

2006 R. L. "Buzz" Capener Memorial Writing Contest in  
Comparative Religious Studies, First Place Winner

# SAVING THE DEAD

## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF POST-FUNERARY RITES IN JAPANESE AND MORMON CULTURE

By John Dewey Remy

*Cultural analysis is (or should be) guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses.*

—CLIFFORD GEERTZ<sup>1</sup>

**A**LTHOUGH FUNERARY RITES are nearly universal, ritual systems based on continuing relationships between the dead and the living are less common. Two such systems of veneration for the dead include rites practiced by the Japanese and those by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

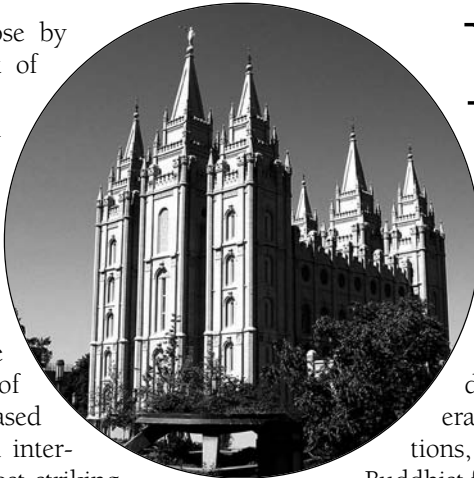
Intrigued by this shared trait between two otherwise very different cultures, I set out to learn more about each system by holding them next to each other in an in-depth comparative study. Although I recognized from the start the problems inherent in comparing the ritual practices of a particular religious tradition with the much broader, syncretistic system of Japanese ancestral worship, I was very pleased with what I found: my research revealed interesting similarities and differences. The most striking difference I noticed is the strong relationship between time and Japanese ritual and between place and Mormon temple ordinances. While Japanese rites venerating ancestors have to be performed at particular times, Mormon ordinances for the



dead can be performed only in LDS temples—specific sacred locales. A fascinating similarity is the existence of the contractual relationships that exist between the living and the dead in both religious cultures.

### COGNITIVE CONTEXT

*What principles bind the various rituals for the dead into coherent systems within Japan and Mormonism?*



**B**ECAUSE BUDDHISM AND DEATH are so closely associated in Japan, and because ancestor worship is supported by Buddhist priests, many rites are conducted in the home at the family *butsudan* (literally, "Buddhist altar"), and the dead spirit is often called *hotoke* (Buddha). Given these meanings, we may be tempted to assume that Japanese death rites are primarily Buddhist in nature. However, Japanese attitudes towards death are highly syncretistic. Ancestor veneration in Japan is a complex mix of traditions, beliefs, and practices. In addition to

Buddhist funerary rites, one can find Shinto concepts about the impurity of death, Taoist geomancy,<sup>2</sup> and Confucian ideals of loyalty and filial piety. When these elements are mixed together, they form the core concept of ancestor worship in Japan: the idea that the spirits of individual ancestors depend on rites performed by their descendants in order to achieve their ultimate destiny of incorporation into the ancestral spirit.

Through a series of rites, the spirit moves from impure association with death to ultimate assimilation into the pure and



JOHN DEWEY REMY is a graduate student in religious studies at California State University, Long Beach. He is a regular contributor to SunstoneBlog.com and explores religious topics on his personal site at mindonfire.com. He welcomes comments on this article at john@mindonfire.com.

godlike ancestral spirit. William LaFleur explains that with each successive rite, the family perceives “that the deceased is more and more rarefied—at least as someone with whom the living need to deal.”<sup>3</sup> Following key ceremonies, a wooden ancestral tablet representing the spirit is sometimes moved to higher platforms, a symbolic gesture that recognizes the ancestor’s increasing status and refinement in the afterlife. The final state of the spirit represents an anonymous amalgamation of all of the spirits of family ancestors, whose purpose is to ensure the prosperity of their line. By taking care of their dead, the living Japanese are entitled, in return, to the protection and helpful intervention of their empowered predecessors.

Mormon veneration for the dead, on the other hand, springs from the doctrine first taught by Joseph Smith that all people—living and dead—are required to receive specified religious ordinances to qualify for eternal salvation in God’s kingdom. Because one cannot participate in these ordinances without a physical body, the disembodied spirits of the dead are at a disadvantage but can overcome this obstacle if the living stand in as proxies for them.

Joseph Smith also taught that family relationships can survive beyond bodily death. Through temple sealing, the family can theoretically have a chain of death-proof bonds extending all the way back to Adam. Indeed, this is one of the ultimate goals of Mormon temple work for the dead—to create patriarchal bonds in an unbroken chain back to the father and patriarch of all humanity.

Mormons are taught that their eternal livelihood depends in part on the diligence with which they perform these necessary rites for their dead. Joseph Smith taught the Saints that “if they neglected to search out their dead and provide by proxy the means for their salvation, they did so at the peril of their own salvation, for the living could not be made perfect without their dead.”<sup>4</sup>

#### SAVING RITES

*Assisting one’s ancestors on the path to godhood*

**R**ITUALS PERFORMED BY the living for the dead form the building blocks for social frameworks in which relationships between the living and the dead can exist. The contexts for these relationships differ greatly between the two cultures. In Japan, the passage of time defines the ritual relationship, while within Mormonism, it is location that constrains the ritual interaction between the living and the dead. In Japan, rites for the dead are closely associated with events that occur at ritually significant times; within Mormonism, saving ordinances for the dead must take place within the temple.

I do not mean that location is not important to the observance of Japanese rites for the dead. These take place in a variety of locales—some at the Buddhist temple, some at the *but-sudan* within the home, and others within the village during the Bon festival. Time, however, is the primary factor when considering the progression of the *shirei* (lit. “dead spirit”), or new dead, along its path to joining the *sorei* (ancestral spirit).

The period of time that has elapsed since the death of a family member changes the nature of the decedent’s relationship with the living relatives. Each death in Japan begins a new series of memorial rites that mark the progression of the spirit over time from *shirei* to *sorei*—from association with the impure corpse to the more benign ancestral spirit to its ultimate assimilation into the collective ancestral spirit.<sup>5</sup> Through this process, the spirit is completely pacified, loses all individuality, and joins the corporate ancestor at the thirty-third anniversary of its death<sup>6</sup>—the survivors have done all that they were required to do and have nothing to fear from the spirit from this point forward.<sup>7</sup>

These memorials (*senzo kuyō*) consist primarily of sutra-chanting by Buddhist priests on behalf of the deceased (in ceremonies sponsored by surviving relatives). They typically occur on important anniversaries, including the first, third, seventh, and every six years after that, up to the thirty-third. These less frequent services are augmented by regular ritual attention paid to the memory of the deceased at the home altar. Relatives may light incense and present small daily offerings to the deceased. Some anniversaries are more important than others.

The forty-ninth day (*shijukunichi*) memorial, *hatsubon* celebration, and thirty-third death anniversary memorial mark significant changes in the status of the dead spirit and its relationship with the living. During the first seven weeks, the spirit is still strongly associated with the body, and the physical presence of the deceased is reinforced by the frequency of the rites during this period. The spirit is also dangerous and unpredictable at this time. The forty-ninth day rite marks the end of the mourning period. At this time, the spirit essentially picks up and moves out of the home and settles in the grave. When this happens, attitudes within the family toward the deceased change.

Certain seasons are also closely associated with the dead. Of these annual events, the Bon festival in August is the most important. The first Bon celebration after death (*hatsubon*) is a critical event both for the capricious and unrefined spirits of the new dead and for their surviving relatives. *Hatsubon* observances are intended to appease and send off the spirits of those who died since the previous Bon celebration. The *hatsubon* is considered a rite of passage for the new dead; they become “purified ancestral spirits” during this celebration.<sup>8</sup> This first Bon celebration for a family who has lost a loved one since the previous summer is thick with death significance.

After the rites of the *hatsubon*, the families of the deceased (and the surrounding community) can rest a bit now that the their recent dead have passed from the more dangerous and unpredictable *shirei* state to the more sedate, benevolent, and private *sorei* state. The spirit settles into a long period of purification through family memorials as it slowly progresses to its final state of incorporation into the collective ancestral spirit.

The final rite is performed on the thirty-third anniversary of the death. The ceremonies performed at this time mark the spirit’s final incorporation into the collective ancestral spirit. In

some locales, the spirit is explicitly said to become a god at this point (*hotoke wa kami ni nari*).<sup>9</sup>

This survey of the Japanese ritual timeframe reveals that death is not an immediate event but a gradual one. Death is both a biological and cultural event.<sup>10</sup> Japanese scholar Kuroda Hideo connects the process of aging and senility with decreasing concern for the things of *this* world (*konoyo*) and the beginning of the transition into *that* world (*anoyo*), or the world of the spirits.<sup>11</sup> This transition continues after death through the long process of joining the ancestors.

Mormonism also has a sequence of rites, but when these occur is of far less importance than in the Japanese rites. Mormon rites for the dead can take place within minutes or decades of each other, with no essential difference to the living or the dead. The sole exceptions are administrative waiting periods, such as the requirement that one can perform rites only for someone who has been dead for at least a year. Location is of primary importance, however: the rites can be administered only in the consecrated space of the temple of the Lord.

The temple ordinances are performed in a sequence that symbolizes passage from death to eternal life. The living perform these rites both for themselves and as proxies for the deceased. The basic sequence includes baptism by full immersion, anointing by water and oil (the initiatory), the lengthy endowment, and the sealing. As the living or the dead progress through these rites, they symbolically move farther away from death and closer to eternal life.

The first ordinance the living receive within the temple is the initiatory (their baptism having occurred prior to their becoming temple eligible). In this ceremony, the body is symbolically washed with water and anointed with olive oil. This is done to prepare the faithful saint for heavenly rule, but there are parallels to the preparation of a body for burial as well. Although the longest rite, the endowment, has been simplified in most temples by keeping the ceremony in one room, in older temples such as the ones in Salt Lake City and Manti, Utah, initiates move or climb a staircase (or ride an escalator or elevator) to increasingly heavenly rooms as the ceremony progresses. The participants travel toward the celestial room, which represents the presence of God. The crowning rite for most faithful Saints is the eternal sealing of husband to wife or parents to children, which generally takes place in rooms immediately adjacent to a temple's celestial room.

In Mormonism, it is impossible to separate death from the temple. The two are symbolically intertwined. For example, the only time Latter-day Saints are dressed in their sacred temple robes outside of the temple is when they are lying in their coffins. Many Mormons also experience communication with, or can sense the presence of, their departed relatives within the temple. It is not uncommon for a Church member to go to the temple expecting to feel close to a dead spouse or parent.

The temple, then, is a transitional space between the physical world and the world of the spirits. This does not mean that any living and any dead can be present in the temple, however. Only the faithful living who are there to receive their own rites

or who have already received them are permitted to enter that sacred space. The same principle seems to apply to the dead, with the added category of the few dead who enter the temple to petition the living to perform their rites for them by proxy. From the eternal perspective of the Latter-day Saint, there is more in common between the living and the dead who have received, or who are in the process of receiving, their rites than between living adult Mormons who have received their temple rites and those who have not. The walls of the temple separate these classes of people more than the veil of death does.

The sacred separateness of the temple space is accentuated for the living by the uniqueness of the rites performed, by the esoteric nature of the knowledge gained (portions of the rites include secrecy oaths), and through the screening of members so that only those who proclaim belief and fealty to the Church, and who demonstrate a certain level of adherence to particular commandments, are given permission to enter. All of these factors combine to transform what would otherwise be just a beautiful religious building into what Douglas Davies calls the "sacred place where death was subjugated."<sup>12</sup>

#### THE TIES THAT BIND

*Why are the Japanese and Mormon systems so different?*

CLEARLY, THE MORMON ritual experience is framed by the sacred *space* of the temple and the Japanese experience by *time*—the days, weeks and years elapsed since death, as well as the annual cycle. I have briefly described two ritual systems I consider similar because of their reverential post-funerary rites for the dead. This leads to the question: Why, then, are these frameworks so different? Why do the Japanese perform their rites with regard to the calendar and Mormons only within the sacred ritual space created by the temple? Conversely, why are the Japanese less concerned with the locale in which their rites are performed, and why is there no significant difference when the Mormons perform proxy rites for someone one year dead as opposed to one thousand years dead? Perhaps the answers can be found by examining the ritual systems within their unique cultural contexts.

The Japanese experience with the dead can be explained in great part through the concept of *on*, which refers to debts owed to, or favors received from those of superior status.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, death and obligation are as symbolically interconnected in Japan as death and the temple are in Mormonism. Hori Ichiro includes the following four items in a list of six common features of Japanese religion: "emphasis on filial piety (*ko*) and ancestor worship connected with the Japanese family system; emphasis on *on* (debts and favors given by superiors) and *ho-on* (the return of *on*); . . . belief in the continuity between man and deity; . . . [and] strong belief in the spirits of the dead in connection with ancestor worship as well as more animistic conceptions of malevolent or benevolent soul activities."<sup>14</sup> These common features are tightly interwoven and reinforce one another.

In a book on the folklore of ghosts in Japan, Michiko



Within the Japanese context, rites exist as mechanisms for fulfilling debts and obligations to the deceased. Mormon ancestral ritual is primarily about making the temporary bonds of birth and marriage permanent and death-proof.

Iwasaka and Barre Toelken explain why the concepts of *on*, *ho-on*, and the spirits of the dead are so interconnected:

But the most difficult and far-reaching debts inhere in family relationships. . . . No one is exempt, and this familial *on* . . . can never be fully repaid. . . . Each person has received so much in nurturance and help from others that one is always in a state of debt. . . . Almost anyone who dies will expire, then, with many unfulfilled obligations to others, and the relatives of that person will also be aware that they still have many obligations to the deceased. The resultant paroxysm of guilt and apology can be articulated and directed to some extent by the survivors' commitment to the proper rituals.<sup>15</sup>

Ancestral rites, then, prevent death's abrupt cessation of the all-important debt payments to one's predecessors and provide a means of avoiding the burden of unfulfilled obligation. These rites give survivors a way to grieve for their dead and to overcome the guilt that might otherwise accompany the person's passing.

Another important factor in Japanese society is the correlation between the frequency of personal interaction among

friends, family, and associates, and the ability to sustain emotional intimacy. While this may seem like common sense, social anthropologist Chie Nakane argues that frequency of contact is perhaps more important in Japanese society for a continuing sense of closeness than it is in other societies. If we accept her assertion, then the periodic rites, along with daily prayers, offerings, and lighting of incense, all serve to maintain a level of emotional contact with the deceased.<sup>16</sup>

Given this background, it is not surprising that rites for individual ancestors last long enough (thirty-three years) for most of those who knew the deceased personally to themselves die off. In other words, the stages that a spirit goes through after death can be correlated with the ability of survivors to remember the deceased. In this context, perhaps the best way to understand Japanese rites is that they fill a uniquely Japanese need to maintain intimate contacts with immediate ancestors and to give both the deceased and the bereaved the opportunity to continue fulfilling their duties and obligations to each other.

Ritual-based relationships with the dead are also important within Mormonism but, they have a different character than the Japanese version. In Japan, the family contractual relation-



ILLUSTRATION BASED ON IMAGE FOUND AT WWW.LDS.ORG

## Mormons who receive their endowment in the temple have already experienced death symbolically. Death is merely a flimsy barrier to be pushed aside as one enters into a brilliant reunion with loved ones.

ships exist by default. The fact that not even the biological death of one party can dissolve these contracts gives rise to a set of social and emotional problems unique to the Japanese. Within the Japanese context, rites exist as mechanisms for fulfilling debts and obligations to the deceased. Family contractual relationships within Mormonism, however, are much weaker (in their unsolemnized state). Temple rites create solid eternal contracts where weak, time-bound promises otherwise exist. Mormon ancestral ritual is primarily about making the temporary bonds of birth and marriage permanent and death-proof.

Sacred, contractual relationships are a vital part of Mormonism. When Joseph Smith introduced the concept of eternal marriage, he called it “the new and everlasting covenant of marriage” (D&C 131:2). Ties between parents and children sealed in the temple are considered stronger than blood ties: for example, an adopted child sealed to her parents in the temple will still be their child after any or all of them die; a child by birth to a family whose members have never been to the temple will not be connected across death unless the family bonds are sealed through formal temple rites.

It is telling that the only revelation in the LDS scriptural

canon that was received during the twentieth century concerned the relationship between the living and the dead. Joseph F. Smith, the nephew of Mormonism’s founding prophet, saw a vision of the world of spirits just a few weeks before his own death in 1918. His vision is the only revelation received by a Mormon prophet that has been canonized during the past 150 years. According to Smith, as quoted in a recent Church manual, the purpose of the temple sealing rites is that there “has got to be a welding together and a joining together of parents and children and children and parents until the whole chain of God’s family shall be welded together into one chain, and they shall all become the family of God and His Christ.”<sup>17</sup> Mormonism’s goal, then, is to create the death-defying familial ties that come far more naturally within Japanese families. This teaching is at the root of much of the Mormon compulsion to research their genealogy and to subsequently perform temple ordinances through which they seal themselves to their ancestors.

Mormon temple rites fulfill the social function of overcoming death but in a different manner than the Japanese rituals do. In the LDS case, since the tradition is very young and the rites implemented relatively recently, we can look at the

circumstances surrounding their creation. Historian Klaus Hansen suggests that one of the many reasons Joseph Smith may have created the temple rites was to plant firmly in the minds of his followers the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul and the eternal nature of human familial relationships sealed by the power of God:

Something more, something tangible and concrete was needed to reassure the Saints of the reality of eternal life. Joseph's answer . . . was the "new and everlasting covenant" . . . the novel idea that the marriage covenant was not only for time but for eternity if sealed by the proper priesthood authorities. . . . This idea more than any other placed the idea of eternity in concrete human terms. Death was thus placed in an entirely new perspective, as Parley P. Pratt pointed out shortly after the promulgation of the new doctrine: "[T]he celestial order is an order of eternal life; it knows no death, and consequently makes no provisions for any. . . . We must leave death entirely out of the consideration, and look at men and families just as we would look at them if there was no death."<sup>18</sup>

In short, Hansen believes Smith created rituals that drove the relative inconsequence of death deeper into the hearts of the Saints. They, in turn, internalized these teachings because ritual performance transformed death from something frightening and unknown into something familiar—something over which they had power, rather than vice versa.

We can see ritual's power to reinforce the doctrine of the immortality of the human spirit by examining the final portion of the endowment ceremony. The culmination of the endowment is when the devout Mormon, clothed in the same priesthood robes in which they will be buried, passes through a veil and into the celestial room. This gauzy temple veil is heavy with meaning: the term "veil" is used in everyday Mormon speech to refer to death and the thin divide between the world of the living and the spirit world.<sup>19</sup> "Passing through the veil" is a common Mormon euphemism for dying. The deceased are merely "on the other side of the veil." Latter-day Saints who attend the temple typically view their transition through the veil as the culmination of their temple experience; they part the shimmering curtains and step into the well-lit and beautifully decorated celestial room, symbolic of the presence of God. There they meet friends and family members who have also completed the ceremony and hug and shake hands in joyful greeting.

The simple ritual act of stepping through the veil profoundly influences the way Saints view death. Mormons who receive their endowment in the temple have already experienced death symbolically. They realize that their essence does not change when they have pass through the veil. Death is merely a flimsy barrier to be pushed aside as one enters into a brilliant reunion with loved ones.

The influence of temple rites on belief is further supported by a study conducted by Glenn Vernon that is cited extensively by Douglas Davies in his book, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* and that I've excerpted from here, putting Vernon's data into a

different format.<sup>20</sup> Note that although some of these traditions surveyed have similar teachings on the immortality of the spirit, Mormon followers are much more likely to accept those teachings. (The numbers indicate the percentage of those who answered "yes" to the questions).

*Is it your personal belief that there will be a future existence after death?*

Mormons	92
Roman Catholics	78
Baptists	71
Lutherans	69
Jews	65
Methodists	61
Episcopalians	37

*Do you anticipate reunion with your loved ones in an afterlife?*

Mormons	90
Roman Catholics	53
Baptists	53
Lutherans	52
Methodists	41
Jews	35
Episcopalians	29

*Could you face the death of a loved one adequately?*

Mormons	62
Roman Catholics	43
Methodists	42
Episcopalians	40
Jews	29

While the original study does not tie participation in temple rites to the strength of Mormon beliefs, Davies does make the connection:

Early Mormons generated a symbolic, ritual, and social world that fully engaged with death in a way that led to a sense of its conquest. . . . The development of LDS ritual, both vicarious and personal, afforded a sense of transcendence over death that continues to be productive at a time when many Protestant, and even some Catholic, views of the afterlife are in decline.<sup>21</sup>

Klaus Hansen suggests a connection between the two, as well: "The Mormon leader [Joseph Smith] was able to counter the destructive and demoralizing impact of death by a brilliantly conceived ritualization of its meaning."<sup>22</sup>

#### FEELING AT HOME

*Why is time not as important to Mormons and their dead as it is to the Japanese?*

THE PRECEDING ANALYSIS answers some questions but raises many others. Why is time not as important to the Mormons and their dead as it is to the Japanese? I believe part of this question can be explained when we examine the history of demographic mobility for each of these

societies. When Mormonism was in its formative years, its adherents were nearly always on the frontier of a young nation. As Joseph Smith and his followers experienced persecution, they kept pushing westward. In addition, the young church had an aggressive missionary program. During the mid-1800s, there were more Saints overseas than in the United States. The majority of these responded to the call to “come to Zion,” immigrating to Illinois and then to Utah. This mountain center was thousands of miles away from the nearest established settlements and was populated primarily by immigrants to the United States. I picture a young family of immigrants from Liverpool wanting to build God’s kingdom and help the Utah desert “blossom as the rose” but at the same time desperately wanting to maintain some kind of connection with the past. Place dominated the lives of these early Saints. They sacrificed to travel to and build a place called Zion. The distance they felt from their mothers and fathers and ancestors was one not of time but of the wide expanse of wilderness and oceans. The temple was a concrete place they could travel to, just as they had traveled to Zion, and there overcome the obstacles that separated them from their beloved dead. Within temple walls, through sacred rites, they could bring their parents and grandparents to Zion.

In contrast with the frontier Mormons, Japanese mobility was limited during the period when many Japanese ancestral rites were solidifying into the forms known today. During this period (from the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries), the Japanese lived under an austere political regime that limited their ability to relocate. This is not to say that people did not move around during the Edo period. There is simply a huge contrast between the Japanese social environment, where families typically spent many generations in one locale, and American frontier society in the 1800s, where most people were first- or second-generation settlers in a particular location.<sup>23</sup>

## CONCLUSION

**M**Y STUDY OF these two ancestor veneration systems has convinced me that ritual functions largely to overcome very human problems. Few trials within human experience are as universal and as terrible as death. Japanese and Mormon post-funerary rites for the dead help people remain grounded and ensure continuity in a world of tremendous flux. These rites have the power to overcome the fear and grief associated with death through a strength that surpasses that of cognitive teachings alone.

While this comparative research has resulted in interesting revelations about the Japanese and Mormon ritual cultures, much more remains to be done. In this study, I compared the ritual practices of one very coherent, international Christian tradition against the entire breadth and depth of syncretistic Japanese ancestral worship. Future research should focus on the practices and beliefs of members of a single Japanese Buddhist sect. Another important study would be to look at groups where the two systems meet—perhaps Japanese converts to the Mormon Church.

Clifford Geertz writes, “This backward order of things—first you write and then you figure out what you are writing about—may seem odd, or even perverse, but it is, I think at least most of the time, standard procedure in cultural anthropology.”<sup>24</sup> There is still much to learn about continuing ritual relationships with the dead in Mormonism and in Japan. ☞

## NOTES

1. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana, 1973), 20.

2. I don’t emphasize the Taoist elements in this study to the same degree as the Buddhist, Shinto, and Confucian influences. Geomancy is familiar to many Westerners as *feng shui*. These principles influence the treatment of the dead body in Japan. For example, many Japanese avoid sleeping with their heads pointing north because this is how the dead are supposed to be aligned during the wake and the funeral.

3. William R. LaFleur, *Liquid Life: Abortion and Buddhism in Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 32–33.

4. Douglas J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation: Force, Grace and Glory* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2000), 91.

5. Robert J. Smith, *Ancestor Worship in Contemporary Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 70–72.

6. The memorial rites continue for fifty years in some locales.

7. The Japanese have an ambivalent relationship with the spirits of the dead. No matter how kind and gentle someone may have been while living, when they die they are more like forces of nature (which are also personified in Shinto)—powerful, capricious, and unpredictable. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to examine this perception in detail, memorial rites serve in large part to appease and pacify the dead.

8. Takatsune Yahata, “Shinmo (Spirits of the Recently Deceased) and Community: Bon Observances in a Japanese Village,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 15, no. 2–3 (1988): 131–36.

9. Smith, *Ancestor Worship*, 95.

10. James H. Foard, “Imagining Nuclear Weapons: Hiroshima, Armageddon, and the Annihilation of the Students of Ichijo School,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 65, no. 1 (1997): 1–19.

11. Referenced in LaFleur, *Liquid Life*, 34–35.

12. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*, 92.

13. It is this sense of social and filial obligation that most clearly reveals the Confucian influence in Japanese post-funerary rituals.

14. Hori Ichiro, *Folk Religion in Japan: Continuity and Change* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 10–13.

15. Michiko Iwasaka and Barre Toelken, *Ghosts and the Japanese: Cultural Experience in Japanese Death Legends* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1994), 19–20.

16. Chie Nakane, *Japanese Society* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1973).

17. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), 407–15.

18. Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 101–02.

19. *Ibid.*, 100.

20. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*, 254. Some of the other questions in the study dealt with the strength of a respondent’s wish to live after death, how often the respondent thought about his or her own death, whether the respondent had seriously discussed the subject of death, and attitudes toward burial versus cremation. For the purposes of this article, one of the most interesting questions asked was: “Do you feel that religious observances by the living can somehow benefit the state of those already dead?” Again Mormons led the survey in number of affirmative responses, 68 percent, which was a level very close to 66 percent in the affirmative for Roman Catholics (whose doctrine includes views on purgatory and intercessory prayer for those who have died). Thirty-eight percent of Jews answered affirmatively, as did 14 percent of Episcopalians, 13 percent of Baptists, and 9 percent of Lutherans.

21. *Ibid.*, 103.

22. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, 105.

23. Some individuals did relocate to the cities, especially the younger sons.

24. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, v.