concert, Van Cleave sang a bunch. Fun stuff. Since it was a local thing the singing left a lot to be desired, but the feeling was there.

Met a lady who's Mathis's investigator. She said **[that]** she'd be our **[tour]** guide for when Daren and I come and visit Tokyo. **[I don't recall ever making such plan, either with Daren or anyone else. Even so, that plan never reached fruition, unfortunately.]**

Met Iwase, Kamiya, and Yoko; **[they're]** Shimais from Okazaki. They said that Yoshie Sugiura *really* wanted to meet me, and had she known I'd've been there she would've shown up for sure. Yoshie: Cute, cute.

Even Henmi Shimai, all the way over from Meito Minami, sang in it.

It's cool, meeting new friends.

(Oh yeah, the buch and **[his]** sons sang there, too, and royally screwed up.)

Sunday, October 20, 1991—Day 656

After church (to which Kitajima Shimai finally came), I borrowed Hintze Choro again and we headed out to some matsuri or other event near where we bowled with Mika on her birthday back on August 26th.

At first everyone was sitting around for no apparent reason, prompting us to talk about how the Japanese have no common sense. Then the big event started: A huge bingo game for Miller six-packs. Exciting. We didn't win.

After that, they had a reggae band (Japanese) play. **[The band's name was "Tanaka Tengoku." "Tanaka" is a common surname, whereas "Tengoku" is Japanese for "heaven."]** It took us a while to get up the guts beforehand, but near when we had to go, they **[the band members]** jumped down and started dancing in front of the stage and waved for others to join in, and so I jumped in and let fly. I was the only other one **[who did so]**.

I danced around for a bit (really hard), then I went back into the crowd and out went Hintze. It was great; we got a bigger applause than the band itself did. We were pretty pumped as we left that scene. *Hundreds* of people saw us.

Next we went back to the church and met a guy who drove us two plus Rasmussen and Hawkins over to the Kanbes' house for dinner. They're Eikaiwa students.

They had some posters of some half-naked American babes in his business downstairs. That got me trunky; **[I have]** less than three months to go. Women!!!

[It was a] fun dinner; saw lots of pictures there. Back at the honbu, Scott took forever making up some Seto chirashis, so we weren't home 'till past 11:00 **[p.m.]** again.

The honbu. I wouldn't want to be in it, but the guys there sure have some adventures.

PHOTOS 099



L-R: Kanbe-san, Elder Hawkins, me, Elder Hintze, Otsuka-san.



Me and Hintze with a couple of unidentified kids.



Hintze, me, Elder Rasmussen, and Hawkins on our way out of the house afterward. I can't remember who the person on the right is.

Monday, October 21, 1991—Day 657

[We] went back to Sakae so [that] Ishida could buy a coat. My list had come back from Mom, but it looks like I can just cut and paste the corrections on this time. Oh, I hope [that] I can get this perfect this time.

Later we went bowling with the Seto guys. The idea was to bring investigators, but Mika couldn't come.

[We] went and ate a little at Mr. Donut later. Oh yeah, Ishida bought us all the all-you-can-eat Shakey's pizza deal in Sakae.

I feel weird.

Tuesday, October 22, 1991—Day 658

After benkyokai we spent a while in the honbu making the corrections on the list. I presented it to the president, and among other things he said, "We can probably send this out to other missions." He first said, "I don't see a copyright on this; does that mean we can copy it?" Sure, by all means!

We next rode to Mika's to drop off the pictures [that] Kitajima Shimai had given to/for her. [We] passed out a few housing chirashis, then came home and took a long break. [We next] ran errands, then Aya-chan and Aki-chan called and we went and had pizza.

This has been really enlightening. The zone leaders don't seem to work any harder than I did. Maybe I'm not such a bad missionary after all.

Wednesday, October 23, 1991—Day 659

Played tennis and did well. There was no other way around it, so I went with these two to their "lesson" with the Yamada family. They want to join, but the husband is afraid of what the guys at work will say if

all of a sudden he quits coffee, alcohol, etc.

We later went and hunted down the guy **[whom]** we all met at the sento the time we all first went. **[It]** took a while to find him, but once we did we talked for a while.

Got a letter from Daren. He gets home December 19th; they gave him a choice. Crud, he left six weeks *after* I did, and he gets back three weeks before I do!

Thursday, October 24, 1991—Day 660

Went with Ishida and Garff, who were splitting, to the honbu to pick up my new and most likely last companion. He's 2nd generation Mormon, so that helps. **[His name is]** Oshiro Choro **[and he's]** from Okinawa. **[He's a]** good guy, this may work after all.

Ishizuka and Yamada Choro drove us back home; with them they took a sister from Okinawa who's going to Inuyama to be in a threesome **[companionship]** with Waters Shimai and one other. **[Her name was Naibi Itokazu. She and Elder Oshiro were from the same ward in Okinawa, conveniently enough.]** By the way, I met her on *Tuesday*; all the sisters were at the church for the shimai taikai. Man Shimai (pronounced MÄN, as in FÄTHER) was there too, and we chatted for a second. **[A]** kick-butt shimai, she is.

[We] walked around to various places and decided on a bike for Oshiro Choro. Waiting for it to be delivered and a little after it came, we housed where we'd placed chirashis. **[As an aside, I also saw a dead bat by the side of the road, of all things.]** Oshiro has the green bean fire; I couldn't get in a shokai without being interrupted. He said **[that]** he'll cooperate with anything I do, so that's a big relief.

Taught Eikaiwa in Seto. Got into a religious discussion with a couple of women and couldn't quit. Reader, you'd be surprised **[at]** how acceptable it is to know nothing about your own religion here.

I feel a burst coming on here. **[This is]** only a guess, but I'm in my last area with my last companion now, and I should have picked up more investigators than three considering how long I've been here. So like a runner when he sees the finish line, I'm going to and am picking up the pace.

Friday, October 25, 1991—Day 661

While the other two had their zone leader taikai, we once again had the monthly food party at Sango Eikaiwa. I had to break the news to them that we were quitting it forever, but they took it better than I thought they would. There was no problem. **[Scott was dreading having to give them the bad news that we were cancelling it. He was the zone leader, so he (correctly) assumed that it was his responsibility to do so. When I volunteered to do it instead, he was palpably relieved.]**

[We] got into a Book of Mormon discussion with them too, or at least Oshiro Choro did.

[We] went to visit Matsubara-san, but she wasn't there, so we chatted with her mother a little about her. I'm lucky **[that]** I once again am in a companionship where half of it understands Japanese perfectly. **[I believe that this visit is the one wherein her mother told us that Hiroe's problems had to do with having a brain tumor when she was in Junior High and thus getting left behind by society. In Japan, you can't "make up" school like you can in America; if you don't succeed the first time, you're done forever, no matter how legitimate your excuse.]**

Either way, I never saw her again.]

[We] went to the honbu, made chirashis, then came back and chatted about a bunch of different things while coloring them. Dang, it's tough to freely B.S. in a language that's not one's own.

[We] went to the store, then set off to hunt down a referral **[that]** we'd gotten in the mail. **[It was]** a self-

referral who'd been to temple square and requested missionaries and a Book.

We went a long ways South. Once we finally found the place, he wasn't home, but we talked to the parents and got the phone number.

[We then] came back and handed out the chirashis. One lady seemed nice (she came to the door); we'll see what happens.

I was up at 5:30 **[a.m.]** and we had benkyokai, so I felt good about myself and about dendo all day. Yep, once we do it 'cause we *want* to do it, it seems to help.

Saturday, October 26, 1991—Day 662

[We] had our dinner party at A.B.C. also today. Tried to shokai Fukuoka-san, but she's dense. I later described why I do this (dendo) to a few people, and Mormon missionaries once more ended up as warriors of truth and heroes supreme. Yep, we truly are awesome.

[We] passed out a few chirashis and then dendoed a bit. At the last house tonight, I shokaid a kid and gave him a Book. Oshiro about overwhelmed the kid he wanted to get a return so bad. Yep, he's got the dendo fire.

[We] ate dinner with the Yamada family again.

This afternoon I got a letter from Theresa. I'd written her a couple of P-days ago just to get rid of some odd stationery. Her Marine is now in Okinawa. Heck, my life must revolve around that place. My unit was sent there, Oshiro is from there, and now this. She'll be around when I'm back and she wants to meet me at the airport and go to my homecoming. I've been thinking: I don't want her to get in the way of Jodi and I, so the airport is out of the question, but the homecoming would be all right, I think.

I also got one from Dan, **[the]** first time in four months. **[It was]** a regular letter, but he left out the most important part: What sex feels like. **[It was his first letter to me since getting married, of course.]** I'll write back and chew him out for forgetting that.

PHOTOS 100



Elder Oshiro introducing himself to the folks at A.B.C. Eikaiwa.



A candid shot. Fukuoka-san is at my left (the viewer's right). Oshiro is at the far right, clearly caught off-guard.



Me and Kobayashi-san in the foreground. You can see Elder Garff partially obscured in the background.



Foreground, L-R: Oshiro, Kobayashi-san, Yoshiko Ibata, Fukuoka-san.
Background: Me.

Sunday, October 27, 1991—Day 663

I was pretty busy running to and fro for this and that in church. Megumi Yamaguchi was back from Hawaii for her older brother's wedding. With her she brought a cooler than smell package from Kyoko. Killer! There was a tape in there that I haven't listened to yet that I'm looking forward to.

Shimizu Yuka came up to me and told me that she talked to Matsumoto Shimai from Fukutoku, and that everyone loved me there and that all **[of them]** were disappointed when I transferred out. Also how I was happy and tried my best to talk to everyone although I couldn't speak **[Japanese very well]**. She asked if (**["she" =]** Shimizu Shimai) I was always this positive or if it's been just since I've been in Japan.

Yuka-chan. How sweet **[she is]**; I really like her.

Today was Meito Minami's ward conference, and there was Yoko from Okazaki. She said **[that]** Yoshie was excited to hear from me (**[I'd said]** "hi" only), and she relays the message that she wants me to go over and play before I go home (I think) and write too, at least after my mission is over. No, wait, I was wrong. She says **[that]** she wants me to come back and stay at her place ("while I'm there," I figure). Cool stuff, or what?

Gads, this mission has been worth it just for the friends I've made if nothing else.

The other guys had double-booked, so Scott and I went on a split for the rest of the night.

Monday, October 28, 1991—Day 664

We taught an Eikaiwa for the Seto boys this morning, which freed me from leaving tonight. **[In other words, since we'd put in the required number of hours in the morning before P-day started, we didn't have to put in those hours in the evening after it ended as was usually the case.]**

Kyoko had a bunch of her friends talk to me on the tape, so I wrote little notes/letters back to all of them.

I've been writing all day and was up late last night doing it. Holy cow do I have a stack written. It amazes *me*, and I'm the one who did it!

Tuesday, October 29, 1991—Day 665

After benkyokai we rode out to Sakae and met Kobayashi and Yamauchi for another tabehodai at the Hilton (?) hotel, **[on the]** 28th floor. After that, they took us and we went inside Nagoya Castle and around the courtyards. That was the first time I'd been back since May 1st of 1990—back on Day 119.

Then we went back home, grabbed the tape I **[had]** made for Kyoko and all the letters **[that]** I'd written, and headed out to the Yamaguchis' for another dinner appointment. This time I couldn't **[even]** eat half as much as normal.

I had Megumi take the tape and letters back **[to Hawaii]** for me.

The Yamaguchis are a cool family. I almost like their mom better than my own.

PHOTOS 101



Front row, kneeling: Oshiro.

Back row, L-R: Yamauchi-san, me, Ishida, Scott, Kobayashi-san.



L-R: Oshiro and me in front of Nagoya Castle.

Wednesday, October 30, 1991—Day 666

What a great number. Read Revelation 13:18.

We had a great zone taikai again. The president's talks are always so spiritual; I love them. I've got to start re-reading some of the notes I've taken.

Later, the honbu staff and a few others went to a *huge* graveyard and played hide and go seek there. **[Since space is at a premium in Japan, graves are also abbreviated accordingly. All bodies are cremated, so they'll just have a gravestone-like monument containing nothing more than the hyoid bone. The newer graveyards, like this one, tend to pack the "graves" very closely together, to the point that there isn't any grass between them—there's enough room to walk between them, but that's it.]** We were invited too, but I kind of got second thoughts about it, talked it over with Oshiro Choro (who incidentally had said many nice things about me during his testimony in Zone Taikai), and we decided to make the small sacrifice and just dendo instead. Wow, that's the first time I've ever been able to dig up the guts to sacrifice my own fun just to go out and find **[people]**, no guarantees.

[We] didn't see any success, but oh well, that's what we're here for. Felt good inside for [doing] it, though.

My companion is very supportive. It's thoroughly great.

Halloween, 1991—Day 667

We once again were able to "sacrifice" by purposely giving up tennis in order to go and try to get a return with Matsubara-san. She was in bed with a fever, or so her mother said.

Later we rode out with the other two to the Yamadas' (investigator-type), and after eating a little the husband took us all to the Toyota car museum, [which was] my second time.

[After this, we] rode straight out to the honbu and then went out to meet Mika. Shikama Shimai tachiaid, and she also met us at the eki ([which is Japanese for] "train station").

I'd planned on reviewing the commitments and chatting about baptism, but since she came late we didn't have time and just talked about quitting tea, also a little about free agency, etc. I think it went well.

Afterward was the Eikaiwa party. It was also for both wards, so lots of people showed [up]. I was a flasher; my companion was a witch, more on the old hag side. He was great, no one (hardly) recognized him. [He had on thick face paint and a prosthetic nose. He also wore an old hag scarf over his head.] Mika was also a witch. [She had on some sort of top like women wear in a dance class. She also wore a witch's pointed hat and a green domino mask. It was really cute.]

They were attempting to do a few games, but it was basically chaos. Finally they brought out the food and put it all on the table, but it was immediately mobbed by kids. Good luck getting anything.

The Shikamas drove Mika home. Before she left, she gave me [a copy of] the poster that she was in! Boy, let me tell you, that's worth more to me than gold.

Then we rode home ourselves. We went as is [costume-wise] and got a few laughs along the way. [More accurately, Elder Oshiro got the laughs, not me, since he was quite obviously "done up."] [It was] my dode's first Halloween party. Oh yeah, upon invitation, we went trick-or-treating at the honbu, [in] the president's place downstairs. His wife gave us some stuff.

The Buch also took me aside and asked what exactly I was wearing under the trench coat. A big crowd assembled to find out, but he shooed them all off while I answered. [Dressed up a flasher, I appeared to be wearing nothing other than my trench coat and shoes. In reality I was wearing a pair of shorts underneath.] 'Twas funny.

PHOTOS 102



The crowd at the Halloween party. I'm in the trench coat and sunglasses.



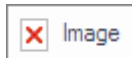
Front row: An unidentified kid.

Middle row, L-R: Spencer Ames, the mission president's third-youngest child, in his cow costume; me in my flasher costume, Elder Hawkins, Elder Yamada.

Back row: Elder Ishizuka in his Dracula costume.



This picture no longer exists. Back when it did, it depicted **[L-R]** Oshiro, Mika, and me.



Another missing picture with a similar shot of the three of us.

Friday, November 01, 1991—Day 668

I've been doing really well getting up at 5:30 every morning; **[the]** problem is **[that]** this morning we both fell asleep 'till an hour past when we were supposed to leave, then Mika called and woke me up. I was half incoherent, so I wonder what she thought.

I wanted to use the phone again, but Scott got on it, and while waiting I fell asleep for another hour.

After that I got to working on the member book and couldn't stop, so at 3:00 **[p.m.]** I finally left and we went down to the Yogos' place to drop off a handmade hairpiece that Kai Shimai had made for Mika. In the process we got to talk with *both* parents for a while, especially the dad, which was needed and *great*. I think that due to that it may prove the going easier once Mika asks for permission to be baptized.

After coloring some more chirashis for tomorrow we went and ate dinner at Sugai Kyodai's house. **[It was actually an apartment, not a house, but oh well. He baked fish for us. It was hopelessly overcooked, like eating raw leather, but it's the thought that counts, of course.]** He's the one who's 73 years old and was baptized only five years ago. **[He's a]** great guy; you've got to respect that. Usually they'll tell you **[that]** they're too old for religion when they're around 40 **[years old]** or so.

Saturday, November 02, 1991—Day 669

After Eikaiwa we were taken to eat curry in the castle nearby, we two and the Seto guys. They took off **[afterward]**, and we four (Kawachi Mitsuko also, and Kobayashi) talked for a while.

[We] shopped, then **[for the]** first time in a long time I prayed for an area **[in which]** to pass out chirashis. In the process I cried, due to all of my blessings and the fact that I have the truth. Who can put a price on that?

[We then] went and passed out chirashis, then did a few follow-up things.

When will my bunpo list take flight?

Sunday, November 03, 1991—Day 670

Nothing really special that I can think of happened at church today. I know **[that]** I apologized for it earlier, but I can hardly help it—Shimizu Yuka Shimai is the current flame. She's totally cool, plus she's mature and womanly, as she's 29. You know me; I like/prefer older women. She doesn't look Japanese—what a hon (short for "honey").

Tonight we streeted, and my dode placed a couple of Books. One was to a guy in Buddhist priest clothes whom I went up and started talking to. He was 19 years old **[and was]** only wearing the stuff 'cause his dad is a priest. **[It was an]** interesting talk we had.

My new dode has got the dendo fire; he always interrupts my shokais. Why, I don't know. It makes me nervous.

On the way home we talked about Buddhism, Shintoism, and their origins and relation to the gospel. He was impressed with my knowledge (for the record).

Monday, November 04, 1991—Day 671

While McMurray did a three-way split here, Garff Choro **[his junior companion]** and the two of us rode

out to Kaori's. Hitomi, her friend, came down from Inuyama, and we rode in her car down to a place called Higashiyama park, near where Hintze Choro and I danced **[but not with each other!]** back on Day 656.

We walked around, went to the zoo there, and rode the big Ferris wheel that gives a view of everything. It wasn't half bad. **[It was a lot of fun, actually.]**

[Something interesting happened when we were at the zoo portion of the park. An elephant had died there some months or years earlier—due to old age, I think—and they had a shrine set up to pay respects to its spirit. Kaori and Hitomi went and did the traditional praying and bowing in front of it, which shocked me beyond measure, at least on Kaori's behalf: Inactive or not, once one joined the LDS church, doesn't one know better than to pray to anything other than God? . . . at least, that was my thinking at the time.]

I said something to my companion about it, and he somewhat sternly reminded me that that's Japanese culture. Perhaps I was displaying a little too much cultural elitism for his taste. In any event, maybe what they were doing wasn't so much "praying" as it was offering well-wishes or paying respects in a traditional manner or something—in other words, by assuming that they were offering actual prayers, I might've been judging a book by its cover—but I'm not sure either way.]

Back at home we were both up late making up for P-day, writing our letters, etc. Being as I've been out of money for two weeks, I haven't even sent last week's letters yet.

Kaori said **[that]** she'd come to church next week since I'm speaking in Sacrament Meeting.

PHOTOS 103



Front row, L-R: Garff, Kaori, Hitomi.
Back row, L-R: Me, Oshiro.

Tuesday, November 05, 1991—Day 672

After benkyokai we rode home and changed. We rode with Kobayashi out to make pottery, but the place was closed, so we ended up first going to that park I mentioned on Day 629 and eating the food **[that]** she'd brought. I felt kind of bad for skipping out on dendo for that.

My money finally came today, thank goodness, so I went and ran several an overdue errand. It was great to get it done.

[We] rode to the honbu for some copies, then headed straight out to where we'd passed out chirashis and dendoed there. The most "success" we saw was talking to a girl for a while about a bunch of church-related things. She'd gone to a Catholic school and I think **[that]** she was a Catholic, etc. She ended up rejecting all **[of]** our offers. I kind of got the impression that even though I can swear that that's where we were supposed to go, we were only meant to bear testimony, thus ensuring a fair judgment. Oshiro Choro felt the same thing. Plus, tonight I asked politely for him to let me do it **[i.e., deliver the introduction, etc.]** when it's my door, and he agreed—so that problem is taken care of.

We came in early, but the other two had played tennis with Aya, Aki, and two others of the honbu staff. I was feeling good tonight, really good tonight, knowing that we'd gone out and worked while they had

played around.

I plan on skipping out on tennis also, so tomorrow should be even better.

PHOTOS 104



Me at the park. I didn't own a regular jacket, so here I improvised by wearing my rain suit top as a windbreaker.



L-R: Ishida, Scott, Oshiro, me.



L-R: Scott, Ishida, Oshiro, me.

Wednesday, November 06, 1991—Day 673

Yes, today was even better. I didn't set my alarm right, so I didn't wake up until 7:30. Later I worked on coloring my fixed copy of a picture someone drew, more rather a cartoon, of angels guarding a pair of missionaries as various dangers befell them. Once I got going, I couldn't stop, and we didn't leave until 12:30 or so. We skipped tennis, however, which made me feel good.

[We] went to Hiroe's, and her mother met us at the door. Hiroe was sick again. Maybe her mother is worried due to us, since we did kind of show up out of the blue. We **[my companion and I]** talked it over and decided that the next thing to do is talk with her mother and tell her what exactly it is **[that]** we're all about so she'll stop worrying. I know **[that]** I'd worry if I were in her shoes.

We later colored many more chirashis, but had to leave since the other two were meeting with Gomyo-san here. So we streeeted and I placed a couple of Books; one was with a second generation Soka Gakkai. He said that he'd call for an appointment and he'd bring along one of his S.G.I. (Soka Gakkai International) "seniors." If this goes through, it'll certainly be interesting.

Back at home I got a lot of copies of the list made and a lot of things done. **[It was a]** pretty good day today; I can't complain.

Thursday, November 07, 1991—Day 674

This morning we headed out and met Kobayashi, who took us to a new place to do service. It was at an orphanage. We got there and were shown around, then we went into the room with the really young ones. The other three and Kobayashi got started sewing on some baby clothes, and at the same time a girl came in carrying a baby, then since I was still standing there she basically dropped him into my arms. So for the hour **[that]** I was there, I played with and held just him the whole time.

He was a really good baby. No crying or anything. For the longest time he just sat and looked up at me. Talking to the other workers, I was able to piece together his story.

They'd given him the name Sato Hiroki. **[Once again, in Japan first and last names are reversed, so "Hiroki" was his given name, while "Sato" was to be his family name.]** When he was found back on June 13 or so, his umbilical cord had barely been cut with a pair of normal scissors, and someone had gone to a hospital and just left him on the bathroom floor, no note or anything.

Poor kid! He made quite the impression on me, though. **[He's]** just barely separated from God's presence. Not a single sin or unclean thought. There's a lot I can learn from him. **[Lo these many years later, I wonder whatever became of him.]**

All those kids (less than 10 of them) were surprisingly good. Since they're basically orphans, I guess they learn early that all their wants won't be immediately met, so crying won't do them much good. **[They were very]** well-behaved kids.

[We] didn't get in much dendo after that. Oshiro and I went around taking pictures, one set in a story form/order that I wanted to use at the **[annual]** Christmas taikai slideshow.

After Eikaiwa at Meito again, Oshiro taught me how to play Japanese chess with the little **[traveler's]** set I bought today.

PHOTOS 105



The south side of our apartment building. Our apartment is on the top floor, leftmost unit. If you squint, you can see me standing on the balcony near the centerline. If you squint really hard, you can see Ishida behind the sliding glass door behind me, photo bombing.



My desk. The writing surface folds up to cover the books and save room.



Me in front of my Japanese naval ensign. I don't know why that electric guitar was in the apartment; it didn't work in any case.



Oshiro, Ishida, and me on the balcony. The camera is facing east. I had merely asked the two of them to be in the photo; they took it upon themselves to "weird" themselves up.

Friday, November 08, 1991—Day 675

This morning my companion and I played "Shogi," Japanese chess. I lost, of course, but had fun.

[Shogi is, in my opinion, far superior to traditional European chess. In the Japanese version, pieces lay flat on the table; they don't stand upright. You don't determine sides by the color of the pieces; you determine sides by the direction the pieces point (always toward the enemy). Beyond that, the major differences—and the reasons why it's superior—are these:

- When a piece is taken, it's not eliminated from the game. The capturing player brainwashes it and may use it against the enemy—the piece's original owner—at a later time.
- Pieces may become more powerful as the game progresses. If a piece manages to get into the enemy's "zone," it promotes by flipping over to display a new rank.
- When a player wishes to use a captured and brainwashed piece against the enemy, he or she can drop it into any empty space on the board. So with this game, one must not only keep an eye on all pieces like usual, but must also keep an eye on all *empty spaces* as well.]

Prayed and went to an area way North to pass out chirashis. In the area was a huge burial mound with part of an ancient mote remaining. I wonder what history this place really has?

We were very near the Northern border of our area. It was raining, making the going difficult.

[We] came back and ate curry rice at a restaurant (I had two servings), then [we went] back home to prepare for Mika's lesson.

We met her and Miyachi Shimai, who's now back from America, at Kamiyashiro and rode in Miyachi Shimai's car to the church. I wasn't too sure what to teach, since she's not progressing too well, so I told Oshiro in the eki [which is Japanese for "train station"] that we'd just go according to how the Spirit dictated.

Miyachi Shimai was a good tachiai, as she's an R.M. herself. She's got a great personality and is very funny. **[She's]** quite friendly. **[She also has a very high voice.]**

We just reviewed the basics of **[the]** Book of Mormon and prayer. Mika's beginning to notice that we've been hitting hard on the Book; she's realizing that it must be important. We had a good talk, then **[we]** showed "What is Real" **[a short movie produced by the church as a missionary aid]**, which tied in great.

I learned/got the impression that in order for her to keep the big commitments, she's got to start with the small **[ones]**, busy as she is. So she committed to reading the Book from the beginning.

'Twas a great lesson, thanks to the Spirit. Of course, she's willing to work with us; that's why it was there.

That's probably the thing I've learned about the most from my mission: The principle of free agency. In a nutshell, if you force someone, the Spirit leaves. So in order to teach by the Spirit, they have to be willing to play ball with you. **[They have to do everything of]** their own free will.

Saturday, November 09, 1991—Day 676

Mathis Choro was here this morning on a split, and I had a great time talking with him about Boot Camp. He was discharged **[from the Marines]** really early due to a heart problem.

He also came to A.B.C. and tore it up there.

Later we went out and followed up on those chirashis, but **[we]** had to leave before we were all the way done in order to keep an appointment. We were supposed to meet the Seto guys at their apartment in order for them to take us to Asuka's for dinner.

They were 40 minutes late. Crud, we may have been able to get finished **[in that amount of time]**.

'Twas a good curry rice dinner.

Heck! You wouldn't believe it; the Japanese just don't understand sarcasm *or* playing dumb. It takes away all the fun.

Sunday, November 10, 1991—Day 677

[I go home] two months from today. **[Again, at the time I didn't know that I would eventually extend for a month, so I was wrong about that "two months" figure.]**

I gave a talk in church about following the prophet. Yep, a talk in church.

After that we had a meeting for tachiais and potential tachiais, where we explained the purpose and how to be a good tachiai. We did a couple of role models which was fun. **[In other words, we conducted some role-playing scenarios and had fun doing so.]**

Since today is Kai Shimai's birthday, we poked around and then bought her a couple of gifts from the honbu, namely three different pictures of Christ, a CTR ring, and **[the book]** "A Marvelous Work and a Wonder." We went to her place, gave the stuff to her, and hung out for a couple of hours. **[I don't recall ever hearing her say "thank you."]**

There wasn't much time left, but I felt **[that]** I had to do it anyhow. We went back to our place and followed up on the chirashis, but we became really late as a result. The first guy kekkoed us pretty hard, but we ended up placing two Books, so why complain?

PHOTOS 106



Me and Sister Yamaguchi. She was really cool.

Monday, November 11, 1991—Day 678

[Today I] finally wrote back to Yamaura Choro who'd written me from Hawaii seven months ago. I purposely waited this long **[partly]** 'cause it'd taken him 11 or so months to answer me back, partly 'cause I was waiting 'till I got the bunpo list done so I could send a perfect copy to him. Now it's sent off; I hope **[that]** it gets popular in Hawaii.

There is a movie barely **[i.e., recently]** made by guys in the M.T.C. for Nihonjins only, pretty much covering basic Lesson 1.1 sort of stuff from what I hear. They were testing it at the church tonight, and they had us bring investigators to trial run it. Mika came, along with Aya, Masunaka-san's daughter; Miyako from Ichinomiya (whom I met in Inuyama), and Nishikawa-san **[from Seto]**. Those were the only ones there. They had the missionaries wait outside so **[that]** they **[the investigators]** would feel free to express their opinions. So I still don't know what the video is about. **[As of this writing, I still don't know what it was about!]**

On the way back to Kamiyashiro, I told Mika what I'd said in my talk.

Oh yeah, before it started, Garff Choro said, "You just had to pick up the best-looking Nihonjin in the

mission!"

I got an outstanding card from Yoshie Sugiura from Okazaki. She'd missed the letter **[that]** I sent to her **[while she was]** in Washington **[State]**, but it was forwarded to her and she barely got it. She really wants to see me before I go home. She's so great! Her card smelled *really* good, too. Perfume. Whoops, that reminds me; I've forgotten to spray "Obsession" on my letters to Jodi the past several times. Oh well.

I also got a postcard from Theresa. Her boyfriend can't be back to California from Okinawa during January and February after all, so she'll be there **[when I get home]** for sure. She says to "plan on dinner (my treat)," so why refuse a free meal?

Ha ha, my evil plots of revenge are beginning to take shape.

Tuesday, November 12, 1991—Day 679

None of us transferred, which is a good sign. So I figure it's sure as can be that I'm dying here. I foresee many a party in the near future, for Scott dies in a month, then myself a month after that.

[We] spent a lot of time at the honbu improving the housing chirashis, since the two **[drawings of]** people in the corners are an abomination. We had a break in between where a lot of us rode to a close by restaurant to see Henmi Shimai off and to celebrate Oshiro Choro's birthday which was today.

[We then] rode home and colored three of the new chirashis, and beyond that **[we]** didn't do much today. I sent a postcard to Yoshie, since I can't stand not answering letters. **[It's]** too bad **[that]** I can't legally write to her yet.

PHOTOS 107



Foreground, L-R: Hintze, Oshiro, Elder Uchimoto.

Midground, L-R: Scott, me.

Background, L-R: Ishida, Sister Henmi, Sister Kristin Hallen.

Wednesday, November 13, 1991—Day 680

Damn!

Tonight we had a dinner/kaiin dendo appointment with Okina Shimai, and her visiting teachers were also invited. They were Shikama Shimai and Shimizu Yuka. However, Yuka wrote it down for the wrong week and so she didn't show up. Who knows, maybe the Lord worked it out that way to keep me from getting out of hand.

This morning I had a dream that Oshiro and I played Shogi, Japanese chess, again. So **[once I woke up]** I really wanted to play. We did, and I had him on the run for most of the game 'till he pulled a sneaky trick and won. 'Twas great fun, though. I got lots better.

[We] went with Kobayashi and the other two to some guy's house and made pottery. **[It was a lot]** tougher than he made it look, but **[it was]** fun.

[We] colored more chirashis, then took off for Okina Shimai's. Argh! I could've had dinner with Yuka-chan!

Damn!

PHOTOS 108



Beginning the pottery-making process. Getting the lump of clay to rotate perfectly around the center axis is far, far harder than it looks in the movies.



Focusing all my concentration on forming the perfect cup.



Using a wire to make the top edge perfectly straight.



Painting our new pottery cups. Mine said, in Japanese, "Christianity: My favorite!" When we got them back after the glazing and firing process, the guy had painted over the "Christianity" part, leaving only the words "my favorite!" completely out of context.

Thursday, November 14, 1991—Day 681

[We] did service again this morning but sewed clothes instead of playing with kids, which was too bad.

When people are Mormon here, they don't seem to trash as many cultural traditions as I thought they did. They still seem to cling a little too close to idol worship for me. Where do you draw the line between tradition and idolatry? [It's] quite the eye-opener.

Later we finished my picture-taking for the slideshow.

Prayed and went and passed out chirashis, which took us close to Mika's, so we dropped in and chatted with her folks and had a fun time. **[Like many Japanese mom-and-pop operations, they lived in the same physical building as their business. Mika's father operated a bike repair shop, and on the other side of the interior wall her mother operated a convenience store. Behind the storefront was the living room and bathroom; upstairs were the sleeping quarters.]**

Next it was off to Seto for Eikaiwa.

I perceive that the social skills I've gained on my mission will serve me well once I re-enter the lifestyle of hitting on chicks.

You know what? Hansen Choro **[Baird's former companion who served with him in Seto]** is going home! I never would've guessed from knowing him when he was here. He's just up and going to dendo in America, **[by]** his own choice. **[It's]** too bad; I really like that guy.

PHOTOS 109



Me with the awesome trophy I won for taking first place in the pan-Asian Ironman competition. (Actually, I just found the trophy in a trash pile and brought it home.)



The intersection to the Southwest of our apartment. This was taken from our back balcony.



Elder Oshiro. This was taken on the street a few dozen yards West of our apartment building. The camera is facing North.



Me. The camera is facing South this time. You can see the aforementioned intersection in the background.



Me doing a one-man cavalry charge. This photo got a few laughs from the crowd at the Christmas taikai a month or so later.

Friday, November 15, 1991—Day 682

[We] got a few hard kekkos and met a few Soka Gakkais during housing, but my dode placed a Book. We came back and I worked on the kain book, adding the pictures that needed to be [added].

Later we went out and streeted, placing three more Books, two by me and one by my dode. [That makes] four total today. So as you can imagine, we were feeling pretty good.

Saturday, November 16, 1991—Day 683

Why has the novelty of writing in this journal worn off? I was pretty excited back on Day 1. I guess [that] the additional 682 days have taken their toll. However, provided [that] the world is still around, my grandkids will love this [journal] I'm sure.

A.B.C. Eikaiwa has gotten a bit bigger. To it comes the lady [whom] Ishida found, Otake Masayo. ["Masayo" was her given name, "Otake" was her family name.] She's totally cool, cute with a happy and lively attitude. I hope my future wife is like that. She's way older than me, but it's hard to tell. [I still remember her. Her upbeat, outgoing, and charming attitude made her even more attractive than her looks alone—which weren't half bad in their own right.]

After that we went with Kobayashi and Yamauchi to a cultural experience out in Seto. They got us free tickets into NO, or NOH, a Japanese-style play. No, it's not KABUKI. [It's] purely Japanese, all right. [They sang in] strange voices and they moved deathly slow. [They moved] so slowly that I fell asleep, along with many others. [I'm] sorry, but I won't even try to explain it beyond that. Most Nihonjins can't, either.

[It was the first time seeing it for Oshiro, too, as I suspect it was for the vast majority of the other people in the audience. This is one of those aspects of Japanese culture that's extremely Japanese even by Japanese standards, if that makes any sense. Anyway, this style of drama—

maybe better described as an opera—achieved its present form sometime during the Renaissance. I later heard that its purpose was specifically to put their high-ranking samurai audience to sleep. A form of stress relief, if you will.

At any rate, I'm certain that I'm one of an extremely small number of missionaries who has ever seen it.]

Since we'd gotten a chirashi for it in the mailbox, we two went to a meeting at the nearby Baptist church. **[It was a]** pretty small event; we were the only ones who responded to the chirashi. **[Several of their regular members were in attendance, of course.]** We had the same strategy as always: Say nothing to no one, speak only when spoken to, and avoid argument like the plague—but if it came down to argument and there was no way out, then *win*.

We saw the lady there whom Seegmiller and I met back on Day 536.

It wasn't the same apostate make-me-vomit feeling that there usually is. **[The sermon was about how King David, in the last half of II Samuel chapter 6, danced before the Lord, and what a total bitch his wife was for taking exception to it.]** At the end, though, one of the reverends who was sitting behind us asked us a few find-out questions, especially about the Book of Mormon. He wanted to argue, saying **[that]** the Bible is all we need and all that crap, but we wouldn't argue with him, so he left.

(For instance, **[he was asking stuff like,]** "Which, **[the]** Bible or **[the]** Book of Mormon, do you think is most important?" "So you use them both?" "Do they say pretty much the same thing?" "Does studying the Book of Mormon help out?" "Are there any contradictory things in there?" **[It was clear that he was more than a little angry with our mere existence.]**)

I can't wait 'till I'm not a missionary anymore and can freely bash at will.

Damn! The other two went to a big meeting at church and sang for it with Shimizu Yuka, among others. W. Eugene Hansen was there from the Quorum of the Seventy. They said **[that]** it was a really great taikai. They all sat up front on the stage behind the Buch. Argh! I could've sang with Yuka-chan!

Damn!

Sunday, November 17, 1991—Day 684

The actual commemoration is the 16th, but since Japan is 16 hours ahead of Utah time, around 1:00 p.m. or so marked the 4-year anniversary of my entering Boot Camp. What a time that was.

We rode with the Yamada family to Mika's house and picked her up and took her to the stake conference. The #1 guy there was Elder **[W. Eugene]** Hansen from the 1st Quorum of Seventy (or 2nd, maybe?). He was the same guy who spoke back on February 24th, Day 418. A few different people spoke; first off was the stake president. He cried, and so when he was done I jumped on it and told Mika, "*That* is the Holy Ghost!"

By the way, Mathis sat behind us, and he congratulated us on Mika's being so cute.

When it ended, Elder Hansen (**[of the]** Quorum of Seventy) was standing there next to the mission president, and on Shimizu Yuka's suggestion I took Mika up to shake his hand. I went first, thanking him and telling him that this was our investigator and that she has good English.

'Twas cool; he shook her hand and told her directly that the church is true. She was pretty impressed.

A non-member by the name of Kato-san was brought there by another member, and Oshiro picked up on that and showed her around, etc. Meanwhile, I was stuck running around getting pictures taken, errands run, taking care of/hosting Mika, etc. Had a lot of fun in the process.

You wouldn't believe it; Eguchi Kyodai gave us a big bag of licorice bits right out of the blue. I was amazed.

Since I don't have any pictures of Yuka-chan of my own, I got a few taken of her. She told me that everyone says I look good in a pair of jeans. Holy Cow! I wondered who besides Mika had seen me in jeans, and it turns out that Hideko remembered me in them from that big "undokai" that got rained out at Aichi Youth Park well over a year ago ([on] Day 256). [That's] amazing and flattering! She didn't even know me [back] then!

At any rate, Yuka made me promise to bring pictures of me in jeans next Sunday. Yay!

Since Salway Shimai will probably tachiai [for] Mika's next lesson, I introduced them. After that, the Yamada family took her home.

I hunted down Oshiro and met Waters Shimai upstairs in the process. [She's a] fun shimai.

Oshiro was in the cultural hall shokaing Kato-san. Her member friend was a woman who is fuke due to health problems but still has a strong testimony.

Poor Kato-san! [It] looks like she's had and has a really rough family life. She's 28 and still unmarried, probably due to her mother. She (Kato-san) cried a few times in the process. I bet just a little bit of [Christlike] love will go a long way with her. Just watch the gospel work a miracle in her life! She's going to call us this week to set up a time to meet.

Wow! [It] looks like the Lord [has] just placed someone prepared in our path. A final blessing before my mission ends.

What an all-around great day today was.

Monday, November 18, 1991—Day 685

Wrote a good letter to Yoshie Sugiura, which is the only time I remember breaking the rule of not writing to folks within mission boundaries. [And thus began my descent into fuke-dom.] I also answered Theresa's postcard. I wonder if we'll just pick up right where we left off? [We did, believe it or not, although it wouldn't last long.]

Fullmer Choro, who used to live in this apartment and is in Scott's [M.T.C.] group, went to Sakae to buy stuff, but in order to save money by not going back home before tomorrow's taikai he's staying overnight at the honbu. No one was there since they're all up North for it, so he came here for district devotional. He brought Seegmiller, his companion. It was pretty cool, seeing him again; [it was] better than I thought it'd be.

[We] went to the Salways' to get a picture of them and went inside for a few minutes. It was strange; I'm not used to North American culture, so I wasn't exactly sure what to do and say.

Tuesday, November 19, 1991—Day 686

Today was a big five-zone conference with Elder [W. Eugene] Hansen [of one of the Quorums of Seventy]. I haven't been in one that big since the Christmas taikai.

Man, the [mission] president gives good talks. I'm beginning to live for them.

When the initial meeting got over, Oshiro went up to shake Elder Hansen's hand. I went up the hall and around to pick him up (Oshiro) when he got done so we could go eat. The president went out first, and to Elder Hansen who followed, he said words to the effect of, "Here's our former Marine!" Elder Hansen had

fun with that. Next the president told him about the bunpo list I made and he seemed pretty impressed. The buch said **[that]** he wanted to show him a copy, and he **[i.e., Elder Hansen]** wanted to see it.

But here's the best part: The president, in his explanation, said in passing that he'd sent it to all the other mission presidents! Yay! It finally happened! I can hardly believe it; I'll have to follow up just to be sure it's really true. The president was really pumping it up, so I was excited.

After it ended, I ran around and had a few good chats. During dinner I met an Ohori Shimai who's dying **[i.e., going home]** day after tomorrow. Afterwards she gave me her name card and told me to come stay with her if I came back **[to Japan]**. I told her that Daren and I probably would, and she was excited and said to stay with her and **[that]** she'd be our guide around Tokyo. **[Is that]** sweet, or what?

Another guy gave the bunpo list rave reviews to another guy, so I was psyched. **[What a]** nice dude.

Rapped with Bunnage among many others. The Katos made sure that a person from Fukutoku got my name card for them. Heck, they *still* remember me. Cool!

That's it in a nutshell. Oh yeah, I went upstairs in the honbu and saw Hansen Choro **[the Elder who used to serve in Seto, not the guy from the Quorum of Seventy]** there just before he was taken to the airport. He said, I've *got* to get some of those things!", meaning the shirt stays **[that]** I wear every day. I gave him the phone number of the place to order them from, and Van Cleave's former **[green]** bean was standing nearby and he wrote down the information too, having only glanced at them **[i.e., at the shirt stays]** directly beforehand. **[It was]** pretty fun.

Ishizuka, the junior A.P., gave a talk, and it was mainly on Depeel Choro, how he really wanted to dendo here, etc. How 'bout that. **[It's]** too bad he had to leave; I wouldn't've guessed.

PHOTOS 110



L-R: Sister Watanabe, me, Sister Yoshioka. Both were really cool.



Me with Junko Masaka.

Wednesday, November 20, 1991—Day 687

This morning, although I was up at 5:30 **[a.m.]**, I wasn't able to stay up and told my companion so and just went back into my futon fully clothed and went to sleep. Later Oshiro did the same.

Went to the honbu and repaired the housing chirashi a bit, came back and colored, and lastly went and passed them out. Funny, the place we were supposed to go turns out to be the same place **[that]** Seegmiller and I went to and didn't find anyone. Hopefully we'll get the person this time.

Poor Oshiro Choro. Tonight was bitter cold, and as always, since he's from Okinawa where it's really warm, he's hating life. This is a first for him.

I also got my flipcharts redone. They were pretty hashed. As in **[I bought]** a new cover, new transparent sleeves, etc. They look pretty sweet now.

PHOTOS 111



Me having a close encounter at a Shinto shrine that we often passed on our way back from the honbu. Do you like my new haircut?



Another close encounter. Shinto shrines are just full of mythological creatures, aren't they?

Thursday, November 21, 1991—Day 688

What a wild day it turned out to be. I had no desire to be up on time, so I slept in way late. Due to the fact that I had no food, I gave in and went to tennis since there's always something there. That went way late, so we went home and ended up taking too long of a break. I hadn't studied at all, and on top of that I'd listened to fuke music.

Out to Eikaiwa in Meito, we first stopped by the honbu to drop off some pictures for the Christmas Taikai slideshow. I gave Ohori Shimai my name card [i.e., my **"business card"**] since I was out of them when she gave me hers, so that was cool. [**She's a**] cute shimai. [**A**] very cute shimai.

The buch came out of his office, took me aside, and said, "Did you get the word?" I was worried at first, but he made a call to downstairs and said to his wife, "He's here!" They consulted a bit, then invited the

two of us to dinner on Sunday! No way! Dinner with the **[mission]** president! How in the world did we come by *that* distinct honor?

Had fun at Eikaiwa, and the Japanese shimai in Meito-Minami who'd attended my class got into a gospel shokai situation with a couple of folks, and since that's what I live for, I hung out to listen. One guy who was also in my class was there, and he expressed lots of interest as to why young folks like us sacrifice so much all in the name of religion. So in short, we've got a return for tomorrow to rap and answer his questions.

Kitajima Shimai showed up, and we rode home with her and she gave us some food. Great! Just like Christ told the apostles, that they'd be taken care of on their ministry, **[it]** looks like we're being provided for, too.

For not having done anything, we sure were blessed today.

Friday, November 22, 1991—Day 689

We headed out and housed the place **[to which]** we'd given chirashis and had a few interesting encounters. We met a lady at a Mahikari dojo, or training house, and after she rejected the Book of Mormon she took us in and showed us around. In short, next week we've got an appointment to come back and hear each other's views. Maybe **[we'll]** give each other our first discussions. **[It]** should prove to be interesting.

[We] met a nice but uncooperative Jehovah's Witness, and lastly **[we met]** a lady from Okinawa with whom Oshiro had a good conversation. She's heard Jehovah's Witness lessons for six months at a time before, and she accepted a Book, so chances are she'll listen. For the sake of B.R.T. he purposely didn't shokai her.

Later we met with Mika and she told us some good stuff: She's been thinking about being baptized before the year's up. What a relief.

Due to a zone leader taikai, Seegmiller was still around when we came in the building. Holy cow, you should've seen his face light up when he saw her. It was getting a bit dangerous before he transferred. **[For example, at one point, on his weekly appointment calendar he had drawn a big heart over the slot in which one of our teaching appointments with her was scheduled.]**

Salway Shimai tachiaid for us. It was different, hearing the English freely flow.

[We] met with our dude **[from yesterday]**, Sasaki-san. **[He's a]** nice guy, but it didn't get much of anywhere.

I called Mika later, and she was in the middle of telling her mother what she'd learned. **[Is that]** cool, or what? She can talk to her parents about it!! **[It's a]** good thing, too, 'cause we talked about truth and the *authority* to teach that truth. AUTHORITY. **[It's a]** good subject for a Buddhist to learn.

Today I got two letters, both from Japanese women. One was from Kyoko, and in it she talked some about (gulp) marriage—about how all her friends advised her that she should marry me, and later about a couple that had met (half and half **[i.e., one half of the couple was American, while the other half of it was Japanese]**) while he was on his mission to Japan. She said **[that]** she doesn't think it matters how you met or how long you've known each other as long as it's the right person, etc. What could she be implying? **[I wonder!]**

The other one was a card from Yoshie (Sugiura). The outside said, "I'm glad I found you." The inside said, "Lucky me!" and she'd drawn lots of red hearts. And lastly she wrote, "Love, Yoshie XOXO"

Holy cow, what have I gotten myself into? Babes. . . it's good to be loved.

Saturday, November 23, 1991—Day 690

I was up on time for a change, but we left way late. **[First it was]** off to the honbu for copies, and Hintze Choro returned Theresa's letter, the insulting one **[that]** I got in February, which I'd loaned to him. He said, "She needs to be taken out and shot." I told him Frehner's reaction, and he agreed. **[Frehner had suggested taking her for a drive up in the mountains and then letting her walk back.]**

Next **[it was]** out to a festival in Owariasahi, with an event for gaijins as well. Scott couldn't go. I was the first gaijin there. Only one other one ended up showing, and after he left, I was the last one. I sat around and rapped with a few head dudes, plus Kobayashi, who's into the foreign resident stuff; Nakamura and Yamauchi from A.B.C. **[Eikaiwa]**, and also our ever-beloved Otake-san.

Later there was some sort of tea party in a different building, the same place **[in which]** the gaijins partied back on Day 585. I was the only one (gaijin) there; **[it was]** funny stuff. Had a good chat with some folks. (It was specifically for gaijins, by the way.)

[We] played volleyball later. Ishizaka Shimai, the junior in Meito-Minami, went to Mountain View High for half a year and graduated with Jeanie, although she never knew her. She was in the same ward as Janean Massey, whom I have mentioned in the sixth regular journal back at home (**[the one with the]** red cover). **[Janean and had I dated a few times, even though she was waiting for another missionary.]** She's got quite a story behind her **[Janean, not Sister Ishizaka.]**. She's married with a kid now, though. **[It]** freaks me out.

[Sister Mari Ishizaka ended up going back to Utah after her mission. I ran into her at a singles ward and tried to get her interested in doing something together sometime, but it was abundantly clear that she wasn't interested.]

PHOTOS 112



Me helping to make "mochi," or rice paste, the traditional way—by hammering the rice out in a large stone bowl. I'd been invited to do this as part of the festival. Yes, I was playing it up for the camera in this shot.



Can you believe how many people were interested in watching a gaijin wield a wooden hammer?

Sunday, November 24, 1991—Day 691

I showed Yuka all my pictures of me in my jeans, and got complimented for it. She said several times that I was "unique." In a good way.

We've been scoring dinner appointments like nothing lately. We were fed *twice* tonight, we've got one for Tuesday, **[there'll be]** automatic food on the zone taikai Wednesday, and straight dinners from Thursday through the end of the week. Just like Christ told His disciples to take no thought what ye should eat or drink, for the Father knoweth the things ye need before ye ask, etc., I'm finding the same to be true here. I'm essentially out of money, yet the Lord is feeding me.

Hawkins and Rasmussen stopped in the chapel and chatted with my dode, then I joined in. Rasmussen says **[that]** I've changed a lot since my mission began. He remembers back in the M.T.C. how I'd comment on how much freedom we had in there, which freaked the others out. They all felt the opposite. Plus, in Okazaki how they asked me how I'd feel if my unit was called up and subsequently annihilated. How I said **[that]** I'd feel "glad I was in Japan!"

Next came dinner with the Buch. First off, we two played with his younger kids while it was still in preparation. **[It]** turns out **[that]** the president was taking a nap, and we didn't get started for quite a while. Once it did start, it was a bit different seeing him on such a personal level, yelling at his kids, etc.

We got to talking a little after the other kids had left. **[It]** turns out **[that]** he hasn't sent the list off to the other **[mission]** presidents just yet; however, Elder Hansen (**[of the]** Quorum of Seventy) really wanted one it seems, so he has it on his desk more or less ready to be sent off. If Elder Hansen shows it to Elder Kikuchi, the Japanese First Quorum of Seventy member, who knows what outstandingly awesome things could come of it!!

Now for the best part: The Buch started talking a little about me extending. He wouldn't come right out and ask, but it was pretty obvious. (**[He was saying things like,]** "Of course it's your own choice," "Some guys I'd just as soon let go home," "We need to keep our good ones around to solve the understaffment problem," "It's still not too late to extend," etc.) Pretty cool, eh? This is from the mission president! He he! I came out and asked if he wanted me to extend or if it was just an option on the table, but we got interrupted before he could answer.

I gave he and his wife the same spiritual message I give **[to]** all the kaiins, that of reading III Nephi 17: 16-17 and detailed thoughts about it. I said right off the bat that giving a spiritual message to the president is like trying to teach Joseph Smith about revelation, but they said **[that]** they need spiritual messages **[just]** as much if not more than most.

Since their home teacher hasn't come by yet, they haven't gotten many **[spiritual messages]** since they've been here.

Never thought I'd give my message to the Buch. As we left, we still wondered exactly why we'd been invited. From the sound of it on Thursday, it may have been Sister Ames' idea. Or was it to talk me into extending?

Next we rushed to the bishop's for dinner there, too. **["Tsurugi" was his last name.]** McMurray and Garff were there, too. They'd had a meeting with the Protestant missionaries, and it went very well in our favor. **[The]** Spirit **[was]** strong, etc.

[It was a] fun day. Shimizu Yuka (what the heck, **[I'll call her]** Yuka-chan) says that her mom and her are going to have me over sometime in December, and there we'll look at each other's pictures, etc. It hasn't been decided when yet, but I'm already looking forward to it.

Monday, November 25, 1991—Day 692

Was up 'till 4:00 writing letters, but only got a few done. Theresa's purposely on the last of the priority list. I also wrote to Ohori Shimai. I wonder if she'll write back?

2:00 p.m. came around, and we headed out for a 2:30 lesson at Yamashita Shimai's house with Kato-san. **[It]** turns out that the dork who made the page for Yamashita Shimai in the kaiin book left out an extremely important number, causing us to look all up and down everywhere for the place without result. Called our place and got her **[phone]** number, called **[her]**, and she wasn't there. **[We]** went back and double-checked, but still nothing. During all this, my dode somehow lost his watch in the process.

We went back home, looked her up in the computer printout, **[and]** discovered the mistake, but by this time we were two hours late. Oshiro called and explained the problem, i.e. what had happened and all. Kato-san was still there and they said **[that]** we could still go over.

Once there, we only had an hour, but it was a good one.

Oshiro came out and shared a scripture, which kind of ticked me off for not following my lead, and Yamashita Shimai in her own motherly way went on and explained away Kato-san's situation and all, essentially putting the words into her mouth. Oshiro was going off giving advice and all, too. This didn't please me too well, 'cause I wanted them to shut up so **[that]** we could hear Kato-san speak her own feelings. Or at least talk with her, not *at* her.

She cried again, and more than once. I got the impression right off that she needed to be taught prayer. Maybe it was bad judgment, but I decided to teach her **[Principle]** 1.1 just so she'd know who she was praying to. Or maybe I was just being selfish 'cause I wanted to see a pick-up. At any rate, it worked, 'cause at the end I asked her how she felt about such a god as ours, and it turns out **[that]** she's prayed before with no result. And it inevitably went back to her parents, i.e. "if such a loving God exists, **[then]** why did He give me parents like these," etc.

Poor woman! I went ahead and taught her the correct method of prayer, saying that now that she's got the right way, it'll be effective from here on out. I said how I've gotten answers time and time again, and since we're equal, she'll get answers too.

We closed with **[a]** prayer, and she chose me to say it. I gave about as sincere a prayer as I ever had. I

said it in the prayer again too, yet all during that hour I explained how I'd had a bad childhood, and how I can relate to her pain. I thanked the Lord in the prayer for how I'd finally found a friend who understands.

It's more than obvious. At this stage of the game, she needs love far more than she needs lessons. Line upon line, precept on precept.

On leaving, I extended our handshake and asked if she knew English. She didn't, so I asked if she understood the phrase "I love you." She did. So, with all the sincerity I could muster, I said, "*We love you!*"

She couldn't look me in the eyes as she said, "I love you!" in English back.

[Was it a] good experience? I think so. We can't teach **[about]** a God of love if we don't have love ourselves. And where love is, there God is also. I hope **[that]** we can meet **[with]** her again very soon. There's a miracle in the making. A life to be changed.

Later **[on]** we went to Yamada Shimai's. **[She's]** Yuko's mother, Michiko. We were there a couple of hours and had a fun time. She's the fuke one **[whom]** Seegmiller and I visited a while back.

Kato-san. I see a lot of my own self in her.

Tuesday, November 26, 1991—Day 693

After benkyokai (which I'm getting sick of) we all (six) went to Yamauchi's **[house]** with Kobayashi for lunch. Sang a few songs there and chatted a long time (mostly about pranks, practical jokes, etc.).

I got three letters today, one **[of]** which had \$100.00 in it from Mom. Cool, she responded to my urgent plea. Got one from Depeel, too. Wow, he's seeing big time success. They get fed meals every day, have 29 investigators, don't street or house at all, and teach four lessons a day on average. How would it be? He's just about cured and has been feeling better than ever before. That's a good thing indeed.

We got a referral in the mail and so did Scott. So both sets **[of elders]** went out to track them down.

Our guy was there, and we went in and chatted for an hour, but **[we]** didn't do much beyond that. He'd ridden his bike all over the country and met the missionaries in Osaka, thus was referred to us.

I don't worry about too much anymore.

PHOTOS 113



Front row (with their backs to us), L-R: McMurray, Oshiro.

Back row, L-R: Yamauchi-san, Garff, me, Scott, Ishida.

Wednesday, November 27, 1991—Day 694

[Today was] another zone taikai. I had to go to the bathroom before lunch, and to Mathis Choro I commented on how strange it was hearing all about new programs that I wouldn't be around long enough to see, and [it] turns out that the [mission] president was standing behind me. He said, "I've got to talk to you, Shades Choro," and just outside he explained (while smiling and half hugging me) how if I didn't extend, there would be an odd number of missionaries for X number of months, etc. ([He said,] "You've given up on having Christmas at home, right?") I asked if he was asking [me to extend], and he said [that] he was. [He asked,] "Will you stick around another month?" He [also] said [that] I could think about it, but I told him right then that I'd do it. So now I'm officially extending.

[It's] interesting how there just so happened to be an odd number [of missionaries] when there was. I guess I'm called to go the extra mile. "By my voice or the voice of my servants, it is the same," so who am I to argue with President Ames?

I'm a bit worried about the Marines, regardless of the 60-day leeway [before you have to rejoin your unit]. They called Boyd Choro and had him go straight in, so that's a concern. But like Nephi said in 1 Nephi 3:7, the Lord will provide a way to accomplish the thing which He has commanded.

There was volleyball tonight, so we did that, but had the weather been better it would've felt better to dendo.

Back at home I'd gotten a letter from Jew Shimai. [She's a] cool girl; she sent me a picture [that was taken] of her just after she'd gotten off the plane.

Talked with Mika on the phone. She can only meet during dinner tomorrow, Thanksgiving dinner with the buch and all [of] the Meito Minami guys. Went ahead and decided with Mika to not meet, but on second thought, I was called here to teach the gospel, not eat. I'm thinking [that] since I'm out of food I'll starve if

I don't go, but on the other hand, why not show a little faith? She's pretty close to a yotei, so will we be blessed? I'm still wondering what to do.

Thanksgiving 1991—Day 695

I decided early that we're here to *dendo*—[so I decided to] skip dinner, fulfill our calling, and teach the gospel of Christ.

[We] headed out to [do] service at the orphanage, and I folded some clothes out of the dryer and chatted a bit with the lady there. Kobayashi and Yamauchi took us two, McMurray, and Garff out to [eat] *okonomiyaki* (one of my favorite Japanese foods).

Back at home, I called Mika's work, but it was too late. Since today was her little brother's birthday, her mom had asked her to buy a cake on the way home, so she had to do that before all the shops closed and [therefore] couldn't meet [with us].

What an idiot I was. I never should've thought twice about it. After all, why am I here? So I felt bad the rest of the day.

It was raining, so we all stayed in the apartment until we left for Thanksgiving dinner.

'Twas okay. It started late, yet it was fun. Not just [the missionaries from] Kita & Minami were there, but a couple of other sets, too, including Durrant Shimai. I now have a dying group of two, just she and I. [I was wrong about that; we were also joined by Sister Chikako Ito.] I still don't know exactly when I go home.

Tonight we called Mika's brother and all four of us sang "Happy Birthday" to him. Mika said not to worry about tonight; she's still probably never met anyone with a nicer heart than me. That's cool.

Friday, November 29, 1991—Day 696

I got up way late and my body felt like a used dishrag. We bummed around getting the place clean, coloring *chirashis*, etc.

[We then] went out to a place that had been catching my eye every time I've prayed for guidance. On the way, we stopped off at a place [at which] we'd met a kid [during the] last time we'd done *chirashis*, since it's been bugging me ever since. I thought when I met him that he was too young to *shokai*, but "what the heck," my conscience told me. Went back and gave him a Book.

[We next] went to our area, passed out our *chirashis*, and had time left, so I went to a place nearby that looked good. We hadn't gone far 'till we met a lady who's been reading the Bible; we gave her a Book of Mormon. God knows all, so He knew [that] she'd been reading the Bible. I'm sure [that] we were led there.

We'd ran out of Books, so [we went] back to the honbu for Books and housing *chirashis*. Somehow Oshiro keeps losing his bike locks out of his rear basket, so we bought him another one.

There was a wedding announcement [posted] up in the honbu. Her boyfriend waited. Yep, a week from tomorrow, Clark Shimai gets married. She had a good color picture of the two of them in it. She wasn't s'bad looking, having recovered from *dendo*.

Way out we went for dinner with the Kishimotos. We got there a bit early, gave some Eikaiwa *chirashis* to some gorgeous babes who had started talking to me from their car in English, and used the remaining time to knock on [on] a few doors.

We were rewarded, too, 'cause we met a Catholic dude who accepted a Book.

Cool, eh? Three Books today.

Saturday, November 30, 1991—Day 697

Today we had a big potluck after A.B.C. Eikaiwa which was pretty good. After all, that was my food for the day.

Had an interview with the buch later. It was awesome; **[it]** looks like I'm staying here 'till I die for sure. We also rapped about all the guys in my group who are bailing out a month early on me. He wasn't too pleased. He remarked on how it was "a blessing" that I wasn't going home with Southwick, Gibson, etc. I.e., from my point of view, **[according to him]** it is a blessing to not die with them. I thought that was pretty funny. **[It didn't hit me until years later that he might've been saying the exact same thing to other elders about me. How could I know either way?]** I've still got a dying group of three, but I'm the only elder. Durrant Shimai, of course, and also Ito Shimai (**[who's]** Japanese). Ito Shimai is in Frehner's group.

The day I set foot back on American soil is Valentine's Day, a good day to attain R.M. status. A shadow or omen of things to come, perhaps?

Oh yeah: Yesterday, on the way to the honbu, we stopped off at an old battle site, and we happened to run into one of Asai-san's kids. We had him tell his dad "hi" for us.

At the honbu there (today) was a letter for me from Maruoka Shimai, at long last. She basically just complained about her health, but I'll write her back.

Instead of going home for a break after the interview, we took the hard way out and dendoed our chirashis. We were blessed with placing another two Books.

Great; barring emergency, I'm here 'till I die. That's a relief. Yay!

Sunday, December 01, 1991—Day 698

At church we planned and set the date for when we're going to visit Yuka-chan. **[It'll be]** this Wednesday. She was excited that I've extended, bless her heart. Let me tell you, reader, she's the neatest, sweetest darling doll around. You know what I'm looking forward to.

It's been a while, but Oshiro and I played Shogi (Japanese chess) three times this morning, and I got my butt kicked all three times. Before heading out to Matsushita's place for Scott's going away party/dinner, we played twice more, and I won both times, but both **[times]** were due to the fact that he screwed up on dumb stuff, not that I was good. He said **[that]** I'm getting a lot better, though.

Monday, December 02, 1991—Day 699

Spent pretty much the whole day writing letters. Got another heated one from Yoshie Sugiura. I was writing a heated one back, then I got a call from Hintze Choro. The first thing he asks is what I'm doing, and I said writing letters. **[He asked,]** "To your woman?" and I explained how I'd just gotten one from a girl in this mission. We're not supposed to accept or write letters from/to chicks within **[the]** mission boundaries, but in Japan it's really rude to not write back, so the **[mission]** president said to use our heads, he reminded me. Hintze said **[that]** it'd probably be okay to write back as long as it wasn't all mushy, love stuff, etc.

Uh-oh. Was that the Lord's way of telling me something? I feel guilty now. I wish **[that]** she'd stop writing.

We went to some stores tonight to shop, and on the way back in the other two tried to bomb us with a

water balloon. So it became an all-out espionage search-and-destroy water fight all up and down the whole building. It'd take too long to give the details, so let's just say **[that]** we all had lots of laughs.

([As a prank, we] threw cold water on Scott while he was in the shower and took a picture as he jumped, we three. **[I'm writing this]** just so I don't forget.)

PHOTOS 114



L-R: Scott, me, Oshiro. This is the aftermath of our water fight. Yeah, we're all pretty much drenched.

Tuesday, December 03, 1991—Day 700

Well, it's been a year and eleven months **[since my mission began]**. And this is my last triple digit day with a double "0" ending.

[Here are] a couple of things I've forgotten: **[On]** Sunday we had this prayer meeting where they came and got us at 6:30 in the morning and took us to some secluded park in Moriyama-ku, and there we climbed a hill and the little building or whatever and had a prayer which the bishop gave for our investigators. At first I complained about the **[early]** hour, but I ended up getting a lot done later as a result of being awake. I hope it helps. **[It was]** rather strange, though. A bit too close to Buddhism for me. **[The branch president in Inuyama wanted to do something similar on New Year's Day; he**

wanted us all to gather on top of the building that the branch rented and say a prayer at the crack of dawn. Bad weather caused the event to be scrapped, however.]

[Here's] another thing that Yoshie said in her letter yesterday: She says "goodnight" to me every night from Okazaki and that she prays for me. I won't bother mentioning how the natural man feels about that.

After district meeting, we came home and I had very little energy left and a whole day of dendo. After a while we set off to leave, but I first called Mika at work to see if she'd kept the word of wisdom. She hadn't, so that got me pretty depressed. [I apparently overdid it with the "awws" and the sighs of disappointment. I heard later from Oshiro that she didn't appreciate it too much. In retrospect, my attitude should've been one of encouragement for the future, not disappointment over the present.]

Housing met with no success. I tried to include and center my shokais around Christmas, but it was still a no-go. We don't just see Mormonism rejected; we see Christ rejected. It hurts.

We met a couple of Christians. [It's] funny; the Buddhists tell us to take our message to someone Christian and the Christians tell us to take our message to someone Buddhist.

It got cold and I got sick of being out there. We couldn't figure out anything to do, so we went by to get a much-needed chirashi refill at the honbu. I was in pretty low spirits, so I hung around to get a boost. There are a bunch of studs in there now. I felt better and then left.

[Then it was] off to Fujigaoka to street. We saw Scott and Ishida there. When they went into a bookstore, we hid their bikes and ran and watched their reaction. [It was] pretty funny.

Tonight we ran into Yamada Sachiko [**"Sachiko" was her given name**], Yuko's older sister whom we'd visited a week ago yesterday. Right afterward we all ran into Kubota Kyodai.

I was feeling bad about all the wasted time, [having loitered at the] honbu, etc., but my dode still placed a Book. Way to go. Oshiro is a great guy, I really like him. It'll be hard to pay him back for all the favors he's done for me, however.

[It's a] long story, but tonight Hawkins Choro inadvertently taught me a good lesson about not bad-mouthing others. [Here's what happened: Gibson was no longer on the mission home staff. While there, he was pretty notorious for never doing anything. I asked Hawkins, "The reason Gibson never got anything done is because he was always out dendoing, right?" Hawkins paused and then said, "You just want me to say something!" He then continued, "He was a stud. And you're a stud, too." So yes, I had been fishing for funny stories at Gibson's expense. Once Hawkins said what he did, it hit me that what I'd been doing is attempting to gossip, strictly speaking. Elder Hawkins had taken the high road and refused to take the bait, and I was humbled by his example.]

And I thought this was going to be a short entry.

Wednesday, December 04, 1991—Day 701

[We] did service, then came back and got a few things done. I dropped off some negatives for developing, and one of the girls working at the place asked me to help her with her college homework assignment. She was working on a unit dealing with foreigners and she had to ask a gaijin [some] questions about Japan. She had it all written out in English and she'd had it there waiting for me for however long. [It was] pretty flattering. I wasn't wearing my name tag, yet they still remembered my name.

It asked a few tough questions, like "Is there anything you don't like about Japan?" Oh well, [there was] nothing to do but answer honestly, so I did. [I can't remember what my answer was, unfortunately.]

Since **[my]** money was there, we went shopping, and I spent my record amount at the grocery store for my whole mission to date. I'm set for a while, though.

[We] went home, got rid of the stuff, waited, then went and got our pictures and prepared them for dinner tonight. We'd done so much other stuff that we didn't really dendo all day.

Off we went to Yuka-chan's house. Before we ate, we all looked at each other's dendo pictures. Holy cow has she changed! Her hair was long then, and of all amazing things, her complexion was far darker. It looked like two separate people. **[To my shame, I was reminded of that Mormon urban legend of people's skin turning lighter when they accepted the gospel. At the time—and with my apologies—I'll be damned if it didn't look like proof.]**

She dendoed from 1983 to 1985. I remember what I did back then. There was a picture of her standing against the fence in front of her apartment, which is the one **[that]** she's still living in now. I recognized the surroundings; I'd passed the spot. Man, 1983. Since then she's served a full**[-time]** mission, been to Hawaii for six months, etc. **[And now she's]** back in the same ol' spot. How the years roll by. It's made me really nostalgic.

I ate too much, and for the first time in well over a year and **[for]** the second time in my life, I had to use a squatter John 'cause I got a bit sick.

We had a *lot* of fun there; **[we]** laughed a lot. Yuka-chan, what an outstanding woman. She gave me a "Crunky" candy bar, with the title altered to say "Trunky." She'd received a few on her mission. **[It was]** pretty funny.

I'm going to miss her.

[On the way home that night, I had Massenet's "Thais Meditations" going through my head. Therefore, to this day, whenever I hear that piece, I'm reminded of this evening and Yuka herself in particular.]

PHOTOS 115



Me showing the fruits my labor at the orphanage, where we did service.

Thursday, December 05, 1991—Day 702

Ishida was sick, and Scott had to go with the Seto guys as Kobayashi took them to make pottery, so we hung out at the apartment not doing much 'till 3:00 [p.m.], when he got back. (Someone had to stay with Ishida.)

Made my first okonomiyaki, a Japanese dish. **[It's sometimes nicknamed a "Japanese pancake."]** Took a picture when it was done. Yummy.

This morning it was tough; I was pretty hung up over Yuka-chan. She was on the mind quite a bit. It was pretty bad; I hope the Lord doesn't transfer me over it.

Didn't get a lot done later, either. Played Street Fighter II for the first time in over a month and a half. Got my butt kicked.

In Seto there was a farewell party for Scott and more-or-less me. We went to the same restaurant where Mori's farewell was back on the last page of Volume I **[of this journal]**.

We each got a few gifts. One was a "shikishi," a card-like thing that everyone signs for you. Aki gave us each a tie.

Also set the record for the latest I've slept in on my mission so far.

Yuka-chan. Just what is it about her that makes her so, so, er, . . .

PHOTOS 116



Me eating the okonomiyaki I'd made. Looks delicious, doesn't it?

Friday, December 06, 1991—Day 703

Remember the record **[that]** I set yesterday for the latest having slept in? Well, today we both beat it by an hour: **[We slept from] 10:00 [p.m.] 'till 10:00 [a.m.]**. We're supposed to be out **[of the apartment]** at 10:00.

Today I wanted to go out on an adventure, so we headed out to the westernmost point of our area. On the way we ran into Shikama Shimai.

We were close to Fukutoku's area. I saw a couple of bridges that I've ridden **[on]** many a time. (We went up on a riverbank **[to catch a better view]**.) We dended the houses on the extreme western edge. **[Only a few of them, though, just to say we did it. I later overheard Oshiro talking to Ishida; apparently he was a bit taken aback that we rode all that way only to proselyte so little.]**

On the way back, a lady pulled out in front of me and only looked right, into the oncoming traffic, just like 99% of Japanese **[people]** do. I braked as well as I could, but still slammed into her **[car]**.

Luckily there was no major damage to body or bike, but she had a dent in her door. I told her to look left also next time. **[Actually, it was more of an exhortation than an order.]**

[We] visited Hayakawa-san for the first time since way back when. Man, Japanese and Americans are different. I let Oshiro handle most of the conversation. **[The talking was so rapid-fire that I couldn't keep up. It culminated in Hayakawa-san saying something like, "wouldn't it be a good idea for Americans to incorporate and learn from Japanese culture?" Oshiro's response was something akin to, "Americans have a lot of pride, so doing something like that wouldn't occur to them." I**

was too tired to bother interjecting anything. Besides, I had to admit that he was correct.]

I got a tape, a pretty long one, from Jeanie. I'll make one for her [in return]; hers was above and beyond the call of duty.

Didn't get a lot done today; I feel bad. Help!

Saturday, December 07, 1991—Day 704

Due to the [International] Date Line, the 50-year Pearl Harbor anniversary comes tomorrow here.

A.B.C. [Eikaiwa] folks threw a big party for Scott since he's gone next week. We all went to Tomei Bowl and 20 people played two games each. I came in second out of everybody after McMurray both times.

We all went and ate at a restaurant later. Good stuff.

Gads, it sucks. I came here to preach the gospel, but virtually no one is letting me. Talk about a bummer! I want to teach, but hardly anyone wants to learn. It's almost a waste of time. I feel like telling some of those folks who know us better that it's like them spending all day preparing a nice, lavish Japanese dinner, then inviting us over for it and having us say, "We don't need it," "We've already got our own food," "There's good food at everybody's house, so why eat yours," etc. But it's not just food with us; it's the gospel of Christ. It's not just a day's preparation; it's two years of work and toil. So you can imagine how I feel every day. I could put a lot of detail into both halves of that little story (the parallel and the real thing), but you get the picture.

[We] played volleyball for a couple of hours later, which was fun since there were only 10 people playing. Talked to Terasawa Shimai at the end later. I don't know how she found out, but apparently Yuka-chan says that that dinner on Wednesday was a great thing, for it was a sign that her mother has really progressed, since beforehand she was nervous of and wouldn't let gaijins over. Hey, let's see where we can take it from here!

[We] rode to the church where they were having a cleaning kai later. I ended up just basically hanging out with the buch's and [the] Matsushitas' kids.

PHOTOS 117



L-R: Kobayashi, a guy whose name I don't remember, Yoshiko Ibata, our cute and outgoing Otake-san, me wearing my shades. I can reach pretty far with my right arm, can't I?



Me bowlin' a big one. I can't remember if my shades brought me luck.



Our group at the restaurant afterward.

Sunday, December 08, 1991—Day 705

They finally got the new place picked out and ready for the new Seto branch, so none of the folks, including the missionaries, from Seto were there **[at church]**. The population was a bit down.

Mika came. It was cool, for she said that like always church calmed her down or had that influence on her. She's been pretty sick lately, and her stomach is still in pain. It's strengthened her resolve to live the Word of Wisdom; I hope **[that]** she follows through with it.

Good ol' Mika. She sure is a good friend, no matter how you slice it.

Later I made my very first "miso shiru," a Japanese soup. **[The stock is made from soybean curd. Elder Oshiro showed me the ingredients to pick out and also taught me how to make it.]**

Heading to Fujigaoka, I was much weighed down in spirit. I didn't want to dendo at all. It began sprinkling, but rather than turn back we decided to dendo it out. We were blessed for it too, for I placed two Books and my dode placed one. Since Christmas is close, telling people that the Book was a Christmas present from us Christian volunteers seemed to help.

A few more details to round out the day: Scott had two investigators to church, one at the Seto branch and **[also]** their great referral at Meito. A couple of women, one from Scott's old area and another one from Kanazawa, came down to see him. The one from Kanazawa asked for my **[business]** card right off; I was impressed.

Saw Waters **[Shimai]** and Iwamatsu Shimai again. 'Twas cool.

PHOTOS 118



Me about done making my miso shiru.



Me holding my "Trunky" bar that Yuka Shimizu gave me. Once again, you can see Elder Ishida photo bombing in the background.

Monday, December 09, 1991—Day 706

I was up 'till 3:00 in the morning making a two-hour tape for Jeanie. I was a bit delirious toward the end. **[I sat in the shower the whole time I was recording so that the others could sleep.]**

[We all] had lunch at Kobayashi's, kind of as a bye-bye party for Scott and Gettling. Man, she's a good cook.

Got another one from Yoshie. Her letters keep getting steamier and steamier. In order to prove that I could draw, I drew a picture of the two of us kissing and sent it back with my reply. I wonder how she'll react? I know **[that]** I'm a bad missionary, but you only live once.

PHOTOS 119



Foreground: McMurray balancing an orange slice on his nose.
Background, L-R: Garff, Oshiro, Yamauchi, Ishida, me, Kobayashi's daughter (I'm pretty sure), Gettling, Scott.



The cast here is the same as before, except Kobayashi's daughter is now taking the photo and Kobayashi herself joins McMurray in the foreground.

Tuesday, December 10, 1991—Day 707

Everyone was giving me a hard time about something soon to happen to me, and after benkyokai I went up and the buch pulled me into his office and told me that he didn't support me in my goal, my goal of dying futsu senpai. ["futsu senpai" = "normal senior." In other words, a senior companion who isn't

a district leader, a zone leader, or an A.P.] Yep, as of Thursday I'll be D.L.-sama. [In other words, I would be the district leader in two days.] Oh well, at least it'll only be for two months. [As I mentioned before, I asked both my mission presidents to let me remain a regular senior companion and never call me to be a district leader, a zone leader, or anything like that. I had no ambition for callings; I just wanted to do the work without being burdened by the additional hassles that go along with those other positions.]

Next we rode out to Seto with McMurray and co. and met Gettling at the home of a girl from Eikaiwa. She was doing some type of thing for her school where she needed pictures of gaijins, so we rode with her in her car to her college in Komaki. [We listened to reggae music on the way. It was actually pretty good.] She was going to buy us lunch there for our time, and she talked us into eating first.

The people in the cafeteria took their own sweet time preparing our food, and our host, Miki, didn't seem too rushed either.

Little by little we all began noticing that the people around us were all stoners and burn-outs. [They had] long hair, leather jackets, guitars, the works (cigarettes, etc.). [To give you an idea of the caliber of student at this particular college, there was a softball diamond outside of the cafeteria building, and a few of them were screwing around on it. They would get done smoking and just toss the butt on the grass, stomp on it, and walk away.]

Finally we got done and she took us up to a room which had some picture-taking paraphernalia. A bunch of her friends showed up, too. We had our names on cards and took turns wearing Gettling's turtleneck [sweater], which was black, and sat and—looking like convicts—got our pictures taken. She took her sweet time on that, too, which didn't please Gettling too well 'cause modeling is his business and he's used to quicker service.

She took her own sweet time finally leaving the place, too. Gads, what a scummy school. It must've been the college for High School dropouts and all-around losers. [On the way back to the car, Miki, our host, was walking a little bit ahead of me. I said under my breath, in Japanese, "There are nothing but weirdos at this school!" I was sort of hoping that Miki would hear me. If she did, she didn't break her stride and otherwise showed no reaction, even though McMurray and one or two others turned toward me while simultaneously pointing at her and giving me the "shhh!" gesture.] Later tonight Oshiro made the comment that seeing these folks doing nothing but spending their parents' money and acting like that made him ashamed to be Japanese.

We got in an hour of dendo later tonight and met two women who had a Book, one of whom had heard a lesson. [Other than that, we saw] no real success, though.

Wednesday, December 11, 1991—Day 708

I was too tired to get up, so I got back into my futon and my doryo and I both didn't wake up 'till almost 9:00 [a.m.] ([Specifically,] 8:50). I regretted it; felt down and slow.

Made banana bread for the Yogo and Matsubara families. The stuff took forever to cook. While waiting, I read through some of Scott's area book. Man, it's depressing, reading about people who gained a testimony [and] progressed close to baptism but for some problem or other lost it and fell away to [having] no interest whatsoever. Kawachi Mitsuko, one [lady] from A.B.C. [Eikaiwa] whom I think I mentioned, is among them. She'd gone to a music production at church and cried her eyes out and said [that] she knew it was true, but recently she told MacArthur that she has no interest, [that] the lessons are a barge-in, and [that] she has no intent to listen. Satan has power indeed! Either that or the race in general is just stupid or both. Probably both. [Once again, I apologize for having made that comment.]

[We] rode out to [the] Yogos' [place] and gave the mom a loaf [of banana bread], then [we rode] out to [Hiroe] Matsubara's [house]. We wanted to meet the whole family, and since there was no car there, we

went to the store with Street Fighter II and bought some fishing line for a new dendo tactic in order to stall for time. **[We]** went back and **[there was]** still no car, so we knocked and talked to and gave it to her mom. **[We]** saw her older sister for a brief moment. **[It was the]** first time.

According to the mom, there was a military base up the hill from their house during the war. It was bombed by us; bombs had fallen near where we were **[standing]**.

Thursday, December 12, 1991—Day 709

[Today was] Christmas Taikai time again. It was cool, seeing everyone again. **[I hadn't seen Elder Madsen, one of my M.T.C. mates, since the previous year's Christmas Taikai.]** Rapped with a bunch of folks, including Frehner. What a stud. Chatted a little with Man Shimai (from China, remember **[actually Hong Kong]**), who's so cool. **[It was]** exciting; I asked and she said it was okay if I wrote to her once my mission is over. That was cool. **[In retrospect, what else was she going to say? "No?" Even so, she seemed pretty enthusiastic about it, so I think she was sincere and not just being polite.]**

This year they did it in reverse; they had the spiritual part first **[before the food]**. For the **[annual]** picture, I and the other guys in my group got out on the balcony on the second floor of the church. I did the same "Shades Salute" as last year. They took it **[i.e., the film]** down to a two-hour developing place, so everyone left with a copy **[of the photo]**. It only turned out to be regular snapshot-size, so that sucked. **[And thus there were problems with both of the annual mission-wide portraits during the time I was there. The first year, the photo turned out blurry; the last year, it was much too small. Lucky me.]**

The skits weren't so well-performed as last year, and the slide show wasn't narrated, so it wasn't nearly as good as last year. They didn't use all the ones given (**[i.e., they didn't use all of their submitted]** pictures for the show).

At the beginning, when I first saw Man Shimai, she exclaimed, "I want to work with you!" Meaning **[to work in the]** same district, of course. **[That was]** a nice compliment, indeed!

After all was said and done, a couple of guys in Cook Choro's group wanted the list **[Elder Brailsford and Elder Brown, specifically]**, so I went into the honbu and with the master **[copy that]** I'd brought made a copy for each **[of them]**. They were happy to get them; I was excited.

Later, the buch walked in and before saying anything else, **[he]** stopped, pointed at me, and said, "Stud!" in front of everybody. ("Stud desu;" it was in Japanese.) **["Desu" = "is" or "am." In Japanese, the verb comes at the end of the sentence.]** Wow, what did I do to deserve a compliment like that?

Holy cow, Bunnage has been transferred out of Fukutoku and has been in Ichinomiya for two weeks.

We got our bikes and us driven home in the van by Daines. We four **[then]** rode our bikes in the cold and gave a homemade birthday card to Sister Yamada.

Fetch, 60% of my **[M.T.C.]** group dies tomorrow. Scott's gone, too. **[And with that, Elder Ishida went senior. The aforementioned Elder Cook transferred into our apartment to be his junior companion.]**

PHOTOS 120



Our official, annual mission-wide Christmas taikai photo for 1991. In and above the balcony are two rows of missionaries; I'm at the extreme right of the uppermost row. At the extreme left of the same row are (L-R) Proctor, Madsen, and Gibson. Van Cleave is the one wearing the white scarf right below Madsen.

Toward the lower-right corner is a sister missionary in an all-green dress; that's Sister Ishizaka, whom I mentioned previously. McMurray is the leftmost person in the photo. As before, anyone else would be too difficult to pinpoint.

This image is, by necessity, rather small, so [CLICK HERE](#) for the full-sized picture.

Friday, December 13, 1991—Day 710

We ran around and got a bunch of errands done. I bought some raccoon slippers, reminiscent of Brough's teddy bear ones in Okazaki. Now my feet won't freeze on the cold wooden floor. I don't know why I wasn't smart enough to get these last year.

I wore thermal garments today, **[which was the]** first time since my second day in the field, way back when. Also, last night I whipped out the trusty electric blanket, and today Ishida and Oshiro pulled out the gas heaters. Now we're fully winterized.

The two Nihonjins had to go on a split to find us a new apartment, so Cook and I went out. **[The mission president had to make us do a split; he couldn't just let either Ishida's companionship or mine go out and find a new place. This is because each companionship had one non-Japanese person in it. If a landlord saw that, they'd be far less likely to agree to rent to us. You see, unlike in the United States, Japan has no anti-discrimination laws. Anybody can discriminate against anyone for any reason or for no reason at all. I might've explained this before, but this is a big reason why more people, especially adult males, in Japan don't join the church: They rightfully fear that**

they'll be fired from their jobs.]

Our phone needed repairs, so we had to be back in before long, but later, once the repairman left, we housed and placed a Book. Cook's previous seniors never did much finding, so he's not too experienced. Ishida and Cook both hit bump day (1/4 **[of their mission completed]**) today.

Later, Oshiro and I went out and tried a new tactic, that of tying a coin to some fishing line and drawing people to *us* by pulling it along as they reached down to pick it up. Not many people saw the coin, but it was pretty fun. My dode placed a Book through it. (He also placed two others through the usual means.)

Sheesh. Madsen, Proctor, and Van Cleave are now high over the Pacific, along with all the guys ahead of me. It's now down to Gibson and I; not one person has been serving here **[in the Nagoya mission]** now longer than us.

Saturday, December 14, 1991—Day 711

Scott was the leader **[previously]**, and with him gone it's now up to me. For A.B.C. Eikaiwa, etc., he was like my security blanket; it was weird without him.

Shopped some, then came home, dragged my bike into the kitchen, then spent many an hour fixing it. We went out and rode around for an hour later, but **[saw]** no success. Oh well. (Today is my two-month mark **[before I go home].**)

Sunday, December 15, 1991—Day 712

Yuka-chan was at church today. Oh, what a honey. I know **[that]** this is all going to embarrass me to death when I come back and read this 20 years later, so why do I write it? Why do I like/love her so much? Just what is it about her? It's gone past mere lust now. Why? Maybe I've just been away from women for so long that my hormones are acting up and my emotions have gone a bit haywire. Yuka . . . I want to love her so bad! Oh, honey baby! I'd better lock my heart. **[It's]** too bad **[that]** it's so tough to dig up the willpower to crush your human emotions.

Afterwards we all practiced for the upcoming Christmas party, **[which involved]** singing, etc. **[We later]** went and ate a good meal with the Hanai family. Before the month's over they'll be moved out to Kariya.

Called Mika and talked a long time. I bet I sound pretty weird on the phone.

PHOTOS 121



L-R: Oshiro, Ishida, Brother Fukunaga, two guys whose names I don't remember, Elder Cook mostly concealed, Brother Sugai (the World War II veteran on the Japanese side), me partially concealed, Brother Shikama. We're practicing our singing for the upcoming Christmas extravaganza.

Monday, December 16, 1991—Day 713

Got another hot letter from Yoshie. Her letters just keep getting better and better. So I wrote a good one back to her. Fetch, I want to throw down on that babe pretty bad. It's getting desperate.

Got one from Daren, too. **[It's]** amazing; he'll be home within the week. **[He, too, opted to go home early for Christmas.]**

[We] went and ate with Kuroda Shimai tonight. 'Twas a pretty straightforward day.

Tuesday, December 17, 1991—Day 714

We rode out to the new branch building in Seto for district benkyokai this morning. I was in the lead this morning for a change; it felt quite different. **[I had just been made district leader, remember.]** I now have the responsibility to hear and sign pass-offs. It's what Horrocks was doing at the very beginning.

We went and helped Kobayashi in her garden (it's the least we could do), then ate a little and I helped her by correcting some English **[that]** she'd done.

Eventually we stopped by the honbu to get the final word on the Success Program, how it's done, etc. **[It's]** funny; everybody had a different opinion, including the **[mission]** president. **[The "Success Program" was instituted by President Smith shortly before he went home. Thanks to that, it hadn't quite gelled when his replacement arrived and few if any people had any experience with it. My impression was that you had to have enough of a command of the lessons that you could teach them effectively and had to prove it by passing off to someone higher ranked than you—you didn't have to memorize the lessons word-for-word. My junior companion had the opposite impression; he thought you had to have them memorized word-for-word and, when proving it, didn't have to present them in a teaching-like setting.]**

We got things pretty much worked out, then went down to Fujigaoka to try our fishing trick again, the one with the coin on the fishing line. ("Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.") No one saw it, so I tried a new tactic—that of gluing a coin to the ground and stopping people who tried to pick it up.

The only ones who saw it were a group of four dudes, and one of them kicked it, sending it flying. Then they went over, pocketed it, and I lost my ¥100. Most people probably wouldn't've had the guts to kick the thing on their own, and on top of that the glue wasn't set yet. I've got to try it again. **[I don't think I did.]**

[We] met an Islamic guy from Pakistan. Also, as we showed up, we ran into the two sisters. That's only the second time I've seen them there; the first time **[we saw them]** was my first time going there, way back when.

Wednesday, December 18, 1991—Day 715

After doing service we rode our bikes out to Atomboy Sushi, where Kobayashi treated us due to the fact that her husband got a bonus **[at work]**. That's the first time I've been **[to that restaurant]** since Inuyama, about 9 ~ 9 and 1/2 months **[ago]** or so.

We ate a bunch (I love Atomboy) and were so stuffed **[that]** we took a nap back at home. **[It was a]** bad choice. I was totally out, so out in fact **[that]** I took a nap in my *dreams* as well.

Got off to a slow resurrection, but went around and ran a few errands.

When I got home I thought **[that]** there was no mail for me, but upstairs, outside my door, was a package from Yoshie. What a sweetheart; she'd sent me a tie, a pair of gloves, and a pair of socks and a card. Man I love her.

So tonight I bought a few blank tapes; two I filled with Christmas music and the other I'm going to talk into. It may be shabby to give recordings, but it's all **[that]** I can do.

She's got a body on her that just won't quit, either. Holy cow does she ever have it where it counts.

Thursday, December 19, 1991—Day 716

To oblige Kobayashi-san who's soon to go into the hospital to get a lump removed from her uterus, we went and played tennis with her. Before leaving, I got a package full of Christmas presents from my folks and a letter from Dick. I'm waiting 'till Christmas to open the gifts, though.

In the letter from Dick were a couple of proof of the pictures **[that]** he'd taken of Jodi. Everyone else thought **[that]** they weren't too bad, but I wasn't too impressed at all. Uh-oh, **[it]** looks like I may be in trouble.

After that I finished making a tape (of my voice) for Yoshie. I wonder how she'll like it?

Matsushita Shimai tachiaid, and we met with Mika again. It's been a long time; we finished **[Lesson]** #3. She says **[that]** she'll get baptized, but she wants to wait and study first.

To Eikaiwa came Kurokawa Shimai, a recent baptizee from Toyota. I met her at the stake conference on November 17, so it's been a month. She's totally cool; I had a lot of fun picking up on her. She's coming to Utah November of next year; we're going to date and have some fun then. We talked it over and we both hope that I don't have a girlfriend then. **[I still remember that conversation as one of the most egregious examples of completely forgetting—or not caring—that I was a missionary. Although I was sincere, it nevertheless bordered far too close to "leading her on" for comfort.]**

In short, I regret it. Even so, she did eventually come to Utah, and we did hang out a couple of times.]

Friday, December 20, 1991—Day 717

Slept in late again. Suck. This morning I was too sick and tired of it all to dendo, so I mailed my package to Yoshie, went and got my money out of the bank from the check I'd gotten (which turned out to be far more than I was expecting), then we went home and I packed away all [of] the stuff I don't need but want to keep to ship home 'cause I know it won't all fit in my luggage. ([That was] pretty long for just one sentence, eh?) Lucky for me I've got a cooperative dode.

Later we four went to the Suzukis' house for dinner. **[They lived very, very near the approach to the airport, so you could see the jumbo jets at close range as they came in for their landings. It was cool.]** Back at home we got into a conversation about the fukeness that's gone on in this mission. Holy cow was I surprised. I guess **[that]** sleeping in late isn't so serious after all. In the process I got to admitting the story of how Yoshie and I are writing. I hope no one else finds out. The sooner I can get this mission thing over and get my butt back to the states, the better.

As I told Bunnage Choro, once home, I'm not so much worried about keeping my membership as I am keeping my **[temple]** recommend.

Saturday, December 21, 1991—Day 718

Right before heading out to A.B.C. Eikaiwa I got a package from Kyoko, but I saved it 'till later. After A.B.C. ended we headed to Meito to go to a service party they were holding for handicapped kids. We rode out there with the Meito Minami sisters, and later we were joined by Ishida and Cook (Ishida is now senior), and finally Bailey (who replaced me in Inuyama) and Daines. All we basically did is play with the kids a little.

[We] rode back home, took too long of a break, then I opened Kyoko's gift. Holy cow did she go out of her way! She gave me a shirt, a cool miniature ancient Japanese police weapon keychain **[specifically, it was a miniature "jitte," which was a quasi-weapon designed specifically to disarm other weapon-wielders]**, a Polynesian Cultural Center travel brochure which opens up to show a big picture of her and a group of **[her]** friends, a card with her picture cleverly embossed within a picture frame depicted on the front, a large picture of herself all done at a portrait studio, and a smaller one for my wallet, finally a keychain with her portrait inside. **[Do you think she overdid it?]** Holy cow, how am I ever going to give her something in return to match that? I'm lost.

[We later] housed for about an hour, which turned out to be a joke, then **[I]** stayed up late teaching "Shogi" to Cook.

Man, Cook's a pervert. Now I'm going back to being a pervert myself.

Sunday, December 22, 1991—Day 719

We went to church early to rap with Kubota Kyodai about dendo, goals, etc. **[He was the new ward mission leader; Gettling had gone back to America by this time.]** Suzuki Kyodai was there and he gave some good advice, but hearing about others' much success on their **[own]** missions is a bit tough considering **[the fact that]** I've had so little **[success]** on mine.

After church we went with Ishida to help him deliver a little Christmas program to his investigators. First we went to the Yamadas' in Fukunaga Kyodai's car. We dropped our bikes off at Terasawa's place, and on the way **[we]** ran into Kitajima Shimai. We've got to get her coming **[back to church]**.

The Yamadas barely got back from the U.S.A., and they went on and on forever about how great the place is. **[In particular he was amazed by how huge the portions are and how cheap the prices are]**

at the same time. For example, he talked about ordering a large drink at some fast food place. In Japan, a large drink is maybe 20 oz. at the most, so when his American-style large drink was given to him, he gesticulated and exclaimed, "A human being couldn't drink it!" I was feeling pretty good.

Later [on] at Terasawa's [house] we ate some good food with Hideko Shikano. The dad never showed [up], so when it came time to leave we took off.

Finally at [the] Matsushitas' [apartment] we got to deliver our little message, which consisted of part reading (on the part of the Nihonjins) and part singing. **[This was a somewhat bizarre little affair, once again a little too close to Buddhism for me. Ishida had them turn out all the lights, then he lit a candle and placed it in the middle of all of us and had the three of us who weren't reading the lines of his presentation hum Christmas carols to round out the ambience.]** After it, they showed us the T.V. program in which Gettling was in which they'd taped. **[It was]** wild, seeing someone you know on T.V. It was a kind of dating game thing, filmed in Sakae. **[Specifically, they had four different foreigners (all of them Caucasian) walk out on a promenade and introduce themselves to a group of 50 or so women. The women then grouped themselves in front of the guy that they liked most and took turns telling him why he should pick them to take out on a date—one of them yelled out, in English, "I want you! I need you! I love you!" Then the dude would walk up behind them all and put a jacket or sweater on the one whom he picked. Gettling easily had the most women lining up for him.]** All of a sudden, Masaka Junko's face came on! She was one of the potential dates to be chosen! (It surprised the heck out of all of us.) **[She later denied that it was her, claiming that it was her sister. Unless it was a twin, then I still have my doubts about her denial.]**

Stayed up late playing Shogi with Cook again. Holy cow can he swear when things don't go his way.

Monday, December 23, 1991—Day 720

There was a softball event that went on this morning way out there, and I was none too pleased to go, but we rode out anyway. It was pretty lame; hardly any members even showed [up]. I sat off to the side and wrote a letter to Kyoko. By the way, she's 34, I found out. Due to a guy in Cook's group who went to BYU Hawaii and knew her then, Cook knew of her and her age long before I did! Small world.

[We later] rode to the church to teach Mika. This is great, for we'd met with her on Thursday. **[Normally we could only meet once a week at best.]** Teaching is my lifeline; if I don't teach, I slowly start dying on the vine.

We had to ride in the rain. Terasawa Shimai drove out and got Mika, and (at long last!) Yuka came down to tachiai.

We had a little "lesson" on Christ. Oshiro went way off track, which needs to be corrected before we ever teach again. **[Specifically, he would go on and on giving example after example to illustrate and clarify the various principles, which took up a lot of time unnecessarily since chances are Mika already "got it" the first time.]** In the process, I got to thinking. . . . and I saw the Lord Jesus Christ in a different light. I thought about all that the church means to me, all the blessings **[that]** I've received through it, etc., and Jesus Christ is the man who made this church for me.

My feeling of thankfulness was so great that I came very close to losing it (my composure).

'Twas a cool lesson, I think. Next we went into the chapel for the program part of our Christmas party. Hoshino Shimai brought her junior high school-aged neighbor to it, so as planned I sat next to her and tried to make her feel at home.

There were parts in which I sang, once with the Elders' Quorum and once with us four missionaries (up in front of everyone).

Masaka Junko was there, and when everyone else went in to chow on food we stayed in the chapel talking about Kitajima Shimai and her problems ([e.g.,] why she hasn't come to church, etc.).

In the cultural hall I was kept plenty busy with all the folks around. Mika and Junko rapped together quite a bit; I hope it's okay. **[In other words, I was worried that Junko might dump a little too much craziness on Mika.]**

Kurokawa Shimai (Tomoyo is her first name) came, bless her heart. She's so cool!

A lot happened, but to make a long story short, Kato Miki (from Fukutoku, remember?) got back from a date with Eguchi Kyodai and she gave me a little Christmas present. **[How]** sweet of her! And before Tomoyo left, she **[Tomoyo]** went out to her car and brought me back yet another gift. (Both **[gifts]** were candy.)

You know, I'm thoroughly of the impression that she **[again, Tomoyo]** drove all the way out here from Toyota just to give me that. However, she got to meet some members here, so that was cool.

Yes, all my favorite women were there tonight. Yuka-chan, what a sweetheart, as usual.

PHOTOS 122



Me. That's Ishida behind me, photo bombing again.



Me and Mika. This is the only photograph of her that survives.



Front row: Cook.
Back row, L-R: Me, Hideko Shikano, Ishida.

Christmas Eve, 1991—Day 721

[We] had benkyokai here at the apartment since the Seto guys had a pick-up lesson scheduled. After that we went and I sent off all the extra stuff I'd packed. **[I mailed the box home via slow boat. It never arrived.]**

Next we set off and delivered Christmas cards that I'd had all four of us sign to the Mastubaras, Asais, and Yogos. Talked to Hiroe's mom and Asai and his wife. Both seemed glad to get the card. 'Twas the mom to whom we delivered the card at the Yogos' **[place]**.

Last night a car pulled out in front of my dode and slammed him, but luckily there wasn't any damage. However, there was a pain in his foot or leg. That pain was there today too, and coupled with the exertion of the batting yesterday, he was pretty much done in. So we came back, and while he slept I got a few things done around here. Made covers for all **[of]** my tapes.

Later we both headed out to do some caroling in Sakae. It took place last night as well, but due to the party we didn't go.

On the train over, I met a guy who is a (get this) Yoga instructor. We'd prepared by bringing six Books of Mormon that had been wrapped up to be given as gifts at the party last night. **[These were]** leftovers.

The guy saw us fumbling around with our songbook, so I sat and talked to him. He started looking at the songbook and trying to sing a few. Man, he's *good*. He saw Joseph Smith's name in the front and asked about him, so I explained a little. Cool, eh?

At the end he asked for and I gave him a meishi (**[which is Japanese for]** "name card"), and I also gave him a nicely wrapped "present" that he said he'd read. He sounded sincere about it.

[It was] interesting; he had me sing a few times to show him how some of the hymns went. **[It was my]** first time, singing with a stranger in the middle of a train. It's effective!

[We] wandered around 'till we found the rest of the crew. There were around 25~30 missionaries or so, some from as far away as Gifu. Met Sekimoto Shimai again. I haven't seen her since I left Fukutoku. She taught the very first Sunday School I ever attended in Japan.

We sang up on a bridge. It was cool; I felt the Spirit. This sure made it a lot more "Christmas-y" than it would've been otherwise.

It ended and I chatted with a few folks. The Kasugai sisters **[i.e., the sister missionaries serving in Kasugai, the area adjacent to mine on the North]** told me that they're having a baptism kai tomorrow. I sure hope **[that]** Mika can go.

Wandering around more, we found a place where a reggae band was playing Christmas stuff. **[All of the band's members were Japanese.]** Lots of people were gathered around. We looked, and right in front of the band there were folks dancing. Holy cow, among their members were missionaries! I decided to join in, (Weaver and Andrus Shimai were in there too, if you can believe it,) and Oshiro waited off to the side. Man, was it fun. **[Dancing was also against the mission rules, but you've just gotta let off steam sometimes.]**

At the end, the drummer threw his sticks into the audience, and lo and behold I got one! **[I still have it to this day.]**

Walking away, I almost bumped into a girl, and she suddenly stopped, pointed right at me, and told me **[that]** I was good-looking. Hey hey, **[it was certainly]** not the worst experience of my life.

Christmas 1991—Day 722

Ishida had gotten a few gifts, too, so after we woke up we both opened them (his and mine). I got a few ties, a bunch of candy, etc.

Although it was drizzling, we headed out and played tennis with Kobayashi again for the last time, even though I was under the impression that last time was the last time.

[Oshiro and I] came back home, then got ready and left for the baptism kai in Kasugai since Mika had called and said **[that]** she could go. I'd never been there, so it was a first for me, too.

[We] met Mika at Chikusa, the same place **[i.e., the same subway station at which]** we'd gotten off to go teach at Trident School back on Day 143. **[We then boarded a different train for the rest of the ride to Kasugai.]** **[It]** looks like Mika is better friends with Carmen than I thought (see also Day 622). They've talked on the phone and Carmen remembers me, still has her Book of Mormon, and still has interest in what's inside. I hope **[that]** she gets around to reading it.

We were the first guests there by a long shot. It started 1/2 hour late, what's more.

The girl receiving baptism was at the caroling thing last night, but I didn't know her then.

[It was a] pretty good experience. Since the chapel was being cleaned, they had to use one of the downstairs rooms.

[The meeting was] quite spiritual. I cried. Man, what a pure soul she is (the baptizee). It's great, 'cause now Mika doesn't need to wonder about it. It's no longer a mystery.

At the end, Mika met a lot of new friends. She and Watanabe Shimai even hugged at least twice. Mika went up and even congratulated the new Shimai with everyone, and signed her shikishi as well.

Mika liked it. Provided **[that]** it impressed her somehow, tonight may have played a big part in her

salvation. She said that this was her best Christmas ever. And for me, I think **[that]** it was the most meaningful. Most folks are just sitting around and thinking about Christ, while I was actually out there serving Him.

Yes, today was a big step forward.

PHOTOS 123



At tennis (of course). This is me winding up for the serve.



And the release. That's my Def Leppard hat that Daren had sent me.



Front row, L-R: Oshiro, Kobayashi.
Back row, L-R: Yamauchi, Ishida, me, Cook.

Thursday, December 26, 1991—Day 723

I was up so late last night talking with Cook that I didn't get up 'till 9:30 **[a.m.]** I forgot about service this morning, so we did a rush job and got there just the two of us (Cook's folks were going to call **[thus requiring him to stay home]**).

One lady there used to work at the old folks home nearby, so she took us two and Kobayashi on a tour of it. **[One of the first residents we met was a guy who'd had both legs blown off during the war. He could see that I was a white guy, of course, but he was not one iota less friendly because of it. It was humbling.]**

Kobayashi later took us to eat Okonomiyaki again **[at the]** same place as on Thanksgiving.

[We took] another long break, then **[it was]** off to Eikaiwa in Seto. They had it in the new building for the first time.

Those are the basics of today. On the way home we had a debate about war, especially the recent one in the gulf. Gads, these folks are an un-patriotic group. **[They have]** no care at all about defending their independence. **[I had]** culture shock.

Oh yeah, I forgot: Last night Iguchi Kyodai came over with Miki and Imamura from Fukutoku. **[It was]** too cool; they gave me a book. It was of a compiled volume of children's letters to God. Now, that was above and beyond the call of duty! Miki was basically begging me to stay in Japan. If nothing else, I sure have gained some true blue quality friends whom I'll always remember. What a blessing.

Today I got a letter from Grandpa S____. I'd given him a picture of me and Oshiro standing in front of Nagoya Castle **[it was the second photo in "PHOTOS 101"]** and he said that I sure look like a Marine, standing "ramrod straight."

That word made me feel good. **[I'm]** proud to be a Marine. "Ramrod straight."

Friday, December 27, 1991—Day 724

This morning Mika calls and says **[that]** she wants to be baptized on the 31st! It blew me away. **[We made]** a yotei without even leaving the apartment. **[I'll have]** much more to say about this; **[there'll be]** more later.

Yesterday I told Ishida **[the time]** when we got to bed (1:30 **[a.m.]**), and he said words to the effect of, "Great district leader, eh?" This morning I commented on how he talked in his sleep at midnight, and he picked up on that and said the same thing since I was up at midnight **[in order]** to hear him.

Who knows; maybe he's just protesting 'cause I'm blowing his image of me, but I'm getting sick of it. He's been out **[in the mission field]** 1/4 as long as I have, has had loads of kyudoshas (**[which is Japanese for]** "investigators") the whole way, has no language barrier, and doesn't have to put up with the B.S. that goes with being a gaijin. **[The]** next time he says anything I'll tell him to not judge until *after* he's gone through what I have.

Oshiro and I got into an argument this morning, 'cause for some reason he thinks **[that]** we can just teach the commitments before baptism and get done with the lessons later. Apparently he'd told her over the phone that that was okay. However, at this point in time, I'm not about to take any shortcuts to conversion. **[There's]** no playing with salvation.

[I was far more pissed off than I let on in this journal. I had gone nearly two years with no success I could call my own; I'd be damned if I was going to allow my companion to mess things up by doing things the wrong way or taking any illegitimate shortcuts.]

We went to Kuroda's for food *again*. I played Shogi with her junior high **[aged]** kid, and he's *good*. He even beats his dad. He beat my companion once, too.

She's never anywhere near having it ready when we get there, so I felt **[like]** we were there inordinately long (4 and 1/2 hours).

Later we did somewhat of a split, 'cause Hawkins, the zone leader, wants Ishida and Oshiro to work together once for some reason. Cook and I tried to hunt down a guy **[whom]** we'd met during our previous split, but since it was raining we got sidetracked by a bookstore.

Our guy wasn't there, so I played a couple of games of Street Fighter **[II]**, doing a lot better in the process.

Back at home I spent a lot of time on the phone. I should be happy as heck about this yotei, but since it's going to be a rush job and **[held on]** a non-Sunday, combined with the fact that my dode pissed me off, I felt kind of bad all day.

[I was] downright *confused*. Tonight I made it a point to pray really hard, 'cause I want really bad for her to be converted and know **[that]** the church is true, so I figure it's in order for the teacher to be converted and know the church is true to bring the student to that same level.

I was confused and worried at first, but then **[completely out of the blue]** I felt impressed to open to Doctrine and Covenants **[section]** 9. **[Out of all the scriptures in the Standard Works, there was no question in my mind. No doubt, no wavering: I somehow knew that I needed to open to that particular scripture.]**

Verse 6 I felt to be of special meaning and of application directly to me. I felt **[that]** it applied to me at this time. I felt a lot better. **[It reads, "Do not murmur, my son, for it is wisdom in me that I have dealt with you after this manner." I got the distinct impression that this was God revealing to me that it was all part of His plan that I had seen so little success during my nearly two years as a missionary so far. The purpose behind His plan, I guessed, was probably to create a situation wherein I would not take success for granted and therefore would be absolutely determined not to make any mistakes while teaching Mika and otherwise take her teaching process deathly seriously—which, of course, was exactly how it played out when the time finally came.]**

I read and pondered verse 8, then I continued and was impressed and felt that verses 13 and 14 were directed to me at this time. **[It was slightly more miraculous than this: After reading verse 8, I received the distinct impression that I needed to skip ahead, that there were more verses in this chapter that God wanted me to apply to myself. Once I got to verses 13 and 14, I knew that these were the ones God wanted me to read, ponder, and integrate. They read: "Do this thing which I have commanded you, and you shall prosper. Be faithful, and yield to no temptation. Stand fast in the work wherewith I have called you, and a hair of your head shall not be lost, and you shall be lifted up at the last day. Amen." I interpreted these verses to be God's instructions to me on how to conduct myself during the brief remainder of my mission—and the rewards He was promising me if I complied.]** I felt much better after reading these.

Then **[it was]** on to asking for a spiritual witness of the truth (and a confirmation that this past two years has been for a reason). Instead of loud shouting, I felt a calm feeling of peace. I felt **[that]** I should cease worrying, that the baptism would run okay **[and on schedule]**, and that Mika would be all right.

And with this calm assurance I went to bed without worries. My prayers were answered.

[Back on Day 398, I described some events "along with something else that happened many months later" that has prevented me from becoming an outright Atheist even today. Well, this prayer and the resulting directions and impressions is that "something else." So distinct were the impressions I received, and so spot-on applicable the verses that I felt inspired to read, that I have an impossible time chalking it all up to mere coincidence.]

Saturday, December 28, 1991—Day 725

[We] had benkyokai **[for the]** first time in a long time, and I asked my dode what it is I do that pisses him off. **[I have]** two things to correct: #1, it's hard for me to believe, but it looks like I'm sometimes a bit too forceful with Mika over the phone. And I thought **[that]** I was too light! Poor Mika—I'd better correct that. #2, since his grandma cries every time she talks about the war and **[since]** he lost his grandfather in it, he doesn't want me to say that the Marines are the elite in front of him. **[That's]** cool.

We had a misunderstanding on the way out, which led to more or less of an argument. **[It was]** all about the way of teaching. It'd be a long story, but let's just say **[that]** it's cool now, I think. **[Specifically, I knew that if we were to complete three lessons in three days, we'd have to stick to the lesson plan like never before, with a minimum of tangents and needless examples and illustrations. I explained this to him, but he wasn't sold on the idea. Neither of us would budge, so I eventually had to pull rank: For the first time ever, I had to abandon diplomacy and come right out with the dreaded, "I'm the senior."**

Once Oshiro heard that, he exclaimed, "Okay, I'll just leave everything to you!" I of course had to retroactively soften the blow by saying that it would take both of us to be successful (or whatever it was I said), but, as I explained above, we eventually came to some sort of understanding.]

We met Mika and ate over at Ota Shimai's place. She showed us a picture of her baptism, and although there's no glass behind it, there is a bright, glowing radiance of some sort above her head **[in the photo]**. Did an angel get caught in the picture? **[It's]** truly something.

[Then it was] off to the church and honbu for further preparations. We weren't able to teach Mika, but we got her choices on who does what at the baptism kai and scheduled the remaining lessons. Having a definite schedule, I feel much better.

[We] got a lot done there, then came home and called like mad to get everyone involved informed.

Shimizu Shimai (Yuka) said [that] she ran into Gibson in Sakae. **[Meito-Kita, my last area, was Gibson's first area; that's how they knew each other.]** He told her that he's seen a baptism. They held it in Meito and the Buch performed it! Way to go!

For various reasons, I fear [that] I may be losing my companion's support. **[There's]** no worse time to lose it than this, the time when I'll be in a storm of preparation and we'll be teaching faster than a shinkansen ("bullet train").

Mika called tonight and wants to change the time to 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday instead of 7:00 p.m. Now I've got to call everyone back and switch. All this and I need to get a **[baptismal]** chirashi made up and drawn to copy and give to the members at church tomorrow. We're teaching a lesson before it even starts, what's more. I'll be like a chicken with my head cut off tomorrow.

Sunday, December 29, 1991—Day 726

This morning I was up at 4:00 to leave plenty of time to draw a chirashi for the baptism kai. I looked at the first picture of her I'd ever gotten, that of eating at Ed Debevic's back on Day 601 for Mika's birthday **[which unfortunately no longer exists]**. I prayed that the Lord would guide my hand to draw a good picture. Sure enough, I drew a picture of Mika that turned out great. I wanted to put something else in the picture next to her, so I thought for a while, and it occurred to me to draw the Savior next to her. The thought of that really struck me. The Lord and Mika in the same picture. How would it be?

So I prayed hard to draw the Savior well. Very hard.

Things weren't going so well at first; I'd gotten the face and all pretty much down, but something wasn't right. Then I got the impression to change the direction **[that]** His face was looking. **[There was]** no way; I've never done that in my life once I already started **[drawing]**! But I couldn't argue with the Spirit, so I went ahead and erased a little here and added a little there. Holy cow, presto—His eyes fell neatly into place and the drawing turned out great. **[This is a]** true story, folks.

We left early to meet Mika. I got the feeling **[that]** my dode was pissed at me; maybe he was, maybe he wasn't. **[We]** met Shiraiwa Kyodai at church; he drove us to Kamiyashiro and we picked up Mika. Shiraiwa Shimai tachiaid. Since **[the]** Meito Minami **[ward]** was having their meetings, we went upstairs in the honbu and taught Lesson 5. Tithing is a pretty big commitment, so I felt yesterday that we should teach it before church so she could make the decision before that. She accepted it **[with]** no problem.

We made a chirashi for the baptism kai after that so we could hand it out at church. **[I had only drawn the picture for its cover, remember.]** It took some time, and we missed the sacrament, dang it. **[So did Shiraiwa Shimai, who had stayed with us.]**

[It's a] good thing we taught **[Lesson]** 5, for tithing was talked about in church.

Mika had to leave early, as usual. Throughout the remainder of the time I felt delirious 'cause I'd gotten up at 4:00 **[a.m.]**.

Found a tachiai, a new R.M. from the Minami ward but who's gone to **[the]** Kita **[ward for]** the past couple **[of]** times, and who's met Mika, who'll tachiai for a few hours straight for her tomorrow. (She doesn't have a job yet, you figure.)

I'm glad **[that]** Mika's getting baptized, of course, but I wish we could've had more notice. I've been

running myself ragged trying to prepare for this.

By the way, I followed Kubota's advice and didn't pass out the chirashis after all for fear of Mika not passing her **[baptismal]** interview. Sheesh, tomorrow will be crucial.

Later tonight Hawkins was here on a split, and he basically had a serious talk with me from a leader's standpoint. As district leader, I guess being an example is more important than I thought **[it was]**. I'd better get my act together. **[Obviously Ishida ratted me out to him.]**

PHOTOS 124



This is the picture I drew for the cover of Mika's baptismal meeting handout.

Monday, December 30, 1991—Day 727

[We] had more or less of a benkyokai at the Seto guys' apartment. Cook was sick, so those two didn't go.

[Oshiro and I] came home and did laundry so I'd have something to wear to the baptism tomorrow. Although it was extremely ineffective, **[what with]** everyone getting ready for New Year's and all **[in Japan, New Year's Day is by far the biggest holiday of the year]**, in order to feel worthy and spiritual for the lessons and baptism we went and streeeted for a little while. **[We saw]** no success.

[We] met Mika at Kamiyashiro, then our tachiai showed **[up]**. She's Hisaka Shimai, daughter of the bishop in the Minami ward. Her dad had driven her, so Mika rode with them to the church while we rode

our bikes.

We taught Lessons 4 and 6 back-to-back. It was a storm of the Spirit; I came close to crying on several occasions. We taught for 3 and 1/2 hours. I loved it. Wish I could teach that much every day.

Next came the interview. She passed!

[After that we did] some last minute preparations, **[planning for the]** font, clothes, etc., then **[it was]** into the honbu to make some calls and get all of it announced. **[The bishop of the Minami ward was very kind. He offered to show up early to the church and fill the font, which would've required him to wake up at an ungodly hour of the morning to get it done on time, not to mention make a special trip. Considering that it was the most inconvenient day of the year in which to do it, he really did us a nice favor. And it wasn't even his ward!]**

[It's] amazing. Folks, at long, long last, this looks like it! A true convert baptism! I sure hope **[that]** she has a spiritual experience tomorrow. I sure hope **[that]** she's converted.

Oh yeah, I got a letter from Depeel Choro. He's been reassigned to the Washington D.C. area. He sounds like he's doing better than ever. He's senior now, can you believe it? He talks about how they went out for 8 hours of straight dendo and placed 8 books and had 11 people who wanted them to come back. Killer, or what?

YOGO MIKA SHIMAI'S BAPTISM—Day 728

[I really did write most of this entry in red ink to symbolize just how important it is. This day, Day 728, was the very pinnacle, the apex of my entire mission.]

Today. The blessed day was today!

This is the one day I've been waiting for for years on end. I've been suffering for it for only the last two years, yet I've been eagerly hoping for it and anticipating it since my early days in the Aaronic Priesthood. And now, exactly two years to the day of my farewell, it finally came. As senior **[companion]**, a person receiving baptism, which baptism I felt truly *confident* about. Not only that, but one I'd seen picked up from Lesson 1.1 all the way through.

I'll tell you how it went, then I'll tell you how I feel now.

I was up at 4:30 **[a.m.]** again to get ready. We both rode out early and were the first ones there. The Minami bishop had been there filling the font for us on his own time, **[the]** sweet guy. The Yamadas had gone to get Mika, so they brought her in about 15 minutes before the meeting was due to start (9:00 a.m.).

It was quite something, seeing her in baptismal white. A few pictures were taken, then **[we all went]** in for the meeting.

The opening song was "Behold the Lamb of God." The opening prayer was given by Shikano Hideko Shimai. Shimizu Yuka was the one who introduced her to everyone, then Miyachi Shimai gave a talk on simple gospel principles. For some reason, Oshiro Choro chose to sit on the regular seats down below, so just Mika and I sat in the bench on the stand closest to the front.

Kubota Kyodai was the director, and he directed us all to the font area next.

The water was nice and warm. We both got in, got into position, then I voiced the prayer. "Amen," then down she went, deep.

Bringing her back up, she smiled. The whole thing had gone perfectly the first time. Yes, she'd been

baptized. What a sight, what a feeling, . . . I may as well have been baptized too, feeling the way I did. Getting dressed, my heart was just doing nothing but singing praises to the highest.

Back in the chapel, we four missionaries and the bishop and his first counselor went up to give the gift of the Holy Ghost. Oshiro Choro performed it, and wow could you feel the power and authority. **[It was a]** good blessing. I opened my eyes a little, and seeing her underneath all the hands was a wonderful sight. I cried.

After all were seated, Mika went up and bore her testimony. She'd written it down, yet it was sincere. I can't remember quite what she said, for I was all wrapped up in the fact that she was bearing her own testimony in front of the Saints. I'd been there all the way, from when we first met, all the way to this most holy moment. I could barely keep my composure.

The bishop next got up to give the new member welcome, and he said a few words about "Yorokobi," or "joy," and said that I obviously can say a few words about it, so he backed off and left the pulpit to me.

I walked right up. I wanted to bear my testimony really bad, but didn't think I'd have the chance to since it wasn't in the program. There were about 50 people or so there (40?), but I didn't care. I could barely speak I was so choked up, and I had trouble with my voice, it was wavering so badly.

I started off by saying that I've been waiting for this day ever since my early days in the Aaronic Priesthood. How my greatest and only real goal was to teach and have someone be converted to Christ as a result. How that goal became my purpose for living. And how I felt that today the purpose of my life has been accomplished.

I also talked about the picture I drew for the chirashi. I spoke a bit on how my perspective of Christ changed back on the 23rd. I spoke a bit on how I went senior and realized that the Lord trusted me to teach His gospel (see Day 453). I said some more about how I knew that Mika was one of the elect daughters of God, and how thankful I am that out of all missionaries I was the one chosen to teach her. Also I said a little about how we aren't for the church, the church is for *us*; and how there are nothing but blessings galore due to it.

There were a few times that I couldn't speak I was crying so hard. I was forcing the words out the whole way. And behind me, Mika was crying, too.

[During my short time at the pulpit, I thought to myself that surely *that* was what the Celestial Kingdom was all about. The way I felt at that moment in time, certainly the Celestial Kingdom couldn't be any different from that, except perhaps in degree—as incomprehensible as that would be. I knew that those short minutes were literally Heaven on Earth—yes, *literally*. No other moment in my life, either before or since, has ever compared to it in any conceivable way.]

I sat down, and her eyes also were wet with tears. The bishop stood up next and talked about how they all feel great when they give somebody at work a Book of Mormon, etc., but how that feeling must be 100 times greater when you meet someone and teach them all the way through to baptism.

The closing song was "O My Father," the same song at the **[end of the]** baptism at which I cried so hard back when I first went senior. **[Again, this was during Day 453. It was in commemoration of that event that I suggested that particular hymn for the closing song for this baptismal service, too.]** And like before, I could barely sing I was so choked with tears. Mika was the same way; she could barely sing either and there were parts where neither of us could sing at all. (We were sharing a book.)

Finally Yamaguchi Shimai gave the closing prayer and it was over.

The folks came up to the stand and in order **[they]** congratulated Yogo Shimai. I worked my way down off the stage **[cause it was Mika's turn to shine]**, yet I received many congratulations myself. I talked to Sister Salway, and with tears in her eyes she talked about how much they've seen me grow in the short

time they've been here. She said a few things about me being a good missionary and how I've made a difference, and I shed a few more tears myself. More than a few people, when talking to me, would look up on the stage at Mika and say that she looks like an angel. She did.

Tanaka Shimai was there from Okazaki. I'd called her and invited her, 'cause she'd told me before to call and invite her if I ever really got a true convert baptism.

I received a lot of comments from lots of folks, and it seems that everybody was *extremely* impressed with the entire meeting. Elder Cook later told me that it blew the ones he'd seen in Nonami right out of the water. I'd fasted all day yesterday so that this meeting would become a spiritual experience for all, especially Mika, and that she'd be truly converted. **[It]** looks like it was granted according to my desires.

It was great, seeing all the members go up and make such a big fuss over her. She received a huge armload of flowers, cards, a Doctrine and Covenants, Seito no Michi **[again, the Japanese equivalent of the *Ensign*]**, etc. etc. etc. 'Twas awesome.

After the congratulations were over, many, many more pictures were taken.

People slowly filtered to the outside. Mika thanked me from her heart for everything. I thank the Lord.

Mingling and rapping with people, I came close to tears again several times. The whole experience was just so overwhelming.

Chatted a little outside, then rapped with Mika one last time. **([For example, I said,]** "Six more A.B. lessons yet to come!") Then she got into Miyachi Shimai's car and off she went. This was it; I'd finally seen a baptism. **[It was]** just so indescribable. I was on air.

I was getting my coat on to leave, then all of a sudden Elders Little and Garff from Seto came out of the room they were in. **[Little, who had been in Meito-Minami when I first moved into Meito-Kita, had recently replaced McMurray as Garff's companion.]** They'd brought one of their investigators to the baptism **[who was]** also female. **[Her first name was also Mika, as luck would have it.]** Elder Little came up to me and said, "We just came out to give you a big hug!" We embraced the breath out of each other, then Garff joined in for a three-way hug. Little's eyes were moist as he said how much it'd helped their investigator out. **[According to him, she commented to the effect that she doubted the existence of God, but after hearing me speak, she said, "maybe God exists after all."]** I about cried again, saying if that's the case then that makes me happier than ever. They both rapturized about how the music, the talk, just everything fit in so perfectly. **[They also commented on how the hymn "O My Father" was the best possible choice.]** Then how when I got up to speak everyone in the room just felt it so hard. Little, the sweet guy, said that I've left more than one mark on this mission. Garff joined in and said that it was more than that; I've drawn all over the whole page! I felt so relieved, for that's what I've been hoping for this whole two years. Hawkins' investigator was there too, and we chatted just after it had ended. It had made a visible impression on him, too.

Just think, Elder Madsen in Kasugai knocked on a door which eventually yielded a baptism, the Kasugai sisters' investigator saw that and got baptized herself, Mika saw that and now she's baptized, two others saw that and who knows what will happen. **[It's]** like a Celestial domino effect.

[We] went into the honbu to do some stuff (Mika still hasn't received the study guides for lessons 4, 5, and 6, my mistake), and then we rode home. Later Cook Choro, who is far from excited about being a missionary, told me that as I spoke during the meeting even he himself felt a tear roll down his cheek.

Yet while riding home, I felt light as a feather. I felt as though a huge weight had been lifted off **[my shoulders]**. My soul felt more peaceful/at peace than it ever has this entire two years. **[Believe it or not, I also felt like all my sins had just been forgiven.]** At long last, my dendo has yielded a real result. It hasn't all been in vain.

Yes, my lifetime goal was accomplished today. Although He may do it in His own due time, the Lord does indeed grant unto us according to our desires.

Praise be to God in the Highest.

Back **[at]** home Ishida tried to give Oshiro a haircut, but it was far less than desirable. We all laughed hard.

Dendoing today would've been meaningless **[thanks to the holiday]**, so we kicked back 'till our next appointment. **[All throughout the afternoon, I couldn't stop pondering what an unreal experience the baptismal service was. I was almost constantly looking at the clock and counting the hours that passed since it started and since it ended, wanting to somehow remain rooted as close to that period in time as possible.]**

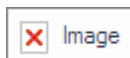
My dode and I ate over at Kitajima's house. I was afraid **[that]** the buch would call due to the baptism, so we left after only two hours in order to be home on time. I/we really wanted to stay longer, though. **[In retrospect, it was probably good that we took off when we did. After all, it was highly unusual to begin with for a Japanese person to entertain guests on New Year's Eve at the expense of her family (she had invited us, though, so we weren't necessarily imposing). I have no idea where her husband and daughter were—in another part of the house or otherwise—but we didn't see them at all. Who knows what they were thinking?]**

Although it was New Year's Eve, I went to bed at 11:00 **[p.m.]** since I was so exasperated from the past week. The other three guys listened to the countdown (in Japanese) on the radio, though.

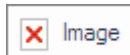
Yes, today was the day. I wrote in red ink to mark it off as special. **[Today was]** probably the greatest day in my entire life to date. This ranks up with the day I became a Marine, if not tops it. Today will *never, ever* be forgotten.

[And it wasn't. Regardless of the ways in which my opinion of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has shifted over the years, I see no need to deny what I actually felt *at the time*. Opinions and reassessments notwithstanding, I nevertheless experienced what I experienced. As such, this day was not only the single best day of my mission, but quite probably the best day of my entire life as well.]

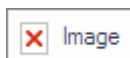
PHOTOS 125



Another photo of Mika that no longer exists. It depicted her in her white baptismal dress flanked by Oshiro and myself (I was in my white baptismal shirt, tie, and pants).

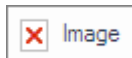


This was another one similar to the above. I had advised her to go easy on the make-up, since she was going to be immersed. I was surprised by how much darker her complexion was. (Japanese women, especially the younger ones, tend to use make-up to lighten their faces.)



When this photo existed, it was a group picture of everyone who was in any way involved in the baptism (with the addition of Sister Tanaka who joined in), taken just after the service. We were all standing on the, uh, stand in front of the chapel. Mika was front and center, holding her large armload of

gifts.



This was another one similar to the above.



L-R: Oshiro, Sister Kitajima, me. This is at her house later that evening.



Me, happy yet exhausted by the weight of two full years of blood, sweat, and tears having finally been lifted from my shoulders. (Well, maybe not blood, but you get the idea.)

New Year's Day, 1992—Day 729

Slept in a while, then we all pretty much sat around 'till evening. We then went to Karaoke Mura and played [video] games. **["Karaoke Mura," which translates to "Karaoke Village," was the name of the place a few hundred yards from our apartment which had the video games, like *Street Fighter II*, that I've mentioned playing every so often.]** Cook was bored and talked to me all day, so it was tough to get anything done.

[Karaoke Mura had a staircase that led to a walkway above the various karaoke booths. There were windows above the booths, so from this walkway you could look down and see the folks singing their songs below. Anyway, knowing that the accompanying videos occasionally featured female nudity, I scrutinized them intently as we walked by, hoping to see something. I quickly recalled that this was a sin, but the temptation to look was nigh unto overpowering.]

After having had my sins forgiven of me (or so I strongly believed) only the day before, I was quite ashamed of myself that I was already back to my old ways—my state of purity had lasted only a mere day. I resolved to repent quickly to hopefully regain my state of forgiveness from the day before.]

Thursday, January 02, 1992—Day 730

We had zone pass-offs and zone taikai today. There will be some very big changes in Eikaiwa and a new big thing called the Harvester Program, **[which will be]** probably as big if not bigger than Covenant Dendo was. **[Have I ever mentioned the "Covenant Dendo" program before? If not, that probably tells you the amount of enthusiasm I had for the various mission-wide programs that came and went. I just wanted to be left alone to dendo; everything else was more or less of a distraction.]** **[The]** problem is, I don't have the energy to go ballistic on all this.

The **[mission]** president's talk was good, but I was so tired **[that]** I slept through a lot of it.

I told Haggerty Shimai about how her telling me about their baptism in Kasugai led to us going **[to it]**, which led to Mika's baptism, which saved my mission. I went into detail about my experience with prayer and all, finally following up by telling her that due to that little thing she said, my mission and life changed. Yes, I told her that she saved my mission.

[You're probably wondering what I meant by "saved my mission." Let me explain: A constant mental theme that ran like an iron chain through my mind for two years was that all I wanted out of life was to see a real, true-to-life, *bona fide* convert baptism; a person converted to Christ as a result of my teaching (and thanks to the Spirit, of course). Missionaries are constantly force-fed propaganda from both the church and mission culture to the effect that every missionary can baptize, so if you're not baptizing, then there's something wrong with *you*. As my mission drew to a close, I started to fear that I wouldn't see this much-desired convert baptism. If I didn't, then that would mean I failed at the one and only thing that really mattered to me, thus proving that I had failed at life, too.]

If I had gone home without seeing a baptism as senior companion—in other words, a baptism "with my name on it"—I had every intention of completely giving up on life and becoming a bum on the street. *I am not joking.*]

I called Mika for some follow-up, and I asked **[her]** how life's been in comparison. She says **[that]** she's felt good and she feels closer to God. Great! And get this—her mom's been reading her *Seito no Michis* with her. Now that's *got* to be good!

Ishida reported this to me, but at the baptism kai, during the **[bestowal of the]** Gift of the Holy Ghost, both he and Hawkins got the strong impression that she would dendo. They both even discussed it later. Yes, she'd make a great Shimai. She's the type who can easily make a huge impact on many lives. It wouldn't surprise me a bit if she dendoed. What a blessing that would be! **[Hawkins and Ishida were wrong; she didn't end up serving a mission.]**

Friday, January 03, 1992—Day 731

[It's been] two years **[since my mission began]**. Holy cow.

Since in order to get all the details of the baptism kai to everyone I've decided to copy my journal, I wrote three pages as an introduction, giving all the details of it and what led up to that day. I'll copy and send that off, too. **[It all]** took me mega-longer than it should've.

These first three days of New Year's we've got off **[i.e., we have them off]**, since dendo in Japan would be a joke otherwise. **[It's]** too bad **[that]** it wasn't like this last year. So we've been pretty much sitting around.

Tonight we both ate over at the Yamamotos'. The Salways and Brother Sugai were there, too.

Saturday, January 04, 1992—Day 732

The major thing we did **[today]** was go to a set of **[apartment]** complexes and switch off companions every once in a while as we did them (**[proselyting]** as a foursome). **[We]** didn't see a bit of success out of it.

We had an appointment to eat at the Yamaguchis', but they called this morning and cancelled since one of them got into a wreck. I hope **[that]** they're okay.

I acted as Cook's scribe and he dictated as I wrote in his journal. Interesting stuff.

[It's been just over] two years since I've made out. Agh, I'm dying for a babe.

Sunday, January 05, 1992—Day 733

Mika's into "shodo," or Japanese calligraphy, and one of their traditions is that on the first Sunday of the year they all write/do it for 12 hours straight. So she couldn't be to church today, which was sad. She's still never seen a testimony meeting.

[We all] had another "inorikai," or prayer meeting, just like last month, where we met early and were driven to a somewhat secluded area in Moriyama. Coming back from it, the bishop told me that Yogo Shimai will make a really good Shimai. I'm glad **[that]** he thinks so!

I bore my testimony at church about my feelings about the baptism kai and the work. Oshiro Choro bore his testimony, too.

Kubota Kyodai has made a newsletter about the missionaries and new members to pass out to the kaiins, called "Missionaries of Fire." It had Mika's picture on it too, and her comments at her baptism just after it ended. Shikano Hideko recorded it, and this is what she said. Japanese packs a much more powerful punch than English does **[in this case]**, so I'm writing it exactly as stated:

"IMA MADE NO JIBUN TO WA MATTAKU CHIGAU JIBUN NO YO DE SHINJIRARENAI KIMOCHI DESU. KONNA KANDO WA IMA MADE NI ARIMASEN DESHITA."

[Translated to the best of my ability, the above statement reads: "I feel like a completely different

person than I was before; it's an unbelievable feeling. I've never been this amazed in my whole life."]

What an eternal blessing indeed. **[And what an indicator of true conversion!]**

As we were leaving the Yamamotos' a couple of nights ago, one of their sons came in, and we shook hands with him. **[It]** turns out **[that]** they found him hanging from the balcony the next morning, dead. He'd killed himself. Apparently he'd graduated from college but couldn't find a job. He'd been inactive lately (while living in Tokyo), so all that is a big worry. They're hoping **[that]** insanity had something to do with it so that he'll be able to resurrect and live with his family **[in the afterlife]**.

[According to LDS doctrine, suicide is a huge sin, the commission of which will keep you out of the Celestial Kingdom, or the highest heaven. Therefore, since it's a sin that *ipso facto* can never be repented of, Mormons always hope that the person committed it due to a mental illness, thus reducing the person's accountability to some degree and thereby his/her sin to the same degree.]

We attended his viewing tonight; it was sad, seeing his family so choked up. His mom was having an especially hard time with it. **[Who can blame her?]**

Monday, January 06, 1992—Day 734

Wrote a letter to my Marine unit, explaining until when I extended and why. I sure hope **[that]** I can get away with extending like this. If they call or write and make me go home I'll be highly disappointed.

We had a pretty decent benkyokai this morning; it's been a while. It rained miserably all day today.

[We] went to the honbu to meet Henmi Shimai, for there Oshiro Choro had to fix the clock affixed to her backpack which he'd assisted in the breakage of **[during the]** last zone taikai. The reason she was there is 'cause her current senior, Waters Shimai, had to go in for some sort of test. **[Although I didn't know it at the time, this turned out to be the same "test" that the mission president had made Elder Depeel take.]**

We had our first A.B. lesson with Mika tonight. Yamada Yuko tachiaid. During her jiko shokai, she went off the subject and said things about inactivity, trials, being alone, no one helping, etc. that we both thought were quite inappropriate. When she testified she was pretty long-winded. For the life of me I couldn't feel the Spirit, and talking it over later, Oshiro felt the same way. Who knows, maybe it was just different 'cause we're not so strung up about her baptism and salvation like before. Or maybe it's just 'cause A.B. lessons aren't technically our responsibility; stake missionaries should have a lot/most to do with them.

We didn't get much of it taught. Mika wants to have them completed by February 10th. She also is getting work off early to see me off at the airport, bless her heart.

I hope **[that]** today's lesson didn't hurt her testimony at all. C'mon, Mika, hang in there.

Tuesday, January 07, 1992—Day 735

Transfer calls came. Ishida and Garff are gone. Little's getting a **[green]** bean, and to our apartment is coming Pollard Choro, who was Biddulph's replacement in Nishio as a bean way back in the Okazaki days.

Had to play tennis with Kobayashi and crew again. Gads, I hate it. I've just become Japanese; I can't say my feelings directly **[to people]**. **[Don't worry; I had no problem saying my feelings directly in this journal.]** They said that after I'm home they want me to have good memories of fun tennis in Owariasahi. **[Once again, although the name of the area and ward in which I lived was "Meito-Kita," the name of the township in which our apartment was located was "Owariasahi."]** Thanks, but I'd rather have

good memories of people humbling themselves, repenting, and coming unto Christ in Owariasahi.

[We] got our money and we shopped a little. Got into a semi-conversation with a woman as I was bagging my groceries. She asked/commented **[in near-perfect English]** that Mormonism was strict, asking if it's true **[that]** we can't "love" anyone else after we're married. Rent a brain, lady! How would you like it if your husband went off with some other chick? **[Knowing now what I do about Japanese culture, chances are she was used to it.]** Reader, let me make one thing absolutely, perfectly clear: The Japanese race as a whole has nearly no common sense whatsoever. It'd amaze you. **[I hereby apologize to everyone for having made such a comment.]**

Iwai-san, one of if not the highest up in the foreign relations department of Owariasahi, came over tonight to show me some of the pictures **[that]** he'd taken of the various international events. (He thought **[that]** I was leaving **[on]** January 10th.) He gave me some doubles of the ones I was in. **[That was]** nice of him; he sacrificed his own time and everything to come here. We gave him two Books—one **[in]** English, one **[in]** Japanese.

I got a letter from Jeanie and her gang in Michigan. Ooh, a couple of them turned me on. Sister Turner said **[that]** I was gorgeous, and since I made my tape for them in the shower, Sister Gamble said that next time I spend all night in the shower, let them know, 'cause there are some sisters in Michigan who'd love to join in. Hot! I saw her picture, too—She's a total babe.

I'm writing back to both, of course. Maybe going home won't be so bad after all. **[I wrote back to the two of them in the same provocative tenor in which they wrote to me. I sent them "care of" Jeanie, which was probably a mistake because Jeanie must've read them—I never heard back from Jeanie again.]**

Wednesday, January 08, 1992—Day 736

Even though today was P-day (the rules changed; for transfer week it's now on Wednesdays **[instead of on Mondays like usual]**), we did service. We just didn't dendo at night. I got some letters written, then we four went and played video games again.

I'm in a pretty pissed off mood. I'm just sick of people and their crap. I wonder how much more I'll have to take before I'm out of here.

Thursday, January 09, 1992—Day 737

Since Cook doesn't know his way around Nagoya, the subway systems, etc., I went by myself to pick up Pollard. In Nagoya Station I ran into Seegmiller and Nielson. Pollard got off with someone else, and we all stood and talked for a while.

Weird, it seems **[like]** everyone is taking this test that Depeel took. Waters Shimai had to take it; now she's going home. The buch asked **[Elder]** Seppi to take it, and apparently Baird has to take it, too. **[Elder]** Law is going home as well.

What's with this place? We all get depressed. We all agreed that if any of us had to take that test, we'd probably all fail. Maybe the buch is trying to weed out the ineffective missionaries as part of his "work effective" plan.

[From then on, I knew that Elder Depeel had been sent home on extremely dubious pretexts at best and had been "set up" at worst. I also knew that all the excuses given for his forced departure were nothing more than a smoke screen. Also from then on, everyone lived in fear of "the test." I only had a month left, so I knew I was safe, but I sometimes wonder if I would've been given the test too if I had, say, six months or longer left to serve.]

Yet it was even more ominous than this. Although I used the phrase "ineffective missionaries"

above, Sister Waters was *far* from ineffective. In fact, by all accounts she was seeing massive amounts of success there in Toyota. This caused a pall to settle over the mission: What if the mission president was giving the test to, and sending home, people he simply didn't like?]

I brought Pollard back, then Oshiro and I went out to pay bills and make copies and send letters. It took long enough.

Next we came back, ate, then left for Eikaiwa in Meito. When it ended, Gibson and Southwick came over to chat **[from the mission home]** since they've both been in Meito-Minami before. I talked a little with Southwick, but I should've made a point to talk with Gibson as well. **[It's]** strange; I should've been there with them. (They're dying.)

Kurokawa Tomoyo was there from Toyota. She gave me (and others) a New Year's card. She wrote in mine that last year was a good year because she got to meet me. In Japanese she wrote that since she's going to America this year, "let's play" for sure (Japanese **[people]** use that word in a very broad sense. **["Let's play" in Japanese is much closer in meaning to "Let's meet up" or "let's hang out" in English.]**) And she said that she'd be extremely happy if I waited 'till then without making any girlfriends.

Tomo-chan, what a sweetie.

Waters and Henmi were there from Toyota, also. It was sad, knowing **[that]** Sister Waters will soon be gone. **[What would've been my last day turned out to be her last day instead.]**

PHOTOS 126



Foreground, L-R: Me, Sister Waters, Elder Hintze (on the mission home staff).

Background: Daren Ames, one of the mission president's sons.



L-R: Sister Waters, Tomoyo Kurokawa.

Friday, January 10, 1992—Day 738

Had to do a bunch of stuff around here, so we didn't get out 'till past 1:00 [p.m.]. [We] went to the honbu to show some bank receipts, and there I got into a conversation about how when Gibson walks out the door then I'm the one who's been here the longest. Then the buch called [out] to me [from his office] and said that what I need to do is get out there and dendo, since knowing what I do I should be the most effective one out here. I should be, but some are blessed more than me. For the life of me, I can't force a person if they say no. We'll see what can't be done [during] this last month of mine, though.

[We earlier] went and bought a cake mix to make one for Yuka and her mother, whose birthdays are two weeks back-to-back. I forgot and left it at the honbu, though.

Talked a little with Gibson and Southwick before they left. [It was] really strange; I should've been [going home] with them.

[We later] taught a cool A.B. [lesson] to Mika. Man, she's elect. More so than me, I think. [Boy, haven't the intervening years proven *that* true!]

[We] hunted down and found where volleyball was going on, but we were late. Tomoyo was there, too, which was cool.

This is weird. This should've been my last entry, but no. [It's] wild; you can open the pages of this journal and read from when I was fresh into the M.T.C. to when I became the #1 oldest/longest [serving] missionary in the Japan Nagoya Mission.

Saturday, January 11, 1992—Day 739

After A.B.C. **[Eikaiwa]** we went and ate inside Shiroyama Castle again. **[We then]** came home and after a while **[we]** left and met the guy **[whom]** Cook and I met on our split a while back. We went in and chatted for 45 minutes or so. My pick-up and dendo suru fire was completely gone. I hardly even cared. **[It's a]** good thing **[that]** my dode knows Japanese and could talk to him.

[We] later housed a little and my dode placed a Book. **[We]** streeted after that. **[During this, we]** looked into a toy store and found a model **[that]** I've been searching for for well over five years: A Ju87 G-2 Stuka, **[which was a]** German World War II dive bomber. **[I bought it, of course.]**

By the way, Little told me this morning that their investigator **[who is also]** named Mika has grown and progressed by leaps and bounds and wants to be baptized really bad. They all know that this growth and change started when she saw our baptism, so Little says **[that]** he's *still* thanking me for that, exceedingly.

Too cool! Now someone else is growing as a result **[of that baptismal service]**, too.

Sunday, January 12, 1992—Day 740

I sure was busy at church today. Translating, coordinating, etc. etc. etc. On top of that, I had to give a talk on Hope with only a few minutes' notice. They'd warned me earlier, but had the wrong date written on the notice **[that]** they'd given me, so I was confused. I was lucky, for thanks to the Lord it turned out okay.

Mika was there. From the stand I got to see her take the sacrament for the first time. **[It was]** truly spectacular. She got to go to all three meetings for the first time today. She now has home teachers, Brothers Kishimoto and Fukunaga. **[They're]** good men, both. I'm glad.

I was running around with so much other stuff going on that I couldn't pay too much attention to Mika. She pretty much got along okay by herself and with the other members, so that was satisfying. **[It's a]** good sign, since I won't be around forever.

[We] went home and made two cakes, one for Yuka-chan and one for her mother, since Yuka's birthday was **[on]** the 1st and her mother's is **[on]** the 15th. Next we rode out and delivered them, candles burning and everything (once we got there). These two **[birthday cakes]** held their shape and frosting perfectly, unlike Mika's disaster back on August 26.

It was fun giving their cakes to them. **[We knocked on the door and sang "Happy Birthday" as we handed Yuka her cake. Once we said our goodbyes and they closed the door, we immediately knocked on the door again and sang "Happy Birthday" once more as we handed her mom a cake of her own. I'm sure neither of them were expecting that.]** Yuka's a sweetheart.

Gads, it's been a long time. I'm dying to make out with somebody.

PHOTOS 127



L-R: Me, Junko Masaka, Brother Salway photo bombing. That's Okina Shimai's profile in the background.

Monday, January 13, 1992—Day 741

We didn't do much but go and play video games, the four of us. Later I wanted to finish writing letters instead of dendo, so we did that.

Got another letter from that bitch Theresa. She doesn't know when to quit! Most human beings know the limits on common courtesy, but I guess **[that]** she's either inhuman or else a bit insane. What a wench.

Tuesday, January 14, 1992—Day 742

It was raining this morning, so I called the Seto boys and cancelled district meeting. Later we played tennis, and I wasn't half bad. After that, we had a nice meal with the Yamaguchis. They always feed us well when we go over.

Today I got a letter from Matsubara Tomie in Nishio. Now that's one outstanding woman.

[I have] only one month left.

Wednesday, January 15, 1992—Day 743

Today was "Seijinshiki," the coming-of-age ceremony, again. We went for Pollard Choro and also to see who we could meet. We were lucky, for even though my dode and I are both 22, the guy still let us go in.

The thing was way longer than Inuyama's was last year. **[It was]** totally boring, too. Afterwards it was hard getting into any sort of conversation at all. The kimonos were cool, but the chicks were (99% of them) butt ugly. Owariasahi really leaves something to be desired.

[We] played games again, then at home we opened the gifts we all got from Seijinshiki. The best one was an electric alarm clock. It's great, for for over two long years I've been using the same wind-up thing

and have had to wind it every night. Finally, **[I have]** something different.

Took a long nap, then went with Cook to make copies. On the way home I called Yoshie and we arranged a time to meet. **[And thus began my descent into fukedom during the last month of my mission. Meeting a member of the opposite sex from outside the district boundaries was verboten, of course. Yet my mindset was this: Having gone two full years before finally seeing some real, true-to-life success, there was no way in Hell I was going to see a repeat within a single solitary month. This is because I had no other investigators and one month simply isn't enough time to go from finding a person to seeing him or her baptized—at least, in Japan it isn't. So since I wasn't going to see any real success anyway before my mission ended, why not "cut loose" and have a little fun before my mission ended?] [It was]** the first time I heard her voice since the day I transferred **[away]** from Okazaki. What a sweetie she is. I need her something fearsome.

Oh yeah, during/after Seijinshiki one girl asked if I was a Mormon missionary. I asked how she knew, and she said that I just had that "aura." Now is that just the coolest, or what? I have that "aura!" **([It's])** rather surprising that I still have it, though.)

Thursday, January 16, 1992—Day 744

[We] did service, ate more okonomiyaki with Kobayashi, then took off to try to find Salway Kyodai's workplace to get a talk off **[of]** him that I need to translate. Couldn't find it, so I was pissed.

[We] went and taught Mika A.B. Lesson #2. Terasawa Shimai tachiaid. I emphasized that she should be extremely careful when she chooses her marriage partner, but later Oshiro told me **[that]** I should've been a bit more careful since Terasawa Shimai's husband isn't a member.

I felt the Spirit during the lesson, which was cool since I don't think **[that]** I deserved it. We've been staying up and sleeping in far too late; that's why. But I sure have been feeling good lately, though.

Friday, January 17, 1992—Day 745

Today was my split with Cook. We headed straight out for Nonami, riding the Meijo line (eventually) from one end to the other. **[During the trip, I reflected on Doctrine and Covenants 9:13-14, the last scripture which I'd felt inspired to read during my prayer back on Day 724. It's the one that reads: "Do this thing which I have commanded you, and you shall prosper. Be faithful, and yield to no temptation. Stand fast in the work wherewith I have called you, and a hair of your head shall not be lost, and you shall be lifted up at the last day. Amen." Since 99% of my purpose in visiting Nonami was to play around (the ostensible, on-paper reason was to go and retrieve Cook's coat that he'd accidentally left there), I was indeed A) failing to do this thing which God had commanded me, B) failing to be faithful, C) yielding to temptation, and D) failing to stand fast in the work wherewith God had called me. Considering the conditional promise at the end of the scripture, did that mean that I was throwing away an all-but-guarantee of salvation . . . literally, the ultimate "giving up your birthright for a mess of pottage" scenario? Every so often I still ponder that question.]** Next **[came]** a long walk and we were there at the famous sento that I've heard so much about **[from Cook]**.

First off we met Okasan, **[which is]** Japanese for "mom." She took us around the corner and stuffed us full of Chinese food. Later Otosan (**[which is Japanese for]** "dad") got back, and we all decided to head out to an amusement park in Mie-Ken (**["Ken" is Japanese for]** Prefecture). You see, this is Cook's old area, and he would help these folks clean their sento. They're all really good friends. **[These two were fantastic people, real salt-of-the-earth types with great senses of humor. Either one of them would probably give you the shirt off of their back.]**

I was glad, for I thought **[that]** I'd never get to see Mie-ken before my mission ended. Now there's only one out of the six **[prefectures]** in the mission that I haven't seen—Toyama-ken.

At the amusement park we basically rode a few rides and hung out. Not too many others were there. **[Part of the reason for the low turnout, I'm sure, is because A) it was a weekday, and B) it was very cold and windy.]**

Once we were back **[at their]** home from that, we waited around and Ootosan kicked my butt twice on Shogi.

His son, **[his]** nephew, and one of their friends showed up and we all went out to eat again. It was like a tabehodai on beef, the way they were bringing it out. **[I found out later that the name of the dish was "shabu shabu." There was a pot of boiling water in the center of the table, and people would pick up slices of meat with their chopsticks, dip the meat into the water until cooked, then eat it.]** 'Twas delicious.

Their younger cohorts wanted to play longer, so we took off with the other three and went bowling. It looked like we were going to spend the night, so I called Oshiro and explained that we'd be back in the morning.

They played video games for a while **[I should've used the word "we" instead of "they;" they kindly hooked Cook and me up with lots of coins as we all took turns playing the notorious coin-eater "Terminator II"]**, then we all headed back **[to Ootosan and Okasan's]** home, which is above the sento. We all sat around and talked 'till way, way late. I looked at a nice book on Rie Miyazawa in the process.

[Rie Miyazawa is/was a female Japanese celebrity who was 18 at the time. Although I didn't have the guts to go into any detail when I originally wrote this entry, the fact of the matter is that the book was a nude pictorial of her. Japanese law at the time forbade the publishing of genitalia, so they were rather tasteful nudes, all things considered. Nevertheless, looking at such a book was, of course, utterly forbidden for missionaries. Yet for whatever reason, I felt far less guilty looking at this than I did when I looked at the Playboy back on Day 597.]

[It] feels weird actually sleeping over, but it sure has been a fun day.

[There were a couple of other embarrassing details that I left out of the original journal for fear of upsetting posterity:

First, rumor had it that Ootosan was in possession of one or more pornographic videotapes and that he'd showed it/them to missionaries at least once before. Now, in Japan, the pubic areas of the actors and actresses in all such tapes are pixelated out, so they're more like cable versions of such movies, but that doesn't make them any more acceptable for missionary viewing, obviously. Somehow, the topic came up—I can't remember if it was me who brought it up, but knowing me, it probably was—and he started searching for it/them. I was more than a little relieved when he wasn't able to find it/them, so that was one sin that I didn't commit.

Second, when Cook and I were about ready to hit the sack, one of Ootosan's other three visitors was planning on staying up later to watch T.V. In Japan, it's legal to show breasts on T.V., and the likelihood that such things would be shown in later hours was much greater, of course. I asked him to wake me up if anything like that came on T.V. Just after I did so, my conscience reminded me, with a vengeance, that I was setting an extremely poor example of missionary conduct. Unlikely though it was, what if he became interested in the missionaries' message and wanted to listen to the discussions at some point in the future? After how I'd acted, how seriously would he take anything they said? I later pondered how I'd done everything humanly possible to make sure that absolutely no mistakes were made during Mika's teaching process; why was I so blatantly sabotaging this guy's process in advance? Why did I allow my approach to change literally 180 degrees? Why did I care so much about projecting a perfect image where she was concerned, but didn't care at all about the image I conveyed where *he* was concerned? I was pretty ashamed of myself for quite some time afterward. Even so, he never woke me up, so I suppose nothing questionable came on T.V. after all.]

PHOTOS 128



Cook and me at the amusement park.



Cook and me in the second row, clearly exhausted from screaming our guts out on the rollercoaster.

Saturday, January 18, 1992—Day 746

We woke up at 7:00 [a.m.] and a couple of the guys from last night drove us to the nearest eki. Once [at] home, Pollard told us that Hawkins had called [early that morning] for some reason.

That got me worried. I thought that he might tell the buch on me, and sure enough the buch called, asking what we had done the night before. After a hasty explanation, he told me to bring Cook and go in for an interview this afternoon.

That pissed me off. Hawkins had told on me.

The two Seto guys (one is a bean who replaced Garff) were there for district training, and I was a bad example by saying several a swear word in relation to Hawkins. **[The green bean—i.e., the missionary fresh from the M.T.C.—took it all in stride and didn't appear offended, to his credit. Nevertheless, I soon felt really bad for setting such a poor example. And I was the district leader!] I could barely concentrate on what I was doing [I was so mad].**

Before A.B.C. [Eikaiwa] I decided to call Hawkins and get an explanation as to why he tattled. He sounded a bit scared, for I was obviously ticked. He talked pretty fast and hastily. Finally he raised his voice a little at me, then I told him [that] I'd talk to him later. **[I could've sworn that my exact words were "I'll deal with you later," but who knows.] [He said] "Fine," and we both hung up.**

On the way to A.B.C. [Eikaiwa], pissed as I was, I got to thinking. I don't like being ticked at people [whom] I like. I hate losing friends and I'd hate to be Hawkins' enemy.

After class ended (me and my jokyu group had gotten into a discussion on destiny, astrology, fortune telling, etc.), we had a potluck [lunch]. It was to welcome Pollard. I was so worried about the upcoming interview that I could barely eat at all.

Finally we two [Cook and I] took off again. We couldn't tell him [i.e., the mission president] that we

took off to Mie-ken, so we made up a cover story as we rode.

Dropped by the Salways to pick up a talk from him that I have to translate for him tomorrow.

Once at the honbu, the buch wasn't in his office yet, but Hawkins was nearby helping Bailey with some stuff. **[Bailey was about to replace Hawkins as the financial secretary.]** Next Hawkins came out into the hall and asked if I was still mad at him.

The next conversation was quiet but a bit strained. I had a pretty undefendable position, for how can I stick up for breaking the rules?

[It] turns out that he called for information on folks with a yotei, and he had to call the president at a certain time. He gave the president everybody's information but mine, 'cause I wasn't there to give it. So he had no choice but to tell the president why he hadn't talked to me.

Judging from the previous conversation, it may have been a cover story also, but I bought it. I felt pretty bad about the whole thing, so I next sat down and wrote Hawkins a letter of apology, admitting that what I had said and done was wrong, among other things.

[It] turns out **[that]** the president had gone to his son's basketball game. Two hours to the minute after I got there, I finally got to go in for my interview. Before I walked in, I handed my letter to Hawkins so he'd know that the president didn't force me to write it. I also told him to read it when I wasn't around.

Before anything got started, one of the president's sons came in and related the following experience: Their oldest son Byron is now back from Christmas in America and will soon go on his mission to Sendai. **["Sendai" is the northernmost mission on Honshu, Japan's main island.]** He barely got his hair cut really short, and when Daren went downstairs he saw him and said, "What's Shades Choro doing down here?" He looked a little closer and said, "Why is Shades Choro wearing Byron's shirt?" Upon looking closer he said, "Hey, that's Byron!" **[It was a]** wild experience. The buch's own family members are mistaking other family members for me.

[Then the interview began.] First off he asked me what we did. I gave him our cover story. **[It was]** pretty close to the real thing, sans the details of the Mie trip. He asked right out if Otosan had shown any porno videos. He hadn't.

He next asked if there were any girls involved. There weren't. He said **[that]** he could tell by my countenance that I wasn't lying, so that was nice. He next talked about Otosan, and he doesn't have a good image of the guy. He thinks **[that]** Otosan has shown X **[-rated]** videos to missionaries. The fact is that he **[Otosan]** walked in on Seppi and Allen Choros; they had put it in **[the VCR]** on their own when they went there on a split. We guess that one of them in an interview tried to shift the blame off of themselves.

At any rate, the buch said **[that]** he wouldn't've cared nearly as much had we stayed with someone other than him. He also said that missionaries won't go there anymore. Uh-oh, the Nonami guys will kill us. They would go and clean the sento and Otosan would take them to dinner every once in a while.

He talked about the missionaries he could trust, and I guess that he had been a bit upset before I got there. **([According to him, he'd said to himself,]** "If I can't trust Shades, who *can* I trust? **[It was a]** neat compliment, for sure!) he also said that he almost considers me part of his family, since I've been here and been so close the entire time he's been here.

We talked some about my impending death. He committed me to do no more playing on non-P-days. **[I can do]** only missionary stuff. If I agree, I get to stay district leader.

Lastly I asked about the bunpo list. He sent it to the regional representative, and **[he]** figured **[that]** the other mission presidents would be more impressed getting a copy from him. But since he **[i.e., the**

regional representative] doesn't know Japanese, he may not have been able to fully appreciate it, so who knows what's happened to it.

The interview wasn't so bad after all. **[It had been very hard to stick to the cover story under pressure. Luckily Cook also stuck to it and didn't cave under the pressure, either.]**

Back at home Ootosan called, saying **[that]** the buch had called the Nonami guys and said, "No more Ootosan." The Nonami guys called Ootosan to tell him the bad news. Ootosan **[then]** called us, letting us know what **[had]** happened. He insisted on calling President Ames back to apologize for having done anything wrong. At first I was very hesitant, for I didn't want our cover story blown. He said **[that]** he wouldn't say anything about me, so I went ahead and gave him the **[phone]** number.

After a long while, Ootosan called back and said **[that]** they both talked for almost an hour. Somehow the buch changed his mind and said **[that]** the missionaries could carry on business as usual. The Nonami folks were happy and Ootosan was glad **[that]** he'd called.

Soon after that, sure enough the buch calls, saying **[that]** he talked to Ootosan just before ("Oh really?"). He said that he was a really nice guy, and heard that he'd taken us to Mie-ken. Uh-oh. **[It]** took some fast talking and playing dumb to get out of that one.

What a screwed-up, hassle of a day today was. **[Yep, I sure did pay for the fuke-ness of the day before.]**

PHOTOS 129



At the potluck. To the far left is Yamauchi; next to her is Pollard. I'm at the far right.



Another shot of the same group (minus Kobayashi-san).

Sunday, January 19, 1992—Day 747

Oshiro rode way up ahead of me on the way to church today. He was totally out of sight. He must've never thought to look behind him, 'cause it wasn't 'till I finally got to church that I met up with him again. You see, my bike's chain has pulled itself a bit longer than it should be (over time), and now even though the chain is tight it doesn't exactly match to the teeth in the sprockets. Therefore, if I apply too much pressure to the pedals, the chain skips. **[Or was my back sprocket missing some teeth?]** Therefore, I can only go so fast. I was a bit pissed, so this time I said something about it. **[Essentially, I explained that I couldn't go very fast, so please look behind him next time and don't get too far ahead. He nodded but didn't say anything.]** I held my temper too long with Seegmiller.

Matsuoka Shimai was a missionary from this ward who went to Okayama, and today was her first Sunday back. I knew her from the book on kaiins **[that]** we missionaries keep and had considered writing to her. I never got around to it, though. **[She's a]** cool person, it seems. Humble. She'll tachiai our next A.B. lesson, so I'm looking forward to that.

Before church started, Hawkins thanked me for the letter. I said **[that]** I was glad he didn't burn it first. We both were smiling by now, so it looks like this thing has been successfully resolved. Whew! **[To this day, I still regret getting into his face and causing ill will in the first place, though.]**

The president was there, too. He came up all smiles and talked about how cool Ootosan was. He said that it turned out that nobody had ever told him the rules. So he's just going to send him a copy of the rules and kindly ask him to throw the missionaries out after the two hour limit has passed. **[Although the rules under President Smith forbade missionaries from staying at a person's house for more than one hour, President Ames wisely recognized that such a short time would be "eat and run" and bumped the time limit up to two hours.]**

[It] sure was a sharp change of opinion, but it looks like that's all been resolved, too. Thank goodness.

I was up 'till 3:00 **[a.m.]** last night translating Brother Salway's talk. Unlike last time, where I tried to go word-for-word, I tried for general meaning. We sat next to Shimizu Yuka who read over my translation and checked for errors. This time I was surprised at how few **[errors]** there were. Very surprised. **[The]**

last time it was a near-complete overhaul.

We went up and did it, **[i.e., gave the talk,]** and before Sunday School Nomura Shimai came up and asked who had written the translation for me. She was surprised when Yuka told her that I had done it **[myself]**. Ha ha!

Yuka returned the pans used for delivering last week's **[birthday]** cakes. Her mom had loved it, and Yuka had taken hers to work and shared it with her workmates. She wanted the recipe, but instant mixes are pretty easy, aren't they?

Yogo Shimai was there. **[On her request,]** I signed her Bible that we'd given her. I prayed to know what to write, and what was produced was two pages of sheer art, in my opinion. They were having a song taikai practice of some sort after church, and she was attending that sitting amidst many members. **[It's]** too cool, 'cause now she's doing things that active members do!! What a great feeling **[it was]**, seeing that.

Monday, January 20, 1992—Day 748

That sweetheart Yoshie gave me a card on Saturday, so I wrote her back today. I turned on the heat considerably higher than before; I wonder how she'll react?

Played a few **[video]** games and got my butt kicked.

The buch called again, and said (talking slowly and carefully) that I'll no longer be district leader. It's been his policy to bump people down to regular senior during their last little bit, and he said that that was the reason and that it had nothing to do with what happened on Friday and Saturday. It makes me wonder, though. Scott was zone leader 'till the end. I'm not the first one this has happened to, so I don't know for sure. As of Thursday I'm out. **[It was a]** fun stint while it lasted, though. **[Elder Pollard would replace me as district leader.]**

[We] went home teaching with Salway Kyodai tonight. Left my freaking gloves at one of the houses though, dang it.

Tuesday, January 21, 1992—Day 749

For benkyokai we just watched a video that Pollard and the other missionaries had made when he was junior **[companion]** in Kasugai.

Oh yeah, Mika called this morning. She said that she read my entry in her Bible in the bus on the way home from church. It was written in English, but she understood it all **[with]** no problem. Here's what she said about it: When she read it, "the tears wouldn't stop."

What a blessing! All the way from day one, and now she's feeling the Spirit to the point that she *cries* like I often do!!

Miyachi Shimai called me a couple of days ago in the early morning. She is in America again now, but she said that—wait, let me explain first. She made a tape of spiritual songs in Japanese (she has a voice like an angel) and gave a copy to Mika. She said Mika told her that she (Mika) will cry when she listens to it. How often I don't know, but wow! To the point of tears!

That's it. I'm glad **[that]** I extended. No matter what trials I've endured or what shortcomings I may have, I can't help but feel good about my mission now. Reflecting back on even the mission as a whole, I feel totally "confident" (for lack of a better word) about the work that's been done. A soul **[has been brought]** unto Christ. Few human beings ever on Earth have been as blessed as I. Tears. She now sheds tears!

Her family even asked what the matter was when she got home. She said to me that her Bible has now become a "treasure."

Wednesday, January 22, 1992—Day 750

Today I took Little Choro's bean, Stoker Choro, out on a split. First off I got a haircut. 'Tis real short now.

We next went out and hunted down a few referrals, one of which I'd gone for six months ago but **[who]** was away at school.

[There was] no one home at the first place, so **[the]** next one was **[written on]** a paper that had been up in my desk that I thought I'd looked up **[already]** but hadn't.

We couldn't find the place, so we stopped at a haircut joint and asked one of the barbers who took us back outside and pointed the way. He asked if we were Christians. He talked about us lifting people's hearts. He said he could tell **[all]** that just by looking at us. He **[also]** said there was a Japanese proverb that says that the eyes are the window to the heart. And by looking at our eyes only, he could tell that we were good people. Cool guy, eh? We felt pretty good after that.

We met our referral. She's a 22 year-old girl. She was referred by her junior high teacher who showed her pictures of Utah, talked about the church, etc. So she's got a good image of it. She's cool. She took a Book and said **[that]** she'd call for an appointment, I guess. Whether she'll call or not I don't know, but I begged her to meet before I go home in three weeks.

[We] housed out a "danchi," or apartment building, that I'd had my eye on for quite some time. **[We]** met a Pakistani guy, but no success.

Stoker says (he studied Japanese for two years) that he can't understand me at all when I talk, although he understands Little Choro (speed, etc.). He complimented my flipcharts, too.

Stoker Choro is a fun guy to talk to. **[We spoke in]** all English.

We went to the Sento later, we and the Seto guys (four people). Oshiro met a guy and gave him a Book and explained about missionaries. The guy next ran out, bought a bunch of food, and gave it to him!

He said to come by his place, but he rightfully belongs to the Seto guys, so they'll do it.

[Today was] not a bad day. I'm glad **[that]** I extended.

By the way, I got a letter from Jodi today, **[the]** first time in two months. She'll be out of state when I get home. From the feeling of the letter, **[it]** sounds like the feeling has **[pretty]** much fizzled out. That's okay, **[it's like that for]** me, too. **[(Does she have)]** a new boyfriend, perhaps?)

Thursday, January 23, 1992—Day 751

This morning we went out for service, and one of the women came in and got me to help them feed the babies. The reason they chose me is because Sato Hiroki was there, the baby **[whom]** I held that first time. **[It's]** funny; they call me his "papa."

Next to me was a lady who has been there only a week. For some reason she came out and said that soon there would be a new culture in Japan.

[A] new culture? How in the world do you go about changing cultures, especially one as deep-rooted and ancient as Japan's?

Next she asked if I'd ever heard of Okawa Ryuho. Oh, yes.

[It] turns out [that] she's one of his disciples. And oh, how hardcore she is. She spoke in that monotone brainwashed voice that you always hear in the movies. We talked a bit, and most of the answers she gave sounded like set, memorized phrases. **[I could probably insert a comment about unintended irony, but I won't.]** I don't remember her ever smiling. **[She showed]** no joy at all. I talked with her about a few doctrinal items, i.e. "how can all religions be true if they often contradict each other?"

The other women (five others) were silently cheering me on. From that, I made the guess that she's probably been driving them all insane since she's gotten there. She sure did shokai me quick enough.

She gave me a magazine, but since it's in kanji I can only look at the pictures. We exchanged addresses; **[it]** ought to be interesting. During July they're having a debate—"religious war" as she put it—with the Soka Gakkais. There they're planning on proving SGI **[which is short for "Soka Gakkai International"]** wrong, thereby winning mass amounts of converts from that. I'd love to see Okawa Ryuho face off with Ikeda Daisaku. I'm dying to find out how it turns out.

She said a few good things about us Mormons, so I thought that was cool. **[She's a]** nice lady; you have to love her; it's just too bad **[that]** she's so far gone. (She even had the leviathan apron, à-la Ryuho Okawa **[i.e., the leviathan is his symbol.]**)

[We] ate some with Yamauchi-san, came back, then went to Eikaiwa in Meito. Tomoyo was there, and she gave me some pictures and a poem in the same envelope. She told me to read it by myself and show no one.

So back at home I read it. She didn't come right out and say "I love you" **[Japanese women are conditioned against saying such a thing directly]**, but the implication was more than obvious. Whether she wrote it herself or not I don't know (**[it was in]** English).

She wrote things like, "Let's live our lives never being separate from each other," **[and]** "To make our love last forever," etc.

[It's] strange. I wonder if she likes me?

Friday, January 24, 1992—Day 752

Got a late start and didn't feel like doing anything. Before we finally got out of the apartment, I got a call from Sonoda Akiko, our Okawa Ryuho lady. She invited us to some sort of meeting tonight of theirs. **[I thought,]** "What the heck," so I agreed.

That got me in the bashing mood, so I tried to call up that Islamic missionary **[whom]** Bunnage and I met in Fujigaoka way back when. He's back in Pakistan, I found out. Maybe sometime I'll talk to his replacement. **[I never did.]**

Reserved a basketball court for the honbu guys, then **[we]** went to the honbu and wrote president's letters. **[i.e., we wrote our weekly mandatory letters to the mission president.]**

[We then went and] got Mika at Fujigaoka **[I actually meant "Kamiyashiro"]** for an A.B. lesson, and on the way there we were passed by the honbu van with four missionaries in it, one of them Frehner. Dude! As we were parking our bikes, he came out to chat. He's down here to get his wisdom teeth out.

Our tachiai, Matsuoka Shimai, never showed. So for a long time I chatted with Frehner. What a stud! He got to meet Mika. Never thought **[that]** those two would ever meet. It was a cool sight, though. While he's here, I hope **[that]** we can chat a lot more, over the phone or whatever.

Finally Kurosawa Shimai came in, the building custodian from Meito-Minami. She said **[that]** she'd tachiai, so for less than a half hour we had our lesson.

On our way back to Kamiyashiro she said **[that]** she's bringing a friend to church on my last Sunday in Japan. Apparently she told this friend about us, and her friend was impressed and wants to meet us. Cool! Already Mika's dendoing!

[We] met Sonoda-san there at Kamiyashiro, then said "bye" to Mika. Crap, I wish Mika didn't have to find out that we went to that.

We got in her car, and on the way she asked **[us]** what our concept of salvation is and what we teach. I told her, then she went into this big long speech. She wouldn't shut up! She was using mega-hard words that I couldn't understand. **[I've been]** out **[for]** over two years, and I still get humbled language-wise.

We finally arrived, and when we went in, the place looked more like an office than a church. Like the one in Takefu. A lady greeted us at the entrance, and since we were really late we sat in the back; **[there were]** no more places **[to sit]**. There were between 25~30 or so people there.

Some guy was speaking, talking about religion and economics, how they're supposedly the same, etc. He had on a huge Okawa Ryuho medallion. Up **[in]** front **[there]** was a picture of Okawa Ryuho, all adorned and decked out like an object of religious worship. The guy bowed to it as he left off speaking.

The next guy stood up and bowed, too (to it). There was a question & answer/free conversation portion near the end, and Sonoda-san spoke up and said essentially, "Let's get our American guest's opinion!"

Uh-oh. Not wanting to be rude since it was their turf, I just said that since I've been raised with a different culture, it's interesting to experience things like this. They asked Oshiro what he thought, and he gave a roundabout answer.

In order to **[bring the meeting to an]** end they whipped out some Buddhist-style prayer book after bowing three times and clapping to Okawa's image. They chanted from that, and "angels of light" were mentioned a few times. She held the book out for me, but I wouldn't chant, of course, the kanji **[nevertheless]** being easy enough to read as it was.

After this, they got into a ring and made us stand with them as they joined arms and sang their theme song. I had Sonoda-san on the left and another chick on the right, so I enjoyed it. **[This was also the first time I saw Sonoda-san actually smile.]**

She thinks **[that]** she's got me recruited. They asked if I was a member, and she said no, but soon. They're trying to recruit me to teach an Eikaiwa **[that]** they're **[going to be]** putting on soon. They're looking for a native speaker but don't have one yet. Too bad; they can come to mine, but I won't teach theirs.

The lady at the door earlier asked if I believe in reincarnation. "No," I said, flat-out. **[For whatever reason, she seemed rather surprised and/or taken aback by this.]**

Sonoda-san took the long way home, driving all over the place, presumably so she could talk our ears off, which she certainly did. She said it in the meeting and re-emphasized it a few times in the car that I'm a great spirit/person coming and teaching about God's love to people, and it's my mission to take all this Ryuho Okawa stuff back to the people in America. It's my "mission" to bring this to America.

Yeah, right. If I *do* have a mission, it's to *warn* the people in America if it ever gets there. Kind of like **[what]** Lynn Bryson does with music. **[Back in the 1980s, Lynn Bryson was a very popular speaker on the Mormon fireside circuit, such that it is. He had been a disc jockey in Hollywood for over twenty years and apparently knew all the inside dirt on many a famous popular musician or group. He spoke all about the devil's influence on the music scene, how such artists were often against God and/or were devil worshippers, etc. That all might sound funny reading me describe it, but I attended one of his lectures once and it was very convincing. It scared me quite a bit, too. Keep**

in mind, of course, that I was still a believing Mormon back then.]

Fetch, we got home late. **[It was]** midnight or so. By the way, she gave me my own personal copy of "Laws of the Sun." **[It's an]** expensive book; **[that was]** nice of her. **[Okawa Ryuho had authored many books; this particular one was the closest thing to scripture for them. Their Bible, if you will.]**

Saturday, January 25, 1992—Day 753

[It] seems like everyone's mad at or fed up with the buch nowadays.

[We] housed a little, then had a family home evening with the Hoshino family. **[They're a]** happy family; there was a good atmosphere there.

Bought a phone card and used 57~58 credits on a phone call to Yoshie. **[Among the many misguided ideas implemented by President Ames was to install pay phones in all the missionary apartments. Until that point, all missionaries in the apartment would split the phone bill evenly; his thinking on this one was that everyone would pay for his or her own calls and no one else's. Now, this may sound good on paper, but calls from a pay phone are/were much more expensive than calls from a standard phone anyway. Therefore, in actual practice, paying for your own calls cost substantially more for everyone than splitting the bill evenly ever did.]** Sweet; she's with it. **[It's]** too bad **[that]** I have to be with a companion 24 hours a day. Her aunt owns a resort hotel, and I can ride military planes to Japan really cheap, . . .

Sunday, January 26, 1992—Day 754

The other two guys had to stay overnight in Kasugai, so we two had the place to ourselves. It felt funny.

[We] got to church **[at]** the same time as Yuka did. She barely got a letter from Kyoko; Kyoko said that she's coming to visit me in Summer. **[It's]** funny how she never told *me* that.

I'm a little too excited to write right now, so forgive this being a bit strange, but we also chatted a bit about Yuka's eventual coming over. It's looking sweet. It looks like I'll get to write to her once I'm gone, too.

Mika came in, and Yuka said **[that]** she looks like an angel.

Sat next to Mika in sacrament meeting. She took a pageful of notes; it was good to see.

There was some sort of leadership taikai there, and several high-ups were there. The stake president came out of a room **[that]** he was in, saw me, and said in English, "I like your smile!" We hugged. Now was that cool, or what?

Later we were outside in a casual conversation with Sasada Kyodai, Yamada Yuko, and Shikano Hideko. The guy above stake president—regional representative or whatever—came out and said, "What lovely girls! I'm jealous!" Uh-oh! **[It]** must've looked bad.

Mika's mom had driven her to church, by the way. Her mom was hoping to see us. That's cool!

Saw lots of Okazaki members, including Anan Shimai. Tanaka Shimai was there, too, and she gave me a small plate of cookies and a jewelry or whatever box for my mom. For my mom too, now is that above and beyond the call of duty or what?

It's all arranged now. Cook and I ride out to meet Yoshie tomorrow. **[I was able to pull this off by telling Oshiro that I wanted to meet Brother Oyama from Inuyama again before my mission ended. Thankfully he didn't want to go, so I recruited Cook instead—precisely as planned.]** The other two are out on an all-night super donut run in someone's car, complete with videos, other missionaries, etc.

Cook is having a female friend [whom] he met on the plane come [tomorrow], and Yoshie is bringing her car to Fujigaoka. PARTY!!!

PHOTOS 130



Reclining: Pollard.

Crouching, L-R: Cook, Little, Oshiro.

Standing, L-R: Stoker, me.

This was taken inside of our apartment, facing South.

Monday, January 27, 1992—Day 755

Cook and I got up early and rode out to Fujigaoka, and there we met Rieko, Cook's friend, and then we met Yoshie! It's been 16 months. A year and four months. Holy smell was it good seeing her again.

We loaded up in the car and off we went to Sakae. We parked, got out, and walked to a nearby pizza place. We four ate there and talked for quite a while.

Next we left and walked around and eventually went into a big department store. We went downstairs, and next I bought Yoshie some ice cream and some for myself, and we ate that and talked for a lot longer of a time. **[During this conversation I found out that she was four years older than me—making her 26. She said that this is the first time she's ever had any sort of relationship with a guy with this much of an age difference. It wasn't the first time for me; Rhonda was (and still is) five years older than I am.]** [It's] pretty flattering when people want you to come back and want to visit you, too. We were planning a double-header: Me coming back in Spring and her coming to America in Summer. We're both going to make efforts to realize this dream. Boy, is it a good one! Thank goodness for those cheap military planes.

After that, we went to an astrodome-, planetarium-like place. I called **[the apartment]** and said **[that]** we wouldn't be able to make district devotional, and we watched a program on the Summer constellations. 'Twas cool, sitting next to Yoshie in the dark. We sat a little close at the end; it was nice.

After that, we walked Rieko to the subway station and said "bye." Yoshie and her must've hit it off well, for they exchanged addresses and said **[that]** they'd write. Cook and her talked a lot about missionaries and what they do and Rieko could see that although Yoshie was Mormon that she was a normal person. So we think it was a good influence for her. **[But what about the example Cook and I were setting? Going and hanging out two-on-two is nothing unusual for a normal person, of course, but had I blinded myself to the fact that this so-called "good influence" might turn into a "bad example" if she ever found out that such conduct is forbidden to missionaries?]**

Yoshie says **[that]** I'm more grown-up. Beyond that, I'm still the same, which is good in her eyes. "Stay cool!" she told me many times.

We rode around the castle and took a few pictures, then **[went]** back to Fujigaoka.

Yoshie man, dang. She stopped her car where she had picked us up, and she presented me with a nicely-wrapped chocolate cake **[that]** she had baked. That sweetheart!

In the process of saying goodbye, up came Daines and Bailey, streeting. "Hey dudes, how's it going?" They smiled and all, but I wonder how it looked. I was still in P-day clothes. They'd better not tell the buch. I can just see it now. I doubt it, though. **[Yoshie gave them a quick cover story, bless her. They must not have told the mission president, because I never heard any more about it.]**

We have to split again on Saturday, so we go to Yoshie's house in Okazaki then.

Tuesday, January 28, 1992—Day 756

[Today was] my last zone taikai. **[There will be]** so many **[new]** programs and changes; I'm glad **[that]** I'm out of here soon.

I was the first one called up to bear **[my]** testimony. After a few opening comments I related the experience I had **[while]** praying the night Mika called us for the yotei, what with D&C 9, etc. I talked for quite a while. I concluded by saying that everything they ever say about the joys of dendo and the rewards therefrom are all true, for I've experienced it for myself. **[Some time later the mission president's wife told me that she wished all the new missionaries could've heard that comment.]**

I also stated that it was my guess that the reason I haven't seen mega-amounts of success is that by kicking me around a bit and having me experience a few trials, I'd do things *right* and not screw around once the real thing finally did come around. And due to that, I now feel very good about my two years here.

And lastly I stated that if anyone ever looked through the lesson plan and had trouble figuring out the bunpo that's in there, then come talk to me after; I've got a present for them (I smiled in the process).

I had almost cried when I'd said earlier how that three hours of baptism kai made the entire two years of dendo worth it.

People thanked me later and I appreciated it.

Got a letter from Depeel Choro. Holy cow is he tearing it up. His letter was 15 pages long.

He related an exceptional experience an investigator of his had with life after death and meeting (or just talking to) Joseph Smith. I'm going to save the letter so **[that]** you can read it for yourself.

[Here's the story. I can easily recount it since it's so indelibly burned into my mind: Elder Depeel taught a lesson to a guy who was in the hospital, convalescing or something. Anyway, partway through, Depeel shows the guy a picture of Joseph Smith that was in his flipcharts. The guy's eyes went wide and he tried to push himself away from the picture.

Once he regained his composure, he related an out-of-body experience he'd had: When he was clinically dead, he found himself riding some sort of carousel. He was cold and uncomfortable. Nearby was a stream, which he decided to cross. As he walked up on the bank on the other side, he immediately became dry as soon as he came out of the water. On this side of the stream, he found himself in a beautiful field or pasture. Various people were nearby, all moving toward some sort of checkpoint or other (I forget how Depeel related it). He decided to follow them. Once there, he came face-to-face with a bearded man. This man consulted a book, then looked at him and told him that it wasn't his time yet.

At that point the doctors successfully revived him and the near-death experience ended. The bearded man who consulted the book? None other than Joseph Smith, Jr.!

When Depeel saw the guy's reaction, he told him that he shouldn't be scared; this was his proof that what they were teaching him was true. As for me, I'll admit that this story has made me doubt my decision to leave the church, especially at the beginning when I took my first timid steps into ex-Mormonism. Depeel himself has since departed the LDS church, so there must be more—or less, perhaps—to this story than he related.]

He [Depeel] says he knows beyond a doubt [that] he's supposed to be there. He thanked me for training him, but considering how well he's doing I doubt [that] I could've taught him anything. He says [that] two things have refined him: He learned hard work in Japan, and in Provo they taught [lessons] so much that he learned lots of teaching skills. So hard work and teaching skills and he's now ready to go!

I love that guy. What a stud.

Wednesday, January 29, 1992—Day 757

I wrote a couple of letters that needed to be written. My uncle Lynn is getting married in Hawaii and my folks asked about whether I'd go or not so [that] they could reserve me a ticket. [It] looks like I'll get to see Kyoko soon after all. More [on this] later.

This took 'till 3:00 or so, but half of it was my fault for talking to the other guys off and on. They hung out at the apartment too.

I called the buch, getting daring enough to ask permission to go to Yoshie's on Saturday. He picked up the phone, laughing. He said, "It must be great knowing that in the entire world there's only one Shades!" Referring to my comments [at the last zone conference] at the beginning of my testimony before I switched to my serious mood (I believe), he said flat-out, "You are unique!" [I had translated standard Japanese greetings into literal English, which sound really strange/funny in our language.] I hear that quite a bit; I guess it must be true.

I began [the phone call] by saying that I got invited to dinner, but it's with a member outside the zone. He asked where; I said "Okazaki." Immediately he said, "Go!" and I didn't need to explain anything else! I don't believe it! I'm free to go!! [Clearly he would've said "no" had I informed him that the member in question was a single female. He didn't ask, so I didn't volunteer it.]

We went and visited Kobayashi-san in the hospital. She [had] had an operation. The other two beat us there. She was doing good.

We took off and played with Asai-san one last time. We ate dinner with his family and looked at lots of

their pictures. They had told us to come by sometime before I left, and I called and this is the time we arranged.

Called and chatted with Mika later. She somehow won a trip to Hawaii, and of all the luck she's going to get there the same time I am! She'll get to meet my folks! She's taking her mom with her, it looks like. **[It'll happen on]** the 26th of April. How 'bout all that. More planning will need to take place once I get home, but it's all going to be quite cool. We'll probably get her mom out to church. Man oh man.

Thursday, January 30, 1992—Day 758

We had service again, and one of the women in the baby room invited me in to work with them. One of the other ladies from before was outside strolling some of them around as we came up, and she asked me how that "Kofuku no Kagaku" (Ryuho Okawa) thing was. I said **[that]** the guy was neurotic and you've got to have something wrong with your head to believe something like that. **[Is there a trace of irony here?]** She agreed.

Sonoda-san was in there singing her Kofuku no Kagaku songs and chants to the babies as she fed them. She didn't preach to me then, but afterwards as we were walking off she appeared and asked if we wanted to go to a nearby park. Neither Pollard nor Oshiro could be talked into it, so I took Cook and we rode in her car to it.

We walked around some, then she began preaching about a bunch of stuff I already know. I never could figure out what she was getting at **[or]** what her point was (the earth being alive, etc.).

[We] visited Kobayashi, then **[it was]** off to Eikaiwa in Meito again. Before that, I got four letters. One **[was]** from Daren in which he said **[that]** he made out for three hours straight on New Year's. Dang, I'm jealous!

Also got a sweet one from Yoshie.

After Eikaiwa, I wanted to talk with Tomoyo about last week's poem, but there were people in the way, barging into the conversation, etc. We both were a little disappointed about that, but we'll talk next week.

Aki-chan called me tonight about my going home. Volleyball is coming up, so I'll get to see her one last time then.

Friday, January 31, 1992—Day 759

I opened a letter from Mom and out fell \$20.00 in U.S. cash. It wasn't as much as I needed, but since I'm flat broke every little bit helps.

[We] went and visited Kobayashi-san in the hospital again. Otake-san showed up too, being her usual happy and fun to be around self.

Out we went in the rain to teach Mika the rest of A.B. **[Lesson]** #3. Yamaguchi Shimai picked her up and drove her from Kamiyashiro, so we didn't walk to or from there like usual.

More special transfers and a "getting sent home" occurred. This mission is going to Hell. I'm glad **[that]** I'll be getting my tail out of here like a bat out of Hell. Two **[more]** weeks.

Saturday, February 01, 1992—Day 760

Oshiro and Pollard had to go to Kasugai, and so Cook and I went to A.B.C. **[Eikaiwa]** to have two Americans there. After that we came home, got ready, and took off to Okazaki to meet Yoshie.

I had asked her in a letter to bring a friend for Cook, and when I told him about it he got all nervous and

called me names. **[I was a bit surprised by his reaction; I thought he'd be happy.]**

[It] took longer than expected, but we finally got down there and Yoshie was waiting for us since I'd called her from a station we switched trains at. Honey.

We went and picked up her friend first off. Then we stopped off and got some bread for our dinner, and stopped at the auto teller **[i.e., the A.T.M.]** so **[that]** I could have money for the trip home.

It's been 16 months since I've seen the streets of Okazaki **[my second area]**. When I left for Inuyama, I never thought **[that]** I'd see them again.

Finally we got to her house, a pre-war structure that's pretty big. **[The fact that her father was a doctor probably didn't hurt when it came to the house's size.]**

[We] piddled around there for a minute, then went to pick out a video. Cook made a joke about getting an adult video, and they both laughed and pointed him to that section once we got there. We finally picked out "Robin Hood" **[the version with Kevin Costner]**.

Back at Yoshie's house we looked at some more of her pictures, some of which dated back to March of '87. She had shorter hair and a different style. She's definitely gotten better-looking with age.

She was a bridesmaid for a gaijin family in America, and believe it or not she looked better than the Americans did.

She'd made us lasagna, **[the]** sweet thing. I ate one helping but couldn't finish the next one. That's it, I know that all this starving has made my stomach smaller, for in America I could eat at will any amount, almost.

Next she brought out some Jell-O, but I couldn't eat all mine then, either.

I helped her wash the dishes, then **[we went]** into a different room to watch the movie. I got to talk to her mom for a minute; she's totally cool.

The movie started, and Yoshie's friend fell asleep after not too long. Once again, it felt very nice reclining in the dark next to her **[i.e., next to Yoshie, not next to her friend!]**. We were fairly close, it was great. Oh, honey.

"Robin Hood" was a kicking movie to say the least. Yet in the last half I got to worrying about the time and what to say we did if Pollard or the buch asked. Plus the fact that I'm still a missionary kept me from enjoying myself too much (dang it).

Finally it ended. **[It was a]** good ending; it pumped us up. Then we got into her car again and **[it was]** off for the eki. It was pretty sad. She wants me to come back to Japan to see her, but the way she was talking ("**[It's]** probably the last time you'll see these streets," plus the fact that she came right out and voiced it on Monday), she doesn't think it'll actually come to pass. It makes me sad hearing that, 'cause I want to come back and visit her *bad*. When I'll be able to is a different story. She's coming to America though, so all is not lost.

Saying goodbye, I kissed her lightly on the forehead then again on the hand. I wanted to give her a hug, for I'm not sure when I'll see her again, but I wasn't sure whether or not she was with it, so I didn't.

[We] rode the super fast train to Nagoya, then the subway to the other line and finally the slow one home. We were an hour late and had called Pollard from Nagoya, but once we were in the apartment no one even asked a thing.

Yoshie. Oh, my heartstrings are getting entangled. She's on the brain. Honey, honey, honey.

PHOTOS 131



Yoshie and me in front of her front door. Yep, it was pane glass, since her father was a doctor and his practice was housed in his, uh, house.

Sunday, February 02, 1992—Day 761

[We] had another—my last—inorikai up in the mountain, [then I] came back and slept more.

There was no dendo chosei shukai, so we left and got to church late. My dode was screwing around with his bike on the way there and fell over. I was right behind him; I stopped as well as I could but not before my front tire hit his thigh.

His handlebars were way offset and his rear basket was bent out of recognition. The buch was there to admire it all once we got there.

I was [the] first to walk in and sat down behind who I thought was Mika and friends but [who] turned out to be Matsuoka Yuriko and friends. They called on folks to be sustained, and Mika was up on the stage/stand, being sustained as a Sunday School pianist.

[She's been] called already! I asked her later when she first found out about this; [it] turns out [that] she's known about it for a couple of weeks. [It's] kind of funny, for last A.B. lesson we talked all about accepting and magnifying an eventual call.

Since Brother Salway is off on a company play day, I took over as Sunday School sensei. It felt a bit like

Eikaiwa, for those are the only times **[that]** I'll teach a group.

But before this: It was testimony meeting, and I made a point to bear mine since it was my last chance to do so in Japan. I talked about how I've come to experience real joy through dendo, and I thanked everyone for making my experience in Meito-Kita so great. I extended two special thanks: One to my companion and one to Yogo **[Mika]** Shimai.

I **[then]** sat down. The last person to bear testimony was Yogo Shimai herself. She talked about how before she met us she had interest in Christianity due to messages from the Bible that Christian relatives would include in letters, etc., but **[she]** knew nothing about it. She also spoke a little about how she wrote a postcard to a friend after she'd been baptized, asking how she was, etc. This friend had been about to commit suicide, and she said that that postcard (or letter) saved her. Had she not been baptized, she probably wouldn't've had the words to say to this friend, said Mika.

Wow! However indirectly, my efforts seem to have led to someone's life being saved.

She next expressed appreciation at how no matter how hot or cold the day was we always met her and walked from Kamiyashiro to church and then back again. And next she said thank you to Oshiro and I for everything.

That was it. She was bearing testimony along with the best of the Saints. Once the meeting was over, Shimizu Shimai caught me crying again.

As Sunday School sensei, I talked about how we can make church warmer and friendlier, among other things. "If you want to be loved, then love," I taught through experience.

As we ended, they asked me to tell them one thing **[that]** I've learned from my mission. **[That was a]** hard one; since I've learned so much it's tough to pick just one **[thing]**. But I said it was "the importance of free agency." If the commitment doesn't come from inside, **[then]** it's not a true convert baptism.

After the meeting, Nomura Shimai (Sanami-chan) had me sign her new Bible like I did Mika's. What an honor! She wanted *me* to *sign* a many-thousand year history of God's sacred word! She chose me, of all people!

I wrote a lot, using the best Japanese **[that]** I could. She was happy. In fact, she told Brother Kubota right in front of me that she wishes she'd switched **[wards]** from Minami to Kita earlier so she could've been here with me longer. Talk about a compliment supreme.

Junko had some weird guy there who's a member, and they asked us to go and eat something with them. So we walked a ways and got curry (on Sunday?). I counseled Junko on how to get along with **[other]** members better. Man, the other guy there was a strange one. **[He was]** strange-looking as well as strange in the head. Ugh. He had us each pay for our own **[meals]** although it was their idea, he asked me to write him several times although he never gave me his address, **[he]** wants me to visit him in Osaka, **[he]** kept telling me to get closer to Junko 'cause we make a good pair and ought to get married, etc. etc. etc. **[Did Junko put him up to that last part?]** What a total dork.

Monday, February 03, 1992—Day 762

[I've been on my mission for] 25 months today.

Pollard and I rode out to Sakae to meet Matsubara Shimai; **[she's]** up from Nishio to see him. We met under the T.V. tower; she brought her younger sister with her. It was good seeing her again. She has a nice voice, by the way.

We went to Shakey's **[Pizza]** for the all-you-can-eat deal. On the way in, Matsubara Shimai told me that Tanaka Shimai bore her testimony in Okazaki the next Sunday following the baptism kai. She (Tanaka

Shimai) didn't tell whose it was, but she said that she's seen many baptism kais but that one in Meito was the absolute best she'd ever seen. Man did the Lord ever bless me on that day, if that's the case. He blessed me anyway, though.

After pizza we went to karaoke, which was very fun. **[It was]** my 2nd time.

Next we were on our way to another store and in the underground mall we ran into Cobb and Smith Choros. **[Like us,]** they were also in Sakae without permission. **[They're]** cool dudes, both.

In the next department store they bought us each a box of chocolate in tradition with Valentine's Day here. **[In Japan, girls give boys chocolate on Valentine's Day, whereas boys give girls chocolate on "White Day," which is a couple of weeks earlier, if memory serves.]**

The whole affair lasted only three hours or so. As they were about to board the subway which led to their train line, I asked if I could give her a hug since this was probably **[the]** last **[time I'd see her in person]**. She said **[that]** she didn't care, so I did. I guess I'd learned my lesson from not hugging Yoshie. **[Even so, it was strictly platonic, since she was about my mother's age and I didn't have those kinds of feelings for her anyway.]**

Back **[at]** home I opened the chocolate, and **[it]** turns out **[that]** it was molded in the form of a naked chick and cellophane over the top had bikini decals on it. **[You]** pull off the cellophane and *voilà!* **[It's]** cool **[that]** they have a sense of humor. Surprising, though. **[Not surprising that they have a sense of humor, of course, but surprising that they'd give such a gift to missionaries!]**

I'm getting a cold, dang it. Sat and wrote letters the rest of the time.

I still love Yoshie.

Tuesday, February 04, 1992—Day 763

I felt like trash this morning, but we had a pretty spiritual benkyokai comparatively. After that, Pollard put in "Laputa," a Japanese cartoon fantasy show that was pretty good. Pollard listened to Stoker's pass-off and Oshiro and I and Cook watched it.

Back at home, Pollard, since he doesn't know anything about Yoshie and I, began talking about her. Other missionaries say **[that]** her main motive for going to church seems to be to hit on the missionaries there; anybody who wants to get down with her can **[do so]**; she's got a big nose and certainly doesn't qualify as cute, average maybe; etc. She's showed him pictures of her hanging on gaijin guys back in America with her being half naked, saying that they both had "so much fun" so you know what that means; she's made advances on him too; she had problems with that kind of stuff even after she was baptized; etc. etc.

Am I being deceived or used? Her letters seem sincere enough. She wasn't all over me during dinner or the movie on Saturday. Maybe Pollard has things blown out of proportion a bit, who knows.

[Here's] one more story that's irrelevant to the above but I want to record so I don't forget:

I heard about this first a long time ago at zone pass-offs from Stewart Choro, who went in there **[to Okazaki]** when I went out. There was a ward conference, and Yoshie gave a talk and in that talk she said in front of everyone that she doesn't know what the Spirit is and doubts **[that]** she's ever felt it, she just goes along with everyone else and says she does.

I'd like to hear what her exact words were. You've got to admit, it took guts **[to say all that in front of everyone]**.

My theory is that the reason she doesn't seem used or loose around me is 'cause she's trying to make

this one special and she's putting forth effort. Who knows, though. All I know is that I want her, and if she puts out then so much the better.

[We] went and ate over at the Suzukis' [house] later. They put in "Willow" [the movie] and it was tough to keep unglued [from the T.V. set]. Kai Shimai was there, too. She gave me a handmade brooch to give to some other girl. [Shall I give it to] Yoshie, perhaps?

Wednesday, February 05, 1992—Day 764

I've been a U.S. Marine for four years now. Check me out, eh?

During service, a couple of women from the baby room came in to where I was and [from] out of the blue presented me with two Valentine's Day presents! Killer! Once I got home, though, one was a box of chocolates that had liquor and alcohol in them. [It's] too bad; they'd looked good.

I got a letter from Yoshie and Pollard told me so. I wondered how he knew, since she hadn't written a return address, and he said [that] he could easily recognize the handwriting and the perfume. I said, "How'd she get my address?" He said, "That's at least the third time she's written you since I've gotten here!" So it's true; he recognized it. Apparently she wrote him after he transferred [out of Nishio, his first area], talking about all the stuff they would do when she visited him in Louisiana. This continued until he quit writing her back. He says [that] she's dangerous; he doesn't want her.

The fact that he recognizes the perfume obviously means [that] she sprayed it on his letters, too. Now I'm left without excuse; now I know what's been going on. Any continuation will be wholly my fault.

As far as the actual letter itself goes, it was pretty good. It was a card, in fact, with a letter inside. She wants to meet *once more* before I die—and so do I.

Oshiro Choro is being cool; [he's] cooperative since I'm about to die. I wrote back to Yoshie and cleaned the apartment, etc., 'till late. Made a copy of my map and sent it to Yoshie so she can find my place if needed. Looked for something to do, and Oshiro gave me ¥500 and we played video games. The money was a going-away present.

Thursday, February 06, 1992—Day 765

Hasegawa Mika, the best investigator in the Seto guys' teaching pool, her birthday is today ([she's] 22). So they had us party with them for her. We all went and got on the train and rode to Sakae. We walked around a bit, then got pizza at Shakey's. Later we did karaoke again [at the] same place as [we did on] Monday. Downstairs they had "Street Fighter II" set up to where you sat at a console and the screen was projected on to a huge screen on the wall. [It was] cool.

After two hours of that (karaoke), we went and got out our money. If I'm going to be here [for] half of February, [then] I should get half of February's pay. They gave me three sen (¥3,000) less than half. I'll need exactly that much to pay my half of February's bills. Great; I have to pay a month and a half's worth of bills on less than half a month's pay. [It] looks like I'll need to call the honbu tomorrow.

On getting home there was a package inside the door from Yoshie. And I'd gotten a totally cool letter from her yesterday, what's more! It was a plastic heart-shaped thing full of Hershey's Kisses. Sweet. Also inside was a card that said, each word underlined twice, "I Love You, Jason." But better than that (this is in addition to everything else that she wrote) there was written in the front fold, outlined and highlighted, "SUGAR ME WITH YOUR LOVE." Oh yes honey, I'll be glad to oblige! **[Boy, I'm ashamed of myself. Had I totally forgotten that I was a missionary, or did I simply not care anymore? I think it's a case of the latter leading to the former. Being a missionary is pretty much equivalent to playing a role, since you consider yourself—and are expected to behave like—a representative of Christ. Forcing yourself do to what doesn't come naturally—or actively avoiding what *does* come naturally, in my case—can only be undertaken for so long before the "real you" comes back.**

Notice that the majority of my active fuke-ness took place during the month in which I extended, or in other words, after I'd already been on my mission for a full two years.]

It was hectic today, but we finally got to church and before Eikaiwa **[we]** taught Mika an A.B. lesson on declaring the gospel in which I felt the Spirit hard. Mika's doing awesome herself, for she has lots of good friends and is doing her share of dendo already. Apparently quite a few people are impressed with us two **[Elder Oshiro and me]** and want to meet us, not just one.

We were supposed to testify on the blessings received from missionary work, and pondering just a little on that took all **[of]** my strength to keep from shedding tears. I had to testify only generally, for if I went into any specifics I'd've lost it completely for sure.

This is so great. After all this time. Mika's a walking blessing.

Friday, February 07, 1992—Day 766

We went and paid kitty since Pollard had to go out of town. Sheesh, it sure is easy to flirt with and get flirted by tellers in Tokai Bank.

We were able to meet Mika again for A.B. **[lesson]** #5. Shikama Shimai met us at Kamiyashiro and walked with us like she did on Halloween.

We weren't pressed for time, so we could sit back and have a nice discussion for a change. It was nice.

Found out **[that]** my money situation is the way it's supposed to be after all. I'm hurting.

I had to borrow a key from Sister Ames to get into the church, and we went down to return it. She invited us in, and for a little while we ate some food she'd prepared that her family didn't eat. The buch is up North in a big taikai. **[We]** had a nice little chat. I'll be there in a week for more food, too!

Back at home I first called Tomoyo, then after that I got a call from Yoshie. (I'd left a message earlier for her to call.) We talked 'till 12:30 a.m. The other three guys plus Wada, Cook's friend **[whom]** he met in Nonami, all mooned me. Then each **[of them]** mooned me off and on after that, making it hard to concentrate during the course of the call.

After that, Oshiro asked **[me]** if it was the shimai in Toyota **[on the phone]**, Kurokawa, and I said yes. I'd said the same stuff to both women, so I would've felt dumb saying a different name later. I felt bad, though. **[I feel bad about it now, too. What right did I have, leading on two different women? It would've been morally objectionable even if I wasn't a missionary.]**

Yoshie and I are meeting in Fujigaoka on Wednesday, my last full day in the **[mission]** field.

Oh yeah, **[here are]** a couple more items of interest **[from earlier today]**. In the post office I met a lady with great English who'd gotten back from a trip to Thailand. **[We]** rode to her house and gave her a chirashi later. She's an English teacher; she said **[that]** she'd tell her students about it **[i.e., about Eikaiwa]**.

[Also,] after we'd gotten the lesson room ready, we were about to ride down to Kamiyashiro to get Mika and all of a sudden some weird dude walks into the church and starts talking to us. He never stated what his purpose was, which is one thing **[that]** I absolutely *hate*. Japan has some weird ones, all right.

Saturday, February 08, 1992—Day 767

Today was my farewell party from the folks at A.B.C. **[Eikaiwa]**. Since we couldn't go bowling, we went off the beaten path and did karaoke at the same place as the first page of this volume **[of my missionary journal]**, volume II **[Day 579]**. **[It]** looks like it was the same room, too. Who knows.

A couple of beaver shots/films came on like before, but this time no one freaked out over them. They all just sat and watched like normal. So as to not cause a disturbance, I didn't say anything. Oshiro and Pollard later told me that they were watching my face through all of it. They were laughing; apparently it was funny.

After two hours of this we went for Pizza Hut pizza. On our bikes, Cook and I somehow rode right past the place the first time.

I received a few gifts during it all, and with the three oldest women there (grandmothers) I had a good chat. Then the time came, the pictures were taken, and the goodbyes were said.

Later we four went to the Yamadas' for dinner. They had brought Mika there, too. It was different, for we were meeting with more than four people, plus it wasn't **[to teach a]** lesson. Neither she nor I needed to exchange the spotlight like usual.

When we got there, she was wearing an apron and helping cook and wash dishes. For the first time I saw her with a domestic flair.

The conversation turned to fukes, darn it, and for the first time Mika found out about them. Up 'till now she'd thought that all who'd been baptized still came every week, i.e. **[she thought that]** the ones **[whom]** she sees each week comprised all of them. I hope **[that]** this doesn't hurt her testimony.

[I've probably mentioned this before, but in any given church unit (ward or branch) in Japan, there are always at least five times as many inactive members as active ones.]

PHOTOS 132



Me singing karaoke.



Taking it up a notch.



Our group after my going-away party. If memory serves, that's Mitsuko Kawachi with her arms on my shoulders. The three Americans in the back row are [L-R] Cook, Little, and Stoker. Just below Stoker, giving the "peace" sign, is Otake-san.

Sunday, February 09, 1992—Day 768

[Today was] my last Sunday in Japan. What a day it was, too. There wasn't any dendo chosei shukai, so we slept in.

Once we finally got inside the church, there Mika was with her friend from work, Hibino Maki. **["Maki" was her given name, of course.]** **[It]** turns out that Maki is always the second person I talk to on the phone when I call Mika's company and try to get through to her. I guess **[that]** the receptionists are in that order.

Also out in the hall was Lon Hall. Man has it been a long time. I'm glad **[that]** I got to see him one last time before going home. He recognized Mika from Trident. **["Trident" was the name of Mika's all-English school for girls; Lon was a teacher there. That's the school where Oviatt, me, Eliason, and MacKillop went and each taught mini-presentations about Mormonism as part of a cultural awareness thing—see Day 143.]** Also, his wife and son were there, too.

[During Sacrament Meeting,] I sat next to Maki and Yogo Shimai sat on the other side of her. I explained a lot as we went along.

You know, she was really excited to finally get to meet me like this. She's seen pictures, heard about me, etc. Maki also says that Mika has been quite down at work lately since I'm about to go home.

After the meeting ended I took a few kaiins outside to take a few more pictures. Who was waiting in the hall but Aoyama Kaori and Inukai Hitomi! I haven't seen them since Day 671.

We talked outside for a bit, then they came in and sat inside for Sunday School. In place of the regular meetings they showed **[General]** Conference that had been translated into Japanese.

I sat next to Maki again to make her feel comfortable, but not wanting to ignore Kaori & co. I invited them to sit next to me also. They had to leave before long, so we went outside and talked for a bit longer. **[It]** sure was nice of them both to come **[and]** visit me **[on]** my last Sunday like this.

They both gave me Valentine's Day presents. Not only that, but **[they also gave me]** cards to go along with them. I can tell **[that]** they really went out of their way.

Goodbyes were said (Kaori told me that her mom loves it when I call), and before going back into the chapel, in came Lon Hall again. His wife had forgotten her purse, so she came back in to get it.

We got to talk a bit more, and of all surprises he spent the time advising me to marry Mika! He said that she's a cutie and that if she feels anything for me then I'd be a fool to let her go. He said to follow my heart and that if I marry her then there's nothing wrong with that. He advised me to talk it over with President Ames. He said **[that]** of course I'm not out here wife-hunting, but if the chance is there, etc.

We exchanged addresses, and he said to send them a wedding invitation. I could tell he had Mika in mind when he said that. **[He's a]** funny guy.

Back in the meeting I sat by Maki again and explained what was going on, who the speakers were, what Conference is, etc. She's cool. Nomura Sanami loaned us her Seito no Michi so I could show **[Maki]** the pictures of the prophet, etc.

Soon enough that got over, too. At the very beginning, as we were hanging up our coats, Maki gave us some cupcake-like treats all wrapped up. She made those for us before she'd even met us, bless her heart. And afterwards Sanami-chan gave me some cheesecake **[that]** she'd made. **[Once again, you just can't outgive the Japanese.]** She'd included a postcard and had written an *awesome* message inside. She's a cutie, herself **[in a classic "girl next door" kind of way]**. Nice girl.

Mika had a problem **[that]** she needed me to help her solve, and so we tried to talk it over, one-on-one, but it was hard breaking away. Salway Kyodai gave me some much-needed pictures of the baptism and thanked me for all **[of]** my help. I also had to sign Junko's Book of Mormon.

Finally we got to talk it over. Some guy with eight world records who walked from the bottom tip of South America to the top part (essentially) of Alaska wrote a book about it and signed copies of it at some store. That's where Mika met him. He's 35 or so **[and is]** married with 2 kids. His marriage is going to pot; now he's living alone. He wrote Mika (he's British); now it seems **[that]** he's got the hots for her.

Poor Mika! All she did was be his friend and send cards on Christmas to his family and him. This happens to her a lot; she'll consider some guy as a friend only and he'll take things all wrong and start talking love and romance to her. That's one of the reasons **[why]** I promised that no matter what I wouldn't do that. I said that due to her looks she'd have this happen to her every once in a while. **["Beautiful" was the word I used.]** I said that I'd stamped out any feelings like that. **[If you've been following this weblog for any length of time, it'll be painfully obvious how much I loved the ladies, so you'll probably agree that me, of all people, utterly stamping out such feelings was a major accomplishment.]** Of course I love her, I said, but only as a missionary to **[an]** investigator, nothing else. She said that that's the best kind. I agreed.

In we went to teach A.B. **[lesson]** #6. **[This was]** mine and her last lesson each. Maki sat in on it, too.

The theme throughout Sacrament Meeting today was free agency. **[How]** appropriate; my last Sunday has the theme that I've come to learn and understand the most. At the end of the lesson Maki commented on how she learned about that principle and came to understand it for the first time.

And that was that. From Lesson One all the way to A.B. Lesson Six, I've taught her **[i.e., Mika]** everything about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that she knows. She's an elect daughter of God, and His having chosen *me* to teach her all the way is a blessing and an honor above all price or comparison.

Song practice for the upcoming concert ended, and lots of people mobbed me in the hall, making it hard to get anything done. As Mika and Maki left in Shiraiwa Kyodai's car, I was able to talk to Maki a little bit beforehand. **[Yeah, that sentence probably doesn't make much sense, but hopefully you get the gist of it.]** She said that she'd heard a lot of good things about me, and now having met me she knows **[that]** it's all true. **[It]** looks like she'll come with Mika to the airport to see me off. That'll be cool; it looks like she'll be prime gospel material here if this keeps up. **[It]** looks like she is already.

Tomoyo was down from Toyota, and she and another Shimai cooked spaghetti for my dode and me **[in the church's kitchen]**. That was nice of them. Later, after it ended, Uchimoto and Ishizuka Choros were in the hall, so we brought them in and **[we]** all had a nice chat.

On the way home, we stopped by Kitajima's **[house]** to discuss the logistics of tomorrow night's meal. She informed us that since this is basically it for me, Junko is insisting on coming over too. Dang it! I was looking forward to being able to talk on a normal human level with normal human beings. Now it'll be just her doing all **[of]** the talking/yelling.

Stayed up really late, then after some joking around we four went on a donut run, my first time since Day 160 early **[in the]** morning with Cloward Choro. It's been a year and eight months. We scored at Kentucky Fried **[Chicken]** and Mr. Donut. **[The]** funny thing is, we don't even need the stuff.

PHOTOS 133



L-R: Ishizuka, Uchimoto, me, Tomoyo, Tomoyo's friend (whose name I don't recall). These were taken in the church after Tomoyo had cooked for us.



L-R: Ishizuka, me, Oshiro, Uchimoto.

Monday, February 10, 1992—Day 769

[Cook and I] kicked back here while Oshiro and Pollard took off to meet Yoshioka Shimai in Sakae.

Daines called, wanting us to go reserve a basketball court for tonight. **[It was]** short notice. We tried, but it was a no-go.

Tried beaver hunting at Karaoke Mura, but that was a no-go as well. **[By "beaver hunting," I meant walking the hallway above the karaoke rooms looking for nudity on the T.V. screens below. You'll recall that I did the exact same thing on New Year's Eve; you'll also recall how horrifically guilty I felt about it immediately afterward. Yet in this entry over a month later, there's not a trace of guilt. My my, how things change.]** So we looked through a nearby bookstore then went home.

Then the time came and we **[i.e., Oshiro and I]** went to a bus terminal nearby Kitajima's house. There Mika was, waiting for us. According to a call I got earlier, I was supposed to meet Junko there too, but I mustn't've been paying too much attention to it. When we got there, out of habit my dode and I saw Mika and immediately began walking with her to our destination.

Once there, Kitajima Shimai gave me some cool presents, including a **[day]** planner that goes up 'till the end of '93.

A call came from Junko; she'd gotten there just a few minutes after we'd left. She'd been waiting **[for]** 20 minutes or so. Kitajima Shimai went and got her. I felt really bad for being so negligent. **[When Junko finally came in and sat down, she looked really exasperated—not to mention half-frozen from the cold. She kept asking, "Why didn't you wait?" I felt like I was an inch tall.]**

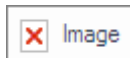
Mika still has a curfew: 10:00 **[p.m.]**, believe it or not. It was 8:00 **[p.m. when she was]** in high school and 7:00 **[p.m. when she was]** in junior high. Oshiro said **[that]** he'd do the same thing to his girl kids but not **[to]** the boys, in order to have the boys go out and experience things. I guess the Japanese don't mind differentiating **[between]** the sexes like we mind it. His exact words were, "because girls are weaker." You'd get hit for that in America. **[I was flabbergasted and speechless at the same time. Believe it or not, what were even *more* shocking were the reactions—or lack thereof—on the faces of Mika and Junko. Both of them had taken it completely in stride, as though his statement was the most natural thing in the world.]**

It ended and we all walked back to the terminal. Once again **[I received]** the shower of compliments **[from Junko]**. I'm glad **[that]** Mika has her head on straight in that respect. (I.e., she doesn't do it.)

PHOTOS 134



Me and Junko before she boarded the bus for the subway home.



Another missing photo of Mika. This was similar to the above, but Mika was standing slightly farther away and wasn't leaning in to me like Junko was.

Tuesday, February 11, 1992—Day 770

We all had benkyokai over here for a change. The buch called, and here's what happened:

I answered the phone, and the buch told me **[that]** I was transferring—my new dode is named _____ **[my mother's last name]**. **[According to him, this is]** the first time in the mission's history that my dode would be female, meaning my mom, I guess.

Well, Oshiro is going to Ichinomiya to be Madsen's junior zone leader, the same Madsen that saw all the success in Kasugai. Now Oshiro will see what real dendo is like, like I did with Oviatt after Horrocks left. I kind of feel bad. **[I felt bad because I wasn't able to provide a better example of finding and teaching more people.]**

Cook is going to my bean apartment in Fukutoku. Pollard is losing **[the]** district leader **[spot]**; Little's going to be it. Two new guys are taking our place here: **[Elder]** Tripp who's Hawaiian **[and]** whom I talked to a little at the Christmas taikai and also Elford who's in Nonami right now.

Oshiro and I took off for lunch at Mika's. We got there, and she greeted us. Hibino Maki was due to show up at 1:00 **[p.m.]**, an hour after we got there. We went upstairs, and I showed her all **[of]** my pictures from the M.T.C. to the present. She played a good tape of an Etsuko Miyasato concert that Matsuoka Shimai had given her. I never knew that she'd given her a gift; that's totally cool.

Mika presented me with a picture **[that]** she had drawn. Holy cow, it was a portrait of me! It was the same style, kind of sketch-like, that I've studied before, so I knew **[that]** it must've taken **[her]** hour after hour for sure. Not only that, but it was the fourth one; she'd messed up three times before, so that's all

the more time you know it took. What a sacrifice.

Maki came, and we all went downstairs to eat. We put in some Mozart then ate. Her mom had prepared some awesome food. It (the group) consisted of my dode and I, Mika, Maki, Mika's younger sister Hiromi, and Mika's mother.

After that, Hiromi and Maki and Mom looked at my pictures also. Mika presented me with my Japanese Bible **[the one I used while teaching discussions]** all signed like I signed hers. She also gave me a little package "so I don't get bored on the plane," and in order to guarantee that I write she gave me a nice pen with a refill as well.

Quite a few pictures had been taken throughout the time, but for the final round Mika walked back into the room and I got a look at her face. Her cheeks seemed a bit red, making me wonder, but then she sort of turned around and lifted her hands to her face and seemed to shake something off. Maki touched her and made an expression to comfort her, so then I knew what was up.

For the last few pictures, I was kneeling and Mika was standing, so I couldn't see her face. After that, I didn't want to go to the next dinner appointment we'd been invited to (by some Eikaiwa folks and Asuka Ono's mom), so I called Little Choro to see if there was any way I could get out of it.

[During the phone conversation,] a little way off Mika was leaning against something, but stuff was in the way so I couldn't see her face again. She probably did it on purpose. But I was *very very* sure that she was crying. I decided that it would be best to cut out while the going was still good and before things got too emotional.

On the way out, Mika kept from facing me. I shook hands with everyone else, and she was last. All were gathered around. When she finally faced me, all the tears were gone (if there had actually been any), but the whites of her eyes were a bit red.

It was an extended handshake, and she couldn't quite look me straight in the eyes. **[The]** next thing you know, without any words on her part, the tears began flowing out of both eyes. Poor girl. Although I assured her that we'd yet meet at the airport, it didn't seem to help, for aside from that this was our last activity together.

Oh man. I started feeling it coming on too, so I took off.

My mission must've been a success. Someone without any boyfriend/girlfriend feelings whatsoever *cried* at my leaving.

We met the other four at **[Sachiko]** Kaneko's place, then rode over to where we ate dinner. I was still dazed from the events of earlier.

That ended, and we rode to volleyball in Seto. It was tough carrying all my stuff. Saw a few members that I knew would be for the last time. Aki and Kato Yuko were there, too.

Back at home, I read the message written in my Bible. I had her do it in Japanese so **[that]** she could express her feelings freely. It was great; that's what I was hoping my dendo would eventually yield. The whole two years of effort, study, worry, and dendo was all rewarded by/summed up with/led to/came down to that one message. I couldn't read it at dinner, for I could tell just by the first half of the first sentence that I would start crying when I read it. **[That was a bit of an understatement. When I opened the Bible and took a peek at the message inside, it was so incredibly powerful that after only a few words I just about burst into tears. It took everything I had to choke them back and endure 'till the end of dinner.]** It would do it injustice if I tried to summarize it at all, so let's just say **[that]** she's very happy and very thankful to a very high degree.

I gave in to my curiosity and looked inside the bag that had my gift for the plane. Two things were in

there: One, a copy of Miyachi Shimai's obviously supreme tape; and the other, a treasure beyond all comparison or price.

I looked inside just enough to find out what it was without reading it. It was a small book, all nicely made up like the jiko shokai books that most missionaries have. And when I say "nicely made up," I mean *NICELY MADE UP!* [The] pictures, [the] writing, [the] backgrounds, etc. It was like a small picture autobiography album of herself. I'm dying to read it; once I do I'll tell you about it. Thinking of my flipcharts, I know how long that took, plus Oshiro spent plenty of time making his jiko shokai book although his wasn't nearly half as good as this.

Thinking back on Mika, I thought of how much her soul means to me and how I threw out any male-female feelings in order to keep the relationship on a high and perfect level. I thought back on how I've never respected a woman as much as this before, and I thought that that must be real love—to love someone enough to *not* "love" them.

So why didn't I treat Tomoyo and Yoshie the same way? Are they not daughters of God as well? Did they not bring some missionary joy? Did they not accept the gospel also?

If it involves the breaking of rules, it mustn't be love, I found out. At this point, I want to repent. I want to call them both up and apologize for compromising my standards and not saving it all 'till *after* my mission.

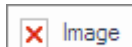
PHOTOS 135



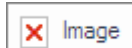
Me holding the picture that Mika drew of me.



L-R: Me, Maki (Mika's friend and co-worker), Hiromi (Mika's younger sister). They're going through all of my mission photos. If you look closely, you'll see them viewing the picture of the little kids in yellow hats back in PHOTOS 13.



A missing group photo that featured me kneeling front-and-center and Mika standing in the upper-right corner. In this shot her eyes and cheeks were red but she was making a valiant attempt to smile.



This one was similar to the above, but Mika was far less successful at forcing a smile.

Wednesday, February 12, 1992—Day 771

This morning I got to realizing that no one could go with me to meet Yoshie due to the transfer. It's about time I shaped up anyhow, so I didn't feel sad at all about calling her and cancelling out. As Pollard said, "Don't worry about hurting others' feelings if you know **[that]** what you're doing is right."

I called her and told her the news, and she sounded as though she was going to cry. She must've really been looking forward to it. It was hard, having to do that. **[I nevertheless made some half-hearted attempts to talk Pollard to going with me, since he wasn't transferring and therefore didn't need to pack, but he told me "no" in no uncertain terms.]** I feel bad for having given in **[and]** written back. **[This whole thing is]** half my fault for leading her on although I knew **[that]** it was wrong. **["Leading her on" probably wasn't the best descriptor, since I truly did like her that way.]**

This morning I called around and ended up getting to talk to Tsutsumi Shimai and also Matsushita Miyuki **[from my Inuyama days]**. **[It's been a]** long time, eh? Matsushita Shimai hasn't been showing up to church lately, and I thought **[that]** I could tell a lack of light in her voice. We talked for quite a while; she thought **[that]** I'd gone home already.

Later the four of us left and went to Kobayashi's for a final dinner.

[We] got home, had a nice district devotional, then the other guys took off to Karaoke Mura with Wada. I got to talk with Kojima Hiroko before that, though. ([She's] the one in Tsuruga or nearby.) I went there [to Karaoke Mura] after them, but didn't do much. Back at home I chatted with Brother Tsutsumi, Nomura Sanami, and both [of] the Yamamotos from Tsuruga, the ones I met a year ago.

Packing sure went late tonight. Judging from what happened yesterday, I'll bet money that bidding farewell to Mika at the airport here soon will be one of the hardest things I do. It'll rip me apart. [I sure was right about that.] (Got a quick call from Kyoko, too, verifying my new address.)

PHOTOS 136



L-R: Oshiro, Cook, Kobayashi-san, me, Pollard.

This was Oshiro's, Cook's, and my last meal with Kobayashi.

Thursday, February 13, 1992—Day 772

This is looking like it. [There's] not much left. Right now I'm sitting in the guest room on the first floor of the honbu. The day is over, and I'm writing in my journal like I've done literally hundreds of times before. From now I'll be doing some serious reflecting on this major stage in my life which is rapidly coming to an end.

Here's how the day went: Last night I was up 'till 4:00 [a.m.] and then some packing at a very slow pace and finally writing last night's [journal] entry.

Once I got up this morning, I took it rather slow finishing my packing. I was quite sad, seeing it all come to an end and knowing that soon I'll have to bid Mika farewell. I wasn't excited at all to be going home.

The time came for Cook to catch his train, so I gave him a hug goodbye. Oshiro Choro and I went to the post office for him to mail something and I bid goodbye to the workers there whom I know pretty well.

Getting back, Oshiro was in a hurry to catch his train, so while he was in the genkan on his way out I gave him a big hug. **[We served]** almost four months together. Oshiro Choro, **[a]** good man 'till the end.

Finally I realized that **[throughout]** my whole mission I'd never tried to stop a woman while streeting. **[It was an unwritten but clearly understood rule that you're only allowed to stop people of the same sex when street contacting. One reason for this is that you're only allowed to teach someone of the same sex—if you pick up a female investigator somehow, such as meeting her through housing, then after the first lesson or two you're supposed to refer her to the sister missionaries and vice-versa for sister missionaries who pick up male investigators. Similarly, if you're in an all-male missionary area and sister missionaries suddenly get assigned there, then you're supposed to immediately refer all of your female investigators to them.]**

You're of course allowed to teach female investigators if there are no sister missionaries in your area, though—this is how I was able to teach Mika. Yet astute readers will pick up on something: If male missionaries can indeed *teach* female investigators in areas without sister missionaries, then why can't they *stop* females while street contacting in those same areas? How are women supposed to be found and taught otherwise? Well, the *other* reason why male missionaries can't stop females—and a much bigger reason, it was explained—is that it's our priority to find and build up the priesthood, since it isn't self-sufficient enough in Japan yet. (Of course, knowing the missionary program the way I do, I'm positive that male missionaries would be forbidden from stopping females on the street even if the priesthood was self-sufficient in Japan.)

Now, that last reason bothered me. Selecting people to whom to introduce the gospel based merely on future priesthood eligibility seemed antithetical to everything that the Gospel of Christ stood for. Priesthood, schmiesthood. The New Testament and Book of Mormon clearly and unambiguously declare that everyone must repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. Nowhere is there a caveat that some people need baptism more (or less, in this case) than others.

And, getting down to brass tacks, the more female members the church has, the more likely that males will want to join, right? Let's call a spade a spade. (For example, in my own experience, Inuyama had so many hot female Jehovah's Witnesses that I'm *still* tempted to go back and pretend to be a Jehovah's Witness just to attend their meetings.) So that's even less of a reason for male missionaries to eschew females while street contacting.

So, for all of those reasons, I found it a bit hypocritical to discriminate whom we did or didn't stop on the streets based merely on gender.] Meanwhile Hawke Choro, Pollard's new dode, showed up. He was the one who had praised my bunpo list so much at the zone taikai.

I got my last letter from Dick _____. Inside was a \$20.00 bill! **[It was]** just enough to cover final honbu expenses! What he wrote was pretty short, basically "Hope this helps out, see you soon."

I went down by myself and got it changed over **[to Japanese yen]**. I went to the same teller as I did the first two times, a guy named Migitaka Satoru. He'd called the apartment after the second time in order to ask if we could exchange letters when I was back in America. Why not? Another gospel contact. So we swapped addresses. **[We never did end up corresponding, though.]**

Then I went to the public phone just outside there and below the apartment and called Mika at work and had her call the apartment.

I went up and she called. I explained that the reason I called was so I could talk to her over the phone one last time before going into the honbu. It struck me hard at the prospect of "last." She is it, that one human being on Earth whom it's been my dream to convert for several years now. **[It]** turns out **[that]** she was the one.

I thanked her for hearing the lessons. She thanked me for teaching.

I had one important question for her. I'd told her time and time again that by hearing the lessons and doing what we asked that she'd gain true "yorokobi," or joy. So I asked her to be honest—after all was said and done, had she obtained true joy?

She said "tottemo," heavily stressed, meaning "much" or "very," but the Japanese has a deeper meaning. She next said that every day she's "shiawase" or "kofuku," I forget which, but meaning from the heart pure happiness (although, she said, lately she's been a bit down. I know why, though).

What a blessing! As a result of my dendo, someone now has joy and is happy every day!

After that I lost **[my]** composure and began to cry. I almost couldn't speak. I couldn't see her face, but she may have been, too.

She thanked me for going to the Nagakute 20 Year Anniversary at which we met. I said that it was guidance; we went there to meet her.

We talked, or tried to talk, a little bit longer. I shed several more tears, then that was it.

Sorry, but I messed up on the sequence: After the bank I came up and then decided to go out and stop my woman. So with Book in hand out the door I went (by myself).

Had my female scoped out, tried to talk to her, but she ignored me and kept walking. **[She was listening to some portable device and had ear buds in her ears. She clearly saw me, though.]** Oh well, at least now I can say **[that]** I tried once.

Since I was in the area, I decided to say goodbye to the folks in the camera shop **[that]** we frequent. For no real reason I asked the name of one of them, and it turns out **[that]** she's the daughter of one of the women in the post office. **[That was an]** interesting coincidence.

Back home, while waiting for Daines to show up with the honbu van, I got to talking with Pollard and Hawke. Saw Hawke's pictures and we listened to some music, so I got cheered up.

Finally Daines showed up with **[Elder]** Tripp. Tripp's really into illustration and artwork, so I got to see some of his books and stuff **[that]** he's done himself. I gave him my much-used maps.

The guy's a total stud. **[It's]** cool **[that]** he's taking my place.

Daines and I picked up my stuff and left. We got into a pretty serious conversation after he asked me how my last month was. **[I've had]** nothing but blessings; I don't regret for one second having extended. **[There are]** three ways **[that]** I've been blessed: Seeing Mika's A.B.s get done, seeing her attend church and take the sacrament as a regular member, and seeing her bear testimony in testimony meeting.

Man am I out of sequence! I totally forgot!!

After the camera place, I still had the Book of Mormon, so I debated on whether to go in and give it to Migitaka-san or not.

I finally decided to go and say bye to the person in the dry-cleaning place nearby. I know her, so we talked a while about the Japanese people, what I thought about Japan, etc. Finally I said **[that]** I wanted to give her a Book as a going-away present. She said **[that]** she'd never read it, but the girl coming in for the 5:00 **[p.m.]** shift is Protestant and goes to church every week. Great! So I said that if that's the case then she'd probably be interested to know that Christ visited the American continent after His resurrection. I left the Book there open to that picture and said to tell her that it was a present from me and she could have it if she wanted. If not, **[then]** she could give it back to us.

[It's] interesting how that worked out. **[Was it]** guidance, perhaps? How 'bout that, **[it]** looks like a little

success at this, the last **[of my mission]**. I feel as though I dended 'till the end. I'm going to leave here with a good taste in my mouth.

Once in the mission home, things took a while getting going. Once they did, the three of us—Durrant Shimai, Ito Shimai, and myself—got some good pep talks from President Ames on after-mission spiritual survival. We later ate dinner, then **[we]** wrote down our testimonies/thoughts for a book being kept by the president. I touched on two major things **[that]** I've learned through dendo, being **[as I'm]** the oldest one here. Number one, that this is the *Lord's* work. All blessings come from Him, not from any skill or trick of ours. Number two, that if our desires are strong enough, He will grant unto us according to them, although He does it in His own due time.

Finally we began our testimony meeting. The president said that each group gets harder to see leave, 'cause he knows each advancing group all the better. This is also his favorite group, he said, 'cause we've all been around the honbu so close and know each other well.

Since our **[departing]** members were few, I had as much time as I wanted. We went around the room, and due to where I was sitting I got to go first. I said basically the same thing that I said in **[my last]** zone taikai, with the addition that for the rest of my life, whenever I read a figure of the membership of the church, I'll know that that number would be one less had I not served a mission.

Well, maybe it wasn't the same thing. I didn't share my D&C 9 experience. I also talked a lot about how it was my biggest goal in life to see a convert baptism and go about it the *right* way. I expressed my eternal gratefulness to the Lord for seeing fit to grant that desire and also for providing me with all the opportunities for growth and development like He has. Also **[I told]** how I feel 100% confident with the way Mika was taught.

A number of times I shed tears during it. I'm becoming less and less concerned with who sees me do this.

It was a good meeting.

Finally it ended, and later I went up for my **[temple]** recommend interview, but the buch got some kind of phone call and had to send me out. I waited upstairs with the honbu guys and said **[the] 10:00 [p.m.]** prayer with them. They had me give it since it was my last time. I'd given the closing prayer in English for the devotional **[i.e., for the earlier testimony meeting between me, Sister Durrant, Sister Ito, and President Ames]**, and like Rikki's blessing back in Fukutoku I felt as though my spirit was leaving my body. Felt the same way as I had before while praying upstairs with the rest of them, this time in Japanese.

I was asked a few times how I felt, but I couldn't adequately answer. In a slight daze from everything, I guess.

President Ames came out and told me **[that]** he'd have to catch me tomorrow, for something big has come up. So **[it was]** down for some last-minute preparations and now I'm here.

They'd given me back all of my **[weekly]** president's letters; now I've got them in order. That'll (they're **[bound]** in a book) compliment this journal rather well.

Yes, today was quite the day. **[I have]** only one entry left. Yes, I made it all this way from Day 1 without missing **[a single day]**. How 'bout that.

Valentine's Day, 1992—Day 773

Well, dear reader, this is it. It's all said and done, essentially. **[This is]** my very last entry.

I remember how after crossing the International Date Line and coming in it was the shortest day of my

life, but today I did the opposite, making this the longest day **[of my life]** by far. Oh well, **[I'd]** better get to it.

For my last time in Japan I woke up at 6:30 **[a.m.]** and then showered. I'd been up 'till almost 2:00 a.m. with last night's **[journal]** entry. Slept in a nice room in a nice bed, and with no companion nearby to boot. 'Twas sweet, **[it was the]** first time in two years.

After showering and getting ready, we three **[Sister Durrant, Sister Ito, and myself]** came into the living room and according to the president's wishes had scripture study. He told me last night to lead the crowd, so I did. We're supposed to be having this scripture study every day as part of an organized new program, but this is the first—and last—time **[that]** I've actually done it.

We opened our books and went around the room sharing our favorite scriptures. It was a nice spiritual uplift.

Later I went up for my temple recommend interview. I passed. When he asked me if I was worthy in every way, he said that a good meter was what I would do if I was sitting in the temple and all of a sudden the Savior appeared. Would I be okay to sit there, or would I run and hide? I honestly feel/felt that I'd be able to take it no problem, so that was a good feeling.

He asked if I had any last questions, and I brought up the bunpo list. After some searching for the copy of it, he promised and covenanted, those words, that he would pass it out at the next zone taikai and that it would become a permanent fixture in the green beans' initial package. Fearing that he was doing it just for me, I said, "Maybe it was a dumb idea," but he emphatically declared, "No, it was a great idea!" It had just kind of gotten lost in the shuffle.

We went downstairs and had a breakfast of ham and egg McMuffins homemade. During the course of the meal, the president remarked to his wife that last night's testimony meeting is the best one they've ever had. That's quite the compliment.

It's routine to send the dying missionaries out on an excursion, and the Tokugawa Art Museum was chosen. Since Durrant Shimai's parents were coming to get her, it was going to be just Ito Shimai and myself, but to keep it from being one on one the president had another Elder go with us, who turned out to be Daines Choro. Good choice.

While I was upstairs getting ready to head out, I got a phone call, which turned out to be Bueler Choro saying goodbye. While talking, though, President Ames came nearby and handed the list to Oilar, the A.P., explaining what it was and telling him **[that]** he wanted it copied and distributed at the next taikai, permanently placed as part of the bean package (**[i.e.,]** what they first get **[when they arrive]** here), etc. I kind of had Bueler hushed trying to listen to all this, explaining things as they were said. **[It was an]** appropriate time for him to call, for he's been the #1 supporter of it this whole time. **[He's a]** good man; I'm glad **[that]** he called.

Oilar was pretty impressed with it.

Hintze is going to Gokiso, so we rode in the van with all his stuff and got dropped off, the three of us, at the art museum. It's close to my bean apartment; Horrocks and I walked through its garden park after my first or second P-day, if I remember the day right. **[I'm]** glad **[that]** I finally got to go inside.

It was a cool place; we took it nice and slow.

We next walked to Ozone to catch the subway to our next pre-determined destination. On the way I spotted that cheap store that Horrocks and I would go to on Tuesdays but **[that]** I never told Oviatt about. (I was afraid **[that]** I wouldn't be able to find it if I told him **[about it].**)

[We] rode down to a place called Osukanon, which turned out to be that cool place full of stores that

Horrocks and I streeeted through one day. I always wanted to go back, but we never got around to it.

We came in from the opposite side **[that Horrocks and I had]**, though. We first milled around the big temple there, the one at which I saw my first lady pray to an idol.

Surprise surprise, we saw two elders from Yokkaichi there, having had done some shopping. **[We all]** chatted for a bit, then moved on. Daines expressed his disappreciation about it later, for they were there without permission. **[You can bet that those two were sweating bullets after this encounter, for they knew that Daines worked in the mission home and therefore had direct access to the mission president.]**

Ito Shimai asked if there was anything **[that]** I wanted to see. There wasn't, so she took us out to eat at a cool Japanese restaurant there. **[This probably represented quite a sacrifice on her part, since missionary budgets are so small and she was feeding herself and two others at a fairly decent restaurant.]**

Anyway, while to be seated waiting, I was by myself at one point and I picked up a magazine, hoping to find some racy photos inside. I soon felt extremely guilty all over again, for here it was the very last day of my mission and I still hadn't mastered my carnal urges. Of all the days to resist temptation and stay worthy, this was the day, yet I still gave in, much to my shame.]

Then **[it was]** onto the subway and back to Kamiyashiro. I pondered on how that's what Mika would always do to meet us.

Daines called the honbu and had them bring the van down to get us. Back there I talked a little to Alexander Choro, the new A.P., about the Marines.

Back inside I shaved, did what little re-packing was necessary, and looked to head out. At the last minute, pictures were taken of Ito Shimai and me as the dying group, for Durrant Shimai had already left.

[I also] got to say "bye" to Henmi Shimai who was there on a split.

Then **[we went]** out to load up in the van. Just before we headed out I began to write a little message to Mika on some yellow post-it notes to put inside the gift **[that]** I had ready for her. I'm glad I opened her gift and found out what was inside, for from that I knew that I should give her an appropriate gift in return. She'd spent so much time on me, it was only fair that I give her something on which I'd spent as much time. There was only one answer: My beloved flipcharts. I was looking forward to keeping them, but hey, only those could be an appropriate sacrifice for her. My heart and soul are in those, and I wrote her that.

Just before we left—the president, the two A.P.s, Sister Ito, and myself—Sister Ames said **[that]** she talked about my last taikai testimony to the beans when they were in there, citing how I said that in the end it was well worth it. She said it was great; it was something that they all needed to hear. What a blessing, getting quoted to the new missionaries.

Then we were off.

Once at the airport, we got in line for baggage check-in. Very shortly afterward, Yogo Shimai came in. I just so happened to catch her by eye; she'd come in and was going the wrong way, up a flight of steps. I called to her, and after a couple of tries she caught sight of us and came over.

The poor Shimai. From the very moment I saw her, I could tell that she was extremely distressed. She'd taken a taxi directly from work, but that of course wasn't the reason. She was on the verge from the beginning.

She came up, but was on the other side of a gate separating us. The buch waved her to come on over,

but she didn't know the way. She tried to go one way as indicated, but couldn't get through. She tried the other way but still couldn't do it, and she came back all worried and frustrated. The poor girl; you should've seen her face! My heart cried for her.

Next, President Ames went and helped her through. The very instant **[that]** she came up, we both began to lose control. My bearing was shot. My voice began to crack just like it does in these situations.

She came along with us as we checked in the baggage. As I looked behind us, there was Kurokawa Shimai waiting off in the distance like she said **[that]** she might. Uh-oh, I was worried about that, for I wanted it to be just Mika alone.

[I was a little bit miffed that Tomoyo had showed up, after I'd clearly (but diplomatically) made it known that I only wanted Mika there to see me off. Were it not for my embarrassment at her presence to temper my emotions a little, God only knows how much harder I would've been crying over the next hour or so. Perhaps she inadvertently did me a favor, 'cause otherwise I might've been unable to even stand up straight.]

Yes, it was hard to talk. Once she **[Mika]** came up, I handed her the black bag in which my flipcharts were. As I handed it to her, I (through tears) told her the same thing that I'd written on the yellow post-it notes. **[It was]** this message:

That what I was giving her was nothing big, but in order to dendo and share the gospel it was a fundamental thing that I used often. I made it myself. And out of all the people **[whom]** I've met, she was the #1 most important person out of all those thousands. It has my heart inside, so please accept it.

She also handed me yet another gift, a small bag with something inside. **[I say this]** not in any male-female way, like I've previously used it, but how completely *sweet!*

Next we all walked upstairs to the loading ramp. There was a huge group of people there to check their bags through, and the line was enormous. We found a space off to the side, and the A.P.s were off trying to park the van while Tomoyo leaned against a far pillar way off.

From now began one of the most difficult and sad hours of my entire life. She **[Mika]** was crying, I was crying. Speaking any little bit at all was extremely difficult. **[In the past,]** it had been my goal to see even so much as one person convert and turn to Christ and His gospel as a result of my future missionary efforts. And now, after all had been said and done, out of all the hundreds of millions of people in all the nations of the world, that single, one special person turned out to be a girl from Nagakute-cho, Japan named Yogo Mika. And here I was, standing there with the one person I'd hoped for, dreamed about, and worked for for years and years on end, knowing that now it was basically over. Six months of lessons, walking from Kamiyashiro and back, phone calls, and various activities had gone by, and now it all stood at an end. Can you imagine how I felt?

Most of the time we just stood there, saying nothing, her either looking down at the floor and me staring off into space, both **[of us]** with tears streaming down our faces.

When I did speak, I reviewed the above with her, i.e., **[that it was]** her out of all the world, and I also re-emphasized the fact that she was elect.

The president was leaning against the window close by, looking off somewhere else. I thought that all **[of]** this may look rather bad, so I took short leave of Mika and went to say a few things to him.

"I'm sorry," I said, referring to my obviously teary-eyed condition. "Don't be," came the reply. With my hand on his shoulder, I could hardly use my voice as I tried to choke out the fact that I promised her three times that there would be no funny relations or feelings between us, so don't worry about this, if possible.

He said **[that]** he could tell there was no problem. **[According to him,]** people are always broadcasting,

so he could tell from a distance **[that there weren't any male/female shenanigans involved]**. I squeezed out a few more tears as I said I was so glad that I remained true to the missionary code throughout her teaching process.

He didn't look me directly in the eyes, but at close range he said:

"SHADES CHORO, YOU ARE A PURE SOUL."

Imagine that being said directly to you, especially by one of the Lord's anointed. A blessing like this is more than enough to make up for vast amounts of trials. **[This is]** yet another blessing I've partaken of **[that's]** rare, so rare among the children of men.

He next said that he doesn't know what my past was like, but I've now obviously been through the refiner's fire, and now, . . . etc. etc. I don't remember what was said after that, for I was struck with what was said about me and the refiner's fire. It just dawned on me—throughout my mission, God found me worthwhile enough to put me through that far. Not all people on Earth does he see fit enough to put them through it. I cried even harder after hearing that, for is not that also a divine blessing?

He looked over at her and said, "She is a gem." She is. I silently agreed.

I bid my leave to talk to Mika again, and it was granted. I apologized to her for taking so long. It went back to more of the same, neither of us saying much yet crying hard.

Finally the buch let us know that due to the size of the line we'd probably better get in now. But before that the A.P.s, Alexander and Oilar, came up and hung with the president. I barely overheard the president talking about me to them. I only caught part of one of the opening sentences which struck me hardest; it went like this:

"Shades Choro gave the most _____ testimony I've heard in _____."

It's not a contest, but I'm still happy, considering from where it came.

Soon we passed Tomoyo. I apologized, saying that it probably looks as though I'm ignoring her, but she said she understood since I explained earlier how since I've only seen one conversion I'd need to do some serious counseling **[with that person. Of course, I'd seen four people baptized when I was a junior companion in Inuyama, but since I wasn't a senior it wasn't me who was setting the tone and pace of the lessons. I therefore only counted baptisms I'd had as a senior, which meant that, to me, Mika's conversion was the only one "with my name on it."]**. Anyhow, she **[Tomoyo]** gave me a gift in a bag as well.

There were lots of people in line, lots of Americans too, so I found it more difficult to cry **[at that point]**.

Next up we came to the place where most of those not boarding stopped. Tomoyo hung back with the other three while Mika went on ahead with me.

This was it! We were down to literally our last few minutes.

I tried to get in all **[of]** those things that I knew I needed to before we parted for good. First I told her that just like I'd promised there wasn't any funny relationship between us, yet I love her as a brother to his sister and as an eternal friend.

We both expressed again on more than a few occasions how we couldn't believe that this was it, the dreaded day had actually arrived, in spite of the fact that neither of us believed it really would.

Once we got to the point in line where we were directly opposite where the others were, they took many snapshots of us. Ito Shimai was directly ahead of us in line. It was hard, very hard to smile in

circumstances like these.

On we moved in the line. I can't remember all the parting shots I gave, but here are the two **[that are]** most important.

I'd been purposely saving this last little bit for the very end. I said that of course there was the problem with her father, but to please think very hard about her own dendo. Meaning, think very hard about becoming a missionary.

[It was] only a few more feet before ticket and baggage check. I said next that out of all the commandments, the #1 one **[that]** I wanted most for her to follow was the one about going to church every week. **[It would've been a shame to see her go inactive like so many other new converts in Japan do.]**

[Then] we were next. Apprehension! This was really, really it! I shook hands with Mika one last time and told her I love her. I handed my bags up to go through the X-ray and Mika walked out to the left to rejoin the others. I turned as I was walking into the next area (and behind a wall that was about to hide them from view) to see the president, the A.P.s, and Tomoyo waving. Mika turned around, and I saw **[that]** her eyes were very red from crying, **[the]** same color they'd been ever since she showed up. On her face was a very grief-stricken expression, putting it lightly. My expression must've been the exact same.

She raised her hand for the final wave. I waved too, and then it was over. All over. Six great and highly eventful months had come to an end. I'm so glad that missions are for two years instead of a year and a half **[for males at least]**, for were that the case, I never would have met Mika. She made my mission! She was my mission!!!

[Folks, I can't possibly over-emphasize that last part. By now it's hopefully become clear that all I wanted out of life was to see someone truly convert and come unto Christ. As any LDS person reading this knows, the church essentially makes it clear that all you have to do is have faith in Christ and obey the mission rules and you can baptize any number of people. Having made it through Boot Camp and become a Marine—an activity far, far more difficult than serving a mission—failure simply wasn't an option for me.

But if I was to nevertheless fail where so many others succeeded, especially since I wanted that success so badly, that would mean that there was something wrong with me personally (since, like I said, the church makes success on a mission seem almost formulaic). If I didn't see anyone convert, that would mean that the purpose of my life had been thwarted and I therefore wouldn't have any real reason to keep living. Now, I wasn't suicidal or anything, but if I hadn't seen anyone convert through my finding and teaching as a *senior companion*, I had every intention—literally, every intention—of giving up entirely on life and becoming a bum on the street. Yes, you read that right: As time went by and it looked as though I might not see a single person converted, I was sincerely planning on becoming a bum on the street and staying that way until the day I died.

Therefore, when I say that Mika saved my mission, I mean that quite literally. In fact, a case can be made that she almost literally saved my life as well. For one thing, I wouldn't be here typing this on a computer were it not for her.]

Just inside was an attendant, a girl I recognized. She was a kaiin from Kasugai. Seeing someone I knew helped ease the pain a bit. **[As luck would have it, I would run into her a year and a half or so later when she was serving her own mission in Temple Square. I unfortunately don't remember her name.]**

I had some scissors in my bag which showed up on the X-ray, causing some delay, but we got it resolved and off I went.

I got in another line and a guy checked my passport and took my gaijin card. **[After that,]** Ito Shimai

found our way to the right boarding gate and on we went. Our seats were next to each other, which made me very happy 'cause then I could talk to someone who understood what was going on, i.e. dendo, etc. and whom I knew from before.

This was it, the famed "flight home." I was still quite overwhelmed. I paid close, close attention as the plane taxied to the runway, as it hit the engines, and as it took off.

I watched the airport sprawl out below me. Soon all of Nagoya and then some was in clear view. I could pick out Higashiyama Tower, but no other landmarks. I couldn't plot from there, for all **[of it]** was bright lit-up city. I could see all the way to the Northern edge of it, then east to what had to be Owariasahi and Seto. I also looked and could see to the West a line of cities that marked the coastline of the Mie **[Prefecture]** side of the bay, stretching off into the distance and out of sight.

Eventually we leveled off and away we went. It was full dark.

I was still shedding tears openly. Earlier in the week, Ito Shimai had called me for some details on our death. She's going back to her American host family in L.A., whom she loves.

Anyway, over the phone I'd been my usual self, i.e. happy and outgoing. I'd talked with her at a zone taikai in Kanazawa, too **[back when she was Sister Chandler's junior companion]**.

So now she kept looking over at me and smiling. I asked her what the deal was, and she said that this is rare; this isn't the Shades Choro **[whom]** she knows. A serious and quiet me is a side that she just couldn't imagine. If that's the case, then I wonder how many other shimais have that same image of me.

I opened Tomoyo's gift. I was going to save Mika's **[gift]** for last.

I'm glad **[that]** Tomoyo came, after all. What she gave **[me]** was pretty touching. There was a uniquely designed set of chopsticks, some candy in a very nice box, a tape on which the cover said "Tomoyo's Favorite Songs," and a small book. It said a few things like, "You're my important person" and "I'll be thinking of you." It was all in kanji, but **[it was]** very simple, like a children's book. That was nice of her.

Ito Shimai had an autograph book, filled with the signatures of all the missionaries and many members with whom she'd come in contact throughout the course of her mission. She said **[that]** I could look through it. I didn't read the messages, but I looked and saw who had signed it. Many people I knew had, including Depeel Choro and Seegmiller. Out of the whole book, I was due to be the last one to sign it, an honor for which I felt unworthy. I went ahead anyway.

I was interrupted and had to quit for a while when they passed out drinks and peanuts. I resumed writing but was interrupted again when they passed out dinner.

One of the waitresses **[perhaps I should've said "flight attendants"]** asked me who was going to meet me at the airport. I, without thinking, said "Only my mom, . . ." She interrupted me before I could complete my sentence. "What do you mean, 'only' your mother?" **[It]** turns out **[that]** she was a mother herself, and she reprimanded me for saying the word "only," considering all the sacrifices and worrying she's done over me **[during]** the past two years. It was kind of funny, yet I never could seem to get on her good side after that.

After dinner ended, I finished writing in Ito Shimai's book. It was a pretty long entry.

I opened what Mika had given me. Two things were in it, one **[was]** a tape she'd dubbed of the one we'd been listening to at her house on Tuesday, **[which was]** a collection of all Madonna's best. **[The album in question is called "The Immaculate Collection."]** The other thing was a box of homemade chocolate candies **[that]** she'd made for me, and **[also]** inside **[the bag]** was a little note she'd written to me.

The note almost broke my heart. Once again, to summarize would destroy the beauty of it, but the

general message was this: She's feeling very lonesome and sad that I'll be leaving (she wrote this the night before), and her tears, as she wrote, would not stop. **[Indeed, there were several places where the ink had been smudged by her teardrops.]** She wrote that she should be happy that I'd soon see my family and friends, but she's really going to miss me.

Poor girl. I don't want her to be sad.

I think I figured out something that had been perplexing me. **[Back when we were]** in line, I told her I promise to make the effort and meet her in the Celestial Kingdom, and raised my pinkie finger to link it and shake like the Japanese do to seal a promise. She seemed reluctant to link and shake with me, and when she did she wouldn't look at me directly. Now, having thought about it, I think **[that]** this reluctance was because she wants to meet me *before* we go to the Celestial Kingdom. She must've thought that I had it in mind that we'd never see each other again during this life. Whoops. No, I don't have any such opinion.

And another thing: Kind of like I had over the phone yesterday, I said that I'd talked a lot about obtaining blessings throughout the teaching process, yet now, after all has been said and done, "Have you received blessings?" She emphatically declared in the affirmative. That was good.

Back to the plane ride. There was a stewardess on board whom President Ames had introduced me to before we checked the baggage in. She knew him from when she'd been going to BYU and he was the bishop or whatever of a guy she was dating. I was concentrating on getting Mika over to us at the time, so I didn't talk much to her at first. But now she kneeled down by us and since things had slowed down a bit we all **[she, Sister Ito, and me]** talked for quite a while. She's full Japanese, I found out, yet her hair has been bleached far lighter and she's lived in America **[for]** so long that her English is perfect. **[She had no accent whatsoever.]** I've never heard a Japanese person with such good English. **[Her last name was "Toki," a surname I'd never heard before. I don't remember her first name.]**

Trying to get all this done, I drank four Cokes during the ride. This whole time I'd thought that I'd relax on the ride home, but such was not the case. The hours flew by the likes of which I've not seen.

They showed a couple of movies, **[one of which was "The Rocketeer",]** for which the window covers were drawn, but when they were over everyone who was still awake opened them and it was getting light outside although it was 1:00 or 2:00 by my watch (a.m.).

Ate some breakfast, and soon we were over U.S. territory, the first time I'd seen it since Day 62. Holy cow. Man, America sure is a spacious country.

We made our descent and that was it. Ito Shimai and I went to customs, and first we had to wait in different lines to check our respective passports. It was a bit scary, seeing all the gaijins everywhere and hearing all the English.

Since Ito Shimai is a non-**[U.S.]** resident, it took her a lot longer than it took me. I got my baggage and went through customs without a problem. The customs officers seemed a bit rude at times, which was probably due to the **[superior]** customer service in Japan that I am used to. **[It was]** a shock nonetheless.

I wanted to wait for Ito Shimai, but she was nowhere to be seen, so I went on ahead up to my gate. I sat there for a few minutes, then realized that my glasses were utterly filthy, so I went into the bathroom to clean them up. Just after I got in, I heard an "Elder?" I turned and saw a man with an Oriental face. **[He asked,]** "Are you leaving or returning?"

I went and talked to him for a while. **[It]** turns out **[that]** he's a Korean man who's a member of around 10 years who also dended in his native country. It was comforting, meeting and talking to someone who's on the same side **[that]** I am.

After I cleaned my glasses and left, another voice called my name. I turned around—Ito Shimai! What a sight for sore eyes. She'd finally gotten through customs and she came and hunted me down.

Her flight was due to leave a half hour before mine did, so she went to her gate and we waited together. Before she boarded, we asked and had a woman take a few pictures of us with Ito Shimai's camera.

Finally she had to get on, so we shook hands warmly and bade our farewells. I hope I see her again sometime. **[Fortunately, I did. She came back to Utah a couple of times to stay with other members of her host family and we spent some time together then.]** Coming home from a mission is a major event in one's life, and she and I had both shared it, so you know **[that]** she turned out to be a very good friend. **[We still correspond occasionally.]**

I went back over to my own gate and sat down. I felt very much like a fish out of water, being my first day back in America after nearly two years, being a missionary and with no companion at all surrounded by all the gaijins.

Finally I boarded and off we went. High we flew over snow-capped mountains. Soon I'd be greeted by my family and who knows who else.

I was once again on the window seat. There was a guy on the aisle, but luckily there was no one next to me, for I shed tears the whole plane ride, beginning to end.

I opened Mika's original gift. I read her little picture album **[that]** she'd prepared for me. The first page was a photograph of a picture of herself **[that]** she'd drawn while looking at a photograph of herself, if you can catch all that. Above it was the title, "As a Daughter of God" in both English and Japanese. Can you believe it? What a divine blessing! Just six months ago she had no idea of that! As a result of my doing what I did, there's now someone on this Earth who knows **[that]** she's a daughter of God. Not only that, but now freely writes it as well.

Folks, this is a pure and unspoiled child of God. You've got to see this and read it to fully understand it. At the end is a blown-up image of her and I standing together at the ward Christmas party. She lastly penned in that she's always thankful to God for meeting me, and that she won't forget my heart, my words, and my helping hand. The whole thing was like a nicely-done thank you note. It conveyed that impression.

That book is probably—no, not probably, but *the* most treasured item that I possess. It's what I got for two years of labor. Two years worth of missionary work.

I broke out and listened to the tape of Miyachi Shimai's music. Oh did I cry. I wasn't ready to face this. My old life, the one **[that]** I was used to, was gone forever, and I was mourning the loss. **[These were]** my last few minutes of being alone, reflecting.

Soon enough the plane landed and taxied into the gate. I looked into the windows **[of the terminal]** and could see my brothers and **[the person]** who must be Dick _____, my new dad, as it were.

I regained composure and waited to be the last one off in order to make a dramatic exit.

As I rounded the last corner of the ramp, there was a long stretch ahead, and at the end of it was Dick, Mom, Ethan and Grant, and Dan and Marcia. **[Marcia was Dan's girlfriend from before his mission; she waited for him and they got married after he got back.]** Knowing it to be the demarcation between the B.C./A.D. of my life, I stopped at the last metal floor divider, looked down, and using both feet I jumped over.

Joining the welcome party, I hugged Mom, and as a peace gesture hugged Dick as well. I hugged Dan, shook hands with Marcia since I'm still a missionary, and lastly hugged both **[of my]** brothers. I'd been saving them for last, 'cause I was utterly amazed with how much taller they are. Was this the right family?

It was exasperating. I was overwhelmed.

After some talk, we moved down towards **[the] baggage [claim area]**. On the way we were met by Eric, his wife Ann and their baby girl **[Eric and Ann had gotten married a month before I entered the M.T.C.]**; Spencer and Stephanie **[Stephanie was his girlfriend from before his mission, apparently she waited for him]**; and Daren and a new girlfriend of his **[whom]** I haven't/hadn't met or seen yet. **[Her first name was—and still is—Toma. She's the one with whom Daren made out on New Year's Eve.]** Ann is almost due with their second kid.

It was wild, seeing everybody again. It was tough to not let any Japanese words fly out. Wow, for the first time in two years I was around people who knew no Japanese whatsoever.

Utah is so elevated, so inland, and so dry that my mouth and throat seemed to burn from **[the]** sudden lack of humidity.

Down at **[the] baggage [claim area]** was another elder with his folks who'd just gotten back from **[the]** Tokyo North **[mission]**. Can't remember his name, but he had been in my branch in the M.T.C. **[I suggested to him, in Japanese, that we ought to impress everyone by speaking to each other in Japanese. He sort of laughed it off.]** Using the phone was a Marine in his dress blues. Also, on the way down there, there was a table set up with women asking for donations to an animal sanctuary, so I donated some Japanese money since that's all I had.

We all consulted and decided to meet at Sizzler later on tonight.

[My family and I] loaded up in Dick's suburban and headed for home. I'd been awake for well over 24 hours straight, yet it was still full bright outside **[and it was still the]** same day. Man, America is a wide country. In the car, Dick was talking about all kinds of job opportunities and so on, which eased a lot of worry and encouraged me. Maybe being in America won't be so bad after all.

[As we entered my old ward boundaries, I honestly thought for a moment that they'd moved the houses back away from the roads while I was gone. That's how unfamiliar I'd become to seeing actual, bona-fide front yards with grass and everything.]

At last we pulled into home. There were several new cars there **([at least, they were]** new to me), and before I went in I leaned against the fence above the backyard and took it all in, the view **[that]** I'd once been used to but haven't seen in over two years. **[It was]** overwhelming.

I was last to walk in, and it shocked me to see everyone in the house with their shoes on. **[Japan is, of course, famous for its tradition of taking one's shoes off before coming indoors.]** **[There was]** no genkan, either. I soon had to take my shoes off 'cause I couldn't stand it.

We went into my room. They'd used it as a storage room, plus there was a huge new bed there, so there was hardly any room. **[There were]** major changes in the house. **[There was a]** VCR, **[there were]** videos, **[there was]** M.T.V., etc. I brought my pictures to show everyone at dinner.

We didn't have much time, so off we went **[to the restaurant]**. We got there as Spencer and Eric and Ann dropped off Stephanie who *still* works there **[at Sizzler, the selfsame place at which we were about to eat]**. She was working there before Spencer left **[on his own mission]**.

I still had my name tag on. **[You're considered to still be a missionary until you're formally released by your stake president, even after you arrive back home. As such, you're expected to keep observing all the missionary protocols until that happens. This includes still dressing like a missionary and still wearing your name tag.]** I felt like I was in a daze. **[There was]** all this blonde hair everywhere.

Saw a few people **[whom]** I know there. **[One of them was a girl about my age whose family lived close to mine when I was in high school. When I was over there one day she suddenly blurted out, "I love you," taking me completely off guard. I wasn't interested in her, so I sort of shrugged it off. Anyway, I saw her in line with a boyfriend and we chatted a little bit.]** **[We]** got our orders in, then took plates back to the most bountiful salad bar I've seen in ages. America—**[the]** land of plenty.

While loading up, a lady noticed my name tag and started talking to me. She had served in Sapporo **[the Northernmost mission in Japan]** a long time ago. It was cool, a link to what I was used to. She gave me the name and phone number of two Japanese girls around here who need friends, especially Japanese-speaking ones. I'll have to give them a call. **[And I did. Daren threw a party on leap year a couple of weeks later; I called them up and invited them to come, which they did. One of them ended up becoming my girlfriend soon afterward; we were exclusive for a little over two years after that.]**

Dan and Marcia came later, then Daren and his woman Toma came last of all. **[I found out later that Daren's tardiness was due to him and Toma being unable to extricate themselves from a heavy make-out session.]** I showed **[them]** all my pictures and we all laughed and had a good time. **[I also learned that Spencer and Stephanie were engaged to be married. It later fell through, though.]**

Later it ended and we each went home. The other guys wanted me to call and see about doing something, but once I got home I realized **[that]** I was too tired to do anything, so I called Daren and said to count me out tonight.

Since that's the show I'm dying to see most, Dick suggested that we watch "Terminator II" since he has it on video. I was dead tired, but I agreed anyhow so that I could drown/forget my sorrows a bit. **[I was so tired that I started falling asleep during the chase scene right before they enter the steel mill. You know you're tired when you can fall asleep during "Terminator II." I successfully stuck it out and remained awake 'till the end, though.]**

After it ended, I went downstairs to my room. Today I was awake for over 31 hours total. Now it's just the formality of getting released; my mission is essentially over. After it was all said and done, there was one last thing I did: So full of uncertainty of the future, so sad to leave Mika and our lessons behind, I went on the floor and cried and cried and cried. I've never, *ever* cried so hard in my life. I cried also out of pure sorrow for not having obeyed God's commandments at all times like I ought. **[A huge reason for that last statement was because I'd just watched Terminator II, a rated-R movie. I was back home, I had only hours left before I was to be formally released, and yet I *still* couldn't obey the commandments with exactness. Why on Earth couldn't I have merely waited a *single day* before watching it, when I'd be officially off my mission? If I couldn't be a faithful servant *then*, after having just served a two-year, full-time mission, when on Earth *would* I become one? I was profoundly ashamed of, and saddened by, my own weakness.]** It was a cry of pure desperation and sorrow. Mika, what an outstanding investigator she was. **[I even whispered it out loud a few times: "Mika, you were *such* a good investigator." Saying this made cry all the harder.]** Now it's over. No more lessons. I'm really, *really* going to miss her. **[Boy, was *that* an understatement.]**

As it stands at an end, all over, I realize that by my having gone through all that's written over these past 773 days, a soul has been brought unto Christ. The Lord has seen fit to grant unto me according to my desires, a grand blessing for which I will be eternally grateful, worlds without end, forever and ever.

AMEN.

Elder Shades,
Japan Nagoya Mission

[And there you have it. One LDS mission, fully documented. Regardless of how I may feel about the LDS church now, that last sentence nevertheless remains as true today as the day I wrote it.

I know of one other returned missionary who wrote in his journal every single day—Russell Foutin, a former missionary preparation teacher of mine and the one from whom I got the idea—and I'm sure that there have been other such missionaries over the years. Nevertheless, considering how A) I've added retroactive commentary, B) I've created a glossary and an index, C) I've added the corresponding photos in the appropriate places, D) I was 100% honest with what I was thinking and feeling at the time, and E) I've uploaded it to the Internet for all the world to see, I think it no stretch to claim that this must certainly be the single most *well-documented* Mormon mission that's ever been served.

Remember how I explained that there were two experiences I had that even now I can't strike up to mere chance? Two experiences that prevent me, this many years later, from becoming an outright atheist? As a refresher, they were the ones wherein A) we met Matsushita-san and her sister Yamakawa-san under million-to-one circumstances, and B) the strong impressions I received to open to Doctrine and Covenants section 9 and thereby received both an answer to my prayer and an explanation for why my mission had turned out the way it had.

Well, there was one more smaller one that I haven't mentioned yet: When I finished writing the narrative of this final entry, I had *just enough* room to comfortably sign off by adding my signature, my name, and the words "Japan, Nagoya Mission." After 732 pages, each 6 3/4" x 8", I ended with *less than a quarter of a page left*. This led me to wonder if perhaps the Lord Himself caused it to work out that way. The odds of having *precisely enough room* for everything in this journal—no more, no less—are so astronomically small that I'm hard-pressed to rule out divine intervention even now.]

PHOTOS 137



L-R: Daines, Sister Ito, me. Behind us are the stairs leading to a massive shrine or temple that contained the idol or idols that I first saw a woman pray to way back when I was a green bean.



Front row: Stephen, the mission president's youngest son, hamming it up for the camera.

Back row, L-R: Sister Ames, me, President Ames.

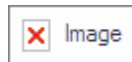


Front row: Stephen again.

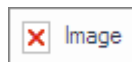
Back row, L-R: Sister Ames, Sister Ito, me, President Ames.



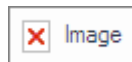
Me in front of the flight roster. My flight is second from the top. Do my eyes look a little red?



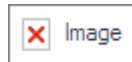
A missing candid picture of me and Mika as we were making our way forward in line. I was saying something to her while she listened.



Another missing picture similar to the above. We were both smiling at each other this time. It was a fantastic shot; I really regret that it's gone.



A missing picture of Mika and I as we passed our mission home friends. We were both facing the camera this time; our eyes and faces were red.



Another missing picture similar to the above, but I was far less successful at forcing a smile.



My plane before it taxied to the runway. Mika took this photo from the roof.



Me and Sister Ito after the long flight from Japan. This was taken in the Portland airport just before she boarded her connecting flight to California.

EPILOGUE

The next afternoon—since I was technically still a missionary when I woke up, I guess you could say it was Day 774—I went to my Stake President's office to be released. There had been no "changing of the guard" in the interim, so this was the same guy who had set me apart as a missionary way back on Day 1

. . . a lifetime ago, seemingly.

After we sat down, the first thing he said was, "So, how was it?" I immediately started to get choked up all over again and was rendered, literally, speechless for a moment or two. He saw this and commented to the effect that this proves I had truly "gotten it." Once I regained control over myself, I told him about Mika and her conversion, how there was no way I was going to mess it up, etc., and he said some very surprising things that I ought not repeat at this time.

The next day was Stake Conference, so I couldn't give my homecoming talk until the week afterward. I did, however, give my "mission report" to the assembled Stake High Council, along with the other missionaries who had returned sometime during the previous month. I was the last one to report; the previous missionaries' opening remarks shocked me by how totally "scripted" they seemed. I'm not exaggerating: *To a man*, they all said words to the effect of, "I served in the Brazil, Rio De Janeiro mission, which is probably the hardest mission in the world. I only had 86 baptisms when I was there." As you can imagine, I was utterly floored by this. 86 baptisms?? And you call that the hardest mission in the world? Kill me now. But that didn't stop the next guy from beginning with the exact same statement: "I served in the Ohio, Columbus North mission, which is probably the hardest mission in the world. I only had 39 baptisms the entire time I was there." And on it went, one after the other. By the time it came to me, I was foaming at the mouth with jealousy over all the baptisms they had seen. Even if you count the baptisms I had seen as a junior—Koyanagi's manipulative tactics notwithstanding—you could still count them all on the fingers of one hand. "Hardest mission in the world" my ass.

When it was my turn, I decided to deviate from the script a little. . . a mistake, in retrospect. I said, "I went to the Japan, Nagoya mission, which is hard but not impossible." I then said that I'd had one baptism, which was fortunate, because some missionaries don't have *any*. Chew on that, dudes.

Sometime during the next week, Daren and I stopped in to get some pizza. As we went to sit down, in one of the booths we walked past was sitting none other than Theresa! Remember that name? She was there with one or two of her younger sisters. She asked me when my homecoming was going to be. Now, I wasn't planning on telling her, since I didn't really want her to be there, but since she asked me point-blank I went ahead and filled her in.

At church, during my homecoming, Dick delivered some comments, a mini-talk of sorts. Then it was my mom's turn. She sort of retroactively introduced him, since they hadn't yet met each other (and thus he hadn't spoke) when I gave my farewell talk. She then went into all the circumstances behind how they met, what led them to eventually get married, etc. This took up a lot of time; Theresa later commented on how it was supposed to be my homecoming but my mom almost transformed it into a completely different event.

Eventually it was my turn (finally). I can't recall with certainty what it was that I talked about, but knowing me, chances are I discussed how, after seeing the different teaching styles of my various senior companions, I eventually thought to myself, "How would Jesus teach?" I'm sure I used this to segue into what I perceived Jesus' teaching method to be: A) being completely open and honest up front—no deception or underhandedness, and B) always respecting the investigator's free agency—no manipulation or strong-arming. I'm just as sure that I described how I was determined to make that methodology my own—Who was I to deviate from the *modus operandi* of the one perfect man? With this as my probable foundation, I know I talked about Mika and her conversion. I distinctly remember, though, closing my remarks by saying, "For the rest of my life, Whenever the church gives its annual statistical report, I will always know that had I not served a mission that number would be one less."

After the meetings we had a mini-open house at my, uh, house. Most if not all of my closest friends were there; Theresa came too. During the goings-on, she joined in on every conversation as though she had known us all of our lives. I was a little resentful of that.

Not long after this, Theresa and I went on a long drive and talked all about the past and our relationship, etc. On either that meeting or the next, she handed me a note on which she'd written words to the effect

that now that I'm home and she's around me again, she wants me back more badly than anything. Wow! Soon after this, we fell right back into our old ways: Petting, etc. I felt pretty bad after the first time, considering all the personal improvement I thought I'd undergone over the previous two years, but aside from that we literally picked up right where we left off. It was quite something.

After a while of this, she wanted me to make a decision: Did I want her, or should she just go back to her fiancée? (He was in the Marines and stationed safely away in Okinawa at the time.) After thinking about how, on my mission, she had essentially broken up with me and rubbed it in my face, I thought to myself, "What's stopping her from doing it again?" I then advised her to just stick with her fiancée. So, with that, she and I parted ways for good.

Although that closes the book on Theresa—the longest-running character in this saga, by far—you might wonder what became of some of the other people about whom you've read over the course of this journal. I inserted brief "where-are-they-now" run-downs as I progressed, particularly on Day 12. There are also brief biographical sketches for each entry in the "Cast of Characters" that cover some others. But that doesn't mean I adequately addressed all of them:

You'll recall Sister Miyuki Maruoka, the girl on whom I had the most severe crush. She eventually married an American guy about 10 years her junior. They now have a couple of kids and live in the United States in the New England area.

Remember Jodi? She and I talked on the phone after I got home, and sure enough, the reason she quit writing so diligently is because she'd gotten a boyfriend. They had already broken up by then, but she was nevertheless engaged to marry someone else. So the first—and last—time she and I met face-to-face was at her wedding reception.

Yoshie and I never did meet up again. Apparently she and I not seeing each other that last time was somehow the "kiss of death." I called her a few years later; she had married a friend of mine from high school in the interim—small world. She's lived back and forth among America, Canada, and Japan since then.

Sister Ito ended up marrying a non-LDS guy back in Japan who eventually converted to the church. They now have two kids and live in the metropolitan area North of Tokyo.

I originally met the Palmer family (Dwayne, Norie, and their oldest child Mindy) in Fukutoku, where they were very kind to me on several occasions. When I was living in my last area, my companion and I visited Norie in the hospital after she gave birth to her second child. They lived in Utah off-and-on after I returned home—fortuitously, they now live in the same town that I do—and I count them among my dear friends.

Elder Van Cleave looked me up via Google early in 2009; the guy is like a brother to me now. Sometime after that I discovered the magic of Facebook.com; as of this writing the other former companions with whom I've reconnected are: Rick Horrocks, Jordan Oviatt, Heber Cloward, Tory Frehner, Tim Depeel, Pepper Seegmiller, Robert Bunnage, and Asao Oshiro. Interestingly, Oviatt, Cloward, and Depeel now feel the same way about the church that I do.

Also as of this writing, other mission friends whom I either found or who found me through Facebook are (in the order in which I originally met them): Jeff Proctor, Shelly Gage, Sharon Upthagrove, Kiyo Yokoyama, Miyuki Maruoka, Jim Pollard, David MacArthur, Michael Baird, Joseph Hansen, Ken Garff, Kayo Henmi, and Ken Stoker. I've since made another friend from the Nagoya Mission, Robyn Sansom, whom I didn't actually know *on* my mission because she entered the M.T.C. about six months after I got home. We met through mission reunions, but she was (and still is) awesome enough to become an honorary member of this journal.

Switching gears a little, remember the grammar list I created, the one that listed every Japanese grammatical principle in the six missionary discussions, in order? President Ames was true to his word

and began including it in the folder that each new missionary received upon arriving in-country. It also caught on in the Okinawa mission, the Sendai mission (I think), and one or two others. In fact, during a mission reunion in October of 1994, I introduced myself to some RMs who served after I did. When they said that my name sounded familiar, I told them about the grammar list (my name was attached to it), and after getting over the shock they all loudly chanted in unison, "We're not worthy! We're not worthy!" That was fun.

I already filled you in on the *longest-running* person in this journal. Now, what about the *most important* one?

Two and a half months after I returned home, my uncle Lynn got married in Hawaii. My family had already bought my plane ticket for me before I got home, so that was very nice of them. Amazingly, Mika won (or earned) a trip to Hawaii through her work for her and a companion, so she arranged to go there with her mother and meet my family at the same time we'd all be there. Let me tell you, folks, it just doesn't get much cooler than that.

Sure enough, though, the event fell on one of my drill weekends with the Marine Reserves (Murphy's Law), so I had to get permission from my chain-of-command to miss drill and make it up later. Unfortunately, my chain-of-command refused my request. I went upstairs to get a note of some sort from my commanding officer to try to get a refund for the plane ticket, and as I was explaining the matter to one of the administrative staff, by a stroke of fantastic luck the commanding officer himself walked by behind me and overheard the conversation. He said, "I never denied that request." Ergo, one or more of the enlisted schmucks at the platoon or company level had refused it, the rotten bastards. Anyway, the commanding officer himself approved my time off without a problem. Whew!

On Hawaii's big island, me, my two brothers, my mom, Dick, and my maternal grandparents all met Mika and her mother, Hisae. We all hung out and hiked, toured, swam, ate dinner, etc. over the space of a couple of days. Two pictures from it are [here](#) and [here](#). A better vacation you simply couldn't ask for.

Roughly a year after I got home, Tony Elford—one of the Elders who moved into my apartment in Meito-Kita on the day I moved out—started writing to her (Mika). After a few months of this they decided to take things to the next level; she flew to Oahu to attend BYU-Hawaii where he was also attending school.

After a rather rocky relationship, however, they broke up. She nevertheless continued attending school there where she met another guy and became engaged. They came to Utah, his (and my) home state, for Christmas in 1995; my wife and I met the two of them at that time. They were married in the Manti temple in April of 1996; we attended their reception.

They've made their home in Hawaii ever since. The last time I saw her face-to-face was in late 1998 or so when I ran into her in a mall in Utah completely by surprise. She and her baby son were there visiting her in-laws.

By all accounts, she's still an active member. Mission accomplished—literally.

In spite of the fact that, as I said, my mind has changed regarding Mormonism itself—[click here](#) if you want the details—I nevertheless look back on my mission with fondness. It was the only time in my life when, aside from a brief crisis of faith on Day 183, I was 100% dedicated to a cause that I was totally convinced was greater (*much* greater) than myself. I tried very hard to be friendly, upbeat, and a positive influence in as many people's lives as I possibly could—a good habit to get into by any standard—thus leaving some (many?) people a little bit better off than I found them, I think. I had some amazing, life-changing experiences, especially on Days 398, 724, 728, and 773. To the extent that a missionary can, I experienced another culture. I also learned a new language, thereby accomplishing one of my lifetime goals, that of becoming bi-lingual. It also taught me a profound lesson about myself: That if I totally believe in the value and the "rightness" of what I am doing, I can accomplish a surprisingly great amount. . . far, far more than I can when just left to my own devices.

Originally, I never considered getting involved with the blogging craze. I mean seriously, who cares what I ate for breakfast or if I was late getting home from work? But then one day in mid-August of 2007, the thought hit me: I have this missionary journal sitting on my shelf collecting dust, so why not put it to work and get some use out of it? The subject matter is a little "off the beaten path," something that's rarely (if ever) seen in other blogs. If nothing else, it's a historical artifact, a "snapshot" of one tiny but unique facet of the human experience.

I therefore decided to transcribe and upload my missionary journal entry-by-entry. There were a few bumps in the road—at one point I gave up writing in it for about four months because I was convinced that it was too boring for anyone to read; at another point we upgraded our board software which made all the blog entries lose their "date stamps," putting all of them out-of-order and requiring me to painstakingly reload them all one-by-one—but for the most part it's been a great experience to relive my mission through this weblog over the past three years and two months. I've been pleasantly surprised by the amount of details I've been able to recall—and fill you in on—with only a sentence or two serving to jog my memory.

In fact, recalling and re-reading how single-minded I was during Mika's teaching process—how I utterly refused to do anything to jeopardize it in any way, and how totally dedicated I was to doing the right thing, no matter the difficulty and no matter the circumstance—I've been inspired to re-adopt those same habits and to otherwise "re-become" the same caliber of person that I was back then. Seriously, why should I "do wrong" by anyone? Why shouldn't I *always* strive to "do the right thing?" Why shouldn't I be a "good person" in every aspect of life, missionary or otherwise?

Therefore, although I tried to be a positive influence in people's lives all those years ago, perhaps my mission has come full circle and become a positive influence in my own life, too.

Thank you for accompanying me on this journey. I hope you enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

—Elder Shades

STATISTICAL RECAP

BAPTISMS

Baptisms I had as a junior :	4	(Masaya Oshita, Masato Watanabe, Tatsuya Imai, Yuji Watanabe)
Baptisms I had as a senior :	1	(Mika Yogo)
Total baptisms:	5	
People I taught as junior who were baptized later:	6	(Masami Ote, Makato Kurita, Tomie Matsubara, Nachiko Atsumi, Miyuki Matsushita, Tsuyoshi Miura)
People I taught as senior who were baptized later:	0	
Total people I taught who were baptized later:	6	

DAYS SERVED

In the M.T.C. :	61
<i>Between M.T.C. & first area:</i>	3
As a junior companion:	385
As a senior companion:	280
As a district leader :	42
<i>Between last area & home:</i>	2

Total days served: 773

COMPANIONS

M.T.C. companions: 2 (Robert Gibson, Wayne Van Cleave)
Senior companions: 6 (Rick Horrocks, Jordan Oviatt, Heber Cloward,
Kris Harris, Yoshihisa Koyanagi, James Poulsen)
Junior companions: 5 (Tory Frehner, Tim Depeel*, Pepper Seegmiller, Robert
Bunnage, Asao Oshiro)
Total companions: 13

DAYS SERVED BY COMPANION

With **Gibson & Van Cleave**: 61
Between M.T.C. & first area: 3
With **Rick Horrocks**: 56
With **Jordan Oviatt**: 28
With **Heber Cloward**: 28
Between companions 5 & 6†: 19
With **Kris Harris**: 72
With **Yoshihisa Koyanagi**: 112
With **James Poulsen**: 70
With **Tory Frehner**: 56
With **Tim Depeel†**: 35
With **Pepper Seegmiller**: 91
With **Robert Bunnage**: 21
Between companions 12 & 13: 7
With **Asao Oshiro**: 112
Between last area & home: 2
Total days served: 773

AREAS

In the **M.T.C.S**: 1
As a **junior** companion: 3 (Fukutoku, Okazaki, Inuyama)
As a **senior** companion: 2 (Takefu, Meito-Kita)
Total areas: 6

DAYS SERVED BY AREA

In the **M.T.C.**: 61
Between M.T.C. & first area: 3
In **Fukutoku**: 84
In **Okazaki**: 119
In **Inuyama**: 182
In **Takefu**: 84
In **Meito-Kita**: 238
Between last area & home: 2
Total days served: 773

UPLOADED PHOTOS

From the M.T.C. :	7	(0.11/day)
<i>Between M.T.C. & first area:</i>	3	(1.00/day)
From Fukutoku :	45	(0.54/day)
From Okazaki :	32	(0.27/day)
From Inuyama :	49	(0.27/day)
From Takefu :	24	(0.29/day)
From Meito-Kita :	148	(0.62/day)
<i>Between last area & home:</i>	6	(3.00/day)
Total photos:	314	(0.41/day)

MISCELLANEOUS

Books of Mormon placed:	127
People or married couples mentioned by name:	599
Japanese & missionary slang words used :	121
Total pages of my actual, physical journal:	732

* I served with him twice, so if you count him twice my number of junior companions would be 6.

† During most of this time I was informally doubled up with Elder Brian Biddulph.

‡ We served together twice; the first time was for 28 days, the second time was for 7 days.

§ Missionaries often don't count the M.T.C. as an area, so I had 5 areas *in the field*.

|| Excluding place names and proper names.

MAPS



Where in the world Japan lies (for the geographically disinclined).



This is a blow-up of the inset of the first map. It shows the part of Japan that my mission covered. As you can see, it was more or less in the dead center of the country.



This is a blow-up of the inset in the second map. In Japan, the equivalent of a state is a "prefecture;" the colored area is the six prefectures that comprised my mission.

1. My first area, Fukutoku, was in Nagoya itself, covering the Northern portion of it.
2. My second area, Okazaki, is Southeast of Nagoya, clearly labeled.
3. My third area, Inuyama, is located right underneath the "21" icon, nearly due North of Nagoya.
4. My fourth area, Takefu, appears to have been renamed "Echizen;" you can find it just above the center of the map toward the left.
5. The apartment in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita, was located a little ways East-Northeast of Nagoya proper in a town called "Owariasahi" (not labeled at this scale), but the ward building itself was located on Nagoya's Eastern edge.

GLOSSARY

- **"Aijin"**: Your lover, or the person you love.
- **"Asakuma"**: A restaurant chain in Nagoya.
- **"Asobikai"**: A Japanese word whose closest English equivalent would probably be "play outing" or "fun outing."
- **"Asobu"**: Japanese for "play" (the verb, not the noun).
- **"Basho"**: Japanese for "area."
- **"Bean"**: See "Green Bean."
- **"Benkyokai"**: Japanese for "study meeting." Usually conducted among companionships or districts of 4-6 missionaries.
- **"Bon Odori"**: A traditional dance done during "O-Bon," below.
- **"Book"**: Whenever I capitalize this word, I'm using it as shorthand for "Book of Mormon."
- **"Bosozoku"**: A person who rides a motorcycle around town without the muffler, usually in the middle of the night, in low gear, revving it up as often as possible. They'll often ride in groups, maximizing the noise level and waking everyone up. Often their bikes are "tricked out" and stylized quite a bit.
- **"B.R.T."**: An acronym for "Build Relationships of Trust," which according to the Missionary Guide is the first step when trying to get a commitment out of an investigator or a potential investigator. Used by missionaries as slang—or justification, take your pick—for hanging out with non- or inactive members, doing something other than teaching a lesson.
- **"Buch"**: Rhymes with "mooch." Short for the Japanese word "dendobucho" (see below). Used as missionary slang.
- **"Bunpo"**: Japanese for "grammar."
- **"-chan"**: An affectionate diminutive suffix for a young person, most often a girl, who isn't old enough to be a "-san" yet. Sort of like how, in America, a girl named "Laura" would be called "Laurie."
- **"Calpis"**: The brand name of a soft drink sold either concentrated, in glass bottles, or pre-mixed in standard cans. It's quite good, but there's also a carbonated version which is divine.
- **"Chirashi"**: Japanese for "flyer" or "handout."
- **"Choro"**: Japanese for "elder." In Japan, it comes at the end of a person's name, so "Elder Smith" would be "Smith Choro."
- **"Dame"**: Rhymes with "Dante." A strong Japanese exclamation meaning "no good" or "no go."
- **"Danchi"**: Japanese for "apartment complex." Not merely a duplex or four-plex, this typically refers to one of those huge single-building government projects that included tens—sometimes hundreds—of individual units.

- **"Dendo"**: Short for the Japanese verb "dendo suru," which means "to proselyte." Used all the time by missionaries as a catch-all word to describe anything having to do with finding or teaching investigators.
- **"Dendo Chosei Shukai"**: Japanese for "proselyting coordination meeting." The English equivalent would probably be "ward/mission coordination meeting" or something like that.
- **"Dendo Chosei Shunin"**: Japanese for "proselyting coordination leader." The English equivalent would be "ward mission leader."
- **"Dendobucho"**: Japanese for "mission president."
- **"Desu"**: Japanese for "is" or "am." Often pronounced "dess."
- **"Dode"**: A missionary slang abbreviation for the Japanese word "doryo," which means "companion" (see below).
- **"Dojo"**: Roughly "training area." Typically (but not always) a dedicated place wherein the martial arts are taught and practiced.
- **"Doryo"**: Japanese for "companion."
- **"Eikaiwa"**: Japanese for "English Conversation." It's also the name of the free English class that missionaries teach.
- **"Eki"**: Japanese for "train station."
- **"Erai"**: A combination of "great" and "respectable." Used in order to compliment someone.
- **"Fud"**: Missionary slang for "o-furo," listed below.
- **"Fujigaoka"**: The name of the area surrounding the eastern terminus of one of Nagoya's subway lines. Also a bus hub by default. The numerous shops and pedestrians made it the prime location for street contacting in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **"Fuke"**: Rhymes with "duke." Short for the Japanese word "fukappatsu," which means "inactive," referring to a less-active member, of course. Also used as missionary slang to describe other missionaries who regularly break the rules.
- **"Futon"**: A thick mat that's used as a mattress that you place on the floor. These are rolled up and put into the closet after waking up, thereby doubling the available space in the bedroom.
- **"Futsu"**: A Japanese word whose meaning is a combination of "normal" and "average."
- **"Gaijin"**: Japanese for "foreigner." Anyone not Japanese gets pointed at and called this all the time.
- **"Genkan"**: In Japanese homes, the place behind the front door where one's shoes are removed prior to entering.
- **"Green Bean"**: Missionary slang for a missionary fresh from the M.T.C. and usually still with his first companion (his trainer).
- **"Hantai"**: Japanese for "opposed." Often used by missionaries to refer to family members who refuse to allow other family members to be baptized.
- **"Hayaku"**: Japanese for "quickly" or "faster," depending on the context.
- **"Hen"**: Japanese for "weird."
- **"Honbu"**: Japanese for "headquarters," which in our case referred to the mission home.
- **"Inorikai"**: Literally "prayer meeting."
- **"Ito Yokado"**: A large department store chain. They currently own all 7-Elevens in the United States, too.
- **"Jiko Shokai"**: Japanese for "self-introduction."
- **"Jishin"**: Japanese for "confidence."
- **"Jitensha"**: Japanese for "bicycle."
- **"Jitte"**: A quasi-weapon used by Japanese policemen in medieval Japan to disarm opponents.
- **"Jokyu"**: Japanese for "advanced class," as in a school setting.
- **"-kai"**: A Japanese suffix meaning "meeting." See "Benkyokai" and "Taikai" for real-world examples.
- **"Kaiin"**: A member of something. Used by missionaries, of course, to refer to a member of the church.

- **"Kama"**: A handheld scythe used to harvest rice stalks. Most easily identifiable as the crescent-bladed weapon of the martial arts.
- **"Kamiyashiro"**: The name of the train station closest to the mission home.
- **"Kanji"**: The complex characters—ideographs—used in written Japanese.
- **"Kankei"**: A relationship of some sort or other. Can also refer to interpersonal relationships between two or more people.
- **"Kapa"**: A rain suit. In Japan, it would be folly not to own one.
- **"Katana"**: Japanese for "sword," more particularly a samurai sword.
- **"Kekko"**: Japanese for "okay" or "all right." When people indicate that they don't want to accept a Book of Mormon or listen to the missionaries, they'll use this word to mean that things are okay the way they are, i.e. they don't want to rock the boat by tuning in. Naturally, this word is used as missionary slang for being rejected.
- **"Kinjin"**: Japanese for "golden person," used as missionary slang for a "golden contact."
- **"Kita"**: Japanese for "North."
- **"Kitty"**: Used by missionaries to refer to each person's share of the utility bills.
- **"Kofuku"**: Japanese for "happiness."
- **"Kofuku no Kagaku"**: A semi-competing religion in Japan.
- **"Komaru"**: A rather untranslatable Japanese intransitive verb. The closest English equivalent is probably "be up the creek without a paddle."
- **"-kun"**: An affectionate diminutive suffix for a young boy who isn't old enough to be a "-san" yet. Sort of like how, in America, a boy named "Bill" would be called "Billy."
- **"-kyo"**: The Japanese suffix meaning "-ism." Therefore, "Mormonism" would be, in Japanese, "Mormon kyo."
- **"Kyodai"**: Japanese for "brother." At church in Japan, it comes at the end of a person's name, so "Brother Smith" would be "Smith Kyodai."
- **"Kyudoshu"**: Japanese for "investigator" (roughly translated).
- **"L.G.M."**: An acronym for "Large Group Meeting." Used only in the M.T.C.
- **"Mahikari"**: A semi-competing religion in Japan.
- **"Matsuri"**: A festival. Usually always consists of a parade with multi-man hand-toted floats.
- **"Meishi"**: Japanese for "business card."
- **"Minami"**: Japanese for "South."
- **"Miso Shiru"**: A very common Japanese soup. The stock is made from soybean paste. You can order it at any Japanese restaurant; it often comes automatically.
- **"Mochi"**: A paste made from smashed rice and traditionally eaten at New Year's.
- **"Mori"**: Japanese for "forest."
- **"M.T.C."**: An acronym for the Missionary Training Center, of course.
- **"Mugi"**: Japanese for "wheat," more especially "cracked wheat."
- **"Mura"**: Japanese for "village."
- **"Nigiri Sushi"**: Sushi constructed out of a small ball of rice with a slab of fish over the top.
- **"Nihonjin"**: Japanese for "Japanese person."
- **"O-Bon"**: A quasi-holiday in early August wherein the spirits of the ancestors are said to return. People do traditional dances (see "Bon Odori," above) in order to please or appease them.
- **"O-furo"**: The Japanese equivalent of a bathtub. Water is gas-heated by the tub itself; few missionary apartments have a centralized water heater.
- **"Okasan"**: Japanese for "mother."
- **"Okonomiyaki"**: A popular Japanese dish. Sometimes nicknamed a "Japanese pancake."
- **"Okusan"**: Japanese for "wife."
- **"Oni"**: A quasi-supernatural being from Japanese mythology, best described as a cross between a demon and an ogre.
- **"Otosan"**: Japanese for "father."
- **"Pachinko"**: A popular form of gambling. Pachinko machines look somewhat akin to pinball machines mounted vertically, wherein the player tries to get the ball(s) to fall into a certain hole or slot.

- **"Romaji"**: Romanized characters, i.e. the A.B.C.s. It's the way American missionaries who don't know kanji, the Japanese ideographs, write in Japanese (and how Japanese people generally write to the missionaries in return).
- **"Sakae"**: The name of Nagoya's downtown area.
- **"Sakura"**: Japanese for "cherry blossom." Also refers to the six-day season when they bloom, a de-facto celebration.
- **"-sama"**: A Japanese honorific suffix reserved for people of high social rank.
- **"-san"**: The standard Japanese honorific suffix, equivalent to a gender-neutral "Mr." or "Mrs."
- **"Sashimi"**: Small slabs of raw fish, considered a delicacy. Think of it as sushi without the rice.
- **"Seichi"**: Japanese for "holy ground." It was the first Japanese word I immediately understood due to knowing the Chinese root words beforehand.
- **"Seijinshiki"**: Japan's annual coming-of-age ceremony to celebrate the legal adulthood of everyone who turned 20 the previous year.
- **"Seito no Michi"**: Japanese for "Path of the Saints." That's the title of the Japanese version of the Ensign.
- **"Sen"**: Japanese for "thousand." Used by itself, it refers to money, especially a single thousand-yen bill (worth approximately \$8.50 or so at the time).
- **"Senpai"**: Japanese for "senior," as in "senior companion."
- **"Sensei"**: Japanese for "teacher." Often used as a suffix to that teacher's name instead of "-san."
- **"Sento"**: Public bathhouse. Males and females had their own sections (unfortunately).
- **"Shabu shabu"**: A traditional Japanese dish wherein thin slices of beef are individually cooked by dipping them into a pot of boiling water.
- **"Shiawase"**: A cross between "joyful" and "ecstatic," with a touch of "content" and "carefree" thrown in.
- **"Shibucho"**: Japanese for "branch president."
- **"Shikishi"**: A thin, oversized matted cardboard square that's given to someone who is leaving or to whom congratulations are due. Everyone in the group signs it and adds a message, hence its size. Sometimes a photograph is affixed in the center.
- **"Shimai"**: Japanese for "sister." At church in Japan, it comes at the end of a person's name, so "Sister Smith" would be "Smith Shimai."
- **"Shinkansen"**: Japan's famed "bullet train."
- **"Shiyakusho"**: Japanese for "city center."
- **"Shodo"**: Japanese for "calligraphy."
- **"Shogi"**: Japanese chess. In my opinion, it's far superior to the standard chess that we Americans are familiar with.
- **"Shokai"**: Japanese for "introduction." Sometimes used by missionaries as a slang verb, for example when introducing the Book of Mormon to potential investigators.
- **"Shokyu"**: Japanese for "beginners' class."
- **"Shonen"**: A young boy, generally no older than a teenager.
- **"Soka Gakkai"**: A semi-competing religion in Japan.
- **"Tabehodai"**: Japanese for "all-you-can-eat." Often used as a noun, particularly to describe a restaurant that operates on that format.
- **"Tachiai"**: Japanese for "fellowship." The ideal situation was to have one of these, a ward member, present during each lesson.
- **"Taikai"**: Japanese for "large meeting." In practice, the closest English equivalent would be the word "conference."
- **"Tengoku"**: Japanese for "Heaven."
- **"The List"**: I use this phrase to refer to the list that I developed of all the Japanese grammar principles—and their English translations—used in the missionary discussions. The items appeared in order, lesson by lesson, principle by principle, paragraph by paragraph, and sentence by sentence. It took me over a year and a half to compile and perfect it.

- **"Tottemo"**: A cross between "very" and "extremely." When using this word, the longer you draw out the double-Ts, the more emphasis you place on it.
- **"Triff"**: Missionary slang for a giggly Japanese girl who's boy-crazy for American missionaries.
- **"Tsuyoi"**: Japanese for "strong." Its meaning is broader than just physical strength; it also refers to one's ability to endure.
- **"Undokai"**: Literally, "exercise meeting." It's what you'd probably call the thing that happens near the end of some grade school years when the kids all run relay races, etc.
- **"Wakizashi"**: A short sword carried by the samurai as a backup in case their main sword broke or they became disarmed.
- **"Wasabi"**: Japanese horseradish used to garnish sushi. Notoriously hot and spicy.
- **"Yakiniku"**: A Japanese dish. Translates literally to "cooked meat."
- **"Yakuza"**: The Japanese mafia.
- **"Yorokobi"**: Japanese for "joy."
- **"Yotei"**: Japanese for "appointment." Used as missionary slang for "baptismal date."

CAST OF CHARACTERS

In the following list, people are alphabetically arranged by the name by which I refer to them in this journal—whether by their first or last name will vary.

- **Akashi, _____** (female): A member in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Aki Yoshimura** (female): An Eikaiwa student and sometime investigator from Seto, the town adjacent to my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. I correctly guessed her last name completely at random.
- **Akiko (Aoyama?)** (female): Younger sister of Yoko, a member in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Alan Ashton**: Founder of WordPerfect and a former neighbor of mine. His family's testimony was in a Book of Mormon in the apartment I lived in while serving in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **"Alex"**: Nickname for a perpetual investigator in my first area, Fukutoku. I never did learn his real name.
- **Alexander, Walter**: One of the two A.P.s when I went home.
- **Allen, Todd**: A junior missionary who was Seppi's companion (and partner-in-crime) at one point.
- **Amano, _____** (female): A friend of Yoshie Sugiura and an Eikaiwa student in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Ames, Byron**: The second child of my second mission president.
- **Ames, Daren**: The third child of my second mission president.
- **Ames, Spencer**: The fourth child of my second mission president.
- **Ames, Walter**: My second mission president. My feelings about him are more hopelessly mixed than about any other human being I know.
- **Amini, Robert**: An elder in the mission home staff for a time while I served in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. His dad was rich, so he bought all the food for both himself and his companions.
- **Anan, Chieko** (female): A widowed member in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Anderson, _____**: An elder in the Tokyo South mission who called me about Kenichi, an exchange student friend from High School.
- **Anderson, _____**: An elder I met when I was in my third area, Inuyama. Reportedly drove everyone around him crazy since he never shut up.
- **Anderton, _____**: A fellow Marine from my unit whom I saw in the M.T.C.
- **Andrus, Shonni**: A sister missionary who arrived in Japan a year after I did.
- **Andy Thomas**: A friend of mine and Dan's since Junior High.
- **Ann Pulley Graham**: Eric's wife. They got married a month before I entered the M.T.C.

- **Arakawa, _____** (female): An inactive member in my first area, Fukutoku, who nevertheless referred a family to us.
- **Arata, _____** (male): An investigator taught by the other pair of elders in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Asai, _____** (male): A guy we visited in my fourth area, Takefu. Spoke rapidly in bad Japanese.
- **Asai, Tamao** (male): A guy we taught in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. We found him after praying hard for an area; his was the first door we knocked on.
- **Asuka Ono** (female): A high-school aged Eikaiwa student in Seto, the town adjacent to my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Ata, Naomi** (female): A student in our Okusan Eikaiwa in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Atsumi, Hideo**: Father of the first family I ever taught.
- **Atsumi, Nachiko**: Mother of the first family I ever taught.
- **Atsumi, Yukako**: Daughter of the first family I ever taught. Almost exactly five years younger than me.
- **Atsushi _____** (male): A cooperative investigator in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Aya _____** (female): An acquaintance of ours who (I believe) lived in Seto, the town adjacent to my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. If I'm wrong about her hometown, she *might* be the same person as Aya Masunaka, below.
- **Aya Masunaka** (female): Daughter of Masunaka-san. I looked up some information on home stay in America for her.
- **Baba, _____** (female): A Christian woman and mother of six who invited us to her home for dinner on a couple of occasions. Wasn't too keen on the idea of military service. She lived in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Baggs, Joseph**: An elder in the M.T.C. a month ahead of me whose duty, along with Elder Graff, was to help our district get oriented and otherwise settle in. This guy was "Mr. Positive" in every respect.
- **Bailey, (Joseph?)**: The missionary fresh from the M.T.C. who replaced me when I left my third area, Inuyama.
- **Baird, Michael**: A missionary who served for a time in Seto, the town adjacent to my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Ballard, M. Russell**: A member of the Quorum of the 12 Apostles who visited the mission while I was in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Barry _____**: An American English teacher living in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Becky Fratcher**: Wife of my friend Dave.
- **Becky Hards**: A girl I didn't know but with whom I nevertheless corresponded briefly as sort of a self-dare.
- **Beers, _____** (male): The missionary I replaced when I went to my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Biddulph, Brian**: A fellow junior companion with whom I was teamed for about two weeks in my second area, Okazaki. I later took his place when I transferred to my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Blackburn, Janalee**: A sister missionary two months behind me.
- **Bob**: Baba-san's cat.
- **Boyd, John**: A fellow Marine from my unit who returned from his own mission to Nagoya a month or so before I went.
- **Brailsford, Cody**: A missionary in Elder Cook's M.T.C. group. I gave him a copy of my bunpo list.
- **Brenchley, Douglas**: A former institute teacher of mine and choir director at the M.T.C. when I was there.
- **Brian Stutz**: A friend from before my mission. Never served a mission himself, but remains a faithful member.
- **Brimhall, _____** (male): A missionary and Frehner's senior companion once he transferred to Tsuruga from Takefu.

- **Brough, Ronald:** The junior companion within the other pair of elders in my second area, Okazaki. We lived together in a four-man apartment. Companion to Elder Sparks. He was hospitalized briefly for appendicitis.
- **Brown, Leroy** (male): A missionary in Elder Cook's M.T.C. group. I gave him a copy of my bunpo list.
- **Bruce R. McConkie:** A former member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and author of the *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* that I briefly borrowed.
- **Bueler, Samuel:** Koyanagi's second junior companion when I was in my fourth area, Takefu. We were both interested in World War II, so we always had something to talk about.
- **Cantwell, Gregory:** The second junior zone leader over my third area, Inuyama. A very spiritual dude.
- **Carmen _____:** A Filipino girl to whom I gave an English Book of Mormon. I did this after giving a presentation at her school. This took place while I was serving in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Carolyn _____:** An exchange student to Japan from Pennsylvania whom I met in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Chamberlain, David:** A fellow Marine from my unit who departed for his own mission to Japan a year before I did. We'd gone to the same Junior High, although we didn't know each other. Former junior companion to Imamura.
- **Chandler, Cheryl:** A sister missionary at the M.T.C. I was infatuated with who also went to Nagoya the same time I did. From Falls Church, Virginia and companion to Sisters Fisher and Uthagrove.
- **Charles Jannuzi:** An American from New England teaching English in my fourth area, Takefu. We rode our bikes with him to the Sea of Japan.
- **Cheryl Depriest:** A girl I briefly dated before my mission. Ditched me for Shane.
- **Chiharu Nakaya** (female): An Eikaiwa student in my third area, Inuyama. Friend of Yoshimi.
- **Chika _____** (female): An Eikaiwa student to whom I gave *two* Books of Mormon (one in English, one in Japanese) in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Chris Bain** (male): My mother's High School sweetheart. I visited him a few times prior to my mission and we corresponded, at times, *during* my mission. Unfortunately, he and his wife perished in the wildfires that swept through Southern California in October of 2007.
- **Christensen, _____** (male): My missionary preparation Institute teacher from before my mission.
- **Christensen, Sondra:** A sister missionary in my zone while I was in my third area, Inuyama. Companion to Sister Maruoka at one point (I believe).
- **Christy _____:** The Brazilian girlfriend of Lon Hall's roommate whom he was fellowshipping in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Chynoweth, Matthew:** Koyanagi's junior companion in Sabae, the next town North of my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Clark, Brett:** Biddulph's senior companion after being teamed with me as co-juniors. They served in Nishio, a town adjacent to my second area, Okazaki.
- **Clark, Gayle:** A sister missionary in my M.T.C. branch who also went to Nagoya about a month after I did. We later served together in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Clinger, Stephen:** One of the A.P.s when I arrived in Japan. Companion to Elder Lloyd.
- **Cloward, Heber:** My third senior companion. We served together in my second area, Okazaki. He loved to talk.
- **Cobb, Charles IV:** A missionary who served in Kasugai, an area in my last zone. A female investigator told him she loved him and that she wanted to have sex with him, going so far as to drop her (clothed) breasts in his hands; he successfully resisted. Companion to Elder Smith.
- **Colter, Brett:** A missionary in my zone while I was in my third area, Inuyama. He'd been on active duty in the Army Rangers before his mission.
- **Cook, Jayson:** The last junior companion within the other pair of elders in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. He became my partner-in-crime when I went a bit fuke my last month.

- **Cordner, Tammy:** One of the four sisters in my M.T.C. district. From Orem, Utah and companion to Sister Woodward.
- **Covey, Stephen R:** A well-known motivational speaker who regularly addressed missionaries at the M.T.C.
- **Daines, Christopher:** The first junior companion within the other pair of elders in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. We lived together in a four-man apartment. Companion to Elder MacArthur.
- **Daisaku Ikeda** (male): Founder of the Soka Gakkai church, a semi-competing religion in Japan.
- **Dala _____:** My second-oldest aunt on my father's side of the family. Wife of Dave.
- **Dale Carnegie:** Author of "How to Win Friends and Influence People." It made a real difference.
- **Dan Clyde:** Along with Daren, one of my two best friends. Served a mission in Vienna, Austria where he taught himself Polish in addition to speaking German. Died in a motorcycle accident in 1996.
- **Daren Holdaway:** Along with Dan, one of my two best friends. Served a mission in Corpus Christi, Texas.
- **Dave _____:** My uncle (in-law) on my dad's side of the family. Husband of Dala.
- **David Fratcher:** The friend who introduced me to Daren.
- **Denise Shelton:** A girl in my home ward through whom I met Theresa. Came very close to marrying Brian.
- **Depeel, Timothy:** My second junior companion. We served together in my fourth area, Takefu (and once again, briefly, in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita). He was the first person to be given President Ames's infamous "test" and then sent home.
- **Desirée Johnson:** A classmate of mine from High School. Later became missionary companions with Jeanie, below, in Michigan.
- **DeTomaso, Mark:** A missionary who was sent home due to an ulcer (his own, of course).
- **"Dick":** My stepfather. My mom met and married him when I was in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Dorough, David:** The junior companion within the other pair of elders in my third area, Inuyama. Later became A.P.
- **Duffy, _____:** A very nice sister missionary in my M.T.C. branch. Five years older than me.
- **Durham, Jan** (male): An elder in my first zone and Frehner's first senior companion. His father was an officer in the Marine Corps.
- **Durrant, Elizabeth:** A sister missionary who served for a time in my last zone. Her mission ended the same day mine did.
- **Eguchi, _____** (male): The member who drove me from the mission home to my first apartment. Also the very first Japanese person to piss me off.
- **Elford, Tony:** One of the elders who replaced me in my last area, Meito-Kita, when I went home.
- **Eliason, Curtis:** The senior within the other pair of elders in my first area, Fukutoku. Companion to Elder MacKillop.
- **Emi Haeno** (female): A recent baptizee in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Endo, Yoshiko** (female): An inactive member in my third area, Inuyama. We taught her son the discussions; her daughter had a nice body.
- **Eric Graham:** A friend of mine from High School. Never served a mission, yet remains a faithful member.
- **Ethan _____:** My younger brother—half brother, if you want to get technical—eight years younger than myself.
- **Ethington, _____** (male): My zone leader after I transferred into my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. He had been a junior in the adjacent town, Seto, several months earlier.
- **Etsuko Miyasato Chidester** (female): A member and returned missionary who produced and distributed her own LDS music. It was actually quite good.

- **Evans, _____**: An extremely attractive sister missionary in the M.T.C. Companion to VaNae Beeston.
- **Evans, Garn**: Our morning teacher at the M.T.C.
- **Facer, Vincent**: The missionary who found and initially taught the Yamamotos. Returned to Japan after his mission was over.
- **Faust, James E.** : One of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who spoke to us at the M.T.C. I was wholly unimpressed by him.
- **Fisher, Tamara**: A sister missionary at the M.T.C. who also went to Nagoya the same time I did. From Ann Arbor, Michigan and companion to Sisters Chandler and Uthagrove.
- **Ford, _____ and _____**: A non-member couple living in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. The husband was American and the wife was Japanese.
- **Frank Sapp**: A Presbyterian missionary, along with his wife, living within my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Frehner, Tory**: My first junior companion. We served together in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Fujihara, _____ (male)**: A former investigator who lived in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Fujisaki, _____ (female)**: A member in my third area, Inuyama. She'd joined the church in 1971 and had had a tough life.
- **Fukuji, _____ (female)**: A member in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Fukunaga, Hideo and _____**: Parents of a member family in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. The father was quite rotund. He later became one of Mika's home teachers.
- **Fukuoka, Maki (female)**: A friend of Kobayashi-san and a student at A.B.C. Eikaiwa in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Fukushima, Yumi (female)**: An extremely cute college-age member in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Fukutomi, Atsushi (male)**: A friend of Kizawa's who listened to the discussions briefly in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Fullmer, _____ (male)**: An elder a month ahead of me in the M.T.C. Stayed overnight in our apartment once when I was living in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Gage, Shelly**: One of the four Sisters in my M.T.C. district. Companion to Sister Soifua.
- **Gamble, _____**: A sister missionary who served with Jeanie in Michigan. Wrote me a letter that turned me on.
- **Garff, Ken**: The junior companion within the pair of elders who simultaneously transferred into Seto, the town adjacent to my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Gettling, Dallen**: A recent RM who also served in Nagoya who came back to teach English. Later got to know Dan at BYU.
- **Gibson, Robert**: One of my two M.T.C. companions (the other was Elder Van Cleave). From Las Vegas. Very immature and a trial of everyone's sanity.
- **Gomyo, _____ (male)**: An investigator taught by the other pair of elders in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Gorbachev, Mikhail**: Last premier of the former Soviet Union.
- **Gordon B. Hinckley**: Former prophet and author of the talk titled "Go Home, Yankee, Go Home."
- **Goto, _____ (male)**: A teenage convert in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Goto, _____ (female)**: Kobayashi's sister. We went to her house a few times to discuss religion. This took place in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Goto, Hiromi (female)**: An inmate at the local mental ward whom we met in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. She spoke pretty good English.
- **Graff, _____**: An elder in the M.T.C. three weeks ahead of me whose duty, along with Elder Baggs, was to help our district get oriented and otherwise settle in.
- **Grandma and Grandpa S _____**: My grandparents on my mother's side.
- **Grant _____**: My youngest brother—half brother, if you want to get technical—10 years younger than myself.
- **Grant Hanks**: The mission's financial secretary when I began serving in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.

- **Gray, _____** (male): Brough's temporary replacement while he was in the hospital. This happened in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Haggerty, Andrea**: The sister missionary who replaced Yoshioka as Watanabe's junior in my last zone. She's the one who told me about the baptism to which we took Mika, which inspired Mika to be baptized, so she quite possibly saved my mission.
- **Hakes, Daniel**: One of the A.P.s while I was in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Hallen, Kristin**: A sister missionary who served for a time in my last zone. Companion to Sister Kayo Henmi.
- **Hanae, _____ and _____**: Parents of a member family in my second area, Okazaki. They were also in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita; they had moved there some time before I transferred in.
- **Hansen, Brett**: A rival for Sister Maruoka's affections. They had apparently talked about exchanging rings at some future date, which is farther than I ever got with her (unfortunately).
- **Hansen, Joseph**: A missionary who served for a short time in Seto, the town adjacent to my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. He was Baird's junior companion and had also been his best friend from before their missions. He disliked Japan and soon got himself reassigned to the United States.
- **Hansen, W. Eugene**: First Counselor in the Asia Area presidency. Visited the mission twice.
- **Harada, Kiyoshi** (male): The zone leader over my third area, Inuyama. Was A.P. by the time I transferred into my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Harada, Yasuaki** (male): A deaf investigator in my first area, Fukutoku. The sisters taught him since Sister Maruoka had some skill with sign language.
- **Harris, Kris** (male): My fourth senior companion. We served together in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Hasegawa, Mika** (female): The best investigator in the teaching pool of the elders in Seto, the town adjacent to my last area, Meito-Kita. She was in the audience for Mika Yogo's baptism; it made quite an impression on her.
- **Hashimoto, _____** (female): One of a pair of Jehovah's Witnesses we met who were out proselyting the same time we were. This happened in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Hashimoto, _____** (female): A city center employee to whom we taught Eikaiwa in my fourth area, Takefu. She had an amazingly nice body.
- **Hata, _____** (female): An older investigator with Bell's palsy whom we taught in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Hawke, Gary**: A missionary who moved into my last apartment when I went home. Replaced Elder Cook as Pollard's companion.
- **Hawkins, Matthew**: A missionary from my same town.
- **Hayakawa, _____** (female): A divorced woman with whom we became acquainted in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. She'd had a hard life, due in part to a mother-in-law from Hell. She worked in her home, as a seamstress, nearly every waking moment.
- **Hayashi, _____** (female): A student in our Okusan Eikaiwa class that we taught in my third area, Inuyama. She praised us missionaries quite heartily on one occasion.
- **Hayashi, Atsuko** (female): A member in my second area, Okazaki. Her husband was a non-member. She held a weekly Eikaiwa out of her home in an adjacent town, Nishio.
- **Hayashi, Takafumi** (male): An investigator in my first area, Fukutoku. He'd failed his college entrance exams, so he was waiting a year to take them again.
- **Hazuki Hayashi** (female): Daughter of Sister Hayashi, above.
- **Heather Larson**: An ex-girlfriend of mine. We were an item two years prior to my mission.
- **Heber J. Grant**: The first missionary to Japan. Later became the seventh president of the church.
- **Henmi, Kayo** (female): A sister missionary who served for a time in my last zone. Very cute and feminine; I was going to write her after my mission but never got around to it, darn it.
- **Hibino, Masae** (female): One of our Okusan Eikaiwa students in my third area, Inuyama.

- **Hibino, Naoto** (male): An outspoken and off-the-wall convert in my third area, Inuyama. Later served a mission to New York, after which he lived in Utah for a time and met Ethan there.
- **Hideki Sasaki** (male): Koyanagi's final baptizee. This took place when I was in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Hideki Takeuchi** (male): An Eikaiwa student and investigator whom we taught in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Hintze, Shane**: A missionary on the mission home staff whom I got to know quite well as I was serving in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Hirai, Nobuhiko** (male): An investigator of Biddulph's whom I helped teach in Nishio, adjacent to my second area, Okazaki.
- **Hirai, _____** (male): An inactive member in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Hirano, _____ and _____**: A married couple who lived below our apartment in my fourth area, Takefu. The wife showed promise, but not the husband.
- **Hirano, (Sachiko?)** (female): Daughter of the married couple listed immediately above. She was a former investigator of Biddulph's.
- **Hiroe Matsubara** (female): A girl my own age who read the Book of Mormon *twice*, prayed, and received an answer all before we even taught her the first discussion. A brain tumor earlier in life had rendered her a virtual shut-in, unfortunately.
- **Hiroki Sato** (male): A baby whom I held on a few occasions while doing service at an orphanage in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. I never heard him cry.
- **Hiroko Kojima** (female): An investigator and a cool friend of Poulsen's who visited us in my third area, Inuyama. Wife of "Masa dude." Friend of the Yamamotos.
- **Hisaka, _____** (female): A newly-returned missionary and daughter of the bishop of the ward that shared a building with my last ward, Meito-Kita. She kindly fellowshipped two back-to-back lessons with Mika that lasted 3 and 1/2 hours total.
- **Hisako Miyamori** (female): A sister missionary to whom I was asked to say "Hi" by Brother Christensen, one of my Institute instructors (if I recall correctly). I was finally able to make good on his request about a year later.
- **Hitomi Inukai** (female): A girl whom I met in my third area, Inuyama, but became much better acquainted with in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. A good friend of Kaori Aoyama.
- **Honda, _____** (female): A member in my fourth area, Takefu. Her husband was a non-member. She had four daughters, two of whom were twins, who were all church-goers, too.
- **Honjo, _____** (male): A college professor to whom I arranged to give a Book. We met him in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Honli Sakaguchi** (male): A half-Chinese high-school aged investigator whom we taught in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Horie, _____** (female): A member in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Horiguchi, _____ and _____**: Parents of a member family in my first area, Fukutoku. They had five kids but lived in a tiny apartment. The husband was employed as the chapel custodian.
- **Horrocks, Rick**: My first senior companion. We served together in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Hoshino, _____ and _____**: Parents of a member family in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. The husband was extremely humble; the wife had a disorder that caused her skin to peel off. Shaking her hand felt like sandpaper.
- **Hosomi Toshie** (female): A girl who referred *herself* to us in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Huber, Laiana**: A sister missionary who transferred into my third area, Inuyama, as I transferred out.
- **Huey, Ken** (male): Our afternoon teacher at the M.T.C. for a brief period of time before being replaced by Sister Wheeler.
- **Idaba, _____** (male): The first person with whom I booked a return appointment in my last area, Meito-Kita. He didn't show up.
- **Iguchi, _____** (male): A single member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.

- **Ikeda, _____** (male): An extremely staunch member who attended church in my fourth area, Takefu (although he lived in the adjacent town, Sabae). His testimony was so strong that Biddulph advised that we *not* use him as a fellowship member (so as to avoid giving investigators a drink from a fire hose, so-to-speak).
- **Ikeda, _____** (male): A member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Ikegami, _____** (female): A member in my second area, Okazaki. Her husband was a non-member.
- **Imai, Tatsuya** (male): A former investigator who was baptized (once he turned 18) in my third area, Inuyama. Soon joined the Japanese military.
- **Imamura, _____** (male): The ward mission leader in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Inoue, _____** (female): A nineteen year-old member who moved into my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita, and went inactive almost immediately afterward.
- **Isa, _____** (male): An inactive member in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Ishida, _____** (female): A member in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Ishida, Masakazu** (male): A fellow-missionary with whom I lived for about five months in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. We were in a four-man apartment.
- **Ishida, Sanae** (female): A fifteen year-old Eikaiwa student in my third area, Inuyama. Mature beyond her years.
- **Ishihara, _____** (male): The bishop (if I recall correctly) over the ward covering my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Ishikawa, _____** (male): An investigator of Biddulph's in Nishio, adjacent to my second area, Okazaki. He only took the lessons to learn how Americans think.
- **Ishizaka, Mari** (female): A sister missionary who served for a time in my same zone while I was in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. I ran into her in Utah after my mission. She wasn't interested in hanging out.
- **Ishizuka, Kazuhiro** (male): A fellow-missionary about four months behind me.
- **Ito, _____** (male): A member in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Ito, Chikako** (female): The sister missionary who flew back to America on the same flight as me when our missions (simultaneously) ended.
- **Iwai, "James"**: A high-level employee (or perhaps the head) of the foreign relations department of Owariasahi, the last town in which I lived.
- **Iwamatsu, Ryoko** (female): A sister missionary whom I met when she had just arrived in the mission.
- **Iwase, Hiromi** (female): A member in my second area, Okazaki. Her husband was a non-member.
- **Izumihara, _____** (female): A woman who lived one floor below us in my second area, Okazaki. We taught her briefly.
- **Janean Massey**: A girl I dated (and then some) a few times before my mission.
- **Janice _____**: An employee at the M.T.C. cafeteria whom I got to know a little bit.
- **Jayson Bybee**: Seegmiller's best friend. He was also called to serve in the Nagoya Mission.
- **Jeanie Hancock**: A friend from my High School days, although we went to different schools. She later served a mission in Michigan.
- **Jeff _____**: A friend of Gettling's and a member of the Reorganized church.
- **Jeff Boyack**: An acquaintance from Junior High whom I saw in the M.T.C.
- **Jenkins, _____** (male): Returned missionary and former A.P. from Nagoya who returned briefly to visit. I met him while serving in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Jensen, _____** (male): The district leader in my third area, Inuyama, before I arrived. Companion to Van Cleave for a while.
- **Jeremy Johansen**: Theresa's quasi-boyfriend before me.
- **Jew, Carolyn**: A sister missionary at the M.T.C. who also went to Nagoya about a month after I did. Of Taiwanese extraction.
- **Jim Reed**: A co-worker of Dan's who got me into trouble in the M.T.C. It was the second time he'd done so.

- **Jodi Longstroth:** A girl with whom I corresponded quite heavily throughout the middle part of my mission.
- **Jones, James:** An elder in my second district, although he was based in a different town, Nishio. Companion (at first) to Elder Biddulph.
- **Judd, _____** (female): A sister missionary at the M.T.C. who'd been a classmate of mine in a prior Institute course. Very attractive.
- **Julie Ford:** A friend of Daren's and mine from before our missions.
- **Junichi _____** (male): A High School-aged Eikaiwa student in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Junko Masaka** (female): (First name pronounced "June-co.") A supertriff I met in my first area, Fukutoku. She ended up falling quite heavily in love with me, often attending church in the same ward building I did while I was in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Junpei _____** (male): An investigator in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Kai, Fumihiro** (male): Father of a member family in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. He'd gone fuke by the time we began teaching his wife the A.B. lessons.
- **Kai, Noriko** (female): Mother of a member family in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. We taught her the A.B. lessons.
- **Kamiya, Michiko** (female): A 20 year-old member in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Kanbe, _____** (female): A member and Eikaiwa student in the ward adjacent to my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Kano, _____** (female): One of the workers where we did service in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Kaori Aoyama** (female): An inactive member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita, whom we tried to reactivate. We ended up getting to know her and her friend, Hitomi, quite well.
- **Katagiri, Toru** (male): An older gentleman with whom we became acquainted in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Kato, _____ and _____:** Parents of a member family in my first area, Fukutoku. They were still talking about me months after I transferred out.
- **Kato, Tatsuya** (male): A recalcitrant investigator in my second area, Okazaki. He wanted to join the church, but tried to bargain his way out of observing the Word of Wisdom.
- **Kato, _____** (female): Hata's friend who flaked out on her appointment with us (to hear the discussions).
- **Kato, _____** (female): A woman who was referred to us in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. She'd had an extremely difficult life and was most likely subject to nothing but emotional cruelty from her family.
- **Kawachi, Mitsuko** (female): A student in our A.B.C. Eikaiwa class that we taught in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. Before I got there, she had progressed close to baptism before losing all interest.
- **Kawai, Nobuyo** (female): A member in my second area, Okazaki. She was a schoolteacher by profession.
- **Kawakami, _____** (female): An extremely cooperative and pleasant investigator in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Kawamitsu, _____** (male): A guy with whom we booked a teaching appointment in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. He never showed up.
- **Kawamura, _____** (male): An investigator (for a brief time) in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Kawamura, _____ and _____:** A married member couple in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Kayo Koizumi** (female): An investigator of the sister missionaries who was baptized soon after I arrived in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Keeko Yuasa** (female): A (roughly) fifteen year-old Girl Scout whom I met in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. Her name sounded vaguely akin to "kick your ass."
- **Keetch, _____** (male): An elder in my first zone. Companion to Elder Leach.
- **Keiji Hatakenaka** (male): A high school-age investigator whom we taught in my fourth area, Takefu. He was rather slow on the uptake and had no self-confidence whatsoever.
- **Keita _____** (male): A two-year old kid for whom we did service in my first area. We "patterned" him to re-establish motor skills he'd sadly lost in infancy.

- **Kelly Shaffer:** A girl with whom I became hot and heavy just over a year before my mission began. She was a BYU student and a year older than me. Although she toyed with me and broke my heart, she later attended my missionary farewell and apologized.
- **Kenichi _____ (male):** A Japanese Christian who Bible bashed with us on the flight to Japan.
- **Kenichi Nakamura (male):** A Japanese foreign exchange student whom I befriended my senior year of High School.
- **Kent Derricott:** A returned missionary living in Japan who was (and still is) a famous T.V. celebrity.
- **Kevin Costner:** The lead actor of "Robin Hood," the movie I saw at Yoshie's house.
- **Kihara, _____ (female):** A woman I met while housing in my fourth area, Takefu. I taught English once to her and her friend's kids.
- **Kiki _____ (female):** A woman I met after a foreigner panel that was held in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Kikuchi, Yoshihiko (male):** The only Japanese General Authority. I saw him both at the M.T.C. and in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Kino, _____ (male):** An investigator we taught in my third area, Inuyama, who quit the lessons out of frustration.
- **Kirk Smith:** One of my co-workers from before my mission and a Returned Missionary from the Dominican Republic.
- **Kishimoto, _____ and _____:** Parents of a member family in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. The husband later became one of Mika's home teachers.
- **Kitagawa, Kunishige (male):** The branch president (if memory serves) over my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Kitajima, Akiko (female):** A member whose hobby during the first part of my mission was getting pictures taken with as many missionaries as she could.
- **Kitano, Emi (female):** Wife within a non-member couple in my fourth area, Takefu, whom we tried to pick up for the discussions. They owned a hair salon.
- **Kitano, "Joe" (short for "Joji"):** Husband within a non-member couple in my fourth area, Takefu, whom we tried to pick up for the discussions. They owned a hair salon.
- **Kito, (Masaya?) (male):** An inactive member in my first area, Fukutoku, who later returned to full activity.
- **Kizawa, Shinji (male):** An Eikaiwa student, and briefly an investigator, in my third area, Inuyama. Friend of Fukutomi.
- **Kobayashi, Michiko (female):** A student in our A.B.C. Eikaiwa in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. She loved inviting missionaries to do things, which made me feel quite guilty over the loss of dendo time.
- **Koichi Kasahara (male):** A high-school aged recent baptizee in my fourth area, Takefu. Really knew the value of friendship.
- **Komura, Kiyoe (female):** A member and missionary-chaser in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Kondo, _____ and _____:** A member family in my first area, Fukutoku. Parents of a newborn.
- **Kondo, Tadao (male):** A member in my fourth area, Takefu. Made us promise to never marry a non-member (his wife was a non-member).
- **Koyanagi, Yoshihisa:** My fifth senior companion and a trial of my sanity. We served together in my third area, Inuyama.
- **"Kubo" Mizuno:** A man whom Horrocks had met who somehow tracked him down at church a year later. We ended up teaching Ote, his live-in girlfriend.
- **Kubota, _____ and _____:** Parents of a member family in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. The father became the ward mission leader.
- **Kurita, Makoto (male):** An investigator we picked up and taught in my first area, Fukutoku. Was later baptized, but went inactive shortly afterward.
- **Kuroda, Kimie (female):** A member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Kurosawa, _____ (female):** The building custodian in my last ward, Meito-Kita.

- **Kyle Echols:** A friend from High School who also went to Japan on a mission (albeit to Okayama, not Nagoya). He ended up marrying Heather's younger sister.
- **Kyoko _____** (female): An acquaintance of Harris's from his and Oviatt's previous area. We ran into her a few times in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Kyoko Kani** (female): A generous and thoughtful 24 year-old Eikaiwa student in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Kyoko Kobayashi** (female): A girl we met on the street in my second area, Okazaki, whom I got to know a little.
- **Kyoko Tanishita** (female): A member whom I met at the beginning of my stint in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. We ended up corresponding; after my mission my family and I met up with her in Hawaii.
- **Lanel _____**: My third-oldest aunt on my dad's side of the family.
- **Lanell _____**: A foreign woman whom I met during a panel discussion held in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Lanita _____**: A friend of Theresa's.
- **Larsen, Emi:** A sister missionary at the M.T.C. who also went to Nagoya about a month after I did.
- **Law, Michael:** A missionary who was given President Ames's infamous "test" and then sent home.
- **Leach, _____**: An elder in my first zone. Companion to Elder Keetch.
- **Leigh, Ruth:** A sister missionary at the M.T.C. who'd been a classmate of mine in a prior Institute course.
- **Lester, _____**: A fellow Marine who was in the M.T.C. when I was. We later transferred into the same Army National Guard unit.
- **Little, Gregory:** A missionary who served in my fifth and final district, even though he was based in Seto, an adjacent town.
- **Lloyd, Vaughn:** One of the A.P.s when I arrived in Japan. Companion to Elder Clinger.
- **Lon Hall:** A Canadian member living in my first area, Fukutoku. Later married a Japanese woman.
- **Lori Hinckley:** One of my co-workers from before my mission. A distant relative of Gordon B. Hinckley.
- **Lowe, _____**: The missionary I replaced when I transferred to my second area, Okazaki. Was a notoriously active sleepwalker.
- **Ludlow, _____**: An elder in the M.T.C. three weeks ahead of me whose classroom was next to ours.
- **Lybbert, Merlin R.:** A member of the 2nd Quorum of Seventy who visited the mission when I was in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Lynn _____**: My uncle on my mother's side of the family.
- **Lynn Bryson:** A popular speaker on the LDS fireside circuit in the 1980s. He presented exclusively on the rock music/Satanism connection.
- **MacArthur, David:** The first senior companion (and district leader) within the other pair of elders in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. We lived together in a four-man apartment. Companion to Elder Daines.
- **MacGregor, Mark:** The first zone leader over my second area, Okazaki.
- **Machiko _____** (female): Girlfriend of "Spuds MacKenzie," both of whom I briefly taught in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **MacKillop, David:** Junior within the other pair of elders in my first area, Fukutoku. Companion to Elder Eliason.
- **Madonna:** The famous recording artist who needs no introduction. Mika dubbed a tape of her greatest hits collection for me as a going-away present.
- **Madsen, Joseph:** One of the five Elders in my M.T.C. district (counting me). From Oroville, California and companion to Elder Proctor.
- **Madsen, Michael:** A missionary about seven months behind me. Became Oshiro's companion after I went home.

- **Maeda, Keeko** (female): A girl whom Poulsen, my last senior, met while at a dinner for foreigners. He was quite impressed with her.
- **Magfoor Ahmad Muneeb** (male): The chief missionary for an Islamic mission. I met him while serving in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. He quite apparently had "Michael Jackson's disease."
- **Maggie McGuire**: The girl I took to the homecoming dance when I was a junior in High School, back in 1985. I met a girl in my third area, Inuyama, who looked a bit like her.
- **Maki, _____** (male): A member in my second area, Okazaki. Had very poor personal hygiene.
- **Maki Hibino** (female): A friend and co-worker of Mika's whom I met during my last week in Japan.
- **Maki Kurizaka** (female): An investigator of the sisters who was baptized in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Maki Tanaka** (female): An Eikaiwa student in my second area, Okazaki. We ran into each other about a year later on the Fourth of July, whereupon she hit on me pretty hard.
- **Man, Miranda**: Last name rhymes with "swan." Her full name was "Miranda Man Man Ting." A sister missionary from Hong Kong.
- **Marcia Crawley Clyde**: Dan's girlfriend, later wife. She waited for him when he served his own mission; they got married six months or so before I got home.
- **Maruoka, Miyuki**: The junior within the sister companionship in my first area, Fukutoku. I became quite infatuated with her. She later met Ethan when he served in her home ward while on his own mission to Japan.
- **"Masa dude"**, real name **Masatoshi Kojima** (male): A cool friend of Poulsen's who visited us in my third area, Inuyama. Husband of Hiroko. Friend of the Yamamotos.
- **Masako _____**: An Eikaiwa student in my second area, Okazaki. I had her write to Dan; they corresponded at least twice.
- **Masataka Miyoshi** (male): A 16 year-old kid with whom we'd booked an appointment in my fourth area, Takefu. His dad came out and sternly berated us for having done so.
- **Masuda, Kyoko** (female): A 23 year-old investigator whom, along with her mother, we taught in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Masuda, Michiko** (female): An investigator whom, along with her daughter, we taught in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Masumi _____** (female): Keita's mother.
- **Masunaka, _____** (female): An Eikaiwa student in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. I looked up some information on home stay in America for her daughter.
- **Mathis, Kevin**: The first junior zone leader over my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. Later went senior within the same zone. He had joined the Marines but was soon discharged due to a medical issue.
- **Matsubara, Tomie** (female): A friend of Sister Anan whom she referred to the missionaries in my second area, Okazaki. Was later baptized.
- **Matsuda, _____** (female): An Eikaiwa student whom I met while serving in my last area, Meito-Kita. I taught her son and his girlfriend for a time.
- **Matsumoto, _____** (male): A member in my first area, Fukutoku. Brother (not husband) of Sister Matsumoto.
- **Matsumoto, _____** (female): A member in my first area, Fukutoku. Sister (not wife) of Brother Matsumoto.
- **Matsumoto, _____ and _____**: Parents of an acquaintance family of ours who lived near us in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Matsumoto, Yasuo** (male): An investigator we taught in my fourth area, Takefu. His father was a Buddhist monk. Had the worst case of acne that I've ever seen in my life.
- **Matsuoka, Yuriko** (female): A missionary whose home ward was my last area, Meito-Kita. She returned home during my last month there. She promised to teach an A.B. lesson for Mika, but never showed up.

- **Matsushita, _____** (female): A member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. Her kids were members too, but her husband wasn't.
- **Matsushita, Miyuki** (female): An investigator who found a Book of Mormon, liked it, then referred herself to us in my third area, Inuyama. Was later baptized. Sister of Yamakawa-san.
- **McMurray, Jack**: The senior companion within the pair of elders who simultaneously transferred into Seto, the town adjacent to my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Merrill, _____**: My branch president in the M.T.C.
- **Michael Jordan**: A famous NBA player formerly with the Chicago Bulls. My companion and apartment-mates went to a member's house to watch a video of him; this took place while I was in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Michi _____** (female): An Eikaiwa student in Seto, the town adjacent to my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Migitaka, Satoru** (male): A bank teller whom I got to know while serving in my last area, Meito-Kita.
- **Mika Yogo** (female): The best investigator I ever had. The single most important person on this list, and in this journal, *by far*. Was eventually baptized—by me. I taught her in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Mike _____**: A college student living with Sister Hayashi so he could teach the for-profit Eikaiwa she was planning to start.
- **Miki (Okubo?)** (female): An Eikaiwa student in Seto, the town adjacent to my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. She attended the lowest-level college humanly imaginable.
- **Miki Kato** (female): An investigator referred to the missionaries by Sister Palmer in my first area, Fukutoku. Was later baptized.
- **Miki Umemoto** (female): A cute Japanese foreign exchange student at my high school when I was a senior. I should've asked her out when I had the chance.
- **Miles, Adam**: Our evening teacher at the M.T.C. He'd been home from his mission only six months.
- **Miles, Glen**: The missionary who took my place when I left my second area, Okazaki, and again when I left my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Mitamura, _____** (female): A promising investigator in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Mitsui, _____** (male): A single father in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita (assuming I have the name correct).
- **Miura, (Tsuyoshi?)** (male): An investigator in my first area. Wanted to be baptized, but couldn't drop his bad habits until a year and a half or so later.
- **Miyachi, Misako** (female): A member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. She soon went back to BYU; I met up with her once after my mission.
- **Miyako _____** (female): A person I'd met while serving in my third area, Inuyama. She was an investigator by the time I was in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Miyaji, _____ and _____**: A couple with whom I'd booked an appointment in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Miyoshi, _____** (male): An acquaintance of ours who was convalescing in the hospital when he was introduced to us by the sisters. Later agreed to hear the discussions. This was in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Mom**: Self-explanatory.
- **Monda, _____** (male): A 13 or 14 year-old kid we taught in my third area, Inuyama. He was friends with Oshita and the Noguchi kids, each of whom had already been baptized. We later got to know his mom.
- **"Mori", real name Chad Forrest**: The senior companion serving in Seto, the other town in our district, when I first transferred into my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. He had been Poulsen's junior companion when they taught the Yamamotos.
- **Morikawa, _____** (male): Our barber in my fourth area, Takefu. We occasionally taught him, although his motive was probably just to keep our business. His father had been a P.O.W. in the Soviet Union for 10 years.

- **Morita, Kiyoshi** (male): The non-member husband of Megumi, below.
- **Morita, Megumi** (female): A member in my first area, Fukutoku. The first person to whom I taught Eikaiwa. Wife of Kiyoshi, above.
- **Murdock, Boyd**: The missionary I replaced when I transferred to my third area, Inuyama.
- **Nagae, _____** (male): A well-to-do former investigator in my first area, Fukutoku. He loved the church, but loved hedonism more.
- **Nagae, Shoko** (female): A 19 year-old inactive member in my second area, Okazaki. Possibly tried to hold my hand.
- **Naibi Itokazu** (female): A sister missionary who arrived in the mission at the same time as my last companion. They were both from the same ward in Okinawa.
- **Nakai, _____** (male): An inactive member in my fourth area, Takefu. Had several pictures of current and former sister missionaries.
- **Nakamura, Kazuyo** (female): A student in our A.B.C. Eikaiwa which we taught in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Nakane, _____** (female): A Eikaiwa student in Nishio (adjacent to my second area, Okazaki) who discussed the church with me but was heavily influenced by the Jehovah's Witnesses.
- **Nakanishi, _____** (female): An extremely cool person to whom we taught a pick-up lesson in my fourth area, Takefu. Couldn't continue the discussions because she was afraid of how her husband would react.
- **Nakayama, _____** (female): A member of the church and one of our Okusan Eikaiwa students in my third area, Inuyama. Was really into gossip and backbiting.
- **Nakayama, Yumiko** (female): An inactive member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita, whom I tried to reactivate. We never met face-to-face; all our conversations were over the phone. In retrospect, I shouldn't've been so pushy.
- **Nielson, Jonas**: A missionary in Depeel's M.T.C. group. Later became Seegmiller's senior. Wasn't too keen on my grammar list.
- **Nishi, _____** (male): A Japanese missionary over a year ahead of me. By all accounts, a weird dude and a real pain in the neck to boot.
- **Nishikawa, Kyoko** (female): A married Eikaiwa student from Seto, the town adjacent to my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. Would sometimes have missionaries and other Eikaiwa students over to her house for mega food-blowouts (her husband was never there, though).
- **Niwa, Takeshi** (male): A guy in my third area, Inuyama, who had been taking the lessons for two years. Had issues with the Law of Tithing.
- **Nobuko Kunisada** (female): A woman living in the apartment above us who was baptized shortly before I arrived in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Noguchi, Kishiko** (female): A woman who was baptized in my third area, Inuyama, the same day as her son. She'd been preceded in baptism by another daughter and another son.
- **Nolan Porter**: A fellow-missionary who told me that he could tell just by looking at me that I had been in the military.
- **Nomura, Sanami** (female): A member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. Very cute and wholesome in a "girl-next-door" kind of way.
- **Noriko Oishi** (female): An Eikaiwa student in my third area, Inuyama. Best friend of Tomoko.
- **Ogawa, _____** (female): An attractive woman with whom I placed a Book of Mormon in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Ogawa, Kiichi "Burt"** (male): An acquaintance of ours in my fourth area, Takefu. Showed us the entryway of the local Mafia den.
- **Ogawa, Susumu** (male): A rather strange older guy whom we taught in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Ohashi, _____** (female): An employee in a barber shop with whom I hit it off very well. She made me wish I wasn't a missionary.
- **Ohori, _____** (female): A sister missionary about four months ahead of me. She invited me to stay at her place and to be my tour guide around Tokyo if I ever went back to Japan.

- **Oilar, Milton:** One of the two A.P.s when I went home. He'd converted to the church only a year before starting his mission.
- **Okado, _____** (male): A guy who often hung out at the park in my second area, Okazaki. I gave him a Book of Mormon.
- **Okamoto, _____** (female): A woman referred to us by Ishida Shimai whom we taught once in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Okina, Ryoko** (female): A member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. The first time that she invited us over for dinner she wasn't there when we showed up.
- **Okumura, Takashi** (male): The first investigator I ever taught as a senior companion. This took place in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Ono, Miko** (female): An extremely timid member in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Orton, Kim** (male): One of the A.P.s when I was in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Osamu, Mano** (male): A socially outgoing investigator we taught in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Oshiro, Asao** (male): My last companion. He was a second generation Mormon from Okinawa. We served together in my fifth and (obviously) final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Oshita, Masaya** (male): A 13 year-old who was the first of my investigators to be baptized while I was still in the area (up 'till that point, they'd all been baptized after I'd transferred out). I felt bad about it because Koyanagi essentially twisted his arm until he got baptized.
- **Ota, Kiyoko** (female): A member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Otake, Masayo** (female): A happy, outgoing, and upbeat (and quite cute) student in our A.B.C. Eikaiwa class that we taught in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Ote, Masami:** Kubo's live-in girlfriend who heard the discussions in my first area, Fukutoku. Was later baptized.
- **Otsuka, _____** (female): A friend of Kanbe-san. Probably a member and/or an Eikaiwa student. I knew her in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Oviatt, Jordan:** My second senior companion. We served together in my first area, Fukutoku. This guy was "super missionary" in every respect.
- **Oyama, _____** (male): An inactive member in my third area, Inuyama. Koyanagi and I wound up socializing with him quite a bit.
- **Palmer, Dwaine:** A returned missionary who also served in Nagoya. I met him and his family while living in my first area, Fukutoku. I met up with them a couple of times after my mission. Husband of Norie and father of Mindy and Lena, below.
- **Palmer, Lena:** Dwaine and Norie's second child. She was born while I was serving in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Palmer, Mindy:** Daughter of Dwaine and Norie. She was about six months old when I met them.
- **Palmer, Norie:** Wife of Dwaine, above, and mother of Mindy and Lena, also above. Her husband was (and still is) Canadian; she was (and still is) Japanese.
- **Patti, _____:** A friend of the family on my dad's side. Fiancée (now wife) of Val.
- **Pedersen, _____ and _____:** Parents of a member family in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. The husband was from New Zealand; the wife was from Japan.
- **Perkins, Robert:** An acquaintance from High School who later became Elder Yamaura's zone leader in Hawaii.
- **Perry, _____** (male): The returned missionary who had baptized Sister Shinoda. He visited them two years later with his rude wife.
- **Perry, L. Tom:** One of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who spoke to us at the M.T.C.
- **Phillips, _____:** A cute sister missionary in the M.T.C. about a month ahead of me.
- **Pinegar, Ed J. :** The president of the M.T.C. when I was there.
- **Pollard, James:** The missionary, fresh out of the M.T.C., who took Biddulph's place when he left Nishio. This took place when I was in my second area, Okazaki. We later lived in the same apartment during my last month in Japan.
- **Poulsen, James:** My sixth and final senior companion. We served together in my third area, Inuyama.

- **Price, Alan:** The missionary who took my place when I left my first area, Fukutoku. Also the second senior to serve within the other pair of Elders in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Proctor, Jeffrey:** One of the five Elders in my M.T.C. district (counting me). From American Fork, Utah and companion to Elder Madsen.
- **"Puppy-chan",** real name **Takako Nakahira** (female): An Eikaiwa student in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Rasmussen, Michael:** A fellow-missionary who was one month ahead of me. Later became A.P.
- **Reed, Lance:** The second junior to serve within the other pair of Elders in my third area, Inuyama. By far the most enthusiastic missionary I've ever met.
- **Reynon, Timothy:** My second zone leader over my first area. Replaced Elder Woolston.
- **Rhonda Estep:** A close female friend from before my mission. Five years older than me.
- **Rich, _____:** A junior zone leader with whom I did a brief split while serving in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Richard Gere:** The celebrity whom everyone said I look like.
- **Rie _____** (female): A member from a different city whom I met while I was in my third area, Inuyama. We'd only met once or twice before she nevertheless became a huge fan of mine.
- **Rieko _____** (female): A friend of Cook's whom he met on the plane to Nagoya.
- **Rieko Nakatani** (female): One of our Okusan Eikaiwa students in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Rieko Yamada** (female): An Eikaiwa student in Seto, the town adjacent to my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Rikki Pugmire** (female): A friend and former co-worker from before my mission.
- **"Rikki",** real name **Rieko Yaguchi** (female): A member in my first area, Fukutoku, and the first person to whom I gave a blessing.
- **Robbins, _____:** The Second Counselor in my M.T.C. branch and a World War II veteran.
- **Robyn Sansom,** nicknamed **"Sammy"**: A sister missionary who arrived in Japan about six months after I left it. I got to know her later at mission reunions. Served for a time in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Roldan, Steve:** An elder in my first zone.
- **Rourk _____:** My ex-stepfather.
- **Russell Foutin:** A former missionary preparation teacher of mine and the one who inspired me to write in my missionary journal every single day.
- **Ryoko Morita:** Daughter of Sister Morita, above. She was three years old at the time.
- **Ryuhō Okawa** (male): Founder of the "Kofuku no Kagaku," a semi-competing religious sect in Japan.
- **Sabi, _____** (male): An inactive member in my fourth area, Takefu. Owned and operated a sushi bar.
- **Sachiko Kaneko** (female): An acquaintance of ours (most likely an Eikaiwa student) who lived in Seto, the town adjacent to my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Saieki, Michiyo** (female): An investigator taught by the other pair of Elders in my third area, Inuyama. She had the hots for Elder Price, the senior teaching her. Was later baptized.
- **Sakai, Yasuhiro** (male): A notoriously spineless investigator of ours in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Sakibara, Kentaro** (male): A recently baptized 17 year-old in my second area, Okazaki. Later visited me in America.
- **Salway, Hal:** A Canadian member of the church in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. He replaced Brother Pedersen at work. Husband of Joann, below.
- **Salway, JoAnn:** A Canadian member of the church in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. Wife of Hal, above.
- **Sano, _____** (male): A member who departed for Tokyo soon after I arrived in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Sasada, _____** (male): A member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.

- **Sasaki, _____** (male): A student in the Eikaiwa class I sometimes taught in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. Had a lot of interest in what would motivate someone as young as us to sacrifice everything just to go and spread religion.
- **Sayaka _____** (female): A fifteen year-old recent convert in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Scott, Steve**: A fellow-missionary who was one month ahead of me. We lived in the same apartment for a time in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Seegmiller, Pepper**: My third junior companion. We served together in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Seely, _____**: A sister missionary in my M.T.C. branch. Now that I recall, she was totally my type.
- **Sekimoto, _____** (female): A member in my first area, Fukutoku. Was the teacher of the very first Sunday School class that I attended in Japan.
- **Seppi, David**: A missionary in Frehner's M.T.C. group. A little on the "fuke" side.
- **Setsuko Kondo** (female): A cute investigator of ours in my second area, Okazaki. She was the first person I ever picked up (for the lessons) entirely in Japanese.
- **Shane McClellan**: A friend of mine since Junior High. He later served a Korean-speaking mission to Anaheim, California.
- **Shaun _____** (female): My oldest aunt on my dad's side of the family.
- **Sherman, _____** (male): An elder who returned to Nagoya after his mission ended and married the woman he baptized.
- **Shibata, _____** (female): A woman who allowed us into her home when we knocked on her door—an extremely rare occurrence in Japan. This took place in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Shikama, _____ and _____**: Parents of a member family in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. The husband was in the Japanese military.
- **Shikano, Hideko** (female): One of two cute biological sisters who were both members in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Shikano, Yuko** (female): One of two cute biological sisters who were both members in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Shimizu, Yuka** (female): A 30 year-old member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. She ended up marrying Brandon Southwick, an American returned missionary who was a month behind me in the M.T.C.
- **Shin _____** (male): A friend of Noriko and Tomoko, both Eikaiwa students in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Shino Watanabe** (female): A new convert of high school age (or so) in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Shinoda, _____ and _____**: An older part-member couple friendly to the missionaries. The wife was mostly active, whereas the husband was a non-member.
- **Shinya _____** (male): A kid with whom we'd booked a pick-up lesson in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. He never showed up.
- **Shiraiwa, _____ and _____**: Parents of a member family in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Shizuka Kudo** (female): A famous singer/idol whom I could swear I saw in her car once.
- **Smith, _____** (male): A missionary who served in Kasugai, an area in my last zone. Companion to Elder Cobb.
- **Smith, Douglas H.**: A general authority who visited our mission when I was in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Smith, Pamela**: The wife of my first mission president.
- **Smith, W. Emery**: My first mission president. I had—and still have—nothing but respect for him.
- **Soifua, Sophia**: One of the four Sisters in my M.T.C. district. Originally from Samoa and companion to Sister Gage. One of the most deeply spiritual people I've ever met.
- **Soma, _____** (male): A guy I met, gave a Book to, *and* made a return appointment with. This happened in my third area, Inuyama.

- **Sonoda, Akiko** (female): A hardcore disciple of Okawa Ryuho, founder of "Kofuku no Kagaku." The most religiously fanatic person I've ever met in my life. I met her during my last month in my last area, Meito-Kita.
- **Southwick, Brandon**: A missionary a month behind me in the M.T.C. Even so, his mission ended a month *before* mine did. Ended up marrying Shimizu Yuka, a member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Sparks, Keith**: The senior companion (and district leader) within the other pair of elders in my second area, Okazaki. We lived together in a four-man apartment. Companion to Elder Brough.
- **Spencer Hansen**: A friend of mine from High School. A year younger than me. Served a mission to Argentina.
- **Spencer W. Kimball**: Former prophet and author of the talk titled "Lock Your Heart."
- **"Spuds MacKenzie"**, real name **Satoshi Matsuda** (male): A guy whom we taught briefly in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. He'd picked up the nickname when he was in America.
- **Stephanie Shoopman**: Spencer's girlfriend before—and after—his mission.
- **Steve Clark**: Co-lead guitarist of Def Leppard. Passed away on January 8, 1991, from complications related to alcoholism. My favorite band has never been the same since.
- **Stoker, Ken**: A "green bean" missionary who arrived in my district during my last month in Japan.
- **Stratton, Shan**: The junior zone leader over my first area, Fukutoku. A true "alpha male" type, but in a good way. Later became A.P.
- **Stuart, _____** (male): A fellow-missionary who transferred into my second area, Okazaki, as the junior zone leader on the same day I transferred out. Later served as Sister Maruoka's district leader in a different area.
- **Sugai, Jiro** (male): A member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. He had been an officer in the Japanese army during World War II, having served in China.
- **Suganuma, _____** (female): A Brazilian member of Japanese descent who moved into my third area, Inuyama. Her husband (listed below) was later baptized.
- **Suganuma, Haruji** (male): A Brazilian of Japanese descent who moved into my third area, Inuyama. His wife (listed above) was a member; he was later baptized.
- **Sugiura, Yoshie** (female): An investigator taught by the other pair of elders in my second area, Okazaki. Was later baptized.
- **Suma, _____** (male): A man from Guinea who was living in my third area, Inuyama. He was there to do primatological research at Inuyama's famed monkey center.
- **Sumi, _____** (male): A member in my third area, Inuyama, who (according to Hibino) was committing all the sins a member of the church isn't supposed to commit.
- **Sumiko _____** (female): An employee in Inuyama City Hall. She was the person who invited us to speak on an all-foreigner panel to discuss the best ways for the city to internationalize.
- **Suzuki, _____** (male): The one who originally introduced Keita's family to the missionaries so we could do service there.
- **Suzuki, _____** (female): An Eikaiwa student to whom I gave a Book of Mormon in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Suzuki, _____** (male): A single member in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Suzuki, _____** (female): A tall, beautiful, statuesque, runway-model caliber woman to whom I gave a Book of Mormon while housing in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Suzuki, _____** (female): A spunky little member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. Went inactive before my stint there ended.
- **Suzuki, _____ and _____**: Parents of a member family in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Suzuki, (Michiko?)** (female): The lead worker where we did service in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Takahashi, _____** (female): An unmarried member in my first area, Fukutoku. She'd had a tough life growing up.
- **Takahashi, _____ and _____**: Parents of a member family in my first area, Fukutoku.

- **Takahashi, _____**: An acquaintance of ours in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Takama, _____** (female): A single member and stake missionary in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Takeda, _____ and _____**: A member couple in my third area, Inuyama. The husband was the branch president.
- **Takeuchi, _____** (male): An inactive member in my fourth area, Takefu. Apparently still had a testimony.
- **Taki Hanaya** (female): One of the sisters' investigators who was baptized while I was in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Tako, _____** (female): A lady who stood us up for an appointment in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Tamashiro, Naotoshi** (male): The junior zone leader over my third area, Inuyama.
- **Tanaka, _____** (female): A member in my second area, Okazaki, who worked downtown and thus we sometimes met while street contacting.
- **Tanaka, Akiko** (female): A member from a different ward whom I ran into occasionally. She later came to America and married an American guy.
- **Tanibata, Junichiro** (male): A friend of ours in my fourth area, Takefu. Was a rather high-level employee of the city government.
- **Tanigawa, _____** (female): A woman whom we taught once in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Tatehana, Utaka "Shingo"** (male): An investigator we taught for a brief time in my first area, Fukutoku. He actually approached us, an extreme rarity.
- **Taylor, _____** (male): The junior companion who lived in Stratton's apartment in my first zone. Had a rather bawdy sense of humor (in a good way).
- **Terakoshi, _____ and _____**: Parents of a member family in my first area, Fukutoku. The husband was much older than the wife.
- **Terasawa, Junko** (female): A member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. She agreed to fellowship for us for a few of Hiroe's lessons.
- **Theressa _____**: My girlfriend from before my mission.
- **Thomason, James**: The first senior companion within the other pair of elders in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Toki, _____** (female): A flight attendant on my plane trip home. President Ames knew her from her BYU days. She was full Japanese, but her English was 100% perfect.
- **Tom Selleck**: The actor who played the main character in the movie "Mr. Baseball," which was filmed in Nagoya.
- **Toma _____** (female): Daren's girlfriend after his mission.
- **Tominaga, _____** (female): An unmarried member in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Tomohiro _____** (male): The second person with whom I booked a return appointment in my last area, Meito-Kita. He never showed up.
- **Tomoko _____** (female): A non-member friend of Elder Miles to whom we taught lessons in the M.T.C.
- **Tomoko Hokazono** (female): An Eikaiwa student in my third area, Inuyama, whose underwear I saw. Best friend of Noriko.
- **Tomoyasu Noguchi** (male): A kid who was baptized in my third area, Inuyama, the same day as his mother. He'd been preceded in baptism by his sister and brother.
- **Tomoyo Kurokawa** (female): An investigator, later baptizee, in a different ward whom I got to know rather well while serving in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. We met up a couple of times later on in America.
- **Toshie _____** (female): An Eikaiwa student to whom I gave a Book of Mormon in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Tripp, Kanila** (male): The elder who replaced me in Meito-Kita when I went home.
- **Tsukada, Eri**: Senior sister missionary who replaced Sister Yokoyama in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Tsukahara, _____ and _____**: Parents of a member family in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Tsurugi, _____** (male): The bishop over my last ward, Meito-Kita.
- **Tsutsumi, Fusae**: Mother of a staunch member family in my third area, Inuyama.

- **Tsutsumi, Masakazu:** Oldest son of a staunch member family in my third area, Inuyama. Notoriously rowdy and undisciplined.
- **Tsutsumi, Masataka:** Father of a staunch member family in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Tsutsumi, Shohei:** Youngest son of a staunch member family in my third area, Inuyama. Notoriously rowdy and undisciplined.
- **Tsuzuku, _____ and _____:** Parents of a member family in my first area, Fukutoku.
- **Turner, _____:** A sister missionary who served with Jeanie in Michigan. Wrote me a letter that turned me on.
- **Uchimoto, Hidetaka (male):** An elder who served for a time in the mission home while I was in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Udy, Ryan:** A missionary whom President Ames made senior after he [Udy] had been in the field a mere three months—an unheard-of occurrence.
- **Uma Bakshi (female):** A woman from India living in my third area, Inuyama. Extremely kind and warm-hearted.
- **Uphagrove, Sharon:** A sister missionary at the M.T.C. who also went to Nagoya the same time I did. We corresponded for a time after our missions. From Heron, Montana and companion to Sisters Chandler and Fisher.
- **Val _____:** A friend of the family on my dad's side. Fiancée (now husband) of Patti.
- **Van Cleave, Wayne:** One of my two M.T.C. companions (the other was Elder Gibson). From Cobb, California. We re-established contact seventeen years later, in 2009.
- **VaNae Beeston:** A female acquaintance of mine since Junior High. Was in the M.T.C. when I was and went to Korea. Companion to Sister Evans.
- **Vance Law:** American, and Mormon, professional baseball player for the Chunichi Dragons (formerly "Nagoya Dragons") while I was there.
- **Wada, _____ (male):** A friend of Cook's whom he'd met when he was living in his first area, Nonami. Wada visited us in my last area, Meito-Kita.
- **Wade, David:** The assistant to the president while I was in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Ward Bushman:** A friend of mine from High School. A year older than me. Served a mission, but I can't remember where.
- **Wasden, _____ (male):** The junior zone leader over my second area, Okazaki. Companion to Elder Windley.
- **Watanabe, Chisato (female):** A sister missionary who was Maruoka's junior companion at one point and Yoshioka's senior companion at another.
- **Watanabe, Masato (male):** An investigator of ours in my third area, Inuyama. He was baptized, but soon went inactive and cut off all contact with the church.
- **Waters, Lori:** The first junior within the pair of sister missionaries in my fourth area, Takefu. She was later given President Ames's infamous "test" and then sent home.
- **Weaver, Teresa Ann:** A sister missionary who served for a time in my last zone.
- **Wheeler, Noramah (female):** Our afternoon teacher at the M.T.C. for most of our stay. Replaced Elder Huey. Had us pray very often.
- **Windley, Todd:** The second zone leader over my second area, Okazaki. Companion to Elder Wasden.
- **Wirthlin, Joseph B.:** One of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who spoke to us at the M.T.C.
- **Woodward, Rachel:** One of the four Sisters in my M.T.C. district. From Hollywood, California and companion to Sister Cordner.
- **Woolston, Stephen:** My first zone leader. Later became A.P.
- **Yaginuma, _____ and _____:** Parents of a member family in my first area, Fukutoku. Their daughter (assuming I have the right family) nearly shed tears when she saw me a year later.
- **Yamada, _____ and _____:** Parents of an investigator family we taught in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Yamada, _____ and _____:** Parents of an investigator family taught by the other set of elders in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. They wanted to be baptized, but the husband

was afraid of what his co-workers would think if he all of a sudden began observing the Word of Wisdom.

- **Yamada, _____ and _____**: A member couple in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. The husband admitted that he didn't serve a mission because he couldn't go two whole years without T.V.
- **Yamada, _____ (male)**: A single member and the ward mission leader over my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Yamada, _____ (male)**: A friend of ours who worked in Takefu's city hall. We occasionally ate lunch with him. He's the one who informed me of Steve Clark's untimely death.
- **Yamada, Hidekazu (male)**: A missionary who served for a time in the mission home. I knew him while serving in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Yamada, Michiko (female)**: An inactive member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. Mother of Sachiko and Yuko, below.
- **Yamada, Sachiko (female)**: A member (possibly inactive?) in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. Daughter of Michiko, above.
- **Yamada, Yuko (female)**: A member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. Daughter of Michiko, above.
- **Yamaguchi, _____ and _____**: Parents of a member family in my first area, Fukutoku. The father had been Yamakawa's branch president 10 years earlier in a different town. He was also paired with Poulsen for a bowling tournament in my third area, Inuyama; they won the doubles trophy.
- **Yamaguchi, _____ and Kumiko**: Parents of a member family in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. They had two children, one of whom was Megumi, listed below.
- **Yamaguchi, Megumi (female)**: The twenty year-old daughter of the Yamaguchis, listed directly above.
- **Yamakawa, _____ (female)**: An inactive member who committed to A) giving up coffee and smoking and B) returning to church once she sat in on a lesson with her investigator sister, Matsushita-san. This happened in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Yamamoto, _____ and _____**: Parents of a member family in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. It took me three tries to find their apartment.
- **Yamamoto, Yayoi (female)**: A cool friend of Poulsen's who visited us in my third area, Inuyama. Wife of Yoshio and friend of Hiroko and "Masa dude."
- **Yamamoto, Yoshio (male)**: A cool friend of Poulsen's who visited us in my third area, Inuyama. Husband of Yayoi and friend of Hiroko and "Masa dude."
- **Yamashita, _____ (female)**: A member in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. She was inactive strictly because her health prevented her from attending regularly.
- **Yamauchi, Etsuko (female)**: A student in our A.B.C. Eikaiwa which I taught in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. Probably the best friend of Kobayashi, Michiko.
- **Yamaura, _____**: A native Japanese elder who joined our M.T.C. district for a short time. He was a native speaker, so he got to skip the language portion.
- **Yasuda, Shinobu (male)**: An investigator we taught in my third area, Inuyama.
- **Yasuko Sawaguchi (female)**: An extremely gorgeous actress whose picture I admired whenever I saw it.
- **Yasuyo _____ (female)**: Joe & Emi Kitano's nineteen year-old apprentice. I think Emi was trying to set me up with her.
- **Yogi, Akemi (female)**: A sister missionary. Later met Daren and I back in America. Eventually married a guy in my National Guard unit quite a few years younger than herself.
- **Yogo, Haruo (male)**: Mika's dad.
- **Yogo, Hiromi (female)**: Mika's younger sister.
- **Yogo, Hisae (female)**: Mika's mom.
- **Yogo, Kazuteru (male)**: Mika's younger brother.
- **Yoko (Aoyama?) (female)**: An outgoing an upbeat single member in my second area, Okazaki. Older sister of Akiko.

- **Yoko Okamura** (female): A beautiful (but married) former investigator in my fourth area, Takefu. She said that we missionaries were "like angels," but her husband was opposed and thus wouldn't let her do anything further with the church.
- **Yokoyama, Kiyo**: The senior within the sister companionship in my first area, Fukutoku. My family and I later ran into her after my mission at the Polynesian Cultural Center.
- **Yoshida, _____** (male): A 15 year-old investigator we briefly taught in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Yoshida, _____ and _____**: Parents of an inactive family in my third area, Inuyama. The father admired the American tradition of independent thinking.
- **Yoshida, _____** (female): Our waitress when we ate lunch at the top of the Hilton in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. She had quite a good body.
- **Yoshie Nakajima** (female): A woman whom Elder Koyanagi baptized while I was in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Yoshikazu "Zenzo" Aoki** (male): A promising investigator we taught in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Yoshiko, _____** (female): An Eikaiwa student in my second area, Okazaki. I had her write to Rhonda, who wrote back.
- **Yoshiko Ibata** (female): An elderly student in our A.B.C. Eikaiwa class that we taught in my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita. I admired her willingness to keep learning.
- **Yoshimi Shimura** (female): An Eikaiwa student in my third area, Inuyama. Admitted that she loved me. Friend of Chiharu.
- **Yoshioka, Nobuko** (female): A sister missionary who was Maruoka's last companion before she (Maruoka) went home. Very beautiful in her own right.
- **Yoshizawa, _____** (male): A guy who skipped out on his pick-up lesson with us. This happened in my fourth area, Takefu.
- **Yuji Watanabe** (male): An investigator of ours who was later baptized in my third area, Inuyama. Younger brother of Watanabe, Masato.
- **Yuki Noguchi** (male): An 11 year-old who was baptized in my third area, Inuyama. His mother and brother were later baptized, too.
- **Yuko _____** (female): A supertriff from within my third zone who squealed, giggled, and touched me quite a bit when we were paired up for doubles bowling.
- **Yuko Kato** (female): An Eikaiwa student in Seto, the town adjacent to my fifth and final area, Meito-Kita.
- **Yumiko _____** (female): Sister Nagae's friend who accompanied us to the fireworks display in my second area, Okazaki.
- **Yuri Amano** (female): The first investigator I ever picked up. I did it in English, though.
- **Yusuke _____**: Keita's older brother. He was seven at the time.