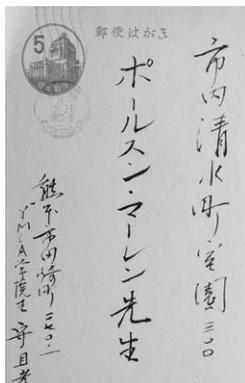


# Marlene Paulsen, a J-3 at Kyushu Jo Gakuin, 1958-1961

Christian M. Hermansen

## INTRODUCTION



Picture 1 Postcard stamped Showa 35 (1960) 12.31 from Kumamoto YMCA to Marlene Paulsen while she worked at Kyushu Jo Gakuin. (M. Paulsen's private archives).

One day in late September 1961, after returning from three years in Japan, Marlene Paulsen got off the city bus on University Avenue in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota) headed for a job interview with Northwest Airlines in St. Paul, MN. Not realizing that this street runs from Minneapolis through the University of Minnesota campus and all the way to St. Paul, instead of the airline office she found herself at the doorstep of the Lutheran Student Center Missouri Synod at the University of Minneapolis.

Mission is an ongoing process involving many kinds of people at all stages, but mission *history* tends to focus on the pioneers. Here follows a biography of another kind of person, one of the many who have participated in the formation and consolidation of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church. Born into the former UELC, small Danish synod in America, Marlene Paulsen followed in the footsteps of other member by going to Japan as a missionary/teacher. Her church collaborated with the former United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA). In 1958, the ULCA mission board sent her to

Kyushu Jo Gakuin as a J-3. However, before going into the details of Ms. Paulsen's story, a short outline of the history of Kyushu Jo Gakuin and the J-3 program follows.

## **Kyushu Jo Gakuin / Janice James School**

The girl's school Kyushu Jo Gakuin was founded in 1926 in Kumamoto City on the island of Kyushu on the initiative of a group of women missionaries from the ULCA in cooperation with local Christians. The founder of the school and its first leader was Ms. Martha Bushong Akard (1887-1969). In her 2006 Akard-biography, Aoyama Shizuko clarifies how a church women's group's vision for secondary education for girls was transplanted by missionaries with the financial backing of their home church and the receptiveness of the Japanese merged to realize this initiative. The following section is, unless otherwise noted, based on Aoyama's excellent study.

Aoyama outlines how formal education for girls grew in the US after the revolution in 1776 and sketches the significance of this in relation to the phenomenon of single women missionaries, exemplified by those who went to Japan for other denominations before the Lutherans in the late 19th century (13-26). In other words, this was a time when a growing number of American families including the Akards sent their daughters' to school. Martha B. Akard was born 17 April 1887, near modern Blountville, Tennessee (Aoyama 38). Her parents, Ida and Able Akard, were Lutherans and their church became a part of The United Synod, South (USS) when that synod was formed in Tennessee in 1886 (30). The USS sent the first American Lutheran missionaries Rev. James A. B. Scherer and Rev. Robert B. Peery to start a work in Japan in 1892 (42). Ms. Akard grew up in an environment supportive of missions to Japan in particular. Martha lost her mother in April 1900 and her father in January 1901. She had just finished the sixth and final grade of her primary school. Others made it possible for her to continue her education until she graduated from a girls' secondary school Marion College in 1905. For Martha the attraction of this particular

boarding school was its commitment to mission work, as she wanted to become a woman missionary (51). After working a year as a high school teacher, she went on to train and qualify first as kindergarten teacher and then as deaconess. She was not ordained a deaconess, for the motherhouse would require her to work in the US, but she preferred serving the church overseas, and she was finally called to go to Japan in 1913 (57-60). After language studies in Tokyo, Ms. Akard took over kindergarten work in Saga Lutheran Church on Kyushu.

Reports from Japan had nursed an interest for mission work in Martha and other women, so that in 1904 the women of USS started a fundraising campaign for its mission and in 1906 held the first Women's Missionary Conference to raise funds for sending women missionaries (48), with the aim of sending two single women by 1912 (59). Women's groups in other denominations were engaged in building girls' schools in Japan and this probably stimulated a desire among the USS women for a similar work. Already in 1908 \$5 were donated for the "Building a Girls' School in Japan" (71), but it was not till 1921 that the Women's Missionary Conference started fundraising for that purpose. Within two years more than 300,000 people contributed \$256,182.42. Aoyama calculates that as one 1922-US dollar was equivalent to 10,000 yen in 2005 (80-81), the purchasing power of this money was equivalent to 2.56 billion yen in 2005 money. Two contributions in particular were important to the story of Kyushu Jo Gakuin. First the initial \$5 donated by the women's group of Immanuel Church in Pennsylvania. The other is the \$10,000 donated by John Warren James and his wife whose daughter Janice, like Martha B. Akard, heard about the need for women missionaries in Japan and wanted to go there, but she died at the age of eight. In memory of Janice her parents decided to support the school project. In addition to the \$10,000 for purchasing land and buildings, they gave \$1,500 for the headmistress' salary and willed \$25,000 for a trust fund for the school. In appreciation it was decided to name the school after the James' daughter, so the official English name for Kyushu Jo Gakuin became Janice James School (88-89, see also Miura 5 and Rinen).

With this kind of faith and economic backing, the next step was to plan and execute the construction of the school. As a long time proponent of founding a girls' school, Ms. Akard was naturally assigned to the local planning committee in 1923. The September 1923-issue of *Lutheran Women's Work* carried Akard's report "Getting Ready for the Girls' School" of June 1923, in which she wrote.

Land and buildings along with other equipment is important and we must plan the purchase of these with the utmost care. However, in the committee I want to emphasize that which is most important: Teachers—we must bear in mind that nothing is more important than missionaries and Japanese teachers who will live and work recognizing Christianity as the core and the life of the school. I especially ask you to pray for God's guidance in our choice of the Japanese manager. The success of the school will depend almost entirely on this person. Please, keep this in mind" (translated from Aoyama' Japanese translation 84-85).

The following year, 1924, she was appointed Founder and Headmistress the Lutheran Girls' School and dedicated herself full time to this purpose. The same year, the answer to her prayer for a good manager turned out to be Murakami Jirō 村上二郎, a teacher from Kyushu Gakuin. In 1909 the JELC had made Kumamoto its headquarters when it started a theological seminary and in 1911 the church opened Kyushu Gakuin 九州学院 a secondary school for boys there as well. So Kumamoto was also the obvious location for a girls' school. Finding enough qualified Christian Japanese



Picture 2 Martha B. Akard teaching at Kyushu Jo Gakuin. (School's archives)

teachers was a challenge (96-97). The school fees and other costs for the students were comparatively high. Yet in April 1926 Janice James School/Kyushu Jo Gakuin was ready and all 70 places were filled when the school welcomed its first freshmen to the five-year program of Christian principled secondary education for girls. From 1927 and later again when Japan entered an economic recession after the Wall Street Crash the enrollment numbers declined. Yet the school survived nevertheless and after the end of World War II, and after a reform of the Japanese educational system, girls flocked to the school.

### **J-3 MISSIONARIES**

After the end of World War II US General Douglas MacArthur was appointed Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) to head the occupational forces which had the final say in most affairs during the seven years of Japanese transition from an Imperial Power to Constitutional Democracy. These powers were most intensively used during the first years when no American civilians were allowed to enter Japan. However from mid-1946 this restriction was gradually eased. of an inclusive nature, but executed this most intensively in the beginning. Japan was then still in the tremendous process of repatriating a total of almost seven million soldiers and civilians from its former colonies, occupied territories, and battlefields. This feat was made the more challenging due to the social, economic, and political devastation of Japan (cf. Dower 2009). Materially famished and spiritually stunned by the shock of losing the war despite all the faith which it had been investing in the divine Imperial course of Japan, the population began to seek consolation and hope in diverse new religions.

The established religions including Christian denominations initiated a period of repentance and adjustment. Repentance for feeling responsible for having furthered the Imperial course or simply having bent with the moods of the age in order to

survive, and adjustment to meet the new conditions of post-war Japan. While Imperial Japan had gradually enforced universal worship of the Emperor and his Military and had streamlined the organization of all religions as a condition of acknowledgement, the SCAP had from the beginning enforced freedom of faith and religion<sup>1</sup>. With the exception of the now banned State Shinto, all religions were to be treated equally and without any interference from the state. Local Japanese Christians generally agreed with this policy though it also prevented them from being favored by the allied forces, because they knew favoritism would backfire once the occupation ended. Some of the US servicemen had been missionaries to Japan before the war. And for his part, General MacArthur believed Christianity was the key to Japan and Asia's gate to freedom and prosperity and thus would alleviate communism. Therefore, he called on the churches in the US to send missionaries. So Christian missionaries were among the first US civilians to gain access to Japan in answer to the call from the General MacArthur and from God. One of these was Martha B. Akard who returned to her school in Kumamoto on 23 August 1946 (Aoyama 242). Another was Hazel Severson McCartney (1902-1982), who returned to Japan with her husband Sedoris McCartney to serve the JELC in 1948. They were assigned to Kyushu Gakuin between February 1948 and September 1951 where Sedoris had missionary status teaching Bible and English classes and Helen was an English teacher (Kyushu Gakuin 1099)<sup>2</sup>. Helen

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1 A general discussion of the legislation on religion during Japan's Imperial age 1868-1945 can be found in Suzuki. A micro level impression can be gleaned from Aoyama's discussion of the changing conditions 1926~1941 as they manifested themselves in the curriculum taught at Janice James School/ Kyushu Jo Gakuin and its annual schedules (102-166). Miura has a scheme listing the ordinary schedule of the school along side the special war related events and ceremonies carried out in the school year of Showa 16 = 1 April 1941 to 31 March 1942 (87-88). While the Allied accepted freedom of religion and faith, they did not permit Japan's Emperor worship to continue. Rather, the Emperor was "defrocked" of the divinity ascribed to him by the Meiji Constitution, and he had to declare himself an ordinary human being in his New Year's Address in 1946 (Dower)

2 Huddle notes that the couple left Japan in 1952 and that Sedoris McCartney was only ordained upon his return to the US (251 Table III note d).

McCartney's autobiography *In the Gray Rain* of 1957 later was very inspirational for Marlene Paulsen. Except for her age, given her vocation and the timespan she served, Helen S. McCartney's life could be seen as fitting with the description of a typical J-3.

J-3 was a post-war category of missionary that some mission boards invented in response to encouragement by General MacArthur (Neve interview). In 1948, the Methodist Mission in Japan sent Ms. Muriel Hayward as a J-3. She told me that the situation of Japan meant that everyone from America had to bring one metric ton of food along with other necessities for their own upkeep (Neve interview). She worked in Kumamoto but in 1949 she decided to terminate her contract in order to marry Rev. Lloyd Neve, a ULCA missionary<sup>3</sup>, who also came to Japan in 1948 (Neve interview and Huddle 251, note g).

There is little documentation for the ULCA's J-3 program but in the book *Kyushu Jo Gakuin 50 Anniversary* this is written about the school's relation to this program (Miura 167).

In February 1956, Bishop Hans Lilje (Germany)<sup>4</sup> and Johnsen (General Secretary of Overseas Mission of the United Lutheran Church in America)<sup>5</sup> came to the school and gave a greeting. Then, in May, English Teacher Gloria

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3 Neve was supported by The United Evangelical Lutheran Church, which was the new name of *The United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* since 1946 (Danes In US, see also appendix 1).

4 Johannes (Hanns) Ernst Richard Lilje (1899-1977), German theologian and bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran State Church of Hanover, 1947-1971. Before the National Socialists came to power in Germany, he supported the party, but after Hitler's dictatorship began Lilje was active in forming and leading the Confessing Church in opposition to Nazism. He was the Superior Bishop of the United Evangelical Church in Germany 1955-1969 and a central person in the Lutheran World Federation 1947-1970 as well as the World Council of Churches for many years (Landeskirche Hannover and Hans\_Lilje).

5 The Johnson mentioned here is like Rev. Warren C. Johnson, Secretary for Malaya and Hong Kong in The Board of Foreign Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America and responsible for Japan 1956-1959, whereas the Rev. Earl S. Erb was the Executive Secretary, Board of Foreign Missions, 1952-1962 (ELCASeries1)

Bauer came under the newly established J-3 program. J-3 referred to young men and women sent by the American Lutheran Church to teach English for three years. Though they were all certified teachers, they were still carefully selected.

J-3s were sent not only to Kyushu Gakuin and Kyushu Jo Gakuin, but to Lutheran churches in all areas. Because they had no formal theological training they were not classified as ordinary missionaries, but in order for them to work overseas they were given the status of missionary.

All costs for travel, board and salaries for J-3s' were paid for by the US Church. Consequently, the system was in a very real sense a human [resource] support.

From 1956 the J-3s at Kyushu Jo Gakuin have been the following, and we want to express our gratitude to these young women and men who burned their youthful passion for English teaching at Jo Gakuin.

Gloria Bauer (1956.4 – 1957.5)

Marlene Paulsen (1958.9 – 1961.7)

Valerie Gerlt (1960.9 – 1963.5)

Nancy Huseeth (1961.9 – 1964.7)

Ann Schulz (1963.7 – 1965.5)

Elizabeth Heitamp (1964.9 – 1967.7)

Lucinda Ashbaugh (1964.9 – 1966.10)

Lavonne Mehrenerg (1966.9 – 1969.9)

Linda Overbeck (1967.9 – 1969.7)

Marry Lee Waterstaat (1968.9-1969.7)

Jeaneth Arnold (1969.9 – 1971.3)

Christine Hanson (1971.4 – 1971.9)

Mr. and Mrs. Lee Kluth (1969.9 – 1971.9)

Paul Nelson (1973.9 -)

Catherine Fedell (1975.4 -)

Some of these J-3s soon ended their commitment due to marriage or for other reasons. Furthermore, starting with Mr. Nelson, the salary for J-3s was shouldered by Kyushu Jo Gakuin.

## **Marlene Paulsen**

In September, 2013, I visited the Danish American Archive and Library in Blair, Nebraska and interviewed Muriel and Lloyd Neve, former United Evangelical Lutheran Church' missionaries to Japan. They mentioned Marlene Paulsen as one of the handful of members of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (Danish) who had been in Japan after graduating from Dana College, Blair, Nebraska.

What made a young woman decide to go to Japan as short-term missionary to teach English? What did she take away from her experiences? Ms. Paulsen kindly told me her story in an interview we did in her home in Nivaa, Denmark, on 4 April 2014.

### **=== INTERVIEW WITH MARLENE PAULSEN, APRIL 2014 ===**

#### **Childhood**

Marlene Paulsen was born in 1936, the eldest of two daughters to Frederik (1908-1950) and Winifred Paulsen (1912-2010) who lived on a farm seven miles (about 11 kilometers) northeast of Blair, Nebraska. Her paternal grandparents were both born in Denmark and her maternal grandparents were born in the USA to Danish immigrants. Christoffer Paulsen (1845-1921), Paulsen's great-grandfather, grew up among the Sturdy Jutlanders, a Christian revival movement and a part of the Danish Inner Mission, with headquarters in Bøgballe. A. M. Andersen, founder of Trinity Seminary (later also Dana College) in Nebraska, had lived in the same area from the age of four and knew Christoffer Paulsen. Both them were active in First Lutheran Church in Blair, NE, which belonged to the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in

America. Paulsen was baptised and confirmed in this church.

Paulsen's childhood was cut short in the late 1940's when her father developed nephritis and had to have one kidney removed. He lived two years longer but passed away at the age of 42 in the spring of 1950 just before Marlene's confirmation. Subsequently, the family had to sell the farm and move into Blair when she was in the 8th grade.

While still living on the farm Paul Neve drove the long distance from Blair once a week to give her piano lessons for a period of three years. A younger brother of Lloyd Neve, Paul was the music director at Dana College. Later Paulsen sang in the Dana Choir under Paul Neve's direction and did a course in music theory with him.

## **The church and parental values**

Both of Paulsen's parents were active members at First Lutheran. Her father Frederik was deacon for many years until his health prevented it. Winifred Paulsen was active in the women's organization, and along with her husband she taught Sunday School classes. The family travelled in to Blair twice a week ... on Saturday for grocery shopping and on Sunday to attend worship services. After the worship service the family always had dinner in the home of grandparents Martin and Lene Paulsen. As the firstborn grandchild, Paulsen was spoiled by her unmarried uncles during these hours. She was always brought to town for the two-week summer Bible school in the church basement.

Monthly prayer meetings were held in members homes ... often in the Paulsen's home. Winifred was a very generous person and often invited visiting missionaries to the home on the farm. Paulsen remembers Dr. J.M.T. Winther visited twice and that she sat on his knee and she played with his beard<sup>6</sup>. He loved the fresh garden

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<sup>6</sup> Jens Mikael Thøgeren Winther, a Dane, was one of the first graduates of Trinity Seminary and the third missionary to join the Lutheran initiative in Japan in 1898. J. M. T. his wife

tomatoes, which lined the windowsill on the porch. Another missionary Carl Morch and his family visited as well when they were on furlough from Columbia. One time while in Blair they lost a four-year-old son who was then buried near Frederik in the Paulsen lot at Blair Cemetery.

## **Ancestors**

Although being born into a family of Danish descent and despite growing up in a Danish Lutheran church, Paulsen did not learn Danish as a child, primarily because it became either illegal (in Iowa, Winifred's home state) or asocial to speak languages other than English after 1939 for patriotic reasons. Prior to this there had been worship services in Danish and English. Marlene grew up with some Danish customs such as celebrating Christmas Eve as the main Christmas event ... in the home of her paternal grandparents. She became familiar with traditional Danish treats like æbleskiver (pancake Puffs) and sødsuppe (fruit soup) which were served at summer socials at First Lutheran Church. Prominent Danes visited Dana College such as the Crown Prince Frederick and Crown Princess Ingrid in 1939, but Paulsen was too young to be aware of that visit. When she began to study at Dana College Marlene Paulsen learned more about Denmark but very little about Danish history or her heritage.

She learned to sing some Danish songs in the choir and to dance Danish folk dances. The colors for Dana were red and white, those of Denmark. But nothing of her Danish heritage was introduced in history or geography courses in grade school or high school. All contact with Denmark was cut off during WWII. Paulsen's grandparents were poorly educated and did not correspond at length with family in Denmark.

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Andrea left Japan in 1941 and settled in Iowa. He worked as a senior pastor in UDELIC. Andrea died in 1948 and J.M.T. returned to Japan in 1950.



She first visited Joyce and Paul C. Johnsen<sup>7</sup> in Chiba east of Tokyo, then took the train southwest to Kobe where Dr. Winther was awaiting her at the station. She recalls that, “Winther was tall, lean with very long legs probably in his 70’s (?)” Together with a heavy suitcase she had an Olympia portable typewriter and a sewing machine, all of which Dr. Winther quickly snatched up and began to carry for her. “We are going to show these Japanese gentlemen how to treat women,” he commented. She spent a couple of days at the newly completed Kobe Lutheran Theological Seminary, where he had his room on the third floor.



Picture 4 Marlene Paulsen's mother Winifred Paulsen and J.M.T. Winther met in Kobe. (Photograph by M. Paulsen)

He was very agile and walked quickly up the stairs taking four steps at a time. Indeed he was a very special person in many ways. He told me, “I sleep eight hours a day, but not at once. I sleep four hours, wake up and work for four hours, sleep two hours, work four more hours, and then sleep the remaining two. That's how I have lived for many years.” He knew 13 languages and so much about so many things. “He told me of his personal friendship with Emperor Hirohito.”

With these impressions of Dr. Winther whose 84th birthday was only a few weeks away Paulsen left for Kumamoto where she arrived on 3 October 1958. In a letter to Rev. Paul C. Johnsen dated “Oktober 5, 1958,” Winther told the story slightly differently.

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<sup>7</sup> The Johnsens lived in Tsudanuma village between Tokyo and Chiba cities. In 1963 they returned to the USA and were replaced by Frode Leth-Larsen of the Danish Mission Society (cf. Hermansen 2014).

Thank you for yours of the first. Yes Miss Paulsen came, saw and conquered. I believe we all got to like her, I believe that I knew her partly from seeing her in her home a number of times between 1947 and 50 [corrected to 49], and partly thru her people. Pastor Clarence P. (Paulsen's uncle and godfather) was my neighbor in Boomer for several years. She arrived at 8,24 in Osaka and left Sannomiya at 22,39<sup>8</sup> the same night, so we had no time to get tired of her visit. She will be welcome again (GL 8,222, English original).

### **Kumamoto and the Lutheran J-3 Program**

As mentioned above, Kumamoto used to be the center of JELC and besides the schools it still has three churches and a diaconal center JiAiEn 慈愛園, which today includes an orphanage, a kindergarten and a home for the elderly<sup>9</sup>. Under the post-war regulations, Kyūshū Gakuin had become a junior and senior high school for boys. And Kyūshū Jo Gakuin was a junior and senior high school for girls. Marlene Paulsen describes the situation as she saw it.

The schools were very successful in attracting many good students, partially because stipends were provided for talented but needy candidates. Partially because the quality of teaching was first rate, especially the English teaching as there was always a native English-speaking teacher. English was high priority and this meant that the missionaries saw much of their time spent in teaching English (perhaps Bible classes) rather than in their primary job, pastoral care. To alleviate the language-teaching burden on the missionaries,

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8 This was the express train “Kirishima 37 Re” leaving Tokyo at 1300 (急行「霧島」 37レ 東京1300) and Sannomiya at 2239, with arrival in Kumamoto 1221 the following day (cf. Shinsan)

9 JiAiEn was founded in 1918 by the ULCA missionary Maude O. Powlas and initially consisted of a home to save prostitutes, an orphanage and an old folks' home (Aoyama 72).

the ULCA initiated the Three-Year in Japan (J-3) program. There were two men on the program teaching at the boys' school when I arrived. I was assigned to teach oral communication in English to both junior and senior classes, each having 40 participants. I joined a team of English teachers with three Japanese English teachers and Elizabeth Huddle, the senior English teacher, who determined the

curriculum and goals. I did not get any guidance in the teaching curriculum but was assigned teaching times and then free to do as I saw fit. Most often this meant only listen and repeat key phrases in unison. Occasionally a bold student asked a question, much to my delight. However, Pavlovian psychology was the method at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, so it followed me to Kumamoto. This meant: listen and repeat and do not allow students to make mistakes.

In a letter home, I wrote, “It was like standing in front of a bed of dark-eyed Susans, (yellow perennials with large black centers),” to describe a classroom full of 40 dark-haired, dark-eyed girls all wearing the same school uniform. They all came up to my shoulders, so I became very popular on school excursions as the students could always locate me quickly. The post-war adults were no taller than their students so could not be seen standing out in a crowd. I was allowed to travel with the 3rd year senior students on their trip to Kyoto during my last year in Kumamoto. While we were in Kyoto it snowed and the ground was covered in white, much to the delight the students ... a first of a lifetime for them. I grew up in Nebraska winters, so it was



Picture 5 English teachers at Kyushu Jo Gakuin, Marlene Paulsen in front, in tartan skirt. (School's archive).

a joy to see this response. I taught them to lie down in the snow and move their arms to form angels with wings. In addition to my teaching schedule at Kyūshū Jo Gakuin, I was asked by the local YMCA to offer an English class for university students, all males. The young men in this group were very grateful and often invited me to join them on cycle trips or hikes in the mountains.

## **Living in Kumamoto**

On my arrival in Kumamoto, I first lived a week or so in an old two-storey “ghost” house on the school compound with only cold water and huge spiders. Then I moved to a new two-storey house on the JiAiEn compound which was occupied by Esther Barnhardt [in Japan from 1951], missionary and social worker. The mission had plans to replace the “ghost” house with a single storey house, and I was put in charge of the project. I ended up designing the house and subsequently made most of the arrangements with the builders. The house was completed in 1960 in time for the second woman J-3 to arrive and share.

In those days local regulations required the presence of a live-in housekeeper to guard the house in case of fire. It was the responsibility of the house residents to warn all neighbors of fire before trying to save their own home. So, when I moved into the new house with Valerie Gerlt, the latest J-3 woman, we were fortunate to find the widow of a school principal in the Kyoto area to come and live in. Mrs. Mano arrived with her teenage son and the two lived in a room at the back of the kitchen. Mrs. Mano very quickly became our guide to everything regarding Japanese customs and culture. She could tell us how to behave when attending a Japanese funeral, for example. She prepared lovely meals for us and for guests and decorated the house with lovely floral

arrangements. We often invited small groups of students to meals so that they could learn to eat with a knife and fork. These were a great success.

## **Relations to local churches and other missionaries**

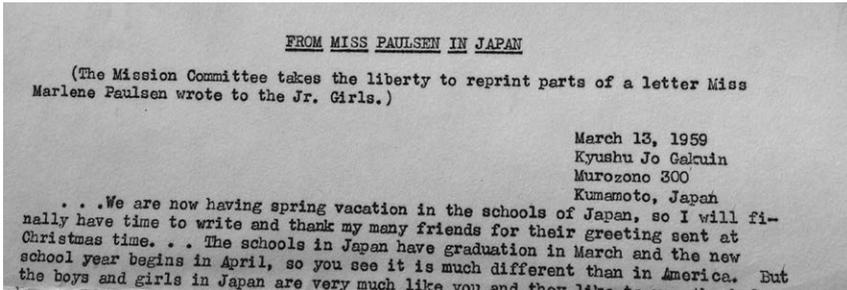
The ULCA had formally given Paulsen missionary status so what was expected of her in terms of Christian activities and interaction with church members and missionaries?

She did not have any prescribed obligations to a congregation but one of her English teacher colleagues, Mr. Sada Noda, asked her to start an English Bible class in his congregation of Kengun Church in Kumamoto. Later when they had no organist for a short while, Paulsen took on that job, proving her lessons with Paul Neve profitable. They found an organist but then she formed a choir and led them in singing for the services.

Regarding relations to other missionaries, she participated in the monthly missionary meetings held in turns at the homes in Kumamoto. During the hot, humid summers of the August holiday most of the missionaries gathered in summer cottages at Lake Nojiri in Nagano Prefecture, and she was always welcome to share in Elisabeth Huddle's cottage. All of the missionaries and their families gathered for a meeting once a year. Paulsen relates: "As a J-3 I was not considered a missionary proper and had no voice in the meetings so it was obvious that my role was to care for the children so that both parents could attend. Thus, I never knew what issues were discussed and debated during this time."

She seems to have developed the closest relations with the other J-3s in Kumamoto. Within her three years, there were four male J-3s at Kyushu Gakuin. Philip Hausknecht, served from October 1957 to May 1960 (cf. Kyushu 109?), found his wife in Ryoko, a former, very cherished student in one of Paulsen's classes. They married in Iowa and lived there for some time while he was studying for the ministry

and prior to returning to Japan as missionaries. Richard Solberg, served from September 1959 to May 1963 (cf. Kyushu 109?), got engaged to Paulsen's colleague Valerie. The three travelled together to Saigon via Hong Kong when Marlene was en route home in 1961, and the couple asked Marlene to be the maid of honor when they married in the US. Richard became a Lutheran minister.



It was not an obligation, but Paulsen wrote occasional letters to church magazines telling about her life in Japan. At least one of these letters was reprinted in yet a different newsletter. This is worth noting because the interest in and commitment to a mission field strongly depends on the frequency and level of communication from the people there to the supporters.

## Language

Marlene Paulsen shares her mother Winifred's openness. That is how I understand her flexible attitude to challenges and heard verbally expressed in her frequent use of “well” in our conversation. Her talent for picking up languages was demonstrated by the fact that she could manage the building of a new house using only Japanese after only one year in the country, for as a J-3, she received no formal Japanese language training. By her own evaluation, she was able to converse in Japanese around that time and by the end of her stay she could also discuss in the

language. During the August holiday in 1960 her mother and Dana classmate visited Japan for some weeks. Marlene organized the women's stay and journeys, including one to Nojiri. In one situation, when they were having dinner with Marlene's Japanese colleagues, Winifred suddenly complained that Marlene was speaking Japanese to her and English to the others. Her mother also noticed that when Marlene was speaking on the telephone in Japanese she would nod her head as the Japanese do whenever they are agreeing with something. Mrs. Paulsen thought this very amusing.

One of the trips for this trio took them to Hiroshima. They visited the Atomic Bomb Memorial Center. When browsing for a postcard in the museum shop Paulsen observed that another visitor was having communication difficulties. The woman behind the desk did not understand the guest's faltering English, so Paulsen helped out by translating and learned that he was from Italy. When his purchase was completed he turned round and confirming that Paulsen was American omitted a thank you.

He accused me of having dropped the Bomb on Hiroshima. I protested that I was but nine years old when it happened, but he insisted that I was guilty by reason of the fact that I was American. That is the only time I heard such an accusation during my stay in Japan. Years later, after moving to Denmark I was often accused of being responsible for the US war in Vietnam but I was old enough to defend myself by then.

After Japan, her life gave her very little opportunity to practice her Japanese but she did not forget the language right away. In the 1970s, when she had moved on to live in Denmark, she surprised her future partner on their first restaurant date at a Japanese restaurant when she began speaking Japanese to the waitresses who wondered how to explain just how the guests should make sukiyaki. All three were surprised and the waitresses were very relieved.

## Impressions left on Japan by Marlene Paulsen and in Marlene Paulsen by Japan



Picture 6 Account record on Marlene Paulsen, Kyushu Jo Gakuin archives.

The house Marlene Paulsen was put in charge of building was no longer to be found, when I visited Kyushu Jo Gakuin in July 2014. The only traces I found of Marlene were firstly in the school's old accounting books that recorded

a) status: teacher, b) name: マーリン・ポールセン (Maarin Poorusun), c) birthday: Meiji (明) 40, 11, 25 (24 November 1907 [actually July 1936 = Showa 11]), d) subject: English, e) qualifications: teach junior and senior high school English, f) educational background: “graduate of Dana College,” g) job commencement date: Showa 33, 9, 1 (1 Sep. 1958), and h) salary from the school: 0; secondly in the photographs preserved in graduation albums of the school years 1958, 1959 and 1960. Her impressions on her many students are untold.

While Paulsen was in Japan, her mother remarried and settled in Mahnomon, MN so upon her return Marlene decided to settle in the Twin Cities. The three years in Japan had been rewarding in many ways and she brought home many gifts from friends in Japan as well as impressions but soon realized that those she met were not all that eager to hear about life in another country. She does not think this indifference was caused by any kind of hostility towards the enemy from WWII but references beginning with “In Japan” or “My Japanese friend” probably sounded too distant to be of interest in the mid-West. So when she began her anecdotes without reference to Japan they were well received. It was perhaps the sense of adventure after completing the journey round the world inspired her to seek a ground service job at Northwest Orient Airlines, with headquarters in St. Paul, MN.

The mistake in stepping off the bus in Minneapolis led her to follow her conscience and share her experiences on the mission field in Japan with young

university students. However, she had made another mistake in that she walked into the German Lutheran student center but was referred to the ULCA student center not far away. The campus pastor, Dr. George Hall, met with her and quickly grabbed at the chance to give her a job as girl's residence housemother as well as work at the student center part time and then she could begin studies on a master's in TEFL.

In 1964 she moved to San Francisco and worked at various jobs. For a year or so in the personnel department at Bechtel Corporation where she processed the paperwork and applications for pipeline workers headed for jobs building pipelines in Libya. One summer she was asked by the ULCA to assist a Lutheran pastor on a project for six women students from various universities across the country. They were to do volunteer jobs related to their majors and live together in an apartment. Paulsen became their housemother and Pastor Joseph R. Barndt was their advisor. The group spent most of their free time together travelling round in a huge VW van. That autumn she began studying for her master's in TEFL at San Francisco State College (now university). Then, she got involved in the Chinatown and Mission District Language project, a part of the War on Poverty program. She worked in both the Chinese and Spanish speaking groups in SF helping them to learn enough English to function in jobs. There was less and less contact with Japan and things Japanese.

Marlene Paulsen was living in San Francisco when the Black Panther movement began. This focused on black roots in a new way and Paulsen began a personal search for her own roots. In 1969 she drove her VW bug to Minnesota and left it with her sister to sell, then flew to NYC and took the Christmas ship to Denmark. In Denmark, she enrolled with the International People's College in Elsinore where she met face to face with visiting Black Panther members who came to give a presentation.

In the autumn that year, she was hired to teach English to Danish volunteers headed for projects in East Africa and India. She later moved to Copenhagen, began studying at the University of Copenhagen and met TEFL colleagues by chance at

a Folk University course. Suddenly she was employed by Studieskolen, an evening school which offers language courses in some 30 languages. She taught there for over 30 years while living in Copenhagen but in late 1998 she and her partner of 18 years moved to Nivaa, a smaller town on the coast of North Sealand, closer to Elsinore than Copenhagen.

Japan and the experiences from Japan slid more and more into the background but the Japanese way never left her. She had learned much about décor and design while in Japan as well as the Japanese way of creating nature to be more natural than it is. These influences never left her. She concludes:

The J-3 program was a job, a teaching job. When a new psychological approach to education was introduced and it was possible to use role play, pair work and humor in teaching as well as allowing students to use their mistakes as a learning step, the rigid teaching situation at Kyūshū Jo Gakuin became somewhat a nightmare memory. My mission in Japan was to make it possible for missionaries to do their pastoral work and not have to teach English. Mission accomplished.

==== END OF INTERVIEW ===

## **Conclusion**

The movement of people, over generations, from an Inner Mission environment in Jutland, Denmark through a religiously faithful community of immigrants in the Blair, Nebraska, via a mission outreach in Kumamoto, Japan and back to Denmark = Marlene Paulsen's story fascinates me. I find it interesting how it parallels the story of J.M.T. Winther except he did not return to Denmark, but like a thread follows its needle, Marlene's story until Kumamoto, followed the path Winther had broken through his first 20 years as a missionary in Japan. Besides, the two

knew each other. I have not yet come across any references to the J-3 program in Winther's archives, perhaps because it had no relations to his work in Kobe from 1950. Paulsen's experiences alone do not warrant firm conclusions as to the effect of the J-3-program, if by this we mean leading others to Christ. On the other hand, as she says, her presence = the presence of a J-3, at the very least left the long term missionaries with more time for pastoral care. But it also expands the chance for non-Christians to meet a person for whom Christianity is a source of strength in life, and supports the local Christians, as was the case when Marlene gave English classes in YMCA. The feedback from young people into their home churches, again, could be and was used to create awareness and support of those churches mission activities. As demonstrated by the examples of Phillip Hausknecht and Richard Solberg, some J-3s went on to be ordained and work as pastors. Finally, while she did not end up as a missionary per se, her experiences in Japan were not inconsequential to her life. Perhaps it was not necessary to go and work in Japan for three years as an English teacher in order to become one? Though clearly not growing up as a fully bilingual, the generous and open approach to people outside her own cultural boundaries which she inherited might as well have won the day despite living in an English dominated environment without her three years in Kumamoto? The questions are very theoretical and impossible to answer, but judged by her story these traits of Marlene Paulsen her life was definitely nourished by her experiences as a J-3 at Kyushu Jo Gakuin.

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