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Borders of Self:
Return Migration and Global Pentecostalism among Nikkei Brazilian Migrants in Japan

By

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An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
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Abstract

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By Suma Ikeuchi

This dissertation responds to the growing need to explore the intersection of migration and religion with a case study of Japanese-Brazilian (i.e. Nikkei) migrants who have converted to Pentecostalism in Japan. Their lives unfold at the intersection of two growing trends in contemporary globalization: return migration and global Pentecostalism. In Asia, it is increasingly common for nation-states to promote the "return" of their diasporic populations by devising legal systems that accommodate such movements. In Latin America, the fast-growing Pentecostal Christianity has been developing a global web of faith networks, oftentimes relying on the transnational mobility of Latin American migrants.

This dissertation is among the first to investigate the phenomenon of religious revivalism among those who partake in return migration. It examines why and how Nikkei migrants convert to born-again Christianity in a country where Buddhist-Shintō syncretism predominates. I conducted 14 months of fieldwork at the churches of Brazilian denomination called Missão Apoio, primarily in Toyota, Japan. Using mixed methods, including participant-observation, interviews, and surveys, I found that many migrants experience Pentecostalism as "the third culture" that can help them transcend the world of ethno-national boundaries, where they have long been placed in in-between space of hyphenated identity.

The dissertation focuses on five major themes to analyze the interrelations between ambiguous ethnic identity, contested national belonging, and conversion to Pentecostalism: time, kinship, affect, self, and belief. From different angles, it illuminates how migrant converts start to reinterpret their ambiguous national belonging as a spiritual asset with which to realize the impermanence of man-made realities such as "nation." In other words, the experience of living "between" nations has sensitized them to the ethical vision of "transnational transcendence," in which they see themselves as conveyers of morality and godliness in the global mission to evangelize.

Despite the numerous predictions that have been made about its wane, religion remains a pervasive and contentious force in the new century. This project helps understand why Pentecostalism has flourished at some of the most fluid and contested boundaries of the globalizing world today.

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Japanese Blood, Brazilian Birth, and Transnational God

The Big Question

This dissertation triangulates ethnicity, religion, and national identity to examine how the interplay between the three affects the process of self-making among transnational migrants. As a psychological anthropologist who studies the intersection of transnational migration and Global Christianity, I approach the question of the self in political and psychological terms. What constructs the ethno-national boundary between "us" and "them"? What makes the experiential encounter between "I" and "Him" possible? Taken together, how do migrant converts navigate the borderland between the self and the other – both cultural others as well as divine alterity? Or, how does the experience of boundary crossing within the national, ethnic, and religious topographies they inhabit remake their sense of the self?

Contested Origin Myths

I investigate these questions through an ethnographic study of Japanese-Brazilian Pentecostal converts in contemporary Japan. They are descendants of Japanese immigrants in Brazil (i.e. Nikkeis) who have migrated to Japan and converted to Pentecostal Christianity in their ancestral homeland. As transnational migrants in "dual diaspora" (Matsue 2006), they craft their selves by weaving together multiple national belongings, ethnic identities, and potential homelands. Depending on the context, they can be Brazilian, Japanese, Nikkei, none of these things, or all of these things at once. The sources of their generative self-making, however, are not limited to ethnic and

national idioms. As participants in the global movements of Pentecostalism, they also claim a belonging in "the Kingdom of God" that supposedly transcends the world of man-made ethno-national boundaries – the world where they have long been placed in ambiguous in-between space of hyphenated identity. What is more, this charismatic branch of Christianity places an upmost emphasis on authentic conversion experience, at which point converts are ideally "born again" as "new creatures" (Anderson et al. 2010). As such, the lives of Nikkei Brazilian Pentecostals in Japan are shaped by multiple origin myths – national, cultural, and theological. Myth in this context does not signify a domain of archived imaginary tales but instead refers to a set of narratives that people live, "completely and intensely," to bring forth real-world consequences (Lévi-Strauss 1966:255).

In 1990, the Japanese government introduced a new type of visa for "long-term residents." Often dubbed as the Nikkei-jin[1] (Japanese descendant) visa, it is available to foreigners of Japanese descent up to the third generation. The same logic that governs Japan's jus sanguinis citizenship law determines the boundary of Nikkei-jin visa beneficiaries. The right to settlement is conferred virtually as the right of blood. At the same time, the legal system also implies that the "Japanese blood" expires after three generations. This is why the offspring of third-generation Nikkei migrants, some of whom are today born in Japan, do not qualify for the visa (many of such youngsters are on their parents' Nikkei-jin visas as dependents). Clearly, the national ideology that

[1] I adopt the following rule in this dissertation. Portuguese words are *italicized.* Japanese words are underscored. Japanese words that have entered the Portuguese lexicon of Nikkeis in Brazil and/or Brazilians in Japan are marked by *both.* This principle does not apply to the non-English words found in cited phrases and sentences. In the case of some non-English words that appear repeatedly in the text (such as Nikkei-jin), I stop marking them as such after clarifying their meanings (as in Nikkei-jin).

underpinned the implementation of the new visa recognizes only one point of origin, which is when Japanese nationals left the country. This pre-emigration original state, the source of any acknowledgeable Japaneseness in the subsequent generations born abroad, cannot be replicated – even when some of the fourth-generation descendants are today raised in Japan from birth. Japan's consanguineous myth thus locates the origin of national identity in the primordial unity of race, culture, and spirit, which arose within the geographical bounds of Japan (Befu 1993).

For Nikkei Brazilians who actually migrated to Japan by obtaining the visa, the emigration of their Japanese ancestors seldom constitutes the starting point of their life stories. Many say they don't know where their grandparents came from in Japan – and some openly admit that they don't care. Very few travel to the place of their ancestral roots, even when they could contact living relatives there. This is partly because they are so-called labor migrants, who decided to come to Japan primarily to save money, send remittances, and then go home to Brazil. Although an increasing number of migrant youth are today growing up in Japan, the majority are still second- and third-generation Nikkeis who were born and raised in places like São Paulo, Paraná, and Mato Grosso do Sul. Predominantly, Nikkei migrants themselves do not view their movement to Japan as a return to the country of origin. Instead, many speak about their return to Brazil next year, in a few years, or as soon as they save enough money: "Of course I want to go home. I was born there." Brazil, which received waves of Japanese immigrants in the first two-thirds of the 20th century, confers citizenship on the basis of place of birth. It is *terra natal* or "land of birth" that is valorized in the rhetoric of national belonging. Furthermore, Brazil has long upheld *mestiçagem* – or "racial mixture" – as an important

aspect of national identity (Andrews 1991, Warren and Sue 2011). Despite the fact that they have often been perceived as the unassimilable oriental other, once in Japan many Nikkeis look back to their natal country as the irrefutable homeland. Thus, the primary locus of their authentic identity – and hence origin – now lies in Brazil, where the myth of *mestiçagem* constitutes the centerpiece of national identity.

The relationship between "Japanese blood" and "Brazilian birth" is ambivalent to say the least, and negotiation of identities is a daily task for many Nikkei migrants in Japan. For those migrants who convert to Pentecostalism that has flourished among migrant communities, however, yet another origin myth takes hold. Pentecostalism is a charismatic movement within Protestantism that places particular emphasis on the direct and personal experience of God through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The common practices among Pentecostals and charismatics include speaking in tongues, sacred healing, divine prophecy, and appreciation of biblical authority (Hefner 2013). On the individual scale, the most defining aspects of Pentecostal identity are attributed not to migration history but to redemption story of conversion: "I was lost but now I am saved." On the grander scriptural scale, the Pentecostal myth locates the origin of current human state at various moments of loss: the Fall as the loss of innocence, the Tower of Babel as the loss of unified humanity, and the crucifixion of Jesus as the loss of savior in flesh. By fusing personal experiences with biblical themes, Nikkei converts learn a third way to narrate their origin stories, this time not as national subjects but as *crentes* ("believers" or born-again Christians). Pentecostalism thus locates the origin of born-again life in the authenticity of conversion experience, on the one hand, and in the grand narrative landscape of spiritual loss and revival, on the other (Harding 2000). It can thereby defy

the temporal scales of modern nation-states. Importantly, Pentecostal Christians also emphasize the universality of their origin myth: It is open to anyone regardless of citizenship, ethnicity, bloodline, or place of birth.

Living in Japan as Nikkei Brazilian converts entails negotiating between the three origin myths sketched out above – of Japanese blood, Brazilian birth, and transnational God. In the following chapters, I will examine how migrant converts comprehend, combine, and at times contest the diverse origin stories that shape their shifting boundaries of the self. To situate my arguments within the larger cultural contexts, the remainder of the introduction will first detail the historical background of my study subjects, ethnographic methods employed, and project's broader theoretical relevance.

Asian "Whites": Immigration into Brazil

Japanese immigration to Brazil started in 1908 with the arrival of Kosato-maru, a ship that carried 781 Japanese immigrant passengers. By 1941, roughly 189,000 Japanese nationals had entered the country (IBGE 1954). Having abolished centuries-old slavery in 1888, the ruling class of early 20th-century Brazil was keenly interested in securing a new supply of labor for plantation fields. Many Brazilian elites viewed the new migrant group from Asia as an ideal substitute for European immigrants who often protested poor working conditions. An effort to place the newcomers in a social category equal to their European counterparts was therefore palpable from the outset of Japanese immigration. J. Amândio Sobral, São Paulo's inspector of agriculture, met the first group of Japanese immigrants as they disembarked from Kosato-maru at the port of Santos in São Paulo and wrote a report on his first impressions. Most of the immigrants were literate; they did not

seem poor; they wore European clothes made in Japanese factories; the living quarters of Kosato-maru, in which they had travelled for three months, were absolutely clean, so were their clothes and bodies. Sobral concluded, "The race is very different, but it is not inferior" (Lesser 2013:154).

Japanese immigrants entered Brazilian society at a time when its elites often conflated national development with what they considered as racial progress. Brazil received more African slaves than any other nation in the Americas. When a large number of free blacks became part of its citizenry in the late 19th century, nationalist thinkers had to reconcile the significant presence of non-white population with the predominant ideology of white superiority at the time. The answer was what they called *branqueamento* (whitening). The whitening ideology posited that, by *mestiçagem* (interracial mixing), the white race and their superior civilization would eventually prevail by absorbing positive qualities of other races while blacks and Indians would gradually disappear (Skidmore 1997:199). It is important to remember, however, that Brazilian discourses of race seldom appealed to strict biological determinism (the equivalent of the "one-drop rule" did not exist in the Brazilian history) (Warren and Sue 2011). Whitening was as much a cultural and class-based concept as a physiological and biological one: "By maximizing their contact with individuals who were more advanced culturally [darker people could whiten]. One of the easiest channels was intermarriage. Miscegenation, therefore, was seen as regenerative, if not biologically, at least in terms of culture contacts" (Skidmore 1997:9).

The first large-scale influx of immigrants from the Far East stimulated the nation's preoccupation with race and progress in an ambiguous way. Phenotypically,

Japanese were not considered white. Additionally, they were often deemed unassimilable due to what the majority viewed as alien culture incompatible with Brazilian ethos. The alleged lack of assimilability meant that Japanese could slow down – and worse yet, halt – the whitening process. At the same time, many elites were willing to place Japanese immigrants in the racial category of "white" since whiteness as a concept involved not only phenotypic traits but also cultural qualities. With the victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, Japan was quickly solidifying its international status as an industrialized First-World nation. In the eyes of many Brazilian officials, then, Japanese were whiter (read: more civilized) than blacks and Indians and hence more desirable. As Amândio Sobral observed, the "race" was "not inferior." They were, however, also Asian (read: too foreign) and the risk of exclusion from national belonging was ever present.

At rural plantations where most were initially sent to work, Japanese immigrants soon turned out to be as unwilling to suffer bad treatments as their European counterparts. The establishment of Japanese *colônias*, rural farming communities subsidized by Japanese firms, alleviated some of the harsh labor and social conditions. Their economic and social status in Brazilian society rose steadily, primarily in the area of agriculture. In 1936, for instance, Japanese farmers produced 46% of the cotton, 57% of the silk, and 75% of the tea in Brazil even though they made up less than 3% of the population (Lesser 2003a:8).

Over time, many *nisei* (second-generation) and *sansei* (third-generation) Nikkeis – born and raised in Brazil – started to leave rural *colônias* for urban areas in pursuit of better educational, social, and economic opportunities. This rural-urban migration and economic ascension of Nikkeis eventually yielded the model minority stereotype, as

many successfully climbed the social ladder to become educated professional urbanites (Adachi 2010). The rate of interethnic marriage also increased among the younger generations who, unlike older immigrants, considered themselves primarily Brazilian. The Brazilian majority, however, continued to conflate "Nikkei Brazilian" with "Japanese" – a tendency evidenced by the usage of the Portuguese word *japonês* that, to this day, encompasses both Brazilian nationals of Japanese descent and Japanese nationals living in Japan. Today, Brazil is home to roughly 1.4 million Nikkeis – the largest Japanese descent population in the world outside of Japan (Sasaki 2008).

Religion and Homeland among Japanese/Nikkei Communities

The ways in which Japanese immigrants practiced Buddhism and Shintō in the early 20th-century Brazil reflected a number of social, cultural, and political forces that shaped their lives. For instance, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs prohibited missionaries – with the exception of Catholic priests – from going to Brazil from 1918 until the end of World War II (Maeyama 1972:162). This policy also applied to the representatives of dominant religions such as Buddhism and Shintō. The government thus tried to keep its overseas communities out of trouble by responding to the pressure for assimilation from the Brazilian majority.

In addition to the government-led determent, there are several other reasons why Japanese communities in Brazil saw few organized religious activities before 1950 (with the exception of Catholicism). Within the dominant Japanese kinship system, the commemoration of ancestral spirits was the right and duty reserved for the head of household (ie) – conventionally the eldest son. Since the majority of male immigrants

were not the eldest and hence free from the cultural expectation to partake in the care of the dead, the communal demand for ritual experts in this area – traditionally Buddhist monks – was not strong (da Rocha 2000:31). The common understanding was that they had left their ancestors and gods in someone else's care in Japan during their stay in Brazil. The continuation of ancestor worship in Brazil was therefore unimportant to the degree that they viewed their life in the nation as provisional, temporary, and bound to end before long. In the early days of Japanese immigration in Brazil, when the majority intended to return one day, they had little reason to have any religion in the Japanese sense – that is, in the form of ancestor worship.

Furthermore, the sway of State Shintō – which to most Japanese represented civil ethics rather than religious doctrines – lessened the communal need for explicit "religion." The bulk of prewar immigrants were educated during the decades immediately preceding World War II, when State Shintō – also called Emperor worship – was the most firmly enforced in public institutions. Some of such social structures were reproduced in Brazil, mostly notably in Japanese schools, where students continued to perform the core rituals of State Shintō. In fact, "[t]he Japanese school in Brazil served as the spiritual center of the community, lent some religious atmosphere with its practices of emperor worship, and consequently became in a sense a community shrine of the *uji gami* (tutelary deity) type. It was sacred" (Maeyama 1972:170-171).

Ancestor worship and Emperor worship were not mutually exclusive since the latter mimicked the former. In the idiom of "family state (kazoku kokka)" that undergirded State Shintō, the Emperor was the head of the national household and the benevolent father to all his "children" – imperial subjects of Japan (Wilson 2006).

Emperor worship also came to mediate the expression of Japanese identity in diaspora. Unlike ancestor worship, which was necessarily based on the unit of household or local clan, Emperor worship could serve as a symbolic nexus of emerging Japanese ethnicity, which many immigrants were experiencing more strongly than ever as they lived among the Brazilian majority. During World War II, however, the Brazilian government banned the teaching of Japanese language, which severely restricted the role Japanese schools had been playing in the immigrant communities. Since Brazil joined the Allies, the majority's antipathy toward the "resident enemy aliens" within its national boundary grew by day. In response, many secret societies linked to Emperor worship arose and garnered wide support among Japanese communities during this period, promoting ultranationalism among alienated Japanese and Nikkeis (Maeyama 1979)

Japan's surrender in August 1945 shook the foundation of Emperor worship in Brazil, but did not quite destroy it. Although the defeat proved the fallacy of imperial invincibility, some fractions of Japanese communities in Brazil refused to accept this fact by claiming that the Allies had fabricated the news to deceive them. A powerful secret society called Shindo Renmei ("League of the Subjects' Path" in Japanese) led such ultranationalist movements in postwar Brazil. Some fanatical members went as far as to physically attack other Japanese and Nikkeis who accepted the news of defeat, murdering 16 people and destroying many more farms (Lesser 2007:8). The secret societies eventually lost their momentum in the early 50s as Nikkeis began to migrate to urban cities en masse, leaving their rural agricultural communities behind.

Japan's defeat also corroded the collective belief in return among the Japanese and Nikkei communities. Most assumed that their homeland was destroyed permanently,

or at least in a way that made their return impossible during their lifetime. Japan was indeed in a bad shape, as the postwar immigration of 50,000 Japanese to Brazil – which continued until the early 1970s – can attest. It is during this immediate postwar years that the turn to permanent residence became definitive. Brazil was, and had to be, their new home. While this shift caused a great deal of anxiety among the first-generation Japanese immigrants, it was not such a shocking decision for the growing second- and third-generations Nikkeis.

The end of Shintō nationalism accelerated Nikkei conversion to Catholicism, especially among the younger generations who were ascending to urban middle-class (Shoji 2008a). Many first-generation immigrants encouraged their offspring to pursue this option as a strategy to enhance social opportunities. While some found such familial and social pressures for conversion coercive, others embraced their Catholic identity and actively participated in church-based movements (Lesser 2007:79). In many cases, however, conversion to Catholicism did not entail total abandonment of Japanese religious practices. Multiple religious identities were common. It is important to keep this information in mind, because Japanese/Nikkei communities witnessed a revival of Japanese religions – such as ancestor worship and Japanese New Religions – during the postwar period.

The widespread decision for permanent residence in Brazil ignited the migration of gods and ancestors from Japan. Now that the likelihood of return was null, many immigrants deemed it necessary to move the center of ancestral rites from Japan to Brazil. Koichi Mori, for instance, reports that many Okinawan Nikkeis started to travel to Okinawa in the 1950s to bring their mortuary tablets of ancestors and ritual tablets for

Fire God (hinukan) back to Brazil. This movement accelerated especially after 1972, when the U.S. Occupation Forces officially returned the islands to Japan (Mori 2003, 2005). The postwar influx of Japanese immigrants – especially from the occupied Okinawa – also fueled the revival of ancestor worship. Many immigrants – both prewar and postwar – regarded the migration of their ancestors indispensable for the true completion of their immigration process. The move of ancestral spirits in turn affirmed their determination to reestablish their kinship-based spirituality in their new homeland. Maeyama wrote in 1972:

> Today those who have decided definitely to reside permanently in Brazil sometimes say, "We are ancestors," or "We, the immigrants, will be the ancestors in Brazil." Here ancestor means a man who provides a foundation for something, prototypically *ie*, and in a wider sense the Japanese community in Brazil as a whole by analogy with the *ie* institution (Maeyama 1972:177).

Available statistical data reflect the history of migration and religion among Nikkei Brazilians that I have briefly sketched out. A survey in 1991 reported that 53% of Nikkeis in Brazil self-identified as Catholic and 31% as belonging to various Japanese religions (Matsue 2006:122, no percentages specified for other religions). Among those who self-identified as Asian in the 2000 census,[2] the ratio of Buddhists was higher than that among the general Brazilian population (10.68% compared to 0.13%). "New oriental religions," which encompasses various Japanese religions that started actively proselytizing in Brazil after the war, was 2.86% among Asian Brazilians compared to 0.09% among general Brazilian citizens. Although the majority of Asian Brazilians were Catholic (63.9%), the percentage was still lower than 73.57% of the general population. Pentecostal Christians were an absolute minority among Asian Brazilians at 4.25%

[2] In the Brazilian census, the category of "yellow (*amarelo*)" is designated to Asian immigrants and their descendants. I could not locate a more accurate source of demographic data on religion among Nikkeis from the same time period.

compared to 10.37% among Brazilians as a whole (Shoji 2008b).

Brazil and the Growth of Pentecostalism in the South

In the 1970s, just as the last wave of Japanese immigration faded out, Brazil's religious landscape was beginning to undergo a profound transformation: the rapid growth of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity accompanied by the decline of Roman Catholic Church. Between 1970 and 2010, the ratio of self-identifying Catholics shrank drastically from 92% to 65% of the population. During the same period, Protestantism experienced a fourfold growth from 5% to 22%, mainly due to the expansion of Pentecostal and charismatic groups (Pew Research Center 2013). The "explosion" of Pentecostalism (Martin 1991) shocked many observers because "Pentecostalism is the first mass religion in Latin America to definitely reject the Catholic institutional hegemony in the religious field" (Beyer and Beaman 2007:585). Instead of "hierarchical syncretism" which assumes the official dominance of Catholicism, Pentecostal movements adopt an alternative model of "competitive pluralism" and encourage exclusive affiliation among the participants (Freston 2013). Although its constituency today consists of people from diverse class backgrounds, Pentecostalism in Brazil – and Latin America in general – has grown the most prominently among the poor in urban peripheries (Chesnut 1997).

The expansion of Pentecostalism has not been unique to Brazil or Latin America. On the contrary, it has been the fastest-growing branch of Global Christianity in the last several decades, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania, and Latin America (Engelke and Tomlinson 2006, Corten and Marshall-Fratani 2001). Today, approximately 27% of Christians in the world are charismatic or Pentecostal, the majority of whom reside in the global South (Pew Research Center 2011). There is as yet no scholarly consensus on just

where to draw Pentecostalism's borders. Like other anthropologists of Global Christianity (Robbins 2014), my primary interest lies in the experiential ramifications of Pentecostalism's globalization for cultural actors rather than theoretical determination of theological borders. I therefore choose to approach Pentecostalism in inclusive terms and define it as the following (Hefner 2013:2):

> These [Pentecostalism's experiential characteristics] are, first, an emphasis on the achievement of a personalized and self-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ (being "born-again," an experience that Pentecostals share with many among their Evangelical cousins); second, ritual performance that highlights the ever-present power of the Holy Spirit ("baptism in the Holy Spirit," a practice given far greater emphasis in Pentecostalism and charismatic Christianity than in most other modern varieties of Christianity); and, third, religious enthusiasm centered on the experience of charismata ("gifts of the Holy Spirit"), including prophecy, exorcism, miraculous healing, and speaking in tongues (glossolalia).

Put simply, Pentecostalism is an emotionally expressive form of Christianity that proclaims the availability of the Holy Spirit's miracles for contemporary believers.

Brazil, the most populous nation in Latin America, is arguably one of the epicenters of Global Pentecostalism in the southern hemisphere today. The explosive growth of Brazilian Pentecostalism has not been contained within its national borders. In addition to other Latin American countries, the networks of Brazilian Pentecostal denominations such as IURD[3] have extended to Mozambique (van de Kamp 2012a, 2013), Portugal (Mafra et al. 2003), the US (Margolis 2013), and Japan (Rocha and Vásquez 2013, Quero and Shoji 2014). Scholars have observed that, in almost any context, Pentecostal practices and philosophies are able to address pressing local concerns at the same time as maintaining its theological distinctiveness and global connectedness. Thus, in Mozambique, IURD's "love therapy" has attracted many young

[3] Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (IURD), or Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG).

women who seek conjugal intimacy as a way to gain more independence from traditional extended kin (van de Kamp 2012b). In the US, where Brazilian expats often feel as though they were an "invisible minority" overshadowed by Spanish-speaking Latinos, Pentecostal churches provide a distinct ethnic space where they can be Brazilian (Margolis 2009). By the same token, Pentecostalism in Japan likely responds to a set of social and psychological issues prominent among Brazilian migrants. Now I will turn to what such issues could be.

Foreigners in the Ancestral Homeland: "Return" to Japan

In 1990, the Japanese government modified the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (nyūkoku kanri hō) and introduced a new type of visa for "long-term residents (teijūsha)." Often dubbed as Nikkei-jin (Japanese descendant) visa, it is available to foreigners of Japanese descent up to the third generation.[4] Given this opportunity and the dire state of Brazilian economy at the time, many second- and third-generation Nikkeis started migrating to Japan. The Brazilian population in the country peaked at 316,967 in 2008 – more than a twentyfold increase from 14,528 in 1989 (Higuchi 2010).

Migration to Japan entailed a significant change in social context, which in turn triggered a drastic shift in migrants' ethnic self-images. As aforementioned, Nikkeis enjoy a model minority status in Brazil as many are relatively well-educated and of middle-class background. In Japan, however, the overwhelming majority of Nikkei

[4] Since Japan prohibits dual citizenship, Japanese emigrants who have naturalized in other countries are officially considered as former Japanese nationals. (Since the government has to depend on its citizens' honesty to learn about their other nationalities, those who do not volunteer such information can in reality maintain dual citizenship.) The long-term resident visa is also available to formerly Japanese "foreigners" who have lost and/or revoked Japanese citizenship.

migrants took up jobs in unskilled manual labor – at automotive manufacturing factories, food processing plants, and so on. Due to the significant gap in wage standards between the two nations, they could expect to earn several times more as factory workers in Japan than as white-collar professionals in Brazil. It was not a shocking sight during the 1990s to spot Nikkei lawyers assembling auto parts on factory floors in places such as Ōizumi, Hamamatsu, and Toyota. The inability to speak fluent Japanese also barred most Nikkei migrants from pursuing more desirable work options in Japan. Temporary staff recruitment agencies called *empreiteira* or *haken* gaisha typically work as intermediaries between migrant workers and hiring Japanese factories, making it virtually unnecessary for Brazilians to learn Japanese.

As providers of outsourced flexible labor managed by external recruitment agencies, migrant workers may work full-time at the same factory for years without full benefits or job security. Many Nikkeis consequently come to feel that the ethnic prestige they (used to) embody in Brazil disappears in the Japanese context – ironically, in the homeland of their ancestors. While this transition can be quite humiliating, migration to Japan also delivered what they could never achieve in Brazil: unequivocal Brazilian identity. As a marginalized minority among the Japanese majority, many Nikkeis feel – and are perceived as – unquestionably Brazilian for the first time in their lives (Tsuda 2000, 2001, Roth 2002).

Some observers have characterized this movement as a straightforward "ethnic" return. Takeyuki Tsuda, for instance, wrote, "(...) the nikkeijin, as descendants of those who initially fled to Brazil because they could not survive in Japan, have now *returned* to Japan because they could not survive economically in Brazil either" (2003:111 italics

added). Few actual migrants, however, saw their migration to Japan as a return (Linger 2003, Sasaki 2013). Neither did Japanese officials. While the legal definition of Nikkei-jin certainly constructs potential migrants as partially Japanese, the recognition of relative proximity to national kinship never guarantees complete national belonging. This is evidenced by a series of policies the Japanese government implemented in response to the 2008 global financial crisis. The sudden recession hit migrant workers with little job security the hardest. While the unemployment rate among Japanese nationals in 2009 was 5.6%, it rose to staggering 40% among Brazilian workers in the country (Higuchi 2010). Fired without a notice and unable to find other employments, many had no option but to leave the country for Brazil.

The exodus of Nikkeis accelerated when the Japanese government announced the implementation of the "support program to those unemployed of Japanese descent wishing to return to their home country (nikkei-jin kikoku shien jigyō)." From April 2009 until March 2010, unemployed Nikkeis and their dependents could receive 300,000 and 200,000 yen,[5] respectably, for the cost of one-way travel to Brazil on the condition that they would not enter Japan again on the Nikkei-jin visa "for a while." By the end of 2009, roughly one-fourth of Brazilian residents in Japan had left (Ibid.). Many Japan-born Brazilian youth "returned" to their "home" country for the first time during this period, adding yet another layer to the complex history of national belonging among Nikkeis. Although the Japanese government lifted the ban on reentry in 2013, the number of Brazilians in Japan never recovered to the pre-2008 level. Since the Brazilian economy has been experiencing a significant growth in the new millennium, currently there is less economic incentive for Nikkeis to migrate to Japan.

[5] roughly $3,000 and $2,000.

Today, there are roughly 178,000 Brazilian nationals in Japan, forming the fourth largest group of foreign residents after the Chinese, Korean, and Filipino (Ministry of Justice 2014). Brazilians are more numerous than all the other Latin Americans combined – roughly 48,000 Peruvians, 5,300 Bolivians, 2,800 Argentinians, and 2,900 Mexicans (Ministry of Justice 2014).[6] The legal system permits each long-term resident to migrate with his or her spouses and dependents, whether they qualify as Nikkei-jin or not. This has led to the diverse ethnic profile of Brazilian residents in Japan. In 2003, for instance, 175,000 non-*mestiço* Nikkeis lived in the country along with 55,000 *mestiço* Nikkeis and non-Nikkei spouses (Lesser 2003:13). A family of five, for instance, can have a third-generation Nikkei mother (the primary visa holder), non-Nikkei father, and three *mestiço* (mixed) children who may self-identify as *yonsei* (fourth-generation Nikkei). Things become slightly more complicated for the *yonsei* youth, many of whom were born in Japan or brought to Japan as a child. Culturally, they may feel quite "Japanese," but they are "Brazilian" in legal terms (See Table 1 below).

As the growing presence of Japan-born youth indicates, the life in Japan did not turn out to be as temporary as many Nikkei Brazilian migrants had expected when they first arrived. In fact, the majority of Brazilian nationals who reside in Japan today hold

[6] The great majority of Peruvians and Bolivians in Japan are also Nikkei. Brazilians are ranked higher than the other Latin American Nikkeis in the perceived ethnic hierarchy for a number of reasons. First, Brazil is considered to have a higher status because of its higher GDP, larger population, and greater political influence. Second, Nikkei Brazilians in general have more Japanese cultural and phenotypic features akin to the Japanese majority in Japan compared to Nikkei Peruvians (the ratio of *mestiços* is greater among Nikkei Peruvians). Lastly, migrants from Peru included more non-Nikkei Peruvians, generally from poorer background, some of whom entered Japan using fraudulent documents. Thus, "(…) unlike Japanese Brazilians who asserted their Brazilianness, Japanese Peruvians, particularly of those of racially unmixed and middle-class backgrounds, tried to distance themselves from 'pure Peruvians,' or non-Japanese Peruvians, emphasizing instead their status as *nikkei* Japanese descendants" (Takenaka 2009:262-263).

permanent resident visas instead of long-term resident visas. According to the statistics released by the Ministry of Justice (2014), roughly 62% of Brazilians in Japan hold permanent resident visas as opposed to those with long-term resident visas who make up only 25% of the migrant community. This holds true on a more regional scale; 3,334 (63%) of the 5,241 registered Brazilians in Toyota City are on permanent resident visas while only 1,394 (26%) live as long-term residents (Toyota City 2013).

To apply for a permanent resident visa, one must have resided in Japan for more than ten years in a sufficiently consecutive manner, which means one can leave the country only for a brief trip. That roughly 60% of Brazilian migrants in Japan have succeeded in obtaining the visa means the obvious: Their life in Japan is not as fleeting as many see it to be. Whether they will eventually ascend to middle- and upper-classes in Japanese society, as their Japanese and Nikkei ancestors did in Brazil decades earlier, is still open to debate. Unlike Japanese immigrants in early 20th-century Brazil, Brazilian migrants in the 21st-century Japan are without governmental support from their home country, without much socioeconomic capital, and without birthright citizenship. Factory work is still the dominant means of making a living. A small number of Brazilian youth, however, are starting to receive college degrees and climb up the social ladder in Japanese society – slowly but steadily.

Encounter with God in the Ancestral Homeland

Just as Japanese immigrants brought Buddhism, Shintō, and Japanese New Religions to Brazil, Brazilian migrants carried with them a number of religious practices from Brazil to Japan. These include major religions such as Catholicism and Pentecostalism as well

as more minor ones such as Japanese New Religions, Espiritismo, and Umbanda[7] (Quero and Shoji 2014). Japanese New Religions that have thrived in post-war Brazil have returned to Japan with the migrants – most notably, Seicho-no-ie, Tenri-kyō, Perfect Liberty, and Sekai-kyūsei-kyō (Clarke 2000, Shimazono 1991, Matsue 2006).

There is unfortunately no large-scale demographic data on religion among Brazilian residents of Japan. When it comes to the places of worship available to Brazilians, however, one scholar has conducted a quantitative survey. By relying on printed media, online websites, Portuguese-language magazines, and other Brazilian ethnic media outlets, Rafael Shoji identified 147 places for Brazilian Pentecostal congregations in 2008, which made up 47% of all the religious sites offering Portuguese services in the country (Shoji 2014:39). 25.8% of such places were of Japanese New Religions; 20.8% were Catholic churches; and only 4.2% were traditional Buddhist temples (Ibid. 37).

Although the number of church locations does not necessarily reflect the number of followers, it is still significant that the number of Pentecostal places of worship far exceeds that of Catholic churches. For instance, Toyota City has one Catholic church, which had roughly 500 registered Brazilian parishioners at the time of my fieldwork. Since the church's father was Korean, it held biweekly mass for Brazilians by inviting a priest who could speak Portuguese (a professor of religious studies from Portugal at a nearby university who was also a certified Catholic priest). From what I could see, roughly 200 parishioners would regularly attend Portuguese mass. The two Pentecostal churches that I knew of in Toyota had roughly 450 and 200 Brazilian members,

[7] Espiritismo is a mediumship religion that focuses on communication with disembodied spirits and reincarnation. Umbanda is an afro-Brazilian religion that blends African traditions, Roman Catholicism, Espiritismo, and indigenous spirituality.

respectively. Almost all of the members attended weekly Sunday service led by Brazilian pastors. Since not all Catholic Brazilians regularly attend mass or register themselves as parishioners in Japan, I would not jump to a conclusion that Pentecostals now exceed Catholics among Brazilian residents of Toyota. Still, Pentecostalism has likely grown significantly in the context of Japan, compared to Brazil's census data from 2000 (in which only 4.25% of Asian Brazilians were Pentecostal while 63.9% were Catholic).

Indeed, a number of researchers have found that Pentecostalism has flourished among Brazilian migrant communities in Japan (Shoji 2014, Yamada 2014, Hoshino 2014). There are several social factors that play into the phenomenon of post-migration conversion. One is organizational. Unlike the centralized governance system of Roman Catholicism, which makes erection of new churches difficult, Pentecostalism is more decentralized and less hierarchical. Consequently, Pentecostal migrants can build their own churches and communities in ways that they see fit, while their Catholic peers must share the church space with preexisting Japanese parishioners. This organizational element in turn fuses with migrants' desire to create their own ethnic space (Vásquez 2009). In many cases, Pentecostal church is the only place where Brazilian migrants can congregate with others like themselves without the gaze of the Japanese majority.

The mass exodus of Brazilian migrants during the 2008 financial crisis, however, changed these dynamics for good. Having realized that they cannot expect to grow indefinitely only within the bounds of Brazilian communities, today Pentecostal churches are adopting an increasingly trans-ethnic rhetoric to attract more members from the Japanese majority. Additionally, the emerging effort for active proselytization in Japan seems to have fueled a sense of moral superiority among migrant converts (Yamada

2014). While they may be perceived as a "backward" Brazilian minority in economic and class terms, they can re-envision themselves as a "forward" Christian minority in spiritual terms. Moreover, the cultivation of a new religious identity enables them to claim Japan as a place to be, not on the basis of Japanese ancestry but as conveyors of morality and godliness in a non-Christian "pagan" land.

Evangelization of the Japanese majority, however, has turned out to be challenging to say the least. Not only is Japanese society overwhelmingly Buddhist and Shintoist, it has historically persecuted or oppressed Christians. Christianity was first brought to Japan in 1549 by Jesuit missionaries in the form of Roman Catholicism. Over the course of the 16th century, its popularity grew among Japanese aristocrats as well as commoners. It is estimated that, by the early 1630s, the number of converts increased to 760,000, roughly 6% of the total population of Japan at the time (Miyazaki 2003:7). Since Catholicism arrived concomitantly with the colonial expansion of the Portuguese and Spanish in Asia, Japanese authorities soon came to regard it as a serious threat to the country's internal stability. In 1614, the Tokugawa Shogunate ordered a nation-wide order to prohibit Christianity and expelled foreign missionaries. Those who refused to abandon their faith were tortured, expelled, and/or executed. Hundreds were martyred during the internal expulsion of Christian social segments. Even when the ban was finally lifted more than two centuries later in 1873, and Protestant missionaries started to arrive primarily from the US, the prejudices against Christians did not easily disappear. Although the freedom of religion was enshrined in the 1889 Meiji Constitution, the growing sway of State Shintō bred nationalist sentiment that Christianity was "un-Japanese" and unpatriotic. In 1891, for instance, a Japanese Protestant intellectual Kanzō

Uchimura received a storm of social criticism when he refused to perform a State Shintō ritual. Japanese authorities upheld the view that State Shintō was a "civic" duty required of all imperial subjects regardless of their "religious" affiliations (Hardacre 1989:114-132). Although State Shintō disintegrated with the defeat of Japanese Empire in World War II, the discourse of "non-religious" remains influential in postwar Japan to this day. While the great majority – roughly 94% of the population, according to some reports (Agency for Cultural Affairs 2015:11) – participates in Buddhist and Shintō activities, that same majority consider themselves as predominantly "non-religious" when polled (Watanabe 2011). There is no explicit antipathy toward Christianity in today's Japan, except its continued association with foreignness and Otherness (Mullins 1998). Christians – Catholics and Protestants combined – currently make up less than 1% of the Japanese population (Tokyo Christian University 2015).

Few Brazilian Pentecostal migrants know the history of Christianity in Japan and their outlook on evangelization of the Japanese majority remains hopeful and youthful. It is indeed too early to judge the outcome of their nascent effort. It suffices to say that time will tell.

Fieldwork

This dissertation interrogates the interplay of ethnic, national, and religious identities among Nikkei Pentecostals in Japan by situating it within the larger politico-historical contexts outlined above. An ethnography of such an interplay requires robust fieldwork that crosscuts multiple social contexts and synthesizes data from different life domains. Over the course of my 14-month fieldwork between 2012 and 2014, I cultivated a

multifaceted ethnographic approach across distinct social fields inhabited by Nikkei Brazilian migrants living in the Aichi Prefecture of Japan. Aichi is the fourth most populous prefecture located in central Japan known for its developed manufacturing industries. In 2013, for instance, Aichi shipped roughly 42 trillion yen worth of manufactured goods, becoming the largest manufacturing prefecture in Japan for the 37th consecutive year. Roughly 30% of them (12 trillion) came from one city: Toyota, my main research site (Aichi Prefectural Government 2013).

The first social field of my study was the city's factories. Toyota City is home to the headquarters of Toyota Motor Corporation.[8] In addition to the seven large factories directly run by the corporation, there are hundreds of auto parts factories scattered around the city, the majority of which are subsidiaries of Toyota. This hub of manufacturing network gives rise to a significant demand for flexible labor force in and around the city. It is not a coincidence, then, that Aichi Prefecture holds the largest Brazilians population in Japan at roughly 47,000. Like other foreign workers, they tend to work in factories that are shunned by many Japanese as "3 K" – kitsui (demeaning), kiken (dangerous), and kitanai (dirty). The majority of my Brazilian informants in Toyota worked in such factories – of auto parts, textiles, and electronics. Many women – as well as older men who could no longer manage physically demanding labor – also worked at food processing and packaging factories that produced goods for convenience stores ubiquitous in today's Japan.

I worked at two different factories in Toyota for five months in total between 2013 and 2014. At the very beginning of my fieldwork, I registered myself at a Japanese

[8] In 1959, the city officially changed it name from Koromo to Toyota. It is the city that was named after the corporation, not the other way around.

temporary staffing agency, which then introduced me a job at a mid-sized auto parts factory. On many days I worked from 8am until 7pm. While the factory did not hire any foreigners, this work experience benefitted my fieldwork because it taught me the basic class issues of part-time factory labor. For example, one day one of my fellow Japanese female part-time workers rushed into the locker room in tears, because she had been denied a day-off to go see her ailing grandmother. According to her, her boss told her that the right to take days off first goes to the directly employed full-timers – one of whom had requested to be off on the same day as she did. I worked at this factory for three months. Toward the end of my fieldwork in 2014, I also worked for two months at a food processing factory. This time, I registered myself at a Brazilian staffing agency and found a job at a place many of my Brazilian informants already worked. My shift was from 8am until 5pm. Since I commuted with Brazilian workers, the factory officials initially did not realize that I was Japanese. When they did after several weeks, they transferred me from the factory floor to a desk job in which I was in charge of managing Brazilian workers. I resisted this move but there was little I could do. At this second factory, I observed how class and ethnic factors commingled to shape the work environment of Brazilian migrants. For instance, the night shift – which was less popular than the day shift – was filled almost exclusively by Brazilians. Although labor is not the central focus of this dissertation, these first-hand observations helped me understand the larger socioeconomic forces that shape migrants' daily experiences.

The second social field was a residential neighborhood with a large concentration of Brazilian migrants. One of the largest Brazilian enclaves in Japan, a partially subsidized housing project called Homi Danchi, is located in Toyota (Linger 2001). In

2014, more than half of the city's 5,120 Brazilians – 2746 of them – lived there with 3,717 Japanese neighbors (Toyota City 2014). After the first two months of my fieldwork, during which I lived in a dormitory owned by my staffing agency, I rented an apartment and moved into the housing complex. The contexts in which I conducted participant observation were diverse, ranging from local Brazilian supermarket to annual summer festival in the neighborhood. Broadly speaking, I have three domains of data from Homi Danchi.

The first consists of local educational entities such as Japanese public schools, Brazilian private schools, and NGO/NPO organizations. While I could arrange only a handful of visits to the schools, I taught a weekly Japanese course as a volunteer at an NGO group called Torcida for three months during my fieldwork. Established in 2003, Torcida provided free Japanese language classes to the children from migratory background in and around Homi Danchi who experienced difficulties in adapting to Japanese school systems. The majority of my students at Torcida were Brazilian and the others were from China and the Philippines. This teaching experience illuminated a number of issues school-aged migrant children faced in Japan.

The second domain comprised neighborhood activities, events, and festivals. The summer festival called Homi Oiden Matsuri, for instance, had a samba performance by a group of Nikkei Brazilians. Participant observation at such events shed light on how residents of Homi Danchi performed their identities depending on the context – Japanese, Brazilian, Nikkei, and/or *gaijin* (foreign).

Last but not least, by living in Homi Danchi, I could insert myself in the reciprocal web home visits among its Brazilian residents. I could walk over to a friend's

apartment for a coffee, dinner, and sometimes a movie. Likewise, when someone needed some help from me – most commonly translation of Japanese documents – she would often come visit me at home (as a lone female ethnographer, I was more hesitant to have a man over unless he came in a group). Since most of the congregants of the church I studied lived in Homi Danchi, home visit provided me with another occasion to interact with the same people but in different, more private, context. Over the course of my fieldwork, I was invited to a number of dinners, baby showers, birthday parties, soccer viewing gatherings, funerals, etc., all of which took place in my informants' homes or at the communal center of Homi Danchi. Some of the most valuable ethnographic findings came from these personal interactions.

The third – and primary – social field of my study was local Pentecostal churches that belong to a denomination called Missão Apoio ("Support Mission" in Portuguese). Missão Apoio was founded in Japan in 1993 by two Brazilian migrants, one of whom had worked as a minister for Assembleia de Deus (the Assemblies of God) in Brazil for 13 years prior to his migration (Yamada 2014). If we were to count the places of worship (and not the number of members, which is more elusive), Missão Apoio is the second largest Brazil-derived Protestant denomination in Japan after Assembleia de Deus (23%) and on par with Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, 10%) (Shoji 2014:40). With roughly 450 Brazilian members, Missão Apoio Toyota was one of the largest Pentecostal churches in the area, located about 15 minutes away from Homi Danchi by car. While I regularly drove to other Missão Apoio churches in Nagoya, Kariya, Iida, and so on, I focused most of my fieldwork effort on the church in Toyota.

I visited the church for the first time during my pilot study in the summer of 2012. Pastor Cid Carneiro, with whom I had previously spoken on the phone and obtained the permission to visit the church, came to Toyota Station himself to pick me up. One of his first questions was whether I was Nikkei Brazilian myself, to which I gave a firm no. "Interesting," he said as he drove, "there are many youngsters at my church who speak Portuguese with an accent like yours." Since some Japan-raised Brazilian youth speak Japanese as their first language today, it is not surprising that their Portuguese would also be affected by Japanese phonetics. His next guess was that I was Japanese-American – probably because I had told him that I was a doctoral student at an American university. I again said no, and explained that I was a Japanese national who had been living in the US for about five years. "So, you were born and raised here? No Brazilians in your family?" "That's right," I answered. As it turned out, I ended up clarifying my identity in a similar way a dozen more times that day as I interacted with Nikkei Brazilians for the first time in my life. At the end of the summer, I asked Pastor Carneiro if I could come back the next year to conduct a yearlong research. With his permission, I returned in August 2013.

Of Missão Apoio Toyota's 500 members, roughly 50 were Nikkei Peruvians who attended their own Spanish service scheduled in Sunday morning. In early afternoon, the church subsequently held a Japanese service, which was attended mostly by Brazilian youth who were fluent in Japanese. At the time of my fieldwork, Missão Apoio Toyota had only one Japanese convert. She was a young woman in her twenties who first converted to evangelical Christianity in Tennessee, where her family had lived during her adolescence due to her father's work situation. After the Japanese service, the church would start getting crowded with Brazilian attendants of 4pm Portuguese worship. Since

the church space could not accommodate all the Portuguese-speaking congregants at one time, there were two Portuguese services on Sunday, one at 4pm and the other at 7pm.

According to the results of demographic survey I administered at Missão Apoio Toyota, 79% of the respondents (147 out of 186 valid responses)[9] were Nikkei and 20% (38) were not. Almost all of the non-Nikkei Brazilians were spouses or ex-spouses of Nikkeis, who first entered Japan on their partners' long-term resident visas. Of the 147 self-identifying Nikkeis, 21% (32) answered that they were *nisei* (second-generation), 66% (98) responded that they were *sansei* (third-generation), and 10% (15) said they were *yonsei* (fourth-generation). Just two people were *issei* or first-generation Nikkei. The gender distribution was equal (91 men and 92 women). The congregation was overall young: 12% (24) in their teenage years, 23% (43) in their 20's, 35% (66) in their 30's, 18% (34) in their 40's, 4% (8) in their 50's, and just 0.5% (1) in his 60's. Of the 119 respondents who specified the type of job they held, the overwhelming majority – 80% (96) – worked in factories. 93% (90) of them belonged to the contingent labor force with little job security while 7% (6) were directly employed workers with insurance coverage, work benefits, and pension plans. Non-factory jobs ranged from hairdresser to gym trainer to interpreter. 68.3% (127 out of 186 valid responses) reported to have converted to Pentecostalism after migrating to Japan.

Over the course of the twelve months between 2013 and 2014, I attended everything I was allowed to attend as a non-convert outsider, which included bible study group, regular Sunday worship, home group gathering, night prayer session, street evangelization, fundraising party, and so on. What I could not attend were leadership

[9] Since I was allowed to distribute the survey at just one of the two Portuguese services on Sunday, in theory just half of all the Brazilian congregants were surveyed.

meeting (only for leaders), marriage counseling session (only for the married), and some prayer camps open only for converts. On the top of such explicitly "religious" gatherings, churchgoers often organized parties with one another in their spare time, to which I was frequently invited.

The fourth field sought contrast. I interviewed Japanese neighbors, teachers, and NGO leaders in and around Homi Danchi. I regularly visited two Catholic churches in the region that held Portuguese mass to meet with Catholic Brazilian migrants. My Japanese family and Buddhist background could also be included here, since the ways in which my Brazilian informants reacted to my identity constituted an important source of ethnographic data. I must disclose, however, that I sought these comparative perspectives only insofar as I had any time left from exploring the previous three social fields. In other words, this project does not aim to set the Japanese-Brazilian or Pentecostal-Catholic comparison as the chief object of analysis. The main focus is firmly on Nikkei Brazilian Pentecostals.

In addition to numerous lengthy conversations that took place organically during participant observation, I also conducted 63 interviews in total: 16 with Nikkei Brazilian Pentecostal men, 4 with non-Nikkei Brazilian Pentecostal men, 17 with Nikkei Brazilian Pentecostal women, 3 with non-Nikkei Brazilian Pentecostal women, 5 with Nikkei Brazilian Catholic men, 4 with Nikkei Brazilian Catholic women, 2 with Nikkei Brazilian men who considered themselves non-religious, 4 with Japanese men, and 7 with Japanese women. I initially attempted to conduct semi-structured interviews by preparing a set of questions, but my informants' eagerness to inquire my identity often changed the interview structure into a more open one. Almost all of the Pentecostal subjects started by

interviewing me about my ethno-national identity and religious affiliation. Those who already knew that I am a Japanese national from a Buddhist family would instead start by checking on my spiritual progress: "So, have you had any experiences with God yet?" The Japanese interview subjects were equally curious about my identity. I often had to clarify why I spoke Portuguese and appeared somewhat Americanized when I was – borrowing one informant's words – "really, actually, 100% Japanese." I would explain that I had lived in the States for some time and studied Portuguese to conduct my anthropological research.

Contribution

Nikkei Brazilian Pentecostals in Japan, although they may appear rather idiosyncratic at first glance, can provide an extremely fertile ethnographic context in which questions of broader significance can be explored. This is because their lives unfold at the intersection of two growing trends in contemporary globalization: return migration and global Pentecostalism. In Asia, it is increasingly common for nation-states to promote the "return" of their diasporic populations by devising legal systems that accommodate such movements. Countries such as China, India, and Japan today offer special visas for foreign citizens deemed to possess enduring ties to national kinship (Xiang, Yeoh, and Toyota 2013). In Latin America, the fast-growing Pentecostal Christianity has been developing a global web of faith networks, oftentimes relying on the transnational mobility of Latin American migrants. By studying Nikkei Brazilian Pentecostals in Japan, this dissertation will not only contribute to the scholarly debates on return migration and global Pentecostalism but also respond to the larger need to explore the

intersection of migration and religion in today's increasingly interconnected and diversifying world.

Why Return Migration? Contribution to Transnationalism Studies

Return migration provides an effective lens through which to interrogate the growing trend toward nationalization of transnational mobility today. Increasingly, nation-states try to regulate, promote, and take advantage of people's mobility and multiple belongings. For many nations, their overseas "citizens" and "kin" constitute an indispensable source of revenue (as remittance) and brainpower (as education attained elsewhere). Countries such as Haiti and the Philippines, for example, host a number of large-scale rituals to celebrate the "return" of their overseas citizens, after which they are expected to go back abroad to the life of labor migrants (Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Blanc 1994, Xiang, Yeoh, and Toyota 2013). Nations-states today seem less opposed to the mobility of their citizens, as supported by "a long-term shift toward a more universal acceptance of dual nationality" (Vertovec 2007:160). Instead, they are keenly interested in simultaneously promoting and regulating migrants' mobility in ways that benefit them (Hollifield 2007). Upadhya's case study of Indian-American IT professionals' "return" to Bangalore demonstrates the great length to which the state is willing to go to tame the desirable pool of migrants overseas (Upadhya 2013).

It is hard to miss the political and ideological dimensions of return. The return of emigrants themselves may be relatively (yet never utterly) uncontested. But what happens when descendants of migrants "return"? The recent development of scholarship on return migration indeed shows that "return" is often negotiated (Christou 2006, Conway and

Potter 2009, Markowitz and Stefansson 2004, Potter, Conway, and Phillips 2005, Wessendorf 2007, Ishi 2003). In other words, return is not a natural event but an achievement of convincing self-making. Anteby-Yemini (2004) discusses the return migration of Ethiopian Jews to Israel. Contrary to the welcoming "promised land" they had long cherished and yearned for, Israel typically greeted them with residential segregation and institutional discrimination. Anteby-Yemini's informants largely agreed that their return "home" was unsuccessful and perhaps impossible. Holsey (2004) writes about another case of "return" among African-American tourists who visit the slave dungeons in Ghana. Strongly identifying these dark dungeons as their origin, they become revitalized by reaffirming the courage of their ancestors with whom they still feel profound ties. The visit is overall a "positive experience from which they return home to the diaspora strengthened with the knowledge that their ancestors' courage continues to dwell in them" (Ibid. 179). Both of these cases as well as many others attest that return is an achievement of selective and yet genuine self-making. It often seems that biological lineage is among the less important elements in the project of return (although returnees may or even must frame it that way for various reasons).

To date, however, the study of return migration says surprisingly little about the role of religion. Although the field has matured significantly compared to a decade ago, when a mere mention of the literature's scarcity sufficed to justify the scholarly value of the topic, there continue to exist very few works that take religion seriously. For instance, none of the existing three ethnographic monographs on Nikkei Brazilians in Japan accord central focus to religious identities and practices of migrants (Linger 2001, Roth 2002, Tsuda 2003). The problem of return tends to be defined primarily in ethnic terms (Tsuda

2009). This analytical pattern reflects the dominant paradigm in the migration and mobility studies literature at large, where the "ethnic lens" has long downplayed religion's theoretical import (Glick-Schiller, Çaglar, and Guldbrandsen 2006). In today's transnationalism studies, however, an increasing number of scholars have been turning to religion as a major force that shapes "an alternative cartography of belonging" (Levitt 2003:17) among those who experience transnational mobility (Alba, Raboteau, and DeWind 2008, Bender et al. 2013, Csordas 2009, Leonard et al. 2006, Levitt 2007). By analyzing the ways in which Pentecostal ideas and practices shape the process of self-making among Nikkei "return" migrants in Japan, this dissertation contributes to the study of return migration in particular and the field of transnational migration studies in general.

Why Global Pentecostalism?: Contribution to the Anthropology of Religion

Two analytical frameworks predominate in the current anthropological literature on Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity. One is psychological and phenomenological. How is the relationship with God mediated? What are the roles of belief, speech, body, ritual, institutional authority, and material objects in the act of mediation? How do the ideal mediums differ across denominational and theological lines? The other is social and political. What sociopolitical claims, gains, and experiences does religion mediate? How does religion sustain, construct, and transform identities such as ethnicity, national identity, class, and gender – and vice versa? What collective movements does religion facilitate?

Each approach comes with its own strengths and weaknesses. While the psycho-phenomenological framework generally does a great job in capturing the rich logics of religious practices, it often fails to fully address religion's entanglements with sociopolitical forces. In *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing* (1994), for instance, Csordas argues that charismatic healing works because it appeals to the embodied sense of self, which encompasses both self-awareness and "preobjective" sense of being (Ibid. 277). His ethnography carefully unpacks such "preobjective" healing processes through a thick description of bodily gestures. Since "(…) one of the essential features of embodied existence is its alterity," Csordas suggests that the phenomenological sources of divine healing may well be located in our body, which is not delimited by the purview of self-consciousness (Ibid. 281). The study, however, reveals surprisingly little about who his subjects are as charismatic Catholics in the 20-century United States. Throughout the book, there is little mention – let alone analysis – of how their ethnic, gender, and class backgrounds inform their religious identities and practices.

In fact, many influential studies of Christianity – particularly in psychological anthropology – tend to treat socio-historical dimensions of religious movements in a muted fashion. Maya Mayblin recently pointed this out in her review Tanya Luhrmann's of *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God* (2012). The book provides a compelling account of how "God becomes real for people" through prayer. Prayer is a cognitive as well as sensorial engagement with one's mind, involving both perception and interpretation. By learning how to attend to one's thoughts, emotions, and memories, believers learn to attribute God's agency to certain

phenomena. For experienced prayer practitioners, "God is real because he produces real effects" (Ibid. 225). Mayblin fully acknowledges the rigor of Luhrmann's study but also points out its potential weakness:

> Luhrmann's study of the mental-phenomenology of individual religious experience in this particular context is well supported. But does it tell us enough about Vineyard Christianity in the great sociological sense? One learns so little about who your [i.e. God's] worshippers out there in that Chicago neighborhood actually are. (…) the book reveals frustratingly little about the peculiarities of kinship, gender, politics, ethnicity, and class in this diverse urban context. (Mayblin 2013:383).

Both Csordas and Luhrmann provide nuanced and thorough answers to the questions they set out with, within the frameworks they make clear that will guide their analyses. At the same time, a predominant pattern in a given body of literature must be acknowledged. I suggest that the psycho-phenomenological approach is prone to ahistorical theorization that fails to fully contextualize its human subjects within their social particularities.

The sociopolitical framework, in contrast, is the most powerful precisely in the analysis of religion's interactions with such social particularities. In *The Color of Sound: Race, Religion, and Music in Brazil* (2013), for instance, John Burdick sets out to "unearth ethnoracial meanings" of Brazilian Pentecostalism. He focuses on black Pentecostal singers in three distinct genres of music: rappers, samba performers, and gospel singers. Each style, Burdick argues, encourages a certain set of identities, which in turn results in weaker or stronger black consciousness. For example, Pentecostal gospel singers emphasize the "racialized, essentialized black voice" and find black identity to be "a strong, sinewy priority" (Ibid. 26). He concludes that his approach is effective in "grasping the processes through which music generates, strengthens, and sometimes weakens ethnic identities" (Ibid.183). Given the strong presence of Afro-Brazilians in the

Pentecostal movements of the country, Burdick's focus on race is legitimate. His analyses, however, oftentimes paint religion as an epiphenomenon of underlying sociopolitical agendas – that is, fortification of black identity – and offer little about the irreducible logics of religious practices.

The literature on the explosion of Pentecostalism in Latin America is dominated by a similar functionalist tone, insofar as it tends to stress this-worldly motives and effects of religion. Thus numerous scholars have argued that Pentecostalism provides a solution to problem drinking, conjugal conflict, street violence, and poverty. Elizabeth Brusco famously argued that Pentecostalism helps women to "domesticate men," in that it redirects the financial resources *machista* men used to spend on street activities to the family and household. She characterizes the religious movement as "a form of female collective action" and "an intensely pragmatic movement aimed at reforming those aspects of society which most affect [women's] lives" (Brusco 1995:146, 222). In *Coping with Poverty* (1994), Cecilia Mariz similarly observed that conversion is a "cultural strategy" for the poor to improve their lives (Ibid.121).

The overwhelming inclination of social scientists to analyze religion as a facilitator of sociopolitical claims and gains, however, has increasingly come under question. David Smilde, for instance, observed that discussing conversion solely in terms of its social benefits implicitly reinforces the view that people can will belief should it prove beneficial. Challenging this tacit assumption, Smilde asks: "Can people really *decide* to believe in a religion because it is in their interest to do so" (2007:7 original italics)? In a similar vein, Ruth Marshall – a scholar of Nigerian Pentecostalism – advocates for a framework that "(…) takes religion seriously" (2009:3). In contrast to

what she calls the "culturalist" bias of the social scientific literature, her work "(…) attempts to restore intelligibility to religion in its irreducibility, to make sense of the inherent rationality of its disciplines and practices, over and above its social, cultural, or political functions" (Marshall 2009:3). Importantly, the sociopolitical framework typically does not accommodate the experiential possibility of alterity within its epistemological horizon. As Susan Harding keenly observed, the social scientific drive to explain born-again Christianity in terms of its social benefits and effects may be based on this intellectualist bias – "nobody in their right mind would believe this stuff" (Harding 2000:36).

In this dissertation, I will synthesize the two approaches to devise an analytical framework that takes into account both the psycho-phenomenological and the sociopolitical. I set this as my analytical goal because this project needs both perspectives. As aforementioned, return migration is an intensely political process that also involves intimate work of self-making on the part of its participants. An analysis of Pentecostal conversion among return migrants consequently needs to pay equal attention to the psychological and political dimensions of religious life. The synthesized *psycho-political* approach can better elucidate why Pentecostalism has flourished among people like Nikkei Brazilian migrants, who inhabit some of the most fluid and contested boundaries – cultural, ethnic, and national – in this age of globalization. In doing so, I aim to contribute to the anthropology of Christianity in particular and the anthropology of religion in general.

The Outline

This introduction posits the broad questions, situates the ethnographic subjects within the larger social contexts, details the employed methods, and clarifies the scholarly contributions. Having set up the ethnographic and theoretical stage for further discussion, I will then spend the remainder of dissertation on the analysis of five distinct themes, one chapter for each: time, kinship, affect, self, and belief.

Chapter 1, "Return to the Present: 'Temporal Tandem' of Migration and Conversion," takes time as the main analytical vehicle. Temporality figures as a central theme in migrant converts' stories of migration to the supposed ancestral homeland as well as in their narratives of conversion in Japan. I will illustrate the ways in which conversion addresses common concerns regarding time among the migrant converts, such as "putting aside living for the future." The chapter concludes with an observation that Nikkeis often experience Pentecostal conversion as a "return to the present," where life is no longer perceived to be suspended.

Chapter 2, "Of Two Bloods: Kinship, Religion, and National Belonging," triangulates nation, ethnicity, and religion in the lives of transnational migrants and asks the following question: What role does religion play in addressing ambiguous ethnic identity and contested national belonging? I investigate the tension between two diverging models of kinship – one ethno-national and the other spiritual – by focusing on two different kinds of blood that affect the lives of Nikkei converts: "Japanese blood" and the blood of Jesus. I argue that they find ways to assert their "modern" identity by

drawing on Jesus' blood as a symbolic sign of spiritual kinship that transcends "traditional" ethno-national belonging.

Chapter 3, "Culture of Love: Family, Ethnicity, and Religion in Affective Terms" investigates how Pentecostal churches respond, implicitly or explicitly, to the common familial struggles experienced by transnational migrants. How do migrant converts imagine and cultivate the unit of family in relation to Christian ideals? After surveying the common family-related issues that Nikkei Brazilian migrants complain about, I will turn to two regular events at Missão Apoio Toyota to examine how the church addresses these familial problems. One is a course for married couples called *Casados para Sempre* (Married Forever). The other is a monthly service for women called *Culto para Mulheres* (Worship for Women). In both cases, love turns out to be the key affective theme that guides desired moral transformation. Interestingly, many Nikkei congregants emphasize the importance of Christian love (*amor*) in contrast to the culture of Japanese discipline (*educação*). I will argue that many migrant converts experience Pentecostal practices in both ethical and ethnic terms to incorporate it into their project of self-remaking.

Chapter 4, "Accompanied Self: Debating Christian Personhood in Multicultural Japan" then turns to the question of Pentecostal selfhood. While the notion of the individual figures prominently in the debate about Christian personhood in the anthropology of Christianity, the concept of relational selves has shaped much of the existing literature on Japanese self. I take this seeming divergence between "individual Christian" and "interdependent Japanese" as the point of departure to probe how Nikkei Brazilian Pentecostals understand and experience the self in the Japanese context. The discourses about the category of religion (*religião* or shūkyō) serve as an important

source of data to tease out cultural self-understandings about authentic self. I will argue that Pentecostal personhood does not fit within either the "individual" or the "relational." The concept of "accompanied self" will then be proposed to accurately capture the kind of self that many migrant converts strive to embody.

Chapter 5, "Layered Faith: Language, Meaning, and Belief in Pentecostal Practice" challenges the widespread view – both popular and academic – that regards Protestant Christianity first and foremost as a culture of sincere belief. By primarily drawing on the rituals of baptism, I will argue that the purview of charismatic faith goes far beyond the cognized acceptance of explicit doctrines to include radical sociality and embodied knowledge. Charismatic faith, in other words, is layered. It is this versatility of faith that makes it possible for people from incredibly diverse backgrounds to construct "one community." Some of my informants referred to a community they envision as "the third culture" – a "culture of God" that at once combines and transcends Japanese and Brazilian identities.

Identities and Selves

This dissertation, in the broadest sense, is about the process of self-making among transnational migrants. The best place to end this introductory chapter therefore seems to be a reflection on the self, as well as how I intend to use related key terms.

While identity and the self are often used interchangeably in both popular and academic writings, I see important distinctions between the two terms. In this dissertation, identity signifies self-representation, or "the individual's mental representation of his own person" (Spiro 1993:109). I frame identity as a result of patterned act of identifying

oneself with symbolic representations about one's place in the world. It follows that identity is a process (despite its appearance as an entity) that consists in reification rather than inherence. As Stuart Hall states in "The Question of Cultural Identity," "(…) in fact, national identities are not things we are born with, but are formed and transformed within and in relation to *representation* (Hall 1996:612 original italic). Cultural representation is based on discourse; discourse is typically founded on language; and language specifies certain aspects of reality to bring them into the contours of self-awareness (Donald 2001:294). As a process dependent on representation, discourse, and language, identity is a reflective awareness of one's positionality in the world.

The existing literature on transnationalism prioritizes the analytical focus on identity – ethnic, national, racial, class, gender, and so forth. Human experience, however, is much more than a mishmash of such discursive representations because subjectivity is richer than a sum of subject positions. This point became increasingly important to me over the course of this project, during which more than a handful of academic colleagues casually suggested to me that what my informants are trying to achieve through Pentecostal practices is all about identity: "It sounds like they are asserting their Brazilian identity by converting to this Latin American form of faith," "It may be beneficial to present themselves as Christian to the Japanese because it signals moral superiority," and so on. Such observations are indeed correct, as I have already indicated in this introduction, because my ethnographic subjects – like any one of us – reify certain parts their selves to think about and negotiate their place in the world. Identity, however, is only half the story of self-making, especially for people like my informants who value immersive sensorial practices. When they speak in tongues, for instance, are they being

Brazilian or Christian? Or are they actually defying the structure of ordinary language that sustains such discursive labels? On many occasions, they have indicated to me that deconstruction of identity – no matter how fleeting – is just as much a priority in their practices as creation and fortification of identity.

This is why I insist that I write about the self, which I take to encompass identity. The self is a synthesis of "psychological, biological, and cultural, and both explicit and implicit" processes of our psyche (Quinn 2006:363), or "the totality of what an organism is physically, biologically, psychologically, socially, and culturally (LeDoux 2003:31). Identity, which requires explicit identification with discursive representation, is part of this larger "totality" called the self. One's sense of the self is usually implicit – that is, nonconscious – and rooted in our embodied existence in the world. The self is therefore much broader than reflective self-consciousness. As Bateson put it, "The total self-corrective unit which processes information, or, as I say, 'thinks' and 'acts' and 'decides,' is a system whose boundaries do not at all coincide with the boundaries either of the body or of what is popularly called the 'self' or 'consciousness'" (1972:445).

I am not asserting, however, that identity is too narrow a concept for *any* project. My point here is that, for the purpose of *this* project, the analytical sensitivity to both layers of the self – discursive and embodied – is necessary. And, as I will discuss further in Epilogue, this double vision for identity and the self will eventually circle back to the issue of politico-psychological approach that I aim to illustrate in the next five chapters. Keeping in mind the analytical, cultural, and historical issues outlined above, we now turn to concrete investigations of identities and selves among Nikkei Brazilian migrant converts in Japan.

TABLE 1: Ethnic and Generational Terminologies among Brazilians in Japan

Terminology	Meaning	Notes on Visa Type and Status
issei	first-generation Nikkei	Those who have revoked Japanese citizenship can apply for: • Visa for Spouses and Other Relatives of Japanese Citizens (nihonjin no haigūsha nado), for which foreign children of Japanese nationals qualify • Long-term resident visa (teijūsha)
nisei	second-generation Nikkei	• Visa for Spouses and Other Relatives of Japanese Citizens • Long-Term Resident Visa
sansei	third-generation Nikkei	• Long-Term Resident Visa
yonsei	fourth-generation Nikkei	Unless they are considered as dependents of those who hold the two visas mentioned above, there would be no preferential treatment for them in legal terms.
mestiço/mestiça	mixed, of mixed race, interracial	Since having one Japanese ancestor is enough to qualify for Long-Term Resident Visa, the number of self-identifying *mestiços* increases in *nisei, sansei,* and *yonsei* generations.
japonês/ japonesa	When contrasted with *mestiço*, it refers to those who are considered as "full-blooded" Japanese descendants with stereotypical East Asian phenotypic traits.	
brasileiro/brasileira	When contrasted with *japonês* or Nikkei, it refers to those who self-identify as non-Nikkei Brazilian, such as Brazilians of European descent, Afro-Brazilians, and *mestiço* Brazilians without Japanese ancestry.	Typically, they are allowed to enter Japan as spouses of those who hold the two visas mentioned above.

CHAPTER 1

Life Suspended, Life Renewed: "Temporal Tandem" of Migration and Conversion

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Opening: Life of a Migrant Convert

In colloquial English, migration tends to elicit metaphors of spatial movement (e.g. flow, influx, passage) whereas conversion typically conjures up images of psychological transformation and temporal renewal (e.g. born-again, revival). But when migrants convert, how can we interpret the two phenomena in relation to each other?

Marcelo is one of such migrant converts whom I met during my fieldwork at the Missão Apoio Pentecostal church in Toyota.[10] He was a cheerful, talkative, and humorous man. One day, I visited his home not far away from Toyota station. As soon as we sat down, he started relating in earnest the stories of his life. He is a *sansei*, or a third-generation Nikkei. He is from a rural part of the state of São Paulo where many Japanese descendants live. He vaguely remembers his Japanese grandmother, who passed away when he was seven. When I asked him what his experience was like when he first arrived in Japan, he responded with the following story:

> So I came in 1990 by myself and arrived in Narita. This guy from my temporary staffing agency[11] was waiting for me at the airport, and he put me in a van and started driving to the company's dorm. I was looking out from the windows, and said, "What is this?" He was like, "What do you mean?" I said, "Where are all the modern buildings with bright colourful neon signs? Where are all the cars and people in good clothes?" [laughs] Because, you see, all I saw from the van was just vegetable fields and rice paddies and, worse yet, I smelt an odour of (…) some kind of livestock. I was like, "What's going on? Japan is supposed to be a

[10] All the names that appear in the dissertation are pseudonyms, with the exception of public leaders such as Missão Apoio's lead pastor Cid Carneiro.

[11] Most Brazilian migrants paid staffing agencies (*empreiteira*) for arranging their trip and visa to Japan, the cost of which they were obligated to pay back.

> country of the First World (*país do Primeiro Mundo*)." Big cities, high technology… You know. Then the guy laughed and said I had to go to Tokyo to see those things. It was a huge shock. In Brazil, we believe that the whole Japan is like that, like Tokyo.

Later in our conversation, we moved to the topic of his faith:

> Here in Japan, we work so much. In my case, it was normal to have three, even four hours of extra working hours. Sometimes I'd work from seven in the morning until ten at night. So life turns into a routine of just going back and forth between work and home – factory, home, factory, home… We want to work a lot because we want the money, you know, many want to go back to Brazil. But we have to work as well, sometimes you can't really say no to your boss. So I spent many years just going about my life like that. And you never have time. You don't have time to stop and really think, really feel. I had this emptiness in my heart, you know, but I never really paid attention.

He then described how he initially found the repeated invitation from his Brazilian Pentecostal colleagues for church gatherings annoying because he used to think "*crentes* (born-again believers) are all fanatics." Then one day, his wife was diagnosed with breast cancer:

> That was… hard. Very. I became desperate. I went to a church gathering at my friend's home, I and my wife. Fortunately her surgery went well and she got better. Then she said she didn't want to go any more, but I kept on going. Soon I started going to church, too. Something filled the emptiness in my heart. Then I went to Encounter with God (a three-day prayer camp)… Oh! That was great. I felt that I really had the time just for myself and God, to really think about my life, my purpose, His plan for me, you know. So after that, I decided to convert. I found Jesus, finally.

Although the excerpts describe two different phenomena, migration and conversion, they share one common thread: time. Speaking about his arrival in Japan, Marcelo reveals images of Japan widely shared in Brazil: metropolitan, advanced, forward, modern, and First World. His "huge shock" is more temporal than cultural for it

was not his customs that were challenged but the sense of time he had long projected onto Japan. In a sense, he had a "time shock."

Then, as he narrates the story of his conversion, "having no time" becomes a central theme. He felt suffocated because he was always busy, occupied, and cramped. Haunted by work and chores without a break, he was merely going through the motions. The catharsis of his conversion narrative comes when he had the deep experience of having "the time just for myself and God." The transformation, then, primarily involves his sense of time. Before conversion, he could not dwell in the moment; after conversion, he can now have time for himself by dwelling on God. Before, he was always out of time; now he has it in the presence of God.

While Marcelo's story may appear idiosyncratic, such stories are in fact common among Brazilian born-again Christians in Japan. Both migration and conversion are often mapped onto temporal scales in ways that show how inextricable the two phenomena are for such converts. In witnessing a concomitant occurrence of migration and conversion, how can we synthesize its spatial, temporal, and psychological implications for anthropological theory? Nikkeis in Japan provide a particularly fertile socio-historical context in which this question can be explored. Having migrated to the country their Japanese ancestors left behind, they grapple with images of the past, the present, and the future in complex ways.

Mobility, Christianity, and Temporality

This chapter starts with a premise that both migration and conversion, far from being solely spatial or psychological, are temporal projects that generatively inform human experience. I therefore take time and temporality as the primary analytical vehicle to

articulate how migration and conversion become interrelated in the experiences of migrant converts. As Nancy Munn observes, "[i]n a lived world, spatial and temporal dimensions cannot be disentangled, and the two commingle in various ways" (1992:94).

Frances Pine recently argued that migration is "a project of hope and is geared toward the future, toward building a new house, investing in more land or other property, providing dowries for daughters, and generally building the prestige and the future of the house" (2014:100). Such a nuanced analytical attention to the relationship between mobility and temporality is on the rise (Besnier 2011, Gabaccia 2015, Mar 2005). It has, however, been relatively absent from the study of the form of migration most pertinent to the case at hand, which is return migration. Potter & Phillips (2009), for instance, highlight the "in-between" positionality of second-generation returnees from the UK to Barbados. They depict young returnees as caught up in "mid-air" between two contradictory cultural norms regarding racial relations and gender dynamics. Granted, many return migrants do assert the ambiguity of their situation in spatial terms. Yet the spatial approach alone cannot duly illuminate the temporal dimension that saturates the experience of migration. I do not mean to indicate here that the scholarship on return has not paid any attention to temporality; it certainly has (Constable 1999, Markowitz and Stefansson 2004, Xiang, Yeoh, and Toyota 2013). Time, however, remains undertheorized compared to other fields, such as the study of Christianity.

Temporal themes such as continuity and rupture have been among "the key topics that have marked work in the anthropology of Christianity from its inception" (Robbins 2014:167, see also Bialecki, Haynes, and Robbins 2008, Jenkins 2012, Lampe 2010, Robbins 2007b). This is in some part due to the essential importance of conversion in

Christian cultures, especially among its charismatic branches such as Pentecostalism. While conversion is usually not a cathartic event but a painstaking process, it is still accentuated as the beginning of a future-oriented project discontinuous from the past among many Christian groups (Bielo 2012, Besnier 2011, Guyer 2007, Meyer 1998, Robbins 2004, Stromberg 1993).

In this chapter, I will elaborate on how migration and conversion hinge upon a set of heterogeneous temporalities and yet become interlocked through a process I call "temporal tandem" – which is inspired by van Dijk's work on time, religion, and diaspora (2001). He focuses on the different modalities of time and modes of subjectivity construction manifest in Pentecostal practices in two contexts: one in the migrants' home country of Ghana and the other in the host Dutch society. In Ghana, leaders at prayer camps emphasize the "breaking" with kinship ties and tradition as well as the move toward individuality by focusing on participants' past sins and the long-term future. In diaspora, in contrast, scrutinizing the past for potential sins becomes taboo so as not to expose the vulnerability of some migrants with painful memories (e.g. illegal status, prostitution, etc.). Instead, leaders now speak about the present and the future. In this foreign context, fostering of "dividuality" through social relations at church becomes the key to success.

Relevant here is the relationship between conversion and migration:

> Hence, prayer camps introduce the person to transnational and transcultural relations as an emergent stranger; as somebody detached from the bonds with the family, (…) and therefore unconstrained in the attempts to 'make it to the West', to 'get the papers' and to become prosperous. (…) The prayer camps' discourse promotes a sense of strangerhood that starts at home and serves as a preparation and incubation to what they might expect when they travel to the West (van Dijk 2001:228).

I expand van Dijk's insight beyond the experience of "strangerhood." In transnational mobility, conversion and migration often become mutually reinforcing as seemingly disparate temporal modalities commingle to shape migrants' subjectivities in generative ways. In this sense, migrant converts experience what can be termed the "temporal tandem," which refers to the fundamental interworking of spatial movement and spiritual development through temporality. By formulating the concept of "temporal tandem," I respond to the growing need to include transnational migrants in the anthropological study of Christianity (Robbins 2010a:173).

Nikkeis, The "Modern" Minority in Brazil

In the discussion of Nikkei identities in Brazil, of paramount importance are the popular images of the Japanese nation in the country. Japan, a rare non-Western economic power since the late nineteenth century, often impressed Brazilian elites who were striving to modernize their nation but had yet to succeed. Social discourses in Brazil such as advertisements and accounts by elites have often emphasized Japan's positive attributes such as its First-World status, modernity, high technology, and discipline. Within this real and imagined geography of progress, the Japanese diaspora within Brazil's own territory – specifically Nikkeis in São Paulo – took on a powerful symbolic meaning. They were "Brazilians of future" (Lesser 2007:xxvi). Nikkeis were thus a "modern" minority, a symbol of the country's promised progress. Their actual upward mobility and economic success in Brazil fuelled the public imagination. At the same time, Nikkeis in Brazil were also a marginalized minority because of their stereotyped irrationality, "hyper-traditional" character, and presumed inability to assimilate (Adachi 2004). On either side of this good

Japanese/bad Japanese dichotomy, the Brazilian majority presupposed a primordial bond between Nikkeis and Japan.

It is clear that presumed blood ties alone did not make the Japanese nation "home" for the Japanese diasporic population in Brazil. Rather, Japan was turned into the home for Nikkeis because they did not belong to "the present" in Brazil. They instead represented both the future (i.e. hyper-modernity) and the past (i.e. hyper-tradition) of Brazil, and Japan was their home "away" – both spatially and temporally. The discursive formation of Nikkei identities in Brazil, especially as a "hyper-modern" minority, prepared a stage for the profound shock of "homecoming" in the 1990s and 2000s. It is in this context that Marcelo arrived in Narita to experience a "time shock." What greeted him was definitely not a futuristic metropolis he and many others had imagined.

Twice a Minority

While migration studies scholars characterize the movement of diasporic population to their "home" country as "return migration," few actual Nikkei migrants saw their move to Japan as a return (Linger 2003, Sasaki 2013). With no exception, all of my Nikkei Brazilian interlocutors narrated the beginning of their life in Japan as an arrival by saying "*cheguei* (I arrived)" or "*vim* (I came)." Marcelo's story of his arrival in Narita also attests the inadequacy of the term "return." His first impression of Japan betrayed not the pristine and nostalgic images he had held toward the land of his ancestors but the modern and forward pictures of the First-World nation where he thought he would belong. His "huge shock" was therefore not prompted by failed "return" to the ancestral homeland;

instead, he was shaken by the realization of a failure to arrive at the future that Japan and his ethnicity had embodied.

The experiences of Nikkei Brazilians in Japan illuminate the plasticity of return. A physical trip to the location where one's ancestors grew up often does not automatically constitute a return in one's mind. In other words, return is not a natural event but instead an achievement of convincing self-transformation, which builds the old bond to "homeland" anew (Markowitz and Stefansson 2004). For the majority of Nikkei Brazilians, return was neither achieved nor even intended. Meanwhile, their ethnic self-image underwent a drastic shift.

Now perceived as unskilled, temporary, and migrant laborers, which in most cases they actually are, Nikkei Brazilians' social status suffered great humiliation (cf. Robbins 2004). Nathan, a 36-year old Nikkei Brazilian man, describes "the principal difference" between Brazil and Japan in the following way:

> In Brazil, Japanese-Brazilians are treated mostly in relation to the Japanese nation – because we look alike, you know. It's a great pride of the Japanese race. (…) Not all are successful, but the majority of descendants there are very educated and hard-working. So they ended up creating a culture and an aura around descendants (…).
>
> This is not the case here in Japan. Those people who were none of these things all came here! [bursts out in laughter with his Brazilian friend] Here it is the opposite. Who is polite, educated, civilized and industrious here? It's the opposite! We commit petty crimes, get into fights all the time, and are lazy. People who are violent, and steal. This is the principal difference that I see. (…) Here, suddenly your culture is lower. The ideals, society, life, and future that shaped you and trained you, they all fail.

Nathan's words echo a predominant sense of "class downgrade" that permeates the migrant communities. Some talk about it bitterly with a frown, others calmly with a shrug, and those like Nathan with a resilient laughter. He is in no way the only one who sees their social status in Japan as suffering and humiliating, compared with the positive

qualities they (used to) embody in Brazil. Luana, a 49-year-old Nikkei who has been living in Japan for 23 years, similarly observed, "In Brazil, we are such positive people – intelligent, polite, diligent. They say, 'Want to get into USP (University of São Paulo)? Kill a Japanese and you have a spot!' [laughs] Here, it's nothing like that."

The level of formal education among migrant converts at Missão Apoio Toyota is actually not as high as the stereotypical image of "professional" Nikkeis in Brazil. My survey data show that roughly 90% of respondents had the equivalent of a high school diploma or less. Only 10% reported to have progressed to college or beyond (including those who did not complete it).[12] While the Brazil census in 2010 reports that those with college degree make up 11.27% of the general population aged 25 or above, the number is much higher among Nikkei Brazilians in urban São Paulo. According to a study by Datafolha, the majority (56%) of its Nikkei subjects had college-level degrees (*nível superior*), which makes them the group with "the most educated profile in the city of São Paulo, where 15% have obtained college-level education" (Datafolha 2008).[13] Despite such a large discrepancy between the stereotypical images and the results of my survey data, most migrants at Missão Apoio Toyota still felt that migration had spoiled the protective "aura" of ethnic prestige.

Brazilian youth born and raised in Japan also made similar comments, despite the fact that they had never lived in Brazil. One day, I was walking back to my apartment building with a group of Brazilian adolescents who lived in Homi Danchi after teaching a

[12] 17 out of 160 respondents who answered this item.
[13] Furthermore, according to a study conducted by IBGE in 1989, the ratio of those who entered college-level education (without necessarily completing it) was 15.9 % among those who self-identified as Asian (*amarelo*) or were without declaration (*sem declaração*) while the average was 4.3% among the general Brazilian population. In the Southeast region, where the majority of Nikkeis live, the numbers were 17.2% versus 7.2%, respectively (Setoguchi 2008:1162)

Japanese class at Torcida, a local NGO organization. At one point, I noticed that Fernando and Yoshiki – two 15-year old boys – were talking about Brazil. "It's a country of thieves and drug dealers," Fernando said. Yoshiki, nodding with juvenile giggles, responded, "That's right man, that's true." I asked how they knew these things and offered a modest counter-perspective: "You know Brazil is going to host the World Cup this year. It can be a really cool place." They looked at me and laughed in unison. "Ah sensei (teacher), but that's what they say! Brazil is a country of hooligans and burglars." "Who are *they*?" "The people (*as pessoas*). People around me. Haven't you watched the TV, sensei? Gangs with guns shooting at the police, guys with covered faces destroying shops on the street? That's my country!" As they kept on laughing, I thought that they had most likely seen the media images from the military police's "pacification" of *favelas* and a fragment of participants in the 2013 mass public demonstrations that resorted to violent vandalism. Since I did not ask what kind of television programs their families watched at home, it is unclear whether they received these images from Japanese media or Brazilian networks available in Japan (or both).[14] Either way, such negative representations affect how Japan-born Brazilian youth come to envision the "homeland" they have never seen with their own eyes.

The sense of "downgrade" from a modern model minority to a backward immoral minority is thus exacerbated by negative media images of Brazil. As Nathan put it, their culture suddenly becomes "lower" in Japan. This perceived demotion of one's own culture in turn affects ethnic self-images.

[14] Portuguese-speaking residents in Japan today can watch the TV programs of major networks in Brazil such as Globo and Rede Recorde through the Internet or satellite transmission.

While many simply lament or shrug off this demeaning transition, some Brazilian migrants make conscious effort to rebuild their social reputation in Japan. Fumio Shimamura is one of such people, who appeared on the December 2013 issue of *Alternativa*, a free magazine in Portuguese read widely among Brazilians in Japan. In an article entitled "I Want to Help Brazilians Have a Decent Life," Shimamura expressed his sense of public duty as the only Brazilian public accountant certified to practice in Japan: "I hope that one day the reputation of Nikkei Brazilians will be equal to that which the Japanese(-Brazilians)[15] had in Brazil" (Ezaki 2013). Ironically, Shimamura's aspiration still hinges upon the tacit consensus that the social status of Nikkei Brazilians in Japan is in no way comparable to that of Nikkeis in Brazil.

Return as a Place of Hope: Future in Brazil

In Portuguese, the migration of Nikkei Brazilians to Japan is often called "*movimento dekassegui* (movement of temporary workers)." True to the term, many migrants arrived in Japan with the intention of returning to Brazil in a few years after saving as much money as possible (Kawamura 1999). Comfort was often postponed in the name of procuring a better middle-class future for their return to Brazil. What they initially tolerated as temporary discomfort, however, quickly turned into a perpetual state, as "several years" became five, ten, and even twenty. Some migrants have returned to Brazil to achieve the goals they set out for, never returning to Japan again. But those who continue to live in Japan are oftentimes still under the spell of perpetual temporariness. Some migrants who became critical of this psychological tendency call it an "illusion of

[15] *Os japoneses* refer to both Japanese nationals in Japan and Japanese descendants in Brazil in colloquial Portuguese; the two are often considered interchangeable (Lesser 2007:45).

return (*ilusão de voltar*)." André, who successfully landed a job as an interpreter with his hard-learned Japanese, told me, "They'd better stop it. It's an illusion. They say they will return next year, but they never do. Some have lived here for ten years and don't know a single word of Japanese."

The illusion of return is an ingenious way to characterize how migrants deal with the perpetual temporariness of life. It captures the power the idea of return exerts in their minds not as a realistic and concrete action to be carried out but as a fantastic and faraway plan to be fantasized about. Artur, for example, talked about return in the following way:

> I am from Rio, you know Rio? Lots of beaches, beautiful. See that? [He turns on his iPhone to show photos of beautiful turquoise-blue ocean] My house is just a few kilometres away from this place. [His 13-year old son peeks in, smiles, and says he wants to live there] I know, son. What? No, he was born and raised here in Toyota. I will return, you know, it's just that it's a beautiful place with no jobs. So I will save money and return.

For many migrants, return becomes not an act one actually plans for but a place in mind where future desires can be safely stored. In a similar vein, Brettel observes the ideological importance of "*emigrar para voltar* (emigrate to return)" in the history of Portuguese migration. Even when physical return does not materialize, this mind-set proves psychologically protective since "… this maintenance of an intention to return alongside the postponement of actual return is a way of dealing with the insecure environment abroad, where the position of the migrant is very much at the mercy of fluctuations in the international economic system" (2003:71).

Other researchers of transatlantic migration similarly wrote about the significance of return. In his study on the migration networks between Portugal and Argentina, Borges (2009) discusses the importance of social images attached to return migrants in Portugal

in the late 19th and early 20th century. Since Brazil was the most popular destination until the mid-20th century, *brasileiro* (a Brazilian) became a discursive archetype of a native-born Portuguese who emigrates to Brazil, makes it rich, and then returns to Portugal to display his wealth. Even those from the southern region of Portugal who tended to migrate to Argentina often spoke about *brasileiro* because it "became synonymous with return migrants regardless of their destination" (Ibid. 113). Many Portuguese dreamt about becoming *brasileiro* even at the same time as mocking it through caricatures and satires. Relatedly, Schneider (2000) situates Italian-Argentinians' yearning for return within the historical context he calls "inversion of roles." When Italians migrated to Buenos Aires before 1950s, Italy meant poverty and backwardness whereas "America" represented progress, wealth, and cosmopolitan status. Yet, over time, Argentina failed to deliver the glory of modern progress to such migrants and their descendants while Italy successfully industrialized and climbed up to its current First-World status. Italian-Argentinians' desire for their ancestral homeland, then, is a bitter craving for the promised future realized elsewhere – ironically, in the land their ancestors left behind.

As these studies show, return often provides a place of hope (cf. Miyazaki 2004). In the case of many Brazilian migrants in Japan, the future to return to now lies in Brazil.

Transpacific Gypsies

Even after a decade, two decades, and in many cases acquiring permanent resident visas in Japan, many Brazilian migrants still talk about returning to Brazil "soon." They would then admit that they had been living in Japan for over a decade or that this was their third

time to be working in Japan, usually smiling with a hint of embarrassment. Since the migrant population peaked at 313,000 in 2008 (Higuchi 2010), fewer and fewer new migrants have been entering this transpacific migratory circuit. I met a number of families during my fieldwork who had just arrived from Brazil, but only a handful were "new faces" or those who had never lived in Japan before.

Many migrants are critical of repeated migration that has become rather common among Brazilians in Japan. For instance, Helio – a 23-year old Nikkei Brazilian man – once asked me: "So, have you found anything interesting about us yet?" It was after a Sunday evening mass in Portuguese at a Catholic church in a neighbouring city of Toyota and he knew that I was a researcher. "Well, let me think…" "Have you noticed," Helio interrupted me, "that too many of us go back and forth between Brazil and Japan, never becoming firm in our decision to stay in either country? It is a problem." He shook his head. "This is not good." At that moment, the father arrived and he excused himself to go into the confessional.

Researchers of transnationalism have long theorized the ways in which the lives of migrants and those who are related to them are not contained within the borders of nation-states. Vertovec, for instance, uses the term "bifocality" devised by Rouse (1992) to capture the state of transnational life that is simultaneously "here" and "there" (Vertovec 2007:153, see also Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2007, for other discussions of 'bifocal,' see Besnier 2011:12). While bifocal mode of being can be celebrated as something liberating, most Brazilians in Japan view their state in a more critical light. Repeated migration is commonplace yet often frowned upon because it signifies the inability to establish a stable middle-class life in either country. In other words, the

number of crossings between the two nations equals the number of failures to arrive at a better future, which was the purpose of migration in the first place. One elderly Nikkei Brazilian man in his fifties summed up this frustration succinctly in the following way:

> Nikkeis, it looks like they have a country but they virtually don't. When in Brazil, they are Japanese. When in Japan, they are Brazilian. So we do but it's like we don't have any country. We move around too much, too, never settling down, never knowing how to establish ourselves. We are like gypsies (*ciganos*) [laughs].

Living with a "Japanese Mask"

One phenomenon that attests the irony of migrants' "temporary" life in Japan is the prevalence of permanent resident visas among the migrant communities. In fact, the majority of Brazilian nationals who reside in Japan today hold permanent resident visas instead of long-term resident visas. The trend toward the permanent resident visa, however, cannot be taken at its face value to signify that migrants are "settling down" in Japan. Granted, a small minority of Brazilians express strong desire to stay and demonstrate such intention by sending their children to Japanese school, saving for children's higher education in Japan, and – for the lucky few – buying a house. For the majority of Brazilians in Homi Danchi, however, the permanent resident visa is not a token of permanent life in Japan but another option to enhance their transnational mobility (cf. Ong 1999). In fact, one can argue that migrants can leave Japan more easily with the visa since the acquisition of re-entry permit is not necessary for permanent resident visa holders. I have met a handful of Brazilians who explained their decision (or plan) to come back to Japan in terms of the maintenance of permanent resident visa. Hiroshi, who left Toyota to return to Brazil during my fieldwork, told me, "I'll definitely come back to visit in seven years to renew my permanent resident visa, I don't want to

lose that." For many, the visa is not symbolic but rather instrumental, and acquiring one does not discourage them from discussing and desiring the return to Brazil.

If not the permanent resident visa, however, there is one procedure that many migrants still resist as symbolically troubling instead of pursuing it as a pragmatic step to enhanced convenience: naturalization. The July 2014 issue of *Vitrine* – a popular Portuguese magazine among Brazilian migrants – had a special article on this topic, urging the readers to look at it as a pragmatic option like the permanent resident visa: "(…) the possibility of becoming a native citizen of the country where one lives, with the same obligations and rights as anyone else, is worth the effort, it's a conquest of freedom from the condition of eternal foreigner (*gaijin*)" (Vitrine 2014:14).[16] Although the article paints the procedure as something necessary and desirable to achieve an equal status in Japan, the cover image captures precisely why many still find it uncomfortable and troubling. It shows an image is of a man – presumably Nikkei Brazilian – putting on a mask of Japanese face. His original face is covered and hidden by the clean and yet impassive mask, thus invoking a sense of inauthentic identity. Alternatively, the cover image can also be read as a Nikkei man who is about to reveal his underlying robot-like "Japanese" face by shedding his "Brazilian" layer. In Brazil, Japanese (in Japan) are often stereotyped as rigid, impersonal, and even robotic. While Nikkeis are similarly perceived to be more serious than Brazilians, the common understanding today is that Nikkeis in Brazil have successfully combined ideal qualities of both Japanese and Brazilians, thus becoming at once "hardworking" and "creative." The latter reading, then, can be more unsettling to Nikkeis since it visually suggests that the underlying robotic

[16] "*Mas a possibilidade de se tornar um cidadão nato do país em que reside, com os mesmos deveres e direitos que qualquer outro, vale o esforço, é a conquista da liberdade da condição eterno gaijin* (…)."

"Japanese" core has always been underneath the "Nikkei/Brazilian" face plate (Table 2). This cover image is a visual display of common view on what "being Japanese" in Japan entails: being completely like the "cold," "mechanical," and "robotic" Japanese majority, even if that involves acting phony (*falso*) – a quality many Brazilians loathe (and often attribute to the Japanese in Japan).

The irony, of course, is that non-*mestiço* Nikkeis do resemble in appearance the face on the mask. The migrants know, however, that looking Japanese oftentimes has little to do with being Japanese. Historically, Japan has long defined national identity and belonging strictly within the narrow convergence of Japanese blood, language, and culture (Befu 1993, 2001, Robertson 2002). Its nationality law is based on jus sanguinis, which means immigration does not constitute a legitimate path to national belonging. Even after a significant amount of criticism against its "illusion of ethnic homogeneity" (Ryang and Lie 2009, Weiner 1997b), it is still virtually impossible to effectively evoke the "unity through diversity" rhetoric in Japanese mainstream discourses. This is in stark contrast with Brazil, where the history of immigration and racial mixture possess even a mythic value in the narrative of nation building (Dávila 2010, cf. Freyre 1964 [1933]).

In Japan, then, migrant continues to be "the M-word" today. Politicians time and again soothe the public that they would do everything in their power to battle the shrinking and aging population before "opening the door to even more foreigners" (Burgess 2014). To Nikkei Brazilians, such a social climate is a constant reminder that they can never be authentically Japanese – despite their Japanese "blood" – or that they

Table 2: Naturalization: Everything You Need to Know

(Cover of *Vitrine*, Volume August 100, 2014, Tokyo, Japan)

can never be authentic and Japanese at the same time. To be sure, the great majority of Brazilians whom I met are emphatic that they are thoroughly Brazilian – they do not want to become Japanese just to fit in. Meanwhile, my observation is that one powerful reason why many Brazilians do not envision a future in Japan is because Japan does not offer a future for them. Can migrants aspire to build a better future in a country that does not provide a map for future belonging without nullifying the diversity such migrants inevitably bring in? The answer, for now, seems to be no.

"We Are in Japan but We Don't Live Here"

While migrants wait uncertainly to return to a better future in Brazil, the life in Japan becomes suspended for many. The prevalence of this sense of suspension became clearer to me every time someone said, often fleetingly, "I don't live here. I came here to work (*Não estou aqui para morar, vim para trabalhar só*)." The felt divide between *morar* and *trabalhar* was brought home in an unexpected way in the responses to the demographic survey at the church. Among some 35 items, there was the following question: "When did you first come to Japan in order to work and/or live here? [___ years ago, or in the year ___]." It asked when the respondent came to Japan, excluding brief trips and visits. As I went through the responses, however, I realized that many people crossed out "live" and circled "work" – instead of or in addition to answering the year of their first arrival. I had included the phrase "or to live" with younger Brazilians in mind, who were too little to work when they were first brought to Japan. But the juxtaposition of "work" and "live" invited an unexpected input from older migrants. The majority of the people who circled

"work" – about 10% of all respondents[17] – were men who arrived in Japan in their early adulthood. That they were compelled to cross out "live," even when that was not the question, shows how divisive the line between life and work can be in the minds of some migrants.

Nathan, who has lived in Toyota for over 20 years, elaborated eloquently on what I call the suspension of life:

> People went back to Brazil, (…) things went wrong there and they ended up returning here. For one family, looking at each individual family, this has happened at least once. Sometimes twice. Even three times. You come, go, come, go, and then come... At a certain moment, one realizes, "Oh my God, I am losing years of my life – because I am depriving myself of living, planning a future that doesn't happen. Is it worth putting aside living (*deixar de viver*)?"

When I inquired about what exactly he meant by "*deixar de viver*," he responded, "There exists a difference between living (*viver*) and surviving (*sobreviver*)." He continued:

> So when a person lives poorly [i.e. survives], it cannot be considered that he has lived. He simply hasn't lived. That doesn't exist, that's like a negative number because it was bad. A good experience is positive. (…) For me, living is much more than you being there just doing what others want from you. (…)
>
> Or, [*deixar de viver* means] that this person doesn't buy anything because he needs to save money to live the future. A person doesn't go to any place because this would be a waste of money, and he cannot do this if he wants to save money to live the future one day. A person cannot dress well. Because this would waste the money that – he is thinking – should be spent in the future.
> (Author) And does this future oftentimes exist in Brazil?
> (Nathan) That's what they plan for themselves.

Other than "to put aside living," *deixar de viver* more literally means "stop living" or "quit living." Nathan's narrative fleshes out how life can actually stop in the lived experiences of migrants as they wait and prepare uncertainly for the future – the future which, Nathan observes, often "does not happen."

[17] 10.7% (20 out of 186 valid responses).

In this context of perpetual temporariness that permeates the migrants' lives, many come to feel suspended between two futures: one in Japan and the other in Brazil. Upon initial migration, migrants saw how Japan turned out to be anything but the hyper-modern First-World nation that Nikkei ethnicity had symbolized in Brazil. Thus the migrants did not arrive at the future in Japan where many thought they would belong. Since then, the future for many migrants in turn has rested in Brazil, and many talk about returning there. Unlike the intention of return, however, the materialization of actual return – especially the return to the ideal future – is rare. Thus, both the future and the present often come to gain qualities of phantasm in migrants' lived experiences. While both tenses remain real as mental categories and scaffoldings for fantasy, they enact little experiential immediacy. This, in turn, leads to the ubiquitous symptom of temporal suffocation – "I don't have time. I work so much. But this is necessary for me to return one day." The claim that the present does not possess innate experiential immediacy may strike some readers as odd. As James & Mills point out, however, "[t]he present is of course a convention, a sort of symbolic fiction, in itself" (2006:2). I take fiction to be a synonym for malleable reality – not for fake construct – while acknowledging the need to be cautious with extreme experiential relativism (Gell 1992).

The question then is if and how migrants in this context start reconfiguring their temporal realities in ways that do not lead to temporal limbo; and the short answer is, they do. For example, an increasing number of Brazilians have been making a conscious decision to "stay (*permanecer*)" and "live (*morar*)" in Japan. They move toward their new vision of future by paying mortgages, making sustained efforts to learn Japanese, and by consciously sending their offspring to Japanese schools instead of Brazilian ones.

I must add, however, that those who can set up long-term future-oriented plans still form an absolute minority among Brazilian migrants at large. The major obstacles are job insecurity, language barriers, and unfamiliarity with Japanese cultural conventions. Although many form casual friendships with their Japanese colleagues at work, such interactions typically do not enhance the sense of embeddedness in Japanese society. This is because those Japanese employees who find themselves in the vicinity of migrant workers likewise occupy precarious and marginal positions in the Japanese labour system (for neoliberalism in Japan, see Allison 2013).

It is quite feasible, therefore, that those migrants who find it difficult to envision the future – or to experience the present – in mainstream Japanese society may end up looking elsewhere. This is where the discussion of Pentecostalism becomes relevant and I now turn to the anthropology of Christianity.

Modern Again in Japan?

Anthropologists of Christianity have commonly analysed conversion in relation to the theme of modernity – or at least with implications for forward temporal movement. Peter van der Veer, for example, characterized the world-wide growth of Christianity as "conversion to modernity" (1995). Along a similar line, Meyer (1999) observed that Pentecostal converts among the Peki Ewe in Ghana embrace Christianity as the promising path to modernity, although conversion comes with an emotional and social price. They must cut themselves off from generations-old obligations to serve their ancestral and lineage gods. Ewe spirits continue to possess converts, and the church translates them as demons that must be exorcised in collective services. Meyer

summarizes, “Pentecostalism provides a bridge over which it is possible to move back and forth [between Christianity and Ewe religion] and thereby to thematise modernity’s ambivalence” (Ibid. 215). More recently, van de Kamp (2012b) analysed the ‘love therapy (*terapia do amor*)’ of Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (or IURD in Portuguese) in Mozambique as a practice aimed at cultivating modern personhood. The therapy has attracted many young women for it offers new ways to embody emotional intimacy and relational commitment. Following the global trend in many parts of the world, the younger generations tend to view love as a token of modern individuality (Hirsch and Wardlow 2006, Padilla et al. 2008). In this context, love becomes a way to cultivate a modern and moral identity connected with the transnational network of Pentecostalism. Love therapy thus provides young upwardly-mobile women with space, ideas, and practices to give meaning to their economic independence; it also helps them disentangle themselves from their kin and “tradition.”

Thus, the global growth of Pentecostalism may have been conducive to the spread of modern identity in various parts of the world (Freston 2001, Klaver and van de Kamp 2011, Mariz 2009, McGovern 2012, Rocha and Vásquez 2013, Scherz 2013). Modern sensibility can be characterized as “a sense that the passage of time should expectably be marked by progress and improvement vis-à-vis the past,” which appears “so ubiquitous today” (Knauft 2002:7). Is the interdependence of conversion and modernity also manifest among Nikkei converts in Japan, who used to represent hypermodernity in Brazil? My fieldwork data indeed suggest such implications. For instance, a number of churchgoers told me that marriage is one area of Japanese culture that must be “renovated.” One pastor told me:

> I heard that married couples here treat each other like air after years of marriage and they think it's normal. They even have a word for it – kamen hūhu (masked marriage). It's horrible. Marriage is an alliance of love that unites two individuals forever. Japanese couples don't even show love to each other! But younger generations are changing it now, and that's great.

Here, he differentiates between loveless traditional Japanese marriage and loving modern Christian relationship. Likewise, many Brazilian converts make critical comments about what they see as "the Japanese tradition," thereby implying that their ideas and practices are more modern, if not morally superior. In this vein, conversion to Pentecostalism can be read as a collective endeavor to restore and rebuild in Japan the modern social status they once had in Brazil. Such an interpretation also resonates well with Robbins' argument about the link between social humiliation and religious conversion (2004). In other words, the failure of progress as upward mobility – material or social – through their initial project of migration is being compensated for by spiritual advancement to "modern" religious sensibility through conversion. However, my fieldwork data point to yet another temporality at work in addition to the one toward modernity. That is, conversion as a return to the present.

No Time to Live

To elucidate this point, I return to the conversion narrative of Marcelo, which was introduced in the beginning. The first thing Marcelo said when prompted to recount how he converted was, "Here in Japan, we work so much." He then described how power dynamics in the factory, heavy workloads, and migrants' focus on economic gain contribute to the exhausting repetitiveness of life – a temporal modality comparable to what Thompson once characterized as "clock-time," or synchronic time instrumental to

the work-discipline of capitalism (Thompson 1967).[18] This monotony of life fuelled the sense of what Marcelo calls "emptiness in heart," which lasted for years since he did not have time to "pay attention" to it. His depiction of his pre-conversion life overlaps greatly with Nathan's observation about "stop living (*deixar de viver*)." That is, they "put aside living" so they could live the better future purportedly awaiting them in Brazil. Mind-numbing routine and suspension of life constituted the basic tone of Marcelo's reality before conversion.

Marcelo initially resisted his Pentecostal colleagues' invitations for church gatherings and his own desire to go as he used to believe that "all *crentes* (born-again believers) are fanatics." He then recounted his wife's cancer as the final push that enabled him to overcome initial reluctance. It is important to note here that the suffering from the illness is not the driving theme of his narrative; nor does the subsequent healing of the disease mark the climax of the story. In fact, he matter-of-factly admits that his wife simply stopped going to church gatherings soon after her recovery. The experience of the illness, then, is a one-time trigger rather than a long-running undercurrent of the story.

What runs through Marcelo's narrative from the beginning to the end is the numbing monotony of life, which causes him a vague sense of crisis: That he was not

[18] It is crucial to acknowledge the significant influence the neoliberal labor system exerts upon temporary migrant workers' psyche. For instance, Brazilian workers routinely lament "working so much" at the same time as characterizing themselves as "lazy." This may seem contradictory, but actually makes sense in this social context. Many do work long hours because they have to (because of their weak position at the workplace) or want to (because it is the only way to enhance income in the time-based wage labor system). Either way, long working hours is the result of their marginalized position in the labor market. This knowledge fuels a sense of resentment (quiet or vocal) among many migrant workers, which in turn leads to low morale: "I don't want to work. I'm so lazy." This system also incentivizes temporary workers to constantly look for other jobs that pay better per hour, even just by 1 yen. As a result, many end up hopping from one factory to another, generating a reputation that Brazilians are opportunistic, reluctant to endure at one place, and lazy. Obviously, all of these phenomena have more to do with labor condition than ethnicity per se. But many Japanese, and Brazilians themselves, conflate these economically driven processes with supposedly preexisting ethnic characteristics.

stopping to reflect on his life, that life is slipping away like sand between his fingers, and that by merely going through the motions every day, he was risking going through his whole life without experiencing anything. This theme of "no time to live" also provides the moment of catharsis, which happens during the prayer camp called Encounter with God. He stated, "I felt that I really had the time just for myself and God, to really think about my life, my purpose, His plan for me, you know." For Marcelo, his conversion was not propelled by some traumatic suffering such as illness, discrimination, or poverty, although he recounted all of them to some degree in the interview. Rather, what made him susceptible to an "encounter with God" is the feeling of suffocation that time was not allowing him to truly live.

Marcelo's feeling of "no time to live" is far from an isolated idiosyncratic experience but a widespread sentiment among Brazilian workers in Japan. Virtually all working Brazilians – male and female, old and young – told me that they never had time. In the beginning of my fieldwork, this used to baffle me. Why would they convert to Pentecostalism when this means that what little time they had left would now be spent on numerous church activities? Why do so many come to the church at 9:30 pm after a long day of work on a Tuesday night to study the Bible, when this likely means a lack of sleep for their already tired bodies? Why do so many show up to Friday night gathering around 9 pm, when the long-awaited weekend of free time has just started? Why would they actively decide to participate in something that takes away even more of their already scarce time?

Some regular activities of the church are rather time-consuming and physically tiring, such as late-night prayer gathering called vigil (*vigília*). Every Friday, congregants

would gather at the foot of a small mountain around midnight. Typically about two dozen people would come to climb up to the top of the mountain where there is a small clearing overlooking the city of Toyota. Prayer at this dark, quiet, and isolated place is meant to encourage an even more intimate relationship with God. It is close to 3 am when they start to descend the mountain, to where they parked their cars.

Not being used to such late-night activities, I was quite exhausted the first several times when I rode with my friends to the mountain and participated in vigil. One night on our way home to Homi Danchi, I finally asked my friend who happened to give me a ride that night what motivated her to come to vigil every Friday. Lucia promptly answered, "Well, here in Japan, we work so much. And I have kids too so I am literally running around all the time. When I come here or go to church activities like Encounter with God, it's just really nice, because I have the time for myself. It's like I can finally breathe."

When migrant converts speak of having time for oneself with God, they are clearly not referring to clock-time, which saturates their experience of unskilled wage labour. Since the majority tolerate the work-discipline imposed by clock-time "to save money and return to Brazil," seeking time outside of work means the pursuit of time that is not spent on preparation for the future. In other words, they are looking for the time in which one can live the present without postponing or sacrificing it.

Return to the Present

Simon Coleman, in his article on charismatic Christians in Sweden (2011), describes the coexistence and interrelation of two distinct temporalities. On one hand, church members "invoke" history by acknowledging the repetitive and mimetic nature of their actions. But

they also "make" history by framing their experiences as new events discontinuous from the past and directed toward ultimate salvation. The emphasis on "right now," he observes, simultaneously engages both perceptions of history and thereby creates a charismatic temporality that dovetails the past and the future, the personal and the collective, and continuity and rupture. It is such a charismatic temporality that sustains "chronic conversion" (Ibid. 443) couched in the succession of renewals in the present. Coleman also points out how charismatic actions in the present are also effective in enacting future time (Ibid.). Therefore, the return to the present does not necessarily entail the negligence of the future but a change in temporal locus of action.

The charismatic temporality of "right now, right here" exerts tremendous appeal to such migrants as Nikkei Brazilians in Japan, who have been suspended between two futures. Tired of the perpetual suspension of life that the planned return to Brazil has imposed upon them, many welcome the charismatic temporality like a fresh breeze of air. Instead of returning to the future, they find a way to return to the present.

A session from a Bible study course designed by Missão Apoio drives this point home. One night, Sara asked me if I wanted to come to a Bible study group. I accepted her offer and, in the following week, we met at a coffee shop in a neighbouring city of Toyota where she lived. As soon as I arrived, I quickly realized it was going to be just Sara and I although I had been under the impression that it was a group study. She clarified that it was actually a one-on-one Bible study session that her church was developing for those interested in or new to the faith. After some back-and-forth about my ambiguous position as a researcher, I decided to accept the opportunity, thanked her for her time, and sat down. After all, it was true that I was "interested in the Bible and

curious to learn," as she put it. I quickly found out that the course was designed in part to proselytize Japanese individuals because the handout Sara gave me was in (sometimes unidiomatic) Japanese while the one she kept in her hand was in Portuguese (she neither spoke nor read Japanese).

Faithful to the handout, she started our first session by telling a story from the gospel of Mark (Mark 10:46-52): Bartimaeus, a blind beggar in the city of Jericho, hears Jesus Christ and shouts out to him, begging for mercy. When Jesus asks him what he desires, he asks to be cured of blindness, which Jesus grants instantaneously, saying that his faith has healed him. Bartimaeus thereafter follows Jesus along the road. Then Sara moved on to explain the important points of this story, mostly following the bullet points on the prepared material. When it came to the part which discussed "what obstacles Bartimaeus had to overcome to get what he desired," however, she put down the sheet and started telling how she related to the story:

> You see how Bartimaeus overcame his complacency (*comodismo*) and conquered his own pride (*orgulho*)? This is really, really difficult. It's hard to get out of the habit of being satisfied with the routine. It's even harder, for some people, to let go of one's pride, surrender, and just cry out for help. We Brazilians typically came to Japan to work and earn money. Very quickly, we fall into this spiral of meaningless routine. Home, factory, home, factory, home, factory, party with friends, sleep, home, factory…. You know, it's really hard to have a sense of purpose in this kind of lifestyle. I hated it. I only liked the weekend when I could party with friends, but even that was empty somehow when I look back now. But once you accept Jesus, life cannot be a routine any more. Every day is new with Jesus. He fortifies us, and we are renewed like an eagle. But you cannot make this change happen on your own. You need God for real change.

Taken together with other data discussed in the chapter, I believe it is more than a mere coincidence that the story of Bartimaeus marked the beginning of the 10-week Bible course. In many ways, the biblical character embodies the sense of renewal in the present that many migrants crave after years of suspended life in Japan.

Conclusion: Temporal Tandem

Many countries around the globe have seen the growth of charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity. The charismatic expansion has not left migrant groups untouched, and researchers to date have offered a number of interpretations of its role among migrants: promotion of ethnic space and collective solidarity (Margolis 2009, 2013, Williams, Steigenga, and Vásquez 2009), formation of new migrant identities and social networks (van Dijk 2002), facilitation of migrants' transnational mobility (Austin-Broos 2001, Mafra, Swatowiski, and Camila 2013), viable reaction against social marginalization (Brodwin 2003, Toulis 1997), and mediation of trans-ethnic minority networks (Glick-Schiller, Çaglar, and Guldbrandsen 2006).

None of these functions are mutually exclusive and Missão Apoio fulfills all of these roles to some degree. The case study of Nikkei Brazilian migrants, however, moves us to acknowledge the process of temporalization at the intersection of migration and conversion. According to Nancy Munn, the concept of temporalization refers to a view of time "as a symbolic process continually being produced in everyday practices. People are 'in' a sociocultural time of multiple dimensions (sequencing, timing, past-present-future relation, etc.) that they are forming in their 'projects'" (1992:116). In this chapter, I have focused on two of such projects common among Nikkei migrant converts: return to the future and return to the present. The former entails forward-looking projection of a better future, "illusion" of return as a way to sustain hope, and a sense of perpetual temporariness. Although extracted from a specific case study in Japan, these may well be common symptoms among labor migrants across borders who inhabit the margins of flexible neoliberal economy in late capitalism (Pine 2014). The latter, in contrast, hinges

upon the charismatic temporality of "right now, right here." It is accessed and fostered not only through explicit discursive messages such as sermons but also by embodied practices such as expressive prayer. As Tanya Luhrmann's detailed account of evangelical prayer practices demonstrates (2012), immersive prayer often calls forth and trains absorption: "the capacity to focus in on the mind's object (…) and to allow that focus to increase while diminishing our attention to the myriad of everyday distractions that accompany the management of normal life" (Ibid. 200). Like Luhrmann's interlocutors, my friends at Missão Apoio also frequently related episodes of absorption in prayer, during which one's sense of time becomes more elastic. Some, for instance, reported that they are often surprised to find out how much time has passed when they come out of prayer. Given that those with such experience typically feel rejuvenated, the temporalization of the charismatic present through Pentecostal practices may have some therapeutic effect – especially for those who have not inhabited the experientially immediate "now" for many years.

Most importantly, the two projects of migration and conversion are interrelated and interdependent – the kind of relationship that may be termed a temporal tandem. By temporal tandem, I mean a joint production or reconfiguration of time – or temporalization – that simultaneously draws on and drives seemingly disparate and yet closely related projects. In the case of Nikkei migrant converts in Japan, the working of temporal tandem is apparent in how the prolonged suspension of life anticipates the charismatic temporality of "right now." Indeed, it is through temporalization that migration and conversion become firmly interlocked to generatively shape the lived worlds of migrant converts. I must also add that temporal tandem works in

multidirectional ways. For instance, many migrants, once converted, start to frame migration as a mission driven by higher purpose, for they are to evangelize a modern and yet "pagan" nation such as Japan. In this view, Japan once again becomes the potential future of the migrants, but this time, the future of the worldwide Christian frontier. Other migrants return to Brazil expressing less anxiety and fear of failing to actualize in Brazil the rosy middle-class future. Charismatic rhetoric typically flattens out geographical, temporal, and cultural differences that we often associate with national borders (cf. Coleman 2000:224). To Pentecostal migrants, life should be the same – equally difficult and equally rewarding –whether in Japan or Brazil, as long as they are in the presence of God. It is one time – one temporality – that must reign over both countries, which is an endless and continuous succession of renewals in the present. Thus, the charismatic temporality now generatively informs migratory issues and helps migrant converts give affirming meanings to their still precarious lives.

CHAPTER 2

Of Two Bloods:
Kinship, Religion, and National Belonging

Opening: Japanese Blood and the Blood of Jesus

One Sunday afternoon, I was interviewing a *sansei* woman in her forties in the communal area of Missão Apoio church in a neighboring city of Toyota that I was visiting. Miyako, who served the church as a Japanese-Portuguese interpreter, answered my questions mostly in fluent Japanese (although her native tongue was Portuguese). When we moved onto the topic of her *yonsei* children, who were born and raised in Japan, her tone became a little tense:

> In my family's case, my kids here have Japanese faces and names. But Japanese kids still say to them: "You are Brazilian, a foreigner. Leave (deteike)." "Don't come to this school." "Die." We went through all of that. Utterly, one hundred percent, it's Japanese blood that runs through our veins (mattaku, hyaku pāsento, nihonjin no chi shika kekkan ni nagaretenai noni). I also gave Japanese names to my kids. But they still said, "We don't need you foreigners." "Leave." Once my daughter was bullied – she was pushed and fell down the stairs. We went through a lot – a lot.

After we spoke more about her concerns for the future of her children, I thanked her for her time and wrapped up the interview because the time for Sunday service was approaching. We moved from the church canteen, where we had been conversing, to the main hall.

It was the day of monthly *santa ceia,* or the Lord's Supper, in which converted congregants reflect on Christ's sacrifice by consuming a piece of bread and small cup of grape juice (which symbolize the body and blood of Christ). The service started. When Miyako passed on a tray of bread and juice cups to me, I passed it on to the next person

without touching them because I was not a convert. *Santa ceia* was one of the times when I strongly felt my outsider status. I observed everyone around me eat a piece of bread and then drink a cup of juice – with their eyes shut while muttering prayers. After a few minutes of quiet reflection, the church band started playing a song called "*Alvo Mais Que A Neve* (Whiter Than Snow)." One by one, congregants came out of personal prayers to join the collective voice and sang along:

Blessed may be, the Lamb	*Bendito seja o Cordeiro*
Who on the cross for us suffered	*Que na cruz por nós padeceu*
Blessed may be, His Blood	*Bendito seja o Seu sangue*
That for us there He shed	*Que por nós ali Ele verteu*
Look, washed in that blood	*Eis nesse sangue lavados*
With such pure white clothing	*Com roupas que tão alvas são*
The redeemed sinners are	*Os pecadores remidos*
Already before his God	*Que perante seu Deus já estão*
[Refrain]	
Whiter than snow	*Alvo mais que a neve*
Purer than snow	*Alvo mais que a neve*
If washed in that blood	*Se nesse sangue lavado*
I will be whiter than snow	*Mais alvo que a neve serei*

I was relieved to be able to participate by singing along. Since the congregation at Missão Apoio Toyota also sang "Whiter Than Snow" at the monthly Lord's Supper, I knew it almost by heart. I looked over to Miyako, who was singing with her eyes shut and palms open toward the sky. There were trails of tears on her cheeks.

Kinship, Religion, and Migration through the Lens of "Blood"

How does the sense of belonging in God address the ambiguity of ethnic identity and national belonging? In this chapter, I will explore this question through an analysis of

ethnographic data on "two bloods": "Japanese blood" and the blood of Jesus.[19] As the opening scene indicates, both were prevalent themes that shaped the lives of Nikkei Pentecostal converts in Japan. Miyako's experience of "Japanese blood" is ambivalent to say the least. She seems to resent how her children's peers rejected her family's belonging in Japan despite their "fully Japanese" lineage and great effort to integrate: "Utterly, one hundred percent, it's Japanese blood that runs through our veins. I also gave Japanese names to my kids. But they still said, 'We don't need you foreigners.'" Her remark illuminates the ambiguity of "Japanese blood." On the one hand, it provides the foundation of national identity in Japan and, by extension, underpins the legal recognition of Nikkei foreigners' proximity to national kinship. On the other hand, it is never a total guarantee of national belonging for people like Miyako who do not conform to the narrow definition of Japaneseness as the convergence of "blood," culture, and ethos. Her experience of Jesus' blood through rituals and songs, in contrast, seems emotionally fulfilling, even therapeutic. As the lyrics of Whiter Than Snow suggest, "the blood of the Lamb" occupies a central place in Pentecostal culture. It symbolizes selfless sacrifice made by Christ ("Blessed may be, His blood that for us there He shed"), promise of ultimate salvation ("Washed in that blood … the redeemed sinners are already before his God"), and desire for moral and spiritual transformation ("If washed in that blood I will be whiter than snow"). The idiom and experience of Jesus' blood, then, seem to mediate a sense of belonging in Pentecostal community. How do these "two bloods" interact with one another in the lives of migrants converts such as Miyako? In this chapter, I will draw

[19] Blood is also an important element in Brazilian nationalist discourses, particularly for ideological concepts such as racial democracy, whitening, and racial mixture and improvement called *mestiçagem*. Since this chapter focuses on "Japanese blood" and the blood of Jesus, these issues will not be discussed here, but please see Introduction pp. 5-6.

on ideas and experiences of blood as an analytical lens through which to investigate the relationship between kinship, religion, and belonging among Nikkei Pentecostals in Japan.

Blood is not the essence but a metaphor of kinship, as generations of anthropologists have observed (Carsten 1995, Peletz 1995, Schneider 1980). Yet the metaphor of consanguinity persists as powerful imagery to demarcate common social belonging. Japan is a country where deep-seated cultural ideas and practices concerning blood abound, and Nikkei migrants' identities are certainly affected by this persistently dominant notion of "Japanese blood." Pentecostal converts, on the other hand, describe the blood of Jesus as "symbolic" and "supernatural" matter. Not only is it theologically important as the symbol and promise for human salvation through Jesus' selfless sacrifice (Bynum 2007, Yong 2005), they frequently stress its power as the mediator of spiritual kinship: "We are one big family in Jesus Christ." In fact, many important rituals in church life – such as the Lord's Supper – are aimed at producing and sustaining spiritual kinship united in the blood of Jesus. Thus, the analytical focus on the trope and experience of blood can illuminate how the lives of Nikkei Pentecostal migrants in Japan are deeply intertwined with competing and yet coexisting models of belonging: one based on naturalized ethno-national kinship and the other grounded in "spiritual" kinship that unites "brothers" and "sisters" in faith.

In "new kinship studies" (Carsten 2004:23), kinship is not conceptualized as a discrete domain but instead as a process intertwined with other forces such as politics, nation-state, and religion (Carsten 2000, McKinnon 2001, McKinnon and Cannell 2013, Peletz 1995, Stone 2002). Nikkei migrants in Japan can provide a particularly fertile

ethnographic context to explore the interplay of kinship and national belonging because the social construction of "return" is the politics of kinship writ large. The nation's preferential treatment of foreigners of Japanese descent implicitly attributes supposedly innate relatedness to nation's diasporic populations.

While there exist a number of fine-grained ethnographies on ramifications of "return" among Nikkei Brazilians in Japan (Lesser 2003b, Linger 2001, Roth 2002, Tsuda 2003), religion is yet to receive central analytical focus. This lacuna must be amended because, especially in the case of Pentecostalism, religion often provides new idioms with which to express a sense of belonging as transcending ethno-national identities (e.g., "God needs no passport!"). Indeed, for people like Nikkeis in Japan who experience heightened ambiguity in their sense of ethno-national identity, religious fellowship may be particularly appealing as an alternative form of belonging. I will argue that migrant converts highlight the symbolic nature of spiritual kinship as a marker of modernity because it supposedly transcends more naturalized and "traditional" forms of kinship found in discourses of nationalism and ethnic particularism in Japan. Since most Nikkei migrants live as unskilled temporary laborers in the margin of Japanese society, Pentecostal conversion in this context may well be read as a collective endeavor to reassert their moral identity in spiritual terms vis-à-vis the "technologically modern" Japanese majority.

Japan: Blood Endures, Blood Corrupts

In Japan, common descent has been the dominant rhetoric in regulation of kinship in its modern time. For example, political ideologies have deployed blood ties to conflate

family and nation, constituting them as mutually reinforcing entities. Amid the national effort for modernization and centralization in the late-19th century Meiji period, the rhetoric of family-nation (or national family, kazoku kokka) emerged and took hold: "(…) the *kazoku kokka* (family state) was projected as an enduring essence, which provided the state with an elevated iconography of consanguineous unity, enhanced the legitimacy of new economic, social, and political relations, and provided the Japanese people with a new sense of national purpose and identity" (Weiner 1997a:1). In the family-nation system, the emperor was the benevolent "father" and "head of the household (kachō)" of one big "national family," and the citizens his "children" (Wilson 2002, 2006). He also fulfilled an indispensible role as a chief priest in State Shintō, in which he carried out a set of liturgies as a living descendant of mythic lineage that could supposedly be traced back to the first gods of the nation. The ideology of family-nation, then, was intimately tied to State Shintō (Hardacre 1989). In this context, nation-state, politics, kinship, family, and religion were not separate domains but powerfully blurred – if not merged – to constitute "the unified Japanese."

Blood figured as the powerful, almost mythic, essence in the creation and maintenance of the family-nation (Robertson 2002). Terms such as minzoku (people, ethnic group), which gained large circulation during this period, often conflated "phenotype, geography, culture, spirit, history, and nationhood" (Robertson 2011:99). Such modern "semantic and semiotic inventions" were later incorporated into the postwar constitution of 1947, which "retained the definition of nationality and citizenship as a right of blood" (Ibid.). Although the explicit ideology of family-nation ceased with Japan's defeat in World War II, the essential significance of blood in the creation of

national identity persisted. To this day, "Jus sanguinis aligns nationality with kinship; the nation is, by virtue of its shared blood, an enormous family" (Linger 2001:277). The demarcation of national belonging as the narrow convergence of language, culture, and "blood" also persists (Befu 1993).

Nikkei Brazilians figure ambiguously in this field of discourses on blood and Japaneseness. The long-term resident (or Nikkei-jin) visa that enabled their initial migration to Japan was granted on the basis of descent. This requirement of Japanese ancestry constitutes potential migrants as Japanese, at least partially. Most Nikkei migrants who arrived, however, were born and raised in Latin America and did not embrace the qualities "Japanese blood" was expected to embody (Roth 2002, Tsuda 2000, 2001).

While "Japanese blood" is regarded as an essence that transcends generations, it is also prone to be "diluted" over time. This is at least the implicit logic behind the restriction of Nikkei-jin visa only to the children and grandchildren of Japanese emigrants. The fourth-generation descendants – the great-grandchildren of Japanese nationals – do not exist in the legal sense to the Japanese government. The children of third-generation Nikkei Brazilians can stay in Japan only as their Nikkei parent's (or parents') dependents, unless they themselves succeed in obtaining permanent resident visas. Many third-generation migrants recount the difficulty that arises if children they are trying to bring to Japan are over 18 years old. I heard, on more than one occasion, parents exchanging information about visas for their *yonsei* children: "Have you ever had a difficulty in getting the visa for your son? Mine is almost eighteen and in Brazil. It's a nightmare." The legal boundary of Nikkei-jin currently falls between the third and the

fourth generation. Culturally speaking, however, the line is arbitrary to say the least, especially due to the fact that many *yonsei* Brazilian youth are born and raised in Japan.

Thus the social construction of "Japanese blood" as an essential and yet perishable substance puts many Nikkei Brazilians in an ambiguous position. Some may have what the Japanese majority views as pure bloodline and Japanese appearance, but not the linguistic and cultural competence. Younger Brazilians may feel "native" in the Japanese language and culture, but they may still be judged *gaijin* (foreign) in terms of appearance and legal definition.

Material Kinship: Forms of Signification in Japanese Nationalism

As Weiner and Robertson have argued, the commonly taken-for-granted unity of "Japanese blood" and the Japanese is a modern "semiotic invention" as well as a cultural "iconography." These terms provide me with clues to develop a semiotic analysis of "Japanese blood" as a mediator of "material kinship."

Peirce's theory on signs, particularly his distinction between symbol, icon, and index, can help illuminate what I mean by material kinship. While symbol is a type of sign in which the form of signification is arbitrary (e.g. the English word "dog" and a class of animals), the relationships between the signifier and the object are *not* arbitrary in icon and index; icon possesses formal resemblance to the thing signified (e.g. "phallic" ritual object), and index is part of or affected by the signified entity (e.g. dark clouds index rain, hourglass indexes passage of time, etc.) (Hardwick 1977). Anthropologist Webb Keane, building on Peirce, characterizes forms of signification that are not

arbitrary as material (2007, 2008). He highlights "the social power of naturalization" facilitated by the materiality of signs:

> (…) indexes do not only presuppose some prior causes of which they bear the effects, they may also have entailments (…). The social power of naturalization comes from this: not simply the false reading of indexicals as if they were directly iconic of some prior essential character, but rather the misconstruing of the possible entailments of indexicals— their effects and possibilities—as if they were merely expressing something (such as character) that already exists. (Keane 2003:417)

Put more simply, some signs can be construed as indexical and material – and, by extension, innate, natural, and preexistent – even when they are not necessarily "directly iconic of some prior essential character."

I take "Japanese blood" to be one such material sign because its aura of indexicality helps naturalize the conflation of nation, family, phenotype, spirit, and culture. Weiner's "iconography of consanguineous unity" is an ingenious way to characterize this conflation for it captures the materiality, inviolability, and touch of sacredness that emanate from the sign. It is in this sense that I characterize the social belonging bound by "Japanese blood" as material kinship. In material kinship, the recognition of arbitrariness between what binds and what is bound is minimized because, in many cases, the two are perceived and experienced as one and the same. Furthermore, material kinship tends to foreground the state of *being* related rather than the process of *becoming* related since materiality can make process of signification appear as *fait accompli.*

The case study of Nikkei migrants, however, helps expose the construed, or incomplete, nature of the material sign that is "Japanese blood. " Their stories and

experiences often serve to disintegrate the domains the sign fuses – nation, culture, "blood," and so on. I now turn to some of such stories.

Migration: Blood Acts

What the Japanese officials who penned the 1990 Revised Entry Regulation Law may not have fully realized is the malleability of kinship. In many forms of kinship as well as in actual ramifications of consanguineous system, blood is often not the defining essence but a flexible actor.[20]

Vinicius presents an exemplary case that captures the flexibility of kinship. Vinicius' father was two years old when his family emigrated to Brazil from Okinawa around 1955. Okinawa is the present-day southernmost prefecture of Japan, which comprises hundreds of tropical islands called Ryūkyū Islands. Until the annexation by the Meiji government of Japan in the late 19th century, it maintained political independence as Ryūkyū Kingdom and its culture, including the language, remains distinct from the rest of the country. Okinawan emigrants and their descendants in Brazil consequently developed ethnic identity distinct from – and sometimes opposed to – the rest of Nikkei Brazilians. For instance, Okinawan-language terms Uchinanchu (Okinawan) and Yamatonchu (mainland Japanese) are used in opposition to each other among Nikkeis of

[20] One phenomenon worth discussing regarding flexibility of consanguineous kinship, although it manifests itself mainly through rumors, is feigned kinship for the purpose of obtaining Nikkei-jin visa. Throughout my fieldwork, dozens of people told me about the existence of black market where transactions of Nikkei ancestors' family registries and fraudulent marriages with Nikkeis take place. Such rumors are not completely baseless (Roth 2002:26-7). Some Nikkeis, they related, "sell their Japanese ancestors" or enter into fake marriage with non-Nikkeis who desire to work in Japan. Most of them, however, related that they had friends or distant relatives who partook in such transactions, never implicating themselves in this questionable practice.

Okinawan descent in Brazil today (Mori 2003:60-61).[21] His father grew up in one of such Okinawan Nikkei communities in São Paulo. Legally speaking, his father is *issei* (first-generation) and Vinicius is *nisei* (second-generation). To this day, his father maintains his Japanese nationality and lives in Brazil on a permanent resident visa. When Vinicius came to Japan with his father at the age of 16, he filed for naturalization in Japan, knowing that his father's Japanese nationality and his status as a minor made the process easier for him. He has been a Japanese citizen for over 15 years. His two Japan-born children also have Japanese nationality, but not his wife. Being a fourth-generation Nikkei Brazilian (which legally speaking is equal to any other foreigner), she has to go through a more rigorous process if she were to naturalize.

When Vinicius' father met his mother, she was already pregnant with him from her previous relationship, but he married her regardless. When Vinicius was born, his father simply registered him as his own son. On paper, he is impeccably Japanese – in terms of descent and nationality. "It's funny, right?" Vinicius said with a smile, "I *am* Japanese but I have no Japanese blood (*sangue japonês*) in me whatsoever!" While he has been living in Japan for over a decade, his father quickly went back to Brazil after several years, completely disappointed with his "native" country. Vinicius recounted:

> [Vinicius] Things were tougher for him. At least I have a face of *gaijin* (foreigner), European too, and tall, so Japanese colleagues were fascinated by me. "Kakkoī (cool, handsome)," they would tell me. My father has a Japanese face, but his Japanese was an issue. What he thought was Japanese, because he grew up speaking it in his family, was actually a language of… what was it…
> [Author] Uchinanchu ("Okinawan" in the language/dialect[22] in Okinawa)?

[21] Some Okinawan communities in Brazil make an active collective effort to preserve the language (Petrucci and Miyahira 2010).
[22] Whether the group of vernacular idioms spoken in Okinawa constitutes a "language" or "dialect" is a question that is as political as it is academic die to the history of the islands (Matsumori 1995).

> [Vinicius] Right, Uchinanchu. So he looks Japanese and is Japanese, but when he opened his mouth, people were like, "What is this guy?" He hated it here. So he left after saving money and never came back.

Vinicius' family story challenges the normative assumptions underlying jus sanguinis of Japan in three ways. First, Japanese descent – or nationality – does not always equal the continuation of "Japanese blood" per se. Second, "Japanese blood" does not ensure affinity for Japan or grasp on Japanese language and culture. Third, Japanese society is not ethnically homogeneous or seamlessly unified, as the ideology of "Japanese blood" suggests; Historically oppressed minorities such as Okinawans (Inoue 2007), Buraku-min (Hankins 2014), and Ainu (Siddle 1996) can attest to this fact.

Between Two Names: In the "Gray Zone" on the Gradation of Japaneseness

The ideology of "Japanese blood" constructs Nikkei migrants as "quasi-Japanese" – more Japanese than non-Nikkei foreigners but less so than the Japanese majority in the nation. This ambiguous social position in turn leads to a distinct form of discrimination, namely, demanded conformity. As Vinicius' narrative of his father shows, Japanese appearance – or Japanese descent in and of itself – can give rise to an expectation of social assimilation on the part of Japanese majority.

Many of my Brazilian informants shrugged off the signs of imposed conformity with pragmatic nonchalance. One night, Paula – 31-year old Nikkei Brazilian woman – came over to my apartment in Homi Danchi to have me translate and fill out the forms her company had required her to submit. The procedure was to change her status from temporary worker to directly employed full-time employee. As we sat down, she

exclaimed: “I’m so happy I’m turning *seishain* (full-time employee)! With this better health care coverage I can finally start planning for a child!”

I started filling out the forms, checking with her in Portuguese. When all forms were taken care of, she asked me to write her name on the name tags for her new uniform as a full-time employee. Since her registered name, which appeared on her Japanese driver’s license, was Okuda Santos (オクダ・サントス), I was going to write the same family name on the name tags. But she stopped me, saying, “You have to write just Okuda, and in kanji (奥田).” When I responded in confusion that her registered name in Japan seems to be in katakana, one of the three alphabets of the Japanese language used for people and objects of foreign origin, Paula responded:

> Because I am Nikkei. If you can write your name in kanji, that’s better. If you are just a temporary employee maybe they don’t care that much, but I’m not any more. Name in kanji is better, that looks more Japanese. (…) If you have Nikkei family names, many factories ask you to write them in kanji, you know. This factory is better than before. At my first factory I had to dye my hair black. My hair is naturally brown, and I dye it blonde now, you know, back then, I had to dye it really black, like Japanese.

Puzzled, I asked her if the practice of dyeing hair black to appear Japanese is common. She responded calmly that it depends on the factory but many of her friends had done so at least once.

A mechanism of inclusion and exclusion is at work in her story, and I call it the gradation of “Japaneseness.” On this spectrum, Nikkeis often fall into the “gray zone” between the utterly foreign and the purely Japanese. Consequently, they measure and fine-tune their outward Japaneseness according to the context. The social pressure for integration increases in the full-time sector of the labor market. This is why Paula felt

compelled to foreground her Japanese identity as she shifted from the more marginal temporary labor force to the more stable full-time employment.

In the Residue of Material Kinship

The ways in which Vinicius and Paula invoked and enacted "Japanese blood" attest to both its materiality as well as malleability. On the one hand, they intuitively understand the basic tenet of Japanese nationalism: that "Japanese blood" indexes the unity of phenotype, nation, language, and culture. This is why Vinicius prefixed his story with "it's funny, right?" because he knew that his biological lineage and appearance did not conform to the ideological fusion of "the Japanese" while his nationality and social lineage did. Similarly, Paula's strategic performance of her Japanese identity hinged on her first-hand understanding of what is expected of "Japanese blood" – and therefore of being Nikkei – in Japan.

Although Nikkei migrants have an intuitive grasp on the materiality of "Japanese blood", they do not perceive it as an inviolable "iconography" but rather as a flexible marker. Paula's fine-tuning of her Japaneseness as an outward expression demonstrates the performativity and malleability that saturate the ramifications of "Japanese blood" in people's actual lives (Goldfarb 2012).

While many Nikkei migrants perform – and occasionally defy – "Japanese blood," those converted to Pentecostalism, in a sense, go a step further: They attempt to transcend material kinship by cultivating another form of relatedness that is "symbolic" and "spiritual."

Pentecostalism: Blood Separates, Blood Unifies

I now turn to another kind of blood that figures prominently among the lives of Brazilian migrant converts, that is, the blood of Jesus Christ. Also referred to as the blood of the Lamb and of eternal covenant, the blood of Jesus symbolizes a number of ethical ideals that inspire Christians: self-sacrifice, purification of sins, ultimate salvation, and unbroken relationship with God (Bynum 2007, Cannell 2013a). Consequently, its theological meanings and ritual functions are manifold. One of its principal implications, however, is that the blood of Jesus separates the converted from the presumably sinful world.

One major ritual in Pentecostal culture can illustrate this working: water baptism (*batismo nas águas*). Water baptism is widely regarded as the definitive moment of conversion. Missão Apoio Toyota holds it once a year in Yahagi River, which runs through the center of the city. Those wishing to participate – and to officially convert – are asked to attend a study session prior to the ritual. To the two dozens of people who gathered that night, the church leaders explained that water baptism means death and resurrection. "It is like getting a death and birth certificate at the same time," the pastor added with a smile:

> It means that you are cut off (*sepultado*) from the world and therefore dead to the world, and to your old self. Then you are born again by being baptized in the blood of Jesus. Now, don't take what I say literally [laughs]. The blood of Jesus, for us Christians, is a symbol of life. Thanks to his sacrifice, because of the blood he shed to cleanse our sins and save us, we can be born again as new creatures united in God.

The blood of Jesus is a "symbolic" substance that mediates the rite of passage into born-again life. It is a potent symbol because of its two-fold significance, death and rebirth. By symbolizing death to the sinful way of life and rebirth in the new sanctified life, the blood

of Jesus marks born-again identity and separates it from what is deemed worldly (Austin-Broos 1997).

In doing so, it also separates converts from the ways of life centered on what they see as worldly "traditional" familial ties (Barker 2012, van de Kamp 2011, van Dijk 2001). Churchgoers – especially those who converted despite their families' opposition – stress the primacy of faith over familial obligations. Larissa, for instance, drew on bible verses to express her feeling toward her parents who follow a Japanese new religion called Seichō-no-Ie: "I love and respect my parents, but that does not mean I should blindly obey them when my faith is at stake. As Jesus said, sometimes true family means brothers and sisters in God."[23]

Larissa's remark indicates another significance of Jesus' blood in Pentecostal culture; the nexus of spiritual kinship. Perhaps the most common trope in this regard is that "the Church is one family under God."[24] It is, in fact, one of the first things I heard as an anthropologist studying the role of church networks: "You know, the church is like a big family. We *dekasegis* (migrant workers) are often here alone, without families, so church is like a real family to us." There is a grain of truth in such a statement. Many Brazilians did indeed leave their families in Brazil and even those who brought or made families in Japan are still without the support of extended kin network. The church often comes to fulfill the role previously taken on by extended kin, occupying a more intimate place on the private-public continuum. One long-term member related:

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[23] This is the biblical passage: Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." [Matthew 12:46-50]

[24] See, for instance, Mark 3:31-35.

> My friend who converted in Japan has recently returned to Brazil and called me, shocked. She was like, "Aline! Born-agains (*crentes*) here don't get together and spend all day together on the Christmas Day and the New Year's Eve! They spend those days just with families and friends! How sad!" I was like, "Of course they don't, they have families there! That's what we do just in Japan." But she misses that, you know, how intimate church feels here in Japan.

Such remarks demonstrate that church networks provide migrant converts with what can be called "fictive kin"[25] that can serve as mutual support system in new social context (Ebaugh and Curry 2000). A number of linguistic conventions common in Christian and Brazilian cultures enhance the sense of intimacy in such kin relationships. For instance, Pentecostal converts (like other Christians) refer to God as "Father (*Pai*)" while situating themselves as "children (*filhos*)" dependent on his grace. Fellow congregants address each other as "brother (*irmão*)" or "sister (*irmã*)." Furthermore, unrelated members at Missão Apoio frequently used kin terms such as *tio* (uncle), *tia* (auntie), *filho* (son), and *filha* (daughter) while speaking to each other, a practice common in Brazil. These Christian and Brazilian practices fused to create a place where many could feel at home.

Metaphors also imply that church is not only "one big family" but also "one big body." Missão Apoio adopts the so-called cellular structure as its ministerial vision (*visão celular*) – the strategy of church growth through small home groups. Each cell (*célula*) strives to have around a dozen members, and among these members there is a single leader. When a cell grows in size, it splits in half, and these two new cell groups work to double in the number of members so that they can divide again. It is a decentralized system that mobilizes lay practitioners' social networks as the chief drive for church's organizational expansion. In this corporeal idiom, each home – where weekly *célula*

[25] The concept of "fictive" kinship has been criticized in anthropology as reifying the assumption about what counts as "real" kinship (i.e. consanguinity and marriage) (Carsten 2000).

meeting is held – is a "cell" that should multiply to contribute to the growth the larger "body" that is the church. The family metaphor and body metaphor are thus fused with one another, enhancing the sense of intimacy among church members. As Shoji observes (2014:42-43), Missão Apoio seems to owe much of its success among migrant communities to the cellular system.[26] In Homi Danchi alone, there were dozens of *células* that met on a weekly basis at congregants' homes (No one, including the pastor, kept track of exactly how many there were, which again demonstrates the decentralized character of Pentecostalism). Extending on the organic metaphors, we could probably say that congregants' social networks constitute the "veins" through which the blood of Jesus circulates through the church-body.

As the mediator of spiritual family and body, the blood of Jesus frequently appears in sermons. One day, the pastor delivered a sermon entitled "What Is The True Church (*Qual É a Verdadeira Igreja?*)." After asking rhetorically what kind of church Jesus would build today, he went on to elucidate, one by one, the four "keys (*chaves*)" of the true church: conquest of death, repentance, evangelization, and Jesus' blood:

> Anyone who is born again is living through His blood. Now, open your Bible – First Peter, chapter 1, verse 19. (…) Great, now let's read together, until verse 23. Ready?
>
> "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. (…) For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God."
>
> Brothers and sisters, turn to the person next to you and say this: "You are a new creature in the blood of the Lamb!" [The congregants repeat.] Say, "Jesus Christ the Lord united us!" [The congregants repeat.] Amen and amen.

[26] This is not unique to Missão Apoio. A number of Pentecostal denominations in Latin America and beyond have employed the cellular system with great success (O'Neill 2009:26).

Given the central significance of Jesus' blood in Christian theology, such a message in and of itself is undistinguished, possibly typical of the genre of preaching. It is when we step back to assess the social context of this sermon that its unique appeal becomes more apparent. That is, the majority of attendants were Nikkei Brazilians who migrated to the land of their ancestors. Some themes of the sermon then stand out as particularly pertinent: namely, the contrast between "perishable" matters associated with ancestors and the "imperishable" blood of Jesus and Word of God. Through the active cooperation of attenders, which includes mutual vocalization of new identity, the latter is valorized, encouraged, and glorified.

The overall message is clear: It is not material heritages from ancestors (silver, gold, and "seed") but the transformation through Jesus' sacrificial blood that makes them who they are. In this instance and others, migrant converts often highlight the separation of spirit and matter – which is a common framework in Protestant culture (Keane 2002) – and stress the higher value of "spiritual birth" over "material/biological birth" (Harding 2000) Although it may sound rather banal to some, this rhetoric facilitates the common understanding of spiritual kinship as transcending ethnic, national, and racial boundaries.

Spiritual Kinship: Forms of Signification in Pentecostal Community

Arguably, both "Japanese blood" and Jesus' blood mediate claims for relatedness (Carsten 2000). While both can be characterized as signs of kinship in this sense, the primary form of signification for each is distinct. While the former is principally indexical and material, Pentecostal converts invoke Jesus' blood as an explicitly symbolic

and immaterial matter, thereby implying that spiritual kinship goes beyond naturalized material kinship.[27]

When church leaders warn those unfamiliar to or new to born-again faith not to take their words about Jesus' blood "literally," they are implicitly contrasting their understanding of the sign against that of Catholics (which the majority of Brazilian Pentecostals were prior to conversion, at least nominally)(Selka 2010, Stoll 1990). Under Pentecostal semiotic ideology, or "basic assumptions about what signs are and how they function in the world" (Keane 2003:419), the materiality of signs in Catholic rituals appear dubious, if not wrong. My Pentecostal interlocutors frequently made critical comments on Catholic practices – ranging from infant baptism to rosary prayer to the Holy Communion – by arguing that they are "meaningless (*não faz sentido*)."

For instance, they would observe that sacramental bread (*hostia*) cannot literally and materially *be* the body of Christ; it symbolically *represents* the body of Christ, they would stress. Their effort to distance themselves from material understandings of sign's effectiveness is manifest in how they conduct the Pentecostal equivalent of the Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper (*santa ceia*). The act of consumption is always preceded by a reading of relevant biblical passages and encouragement from the pastor to seriously consider whether one deserves to consume the symbols. Without the understanding of articulable meaning invested in the object and the right intention during the act, converts say, one would be consuming a mere breadcrumb. Unlike material signs that often come to embody meaning in themselves, symbolic signs call forth an intentional and sincere subject for meaning to be realized (Mafra 2011).

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[27] Glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, is predicated a different semiotic ideology (Csordas 1997, 1990). See Chapter 5.

Thus, converts evoke the blood of Jesus primarily as a symbolic sign. For them, the relationship between the signifier (i.e., Jesus' blood) and the signified (i.e., Christian fellowship) is not a given but in need of conscious and continuous work for it to sustain itself. Indeed, it is a truism among the converted to say that no one is born Pentecostal but *becomes* one – or, to put it otherwise, one must be born again to be born-again. Unlike cases of material kinship, the blood of Jesus and "the Christian" are not fused in indexical materiality to constitute a naturalized entity; instead, converts are urged – from water baptism to the Lord's Supper to daily prayer – to consciously reflect on the symbolic sign that is the blood of Jesus to sustain and buttress their identity as Christian. What I refer to as spiritual kinship, hence, diverges from material kinship in its greater presupposition of and reliance on the intentional and sincere subject.

Christian Moderns

Thinkers such as Bruno Latour (1993), Charles Taylor (1989), and Webb Keane (2007) have observed that intentionality, interiority, and sincerity constitute "sources" of the modern self. It is hardly surprising, then, that Pentecostal converts around the world often position themselves in alignment with "modernity" while downplaying "tradition" as something that must be overcome. In the context of Nikkei Brazilian Pentecostals in Japan, the label of "traditionalist (*tradicionalista*)" is directed toward two main groups: other Brazilians who are not born-again (e.g., Catholic) and the non-Christian Japanese majority in Japan.

My Japanese identity, coupled with my Buddhist family background, seemed to invite my interlocutors' critique and skepticism against "the Japanese tradition" – which

was directed to me occasionally. For the first several months of my fieldwork, whenever I was asked whether I was a Christian (by which they meant born-again), I responded without much reflection: “Well, my family is Buddhist.” I soon stopped phrasing my answer in this way because it seemed to elicit uniformly ambiguous reactions from my informants. In fact, several of them explicitly told me: “Japanese people always say that. But I am asking about *you,* not about your family!” To born-again converts, faith ideally entails a conscious choice made by an intentional sincere subject; its authenticity becomes irreversibly compromised if handed down “uncritically” through family or, even worse, through “tradition.” Many Nikkei converts view the interdependence of kinship and religion manifest in Buddhist memorial services for ancestors in Japan as a hallmark of “Japanese tradition” (on the evolving nature of "tradition" in Japan, see, among others, Rowe 2011, Ben-Ari, Moeran, and Valentine 1990).

When they foreground the intentionality and sincerity that mark their religious practices and commitments, they seem to be claiming that they are more – or more authentically – modern than the Japanese. As I have made clear in the discussion of temporality in the previous chapter, the link between conversion and modernity is well-supported by the existing studies of Pentecostalism in the global south (Brodwin 2003, Fumanti 2010). Other than prevalent the comments concerning “the Japanese tradition,” the nascent effort among Brazilian Pentecostal churches to proselytize the Japanese majority is also a case in point. The rhetoric of evangelization often foregrounds their spiritually modern born-again identity as “bringing the light” to the technologically modern and yet “pagan” nation such as Japan (Yamada 2014).

The Marriage of the Two J's - Japan and Jesus[28]

The extremely small proportion of Christians in the overall Japanese population presents a number of challenges for proselytizers. As Pastor Cid admitted to me, they are "still far away from reaching the Japanese community." One obstacle is the unfamiliarity of most Japanese with Christianity – whether it be Christian ideas, practices, or ethos. Luana related the following after reminiscing how difficult it initially was for her – a *sansei* Nikkei – to apprehend Christian worldviews:

> This is why I know that for Japanese it is even harder, because they don't have any Christian base. None. If you tell them about Jesus: "Who is that?" (…) It's so hard!
>
> I met an old Japanese lady there on the bridge in Homi Danchi, and I said ohayō gozaimasu (good morning). She said, "Thank you for talking to me, no one talks with me." So I said, "Jesus Christ loves you." "Huh? I don't know who that is, but thank you anyway!" As she walked away, I said, "But if you have any problems, pray to this Jesus, got it?" And she: "Thank you for talking to me!" [laughs] (…)
>
> There [in Brazil], there is a lot of religiosity (*religiosidade*), even if you aren't practicing. Brazil is a Catholic country. So they have Catholic holidays. Many things are in reference to Christianity. So more or less, *japoneses* (Japanese-Brazilians) there, when they ask, "What holiday is today?" they always end up learning something about it.

Many migrant converts who see an opportunity to tell "the good news" in their occasional interactions with Japanese struggle like Luana. The majority does not speak Japanese fluently enough to navigate the complex rhetorical terrain of religious persuasion. Even for those coverts who do not find the language barrier to be an issue, the common lack of conceptual scaffold to understand basic Christian tenets on the part of most Japanese proves challenging.

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[28] The phrase, "two J's," is attributed to a Japanese Christian thinker Kanzō Uchimura, who wrote in the early 20th century: "I love two Js and no third; one is Jesus, and the other is Japan. I do not know which I love more, Jesus or Japan. I am hated by my countrymen for Jesus' sake as *Yaso*, and I am disliked by foreign missionaries for Japan's sake as national and narrow. No matter; I may lose all my friends, but I cannot lose Jesus and Japan" (Miura 1996:52).

Thus, the cultural climate of the mainstream Japanese society is non-Christian. Yet, many migrant converts occasionally paint Japan as a "Christian" nation and the Japanese as a "Christian" people. This genre of talk is significant for it claims that Japan is an inherently Christian country. For instance, some migrant converts characterize the perceived politeness, honesty, and modesty of Japanese people as the markers of Christianness. Luana, who related that "the Japanese don't have any Christian base," recounted the following later in the same interview when I asked her if the life in Japan had changed her:

> Certainly. I think one thing that helped a lot, my family became a lot strengthened, was Jesus, that we discovered Jesus. Because there in Brazil, there are so many churches but sometimes the vision of people is corrupt - they all speak about Jesus but don't want to live with Jesus. They don't live in the right way, the way Jesus instructed.
>
> There is a lot of sensuality, too. Women dress a lot like, um, they expose a lot. They show too much. So when a man who wants to live a life of sanctity, without sinning, without looking with, um, this sin for women, how can he succeed when women are showing it all? You can't live like this [covers her eyes with her hands], you can't.
>
> Principally because of the carnival, the heat, you see. Women wear short T-shirt, miniskirt, bikini, tank top, belly all bare, all of that. And children will imitate all this. If my Lili [her 7-year old daughter] were in Brazil, she would be walking around freely in a tiny top, her belly and legs all bare. (…) So I prefer here, it's more modest. More respect.

Several prominent themes run through Luana's response: the questionable authenticity of large-scale born-again movement in Brazil, the "sensuality" of Brazilian culture as an obstacle to holy life, and the characterization of Japanese culture as more modest, respectful, and therefore suitable for Christians. All of these issues commonly appear in the remarks Brazilian Pentecostals make when discussing the implications of being Christian in Japan. Vinicius had the following to say when I asked if he felt "Japanese" since he had naturalized more than a decade earlier:

> No, I don't feel Japanese – it's hard. I only know the environment at the factory, that's the only social context that I'm used to. I don't know much else. But at the same time, I'm not really Brazilian either. If I go back to Brazil, people there would find me strange. I don't have the accent of my land (*sotaque da minha terra*) any more, for example; I have been living here for too long.
>
> Also, I am a born-again Christian (*crente*) today; I converted here. So I can't follow certain practices that are very common in Brazil. Like, that crazy *jeitinho* (accomplishing something by circumventing rules and conventions) of Brazilians – people lie and break rules to get what they want, you know. As a *crente*, I can't do it any more, it's not right. Actually, living as a Christian is easier here since the Japanese are more honest – everything by the book. Japanese follow the rules and respect authority. Generally they have better manners (*mais educação*), you see.

What some Brazilians laugh at as the rigidity of rule-obsessed Japanese turns into a desirable ethical trait called honesty to many migrant converts.

While Pentecostal Brazilians do stress the non-Christianness of Japan, they also highlight its implicit Christianness, often in the same breath. While this may sound paradoxical, it serves, in my view, to accentuate the authenticity of born-again movement in which they are engaged in Japan. On the one hand, the non-Christian social climate of Japan proves the legitimacy of migrants' born-again identity because they are not "following the trend." Furthermore, the relatively small scale of the Pentecostal churches in Japan promotes the perception of enhanced intimacy, simplicity, and sincerity among its members. Many migrant converts frown at what they see as the compromised – if not corrupted – state of Pentecostal affairs in Brazil. What they regard as the sign of compromise are many: occasional scandals involving popular evangelists,[29] wealth of prominent pastors, dependence on new media outlets for mass proselytization, and so on. "They are not living *with* the gospel," one long-term congregant observed, "they are living *through* the gospel (*através do evangelho*)."

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[29] For example, the organizers of March for Jesus São Paulo and founders of Reborn in Christ Church, Estevam and Sônia Hernandes, were arrested in 2007 in Miami and charged with illegally smuggling cash into the US, including $9,000 concealed in a Bible (Rohter 2007).

On the other hand, the "inherent" Christianness that migrant converts see in Japanese society lends further legitimacy to their developing born-again identity in Japan. That Japanese people seemed to exhibit a number of moral characteristics – honesty, modesty, and respect – without actually being Christian, migrant converts indicated to me, must mean that Japanese culture is somehow compatible with Christian ethos. Conversely, they regarded some stereotypical aspects of Brazilian society – such as sensuality – as a sign of inherent incompatibility with born-again way of life. While born-again Christians worldwide commonly reject worldly pleasures as unchristian, doing so holds a particular cultural meaning for Brazilian Pentecostals because of Brazil's reputation for natural sensuality. In this context, the Pentecostal moral imperative for sanctity provides an effective rhetorical tool to engage in a critique of national culture and its icons such as sensational *carnaval* and voluptuous dancers.

The selective reading of stereotypical cultural traits through a "Christian" lens helps them see reasons in their life in Japan beyond mere economic incentives or bare material necessities: The nation, which is non-christian but not unchristian, can provide a better environment for sanctified life conducive for spiritual growth. As a number of churchgoers explicitly stated, "it is easier to be Christian in Japan than in Brazil" because of the perceived honesty and modesty of the people. Coupled with their sense of mission to evangelize the non-Christian nation, many migrant converts begin to embrace Japan as a place to be, if not as a home.

Conclusions: Trans-Ethnic "Imperishable" Spiritual Kinship

The pastor of Missão Apoio Toyota once related to me the following story of his visit to "Japanese-Brazilian Church" in Brazil:

> Once, when I was preaching in Brazil, I went to *Igreja Nipo-Brasileira* (Japanese-Brazilian Church). I arrived (…) and looked for faces of (Japanese) descendants but couldn't find any. (…) I went up to the podium and saw bilingual hymnals and bibles in Japanese and Portuguese, but they were completely useless [to the congregants]. Why? Because the children of descendants married and left, then the church was taken over by another group, migrants from Northeastern Brazil. The church had *Nipo* (Japanese) in its name, but there was no one there who was *nipo*, not even the pastor.
>
> This made me think. What happened there can happen here. (…) For this reason, I do not wish to separate the youth who speak good Japanese because they have the power to continue what we started here. (…) So our dream is that this church doesn't perish, that it fulfills its mission, and that it be the light in the world, and that all this will continue.

The pastor's dream is for his church to become completely native in Japan – a church with Brazilian name (Missão Apoio) with all-Japanese congregants. At first glance, his statement seems to reflect a passion for proselytization characteristic of evangelical branches of Christianity. As I have discussed above, evangelization may well enhance a sense of identity among Nikkei converts that they are spiritually – and thus truly – modern compared to the Japanese majority.

But perhaps more importantly, he is also emphasizing the primacy of Christian spiritual kinship over ethno-national material kinship. Nikkeis may completely cease to be "Japanese" or "Brazilian" in the future but, as long as they continue to be Christian, they will be "fulfilling their mission" in the world. Social integration – even assimilation – is not to be feared in this perspective, because they will always be distinct as Christians, if not as Brazilians. "The youth who speak good Japanese" today are mostly fourth-generation Nikkei Brazilians, whom the Japanese government does not legally recognize

as Nikkei. Japan's Nikkei-jin visa only recognizes one starting point or the point of origin, which is when Japanese nationals left the country to emigrate. "Japanese blood" derived from this original point of emigration, the law implies, endures only for three generation. The Brazilian youth growing up in Japan today face the implicit message conveyed by the system: that they are neither Japanese nor even Nikkei.

The blood of Jesus in Pentecostal semiotic ideology, unlike "Japanese blood," does not become "diluted" over time because it is an explicitly symbolic sign unattached to material substance. Furthermore, its point of origin in personal history is typically located at the time of conversion, during which one is reborn as a "new creature" in the sacrificial and life-giving blood of Jesus Christ. Since the experience of conversion is commonly understood as repeatable – in fact, continual – at any moment of born-again life (Coleman 2011, Bielo 2012), spiritual kinship mediated by Jesus' blood is in theory also renewable at any given time. When contrasted with "Japanese blood," the biblical characterization of Jesus' blood as "imperishable" holds some truth in the following sense: By attempting to overcome the materiality of signs and naturalized blood ties, the blood of Jesus gains more rhetorical power as the source of trans-ethnic and trans-generational unity that could continue infinitely into the future. Seen in this light, spiritual kinship in Pentecostal culture presents another case of "re-enchantment of kinship" (Cannell 2013b), in which modernity, religion, and belonging become powerfully fused.

CHAPTER 3

Culture of Love:
Family, Ethnicity, and Religion in Affective Terms

Opening: Family Reconciliation

"Anyone wants to share with us how God worked in your life this week?" As soon as the presbyter solicited testimonies, a dozen hands shot up. It was the first Sunday service following a two-day prayer camp organized by the church, and many participants were eager to speak about their experiences. Veredas Antigas, or "Ancient Paths" in Portuguese, is a weekend retreat that many Missão Apoio churches promote as an opportunity for – according to the circulated poster – "restoring eternal family values (*restaurar os valores eternos da família*)." Recommended primarily for parents and children, it is aimed at healing "traumas" and "frustrations" that haunt familial relationships through Christian values and practices.

One woman walked up to the podium and received the microphone from the presbyter. She started by recollecting her first years in Japan as a teenage daughter of two Nikkei Brazilians who decided to migrate to save money for a new house. "I felt so lonely because my parents were never at home. They did so much *zangyō* (overtime work) and *yakin* (night shift)[30] to earn more money. I needed their love." During the retreat, however, she realized how unrealistic she had been in her expectations toward her parents. Today, she is a mother herself and she too has to leave her own child at home

[30] Since part-time contingent workers are paid per hour, working longer hours is virtually the only way to increase one's income. Another option is to work on weekends, holidays, and at night, when hourly wage is higher than regular working hours.

while she works in factory. Just like her parents, she and her husband have had many quarrels about finances and household chores. "I realized that I have been doing the exact same things I hated my *dekasegi* (migrant worker) parents for, and this brought me down to my knees. In this world, only God is perfect. So we must love one another just as he loves all of us unconditionally." In tears, she begged for forgiveness from her parents (who had returned to Brazil), husband, and son. Her husband and teenage son walked up to the front, embraced her, and repeated "*Te amo* (I love you)." The son also asked for forgiveness for having been a *rebelde* (rebel, or disobedient child in this context) who at times mocked his mother for her inability to speak Japanese. After a while, the presbyter took up the microphone again and invited the whole congregation to pray for the family "so that God's love will fill their hearts and lives with joy." With their hands held and eyes shut, the mother, father, and son faced their fellow congregants to receive prayers.

Subsequent testimonies followed a similar pattern: acknowledgement of family problems, expression of desire for forgiveness, and scene of reconciliation performed before the whole congregation. A husband asked his wife to forgive him for having neglected her by using night shift as an excuse. A mother confessed that she had distanced (*afastar*) herself from her children when they needed her love the most because what she perceived as their "loss of Brazilian identity" – such as speaking primarily in Japanese – upset her. Whenever the family members mentioned in testimony were present, the presbyter would bring them to the front to encourage a "moment of reconciliation" – hugs, kisses, tears, and words of affection. Consequently, the testimonies lasted much longer than in a typical Sunday service. As I observed them from the back of the church, I was taken aback by the families' willingness to engage in

intimate interactions in front of the whole congregation. While emotional expressiveness is a prominent characteristic of Pentecostal style of worship in general, in this case it seemed to mediate what appeared to be a very public form of family therapy.

Effective Affect: Love as a Link between Migration and Religion

This chapter investigates how Nikkei converts employ affective idioms and techniques to make sense of common familial issues they experience as *dekasegis* (migrant workers) in Japan. As the opening scene shows, affect is a salient medium that guides their effort to interpret and address problems linked to migratory life in Japan.

For example, emotional distance (*afastamento*) between family members is often attributed to the perceived lack of parental (especially maternal) love. As the woman recounted, she felt "lonely" because she could not receive the love she "needed" from her *dekasegi* parents who worked irregular shifts. Others think that what inhibits the expression of parental affection is the growing generation gap between the older migrants who grew up in Brazil and the increasing number of youth born or raised in Japan. As another woman confessed, she felt her Japan-raised children were building a language barrier that separated her from their world.

The ways in which those who converted to Pentecostalism respond to such sentiments of affective deprivation are equally emotive. During "family reconciliation," families openly express their love for each other through affectionate gestures and words. Importantly, it is the theme of God's love that frames the moral imperative for conjugal and familial intimacy. As the first woman who testified put it, "We must love one another

just as he loves all of us unconditionally." The collective prayers aimed at restoration of family ties likewise focused on the divine love as the important source of healing.

The ethnographic scene thus suggests that love (*amor*) possesses a polyphonic significance for migrant converts in this social context. On the one hand, it provides an affective idiom with which to comprehend the challenges and problems of complex life as Japanese-Brazilian dekasegis in Japan. On the other hand, its ethical resonance within Pentecostal affective landscape makes it an efficacious rhetorical and experiential device for the process of healing. The focus on affect, and love in particular, can therefore facilitate an investigation of the interrelations between migratory movement, family ties, and religious practices. In this chapter, I will take the discursive and emotive significance of love (*amor*) and affection (*carinho*) as the point of departure to examine how Pentecostal churches such as Missão Apoio respond, implicitly or explicitly, to the common familial struggles experienced by transnational migrants.

Much of the research on transnational mobility has theorized the structural dimensions of the global movement of people and capital, dealing with the political economy, neoliberalization of labor, formation of migrant networks, and so on (see, for example, Massey et al. 1998, Portes and DeWind 2007, Sassen 1998). Yet, perhaps in the endeavor to understand and explain the structural factors driving global migrations, scholars have often overlooked the decidedly affective dimension of the global movement of people. This relative paucity of researches on the intimate registers of migration is regrettable because, as Coe and her colleagues observed, "Migrations can be guided, impacted, or undermined by economic need and broad structures of power, as well as by intimate relations and the emotional aspects of everyday life" (Coe et al.

2011:14). In response to the traditional dominance of structural perspectives over the emotional viewpoints within migration studies, an emergent body of work is starting to bridge research about transnational migration with examinations of affect and emotion (Boehm 2013, Escandell and Tapias 2010, Svašek 2010).

Among those who study foreign migrants in Japan, for instance, Lieba Faier wrote about the "profession of love" among Filipina women who marry Japanese men (Faier 2007). The majority met their husbands at Filipina "hostess bars" where they worked to entertain customers, to perform "emotional labor" (Hochschild 2003:7), and to convince men that they cared for them and were having a good time so that they would patronize the bars. Even when they married their customers and became their wives, the "labor of love" continued in different forms, because their prospect for sending remittances back to the Philippines depended on their husbands' understanding, generosity, and love. Upon hearing many of her informants profess genuine love for their husbands, Faier observed, "Love was a key, if contradictory, term through which Filipina migrants in Central Kiso crafted senses of self as they carried out and made sense of their transnational daily lives" (Ibid. 157). She thus illustrates how the analytical sensitivity to affect can illuminate the ways in which emotional experiences inevitably interact with the making of political-economic subjects (see also Faier 2011).

Unlike migration scholars, psychological anthropologists have long explored intimate emotional processes as one of the central aspects of human experience, especially since they have turned to emotion as a subject of explicit ethnographic study (Lutz 1986, Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990, Lutz and White 1986, Rosaldo 1984). From the exploration of "sorrow" and "nostalgia" enacted during the Gisalo ceremony among the

Kaluli (Schieffelin 2005 [1976]) to a more contemporary study of how American parents sustain "hope" when no cure is in sight for their sick children (Mattingly 2010), emotion has been an essential subject matter in this field. The attentiveness to affect also extends to the anthropological study religious practices and moral formations (Cassaniti and Hickman 2014, Desjarlais and Throop 2011, Desarlais 1992, Parish 1994). It is perhaps not surprising, then, that anthropologists of Christianity have also paid significant attention to affect and emotion, such as love (van de Kamp 2012b, Zigon 2013).

In "The Love of Jesus Never Disappoints: Reconstituting Female Personhood in Urban Madagascar" (2012), for instance, Cole elaborates on the role of Pentecostal churches in assuaging gendered suffering among middle-aged women who have become vulnerable to social exclusion. Some techniques Cole observed were affective and directed toward the cultivation of a relationship with Jesus through prayer and small acts of exchange. Even though the larger structures of kinship and gender inequality rarely changed, the language and experience of love could still bring about an affective shift in they interpreted and responded to the challenges. One woman who looked after a child with a serious disease, for instance, learned to frame her care in Christian emotive terms: "You have to do it with love, for anything you do without love is an empty thing without meaning" (Ibid.401).

Given the theoretical trends I have thus delineated, the affective theme of love seems particularly promising as an analytical tool to probe the intersection of migration and religion in particular, and of migration studies and the anthropology of Christianity in general. In what follows, I will explore the role of love and affection among Nikkei converts in Japan in three steps. First, I will discuss issues surrounding marriage, gender

roles, and intergenerational ties, the three common topics my informants often brought up as problems. Second, I will investigate how Pentecostal churches in Japan, such as Missão Apoio, serve as a social nexus through which migrants reimagine and reconstruct family. Particular attention will be paid to church-led events which have a clear focus on gender, family, and generation – namely, *Culto para Mulheres* (Worship for Women), Seminar *Casados para Sempre* (Married for Life), and *Culto para Jovens* (Worship for Youth). Love turns out to be an organizing theme in such church events, saturating the affective idioms and techniques that churchgoers employ. I will argue that the Christian effort to "restore family for God" in this context is not a symptom of religious conservatism – an image widespread in the US (Durham 2000) – but a viable response to common migratory issues. Lastly, I will analyze why many Nikkei converts speak of the Christian love (*amor*) in contrast to what they perceive as the culture of Japanese discipline (*educação*). I will conclude that many migrant converts experience Pentecostal practices in both ethical and ethnic terms to incorporate it into their project of self-remaking.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Tales of Lost Families

The Almeidas are a family of five – Luana, *sansei*[31] Nikkei mother, João Pedro, non-Nikkei father whom Luana describes as "white (*branco*)," and their three children who are 26, 24, and ten-years old, respectively. While Lara and Diego were born in Brazil, the youngest Chika was born in Japan. Having arrived in Japan in 1991, today they own two apartments in Homi Danchi – one for Luana, Chika, and João Pedro, and the other for

[31] *issei* (first generation), *nisei* (second generation), *sansei* (third generation), and *yonsei* (fourth generation).

Lara and Diego who are already in their twenties. I visited Luana Almeida one afternoon, whose apartment was five-minute walk away from where I lived in the housing complex.

She was born in Assaí, Paraná, to *nisei* parents who were "children of Japanese with the face of *nihon-jin* (Japanese)." When she was eight, her family moved to the city of São Paulo for the education of her older siblings. Both in Assaí and São Paulo, "there were many (Japanese) descendants" in the neighborhoods, and she remembers various Japanese foods and customs from her childhood – the commemoration of *obon*,[32] *mochi*[33] her grandparents gave her as a treat, and *undōkai*[34] festival of local Japanese associations, etc.

When she was a student at the University of São Paulo, she met and married João Pedro, her current husband, and subsequently left school without graduating. He was a high school graduate who ran a small eatery in the city. With the record high inflation rate ("it was the time of Plano Collor[35] – things were tough, you know"), he was forced to close down his business soon after their marriage. In 1991, they decided to "go to Japan to work and save money for a few years, because everyone was doing it back then – why not?"

They were not the first ones in Luana's family to emigrate. One year earlier in 1990, Luana's father migrated to Japan by himself. When she recounted the effect of her father's migration on her family, her face hardened slightly:

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[32] A Japanese Buddhist custom to commemorate and honor ancestral spirits.
[33] Stickey rice cake made of mochigome or glutinous rice.
[34] Sports Day, a day-long event held at Japanese schools for pupils and students to compete in various sports.
[35] The name given to a set of economic policies including inflation-stabilization plans carried out during the presidency of Collor de Mello in Brazil between 1990 and 1992. My informants mentioned Plano Collor mainly to emphasize the tremendous difficulty they experienced to financially survive in extreme inflation.

> My mother had to stay in Brazil because someone had to take care of the renovation of the house with the money he sent from Japan – and over time, there was estrangement (*afastamento*) between them. We began to get used to this situation, that he was always gone. (…) As time went by, more and more distance... My father stayed here longer, alone, and my mother there [in Brazil] (…).
>
> In Japan, he lived in Gunma.[36] When I'd say, "Dad, I want to come visit you [from Toyota]." He'd say, "No, you don't need to, it's really far away, I'm busy." And when I called, this obasan (middle-aged women) would take the call. "Who is the woman [who takes calls]?" "Ah, I share a house with a married couple."
>
> Then one day, he returned to Brazil, he didn't tell my mother, didn't tell my sister, and just showed up at their door. (…) He said, "Because the factory closed down there (…) so I was fired." And he left again to get a job, actually the same one he had before he went to Japan. He took care of a beach house in a nearby coastal city. So he went to live there. And one day, he had something like a seizure and passed away.
>
> When my sister went there to prepare for a funeral, what had happened was, he was with another woman (…). He had another wife! But my mother never knew, he didn't say a word about it. (…) this woman wanted to receive his pension, because there in Brazil a widow can continue to receive.[37] But my sister said, "Um, I am his daughter. And I have a mother, who is his spouse." The woman became like this [wide open eyes]. She didn't know anything. Because they were by themselves here [in Japan]. That's why he didn't want any contact with us – he got himself another wife in Japan.

Luana then went on to describe similar experiences she had seen among her Brazilian friends: unfaithful spouses, divorces, abandoned children, and so on. She thereby stressed the distancing effect – both physically and emotionally – migration often exerts upon family ties.

Luana's story, while narrated from her personal viewpoint, reflects some structural issues that apply more broadly to Brazilian migrants in Japan at large. Data collected by Associação Brasileira de Dekasseguis in 2004 from 321 subjects (Beltrão and Sugahara 2009:29), for instance, show that 43.7% of surveyed Brazilian men

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[36] Roughly 250 miles east of Toyota.

[37] *Pensão por Morte,* or Pension by Death, is a type of benefit in social welfare that the legal dependents of the deceased can receive, given that they meet certain conditions.

migrated to Japan unaccompanied by their families. Women, in contrast, tended to migrate with family members – spouses, children, siblings, etc. – and only 24.3% arrived in Japan alone. Even among married men, 38.2% migrated by themselves while just 19% of married women did so. These numbers indicate that gender-related expectations are among the chief factors in shaping migratory patterns. While men are more likely to prioritize economic motives and willing to migrate alone, women tend to frame their decision in relational terms and find solitary migration more challenging. One consequence is the prevalence of single-person households among Brazilian migrants in Japan, especially for men. While they makes up roughly 40% of all the Brazilian households surveyed in Japan, they constitute just 12% of households in Brazil according to the 2010 Brazil census (IBGE 2012a). This demographic change exacerbates the sense of *afastamento* – isolation, separation, and alienation from family ties – among many migrants.

Seen in this light, Luana's resentment toward her father's infidelity in Japan is linked to the larger sociological shifts that accompanied *dekasegi* migration. The sense of moral crisis she expresses regarding family values therefore has an element of experiential truth in this ethnographic context. Indeed, virtually everyone I met during fieldwork had a similar moral story to tell about the damaging effects of migration on family – ranging from their own life events to observations of what others went through to imaginations based on rumors.

In fact, the estrangement of family members is an acknowledged issue among Brazilian migrants and families on both sides of the Pacific. In Brazil, for instance, there exists a group called Association of Families Abandoned by Migrant Workers

(*Associação das Famílias Abandonadas por Dekasseguis*). Founded in 1991 to unite "widows and widowers of living partners (*viúvos de companheiros vivos*)" (Marra 2002), it had 300 registered families in 2010 (Matsuki 2010). One of the leaders, Djalma Straube, counts himself as one of the "victims" of abandonment. The Nikkei woman he married and with whom he had had two children stopped sending back remittances, cut off all communications with the family, and effectively went missing in Japan – until, five years later in 2000, she suddenly returned to Brazil and filed for a divorce (Marra 2002).

Brazilian media tend to problematize such issues in relation to the lack of diplomatic agreements in the area of civil and criminal cases between the two governments. For example, when a migrant in Japan fails to pay alimony to his or her family in Brazil, the Brazilian authority can send out an order, which the addressee can ignore since it will not be executed in Japan. Indeed, a major Brazilian newspaper O Estado de S. Paulo reported that Japan is "a great refuge for those who do not want to provide payment" among "Japanese descendants – the *dekasseguis*" (O Estado de S. Paulo 2010).[38] The article gives the following detail:

> The data from the Tribunal of Justice of São Paulo – the state with the largest number of dekasseguis in the country – show that in 2005 2,425 petition letters (*cartas rogatórias*) were issued to Japan. Among these, 1,122 dealt with alimony, 509 with divorces, 570 with recognition of paternity, and 224 with criminal issues. In 80% of the cases, the addressee was not localized. Even when they are found, the dekasseguis can ignore the precatory letters, the Ministry of Foreign Relations admits. (Ibid.)

While Luana felt she lost her father to Japan, the opposite is true for other migrants; sometimes, families they left behind in Brazil leave *them* behind as years pass

[38] The text of the article uses *descendente* (Japanese descendents) and *dekassegui* (migrant worker) interchangeably, a common lingustic and conceptual blurring observed among Brazilians.

by. Ana, a 33-year old *nisei* woman, left her non-Nikkei husband and six-month old daughter in Brazil to work and provide for her family. As she worked in Japan for several years, her family gradually "became more distant" but she "did not have time to think much about it." On her brief trip back to Brazil during holidays one year, her husband's family – specifically her mother-in-law – brought up the issue of legal guardianship. "She said that, um, since I was away all the time, it would be better for my daughter if more people had the capacity to care for her in every way, at the time she needed." After this legal arrangement and her return to Japan, Ana realized that it was increasingly difficult to reach her daughter. "They'd say on the phone, she is sleeping. How can she be sleeping all the time?" In the end, her husband filed for divorce and, after some resistance, she was "forced to give up" her daughter. "I was really angry. I cried. She is the love of my life – I worked for her!"

I heard Ana recount the story for the first time at a *célula*[39] home gathering in Homi Danchi – she was speaking with another Brazilian woman who, unlike her, migrated together with her husband and daughter. By the time Ana finished relating her experience, both were in tears. Then the other woman, holding Ana's hands, started telling similar experiences she had seen among her friends. "This is so sad, Ana… We *dekasseguis* have much suffering when it comes to family, for sure."

It is extremely difficult – virtually impossible, indeed – to determine the exact rate of divorce among Brazilians in Japan for several reasons. First, neither the Japanese nor Brazilian government regularly conducts comprehensive demographic survey that targets this population. Second, many Brazilian migrants lead a mobile lifestyle both

[39] Informal social gathering convened at a church member's home which is open for non-converts.

domestically and internationally. According to the survey by Associação Brasileira de Dekasseguis, for instance, close to a half of surveyed men and 40% of women had previously lived in Japan. For roughly 10% of all the respondents, it was their fourth, fifth, or sixth time in the country. Such a degree of mobility makes it more difficult for statistical studies conducted in either country to reflect the migrants in their findings. Additionally, the geographical location where divorce is filed may reveal as much as it conceals. Just because a divorce was filed through one of the consulates-general of Brazil in Japan does not necessarily mean that the marriage suffered primarily from migration; in theory, a couple who were already on the verge of divorce can travel to Japan and take legal steps once there. The opposite is also true. Migrant couples who decide to file for divorce in one of their short trips back to Brazil will not be reflected in the total number of divorces among Brazilian residents in Japan, not to mention the cases in which spouses left behind in Brazil initiate a petition for divorce.

That being said, a report published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brazil specifies that, "[a]ccording to an investigation carried out at the Consulate-General in Tokyo in 2004 and 2005, 473 letters of attorney[40] were filed with the specific objective of initiating the process for legal separation or divorce" (Costa 2007:166-167). The average number of divorce per year would be roughly 236. The annual number of marriages registered during the same period at the same consulate was 489. Since the report does not include similar data from other consulates-general in places such as Hamamatsu and Nagoya, where there is a large concentration of Brazilians, these numbers do not indicate

[40] Letter fo attorney is a written authorization to represent or act on another's behalf in private affairs, business, or some other legal matter, *procuração* in Portuguese.

the total numbers of divorces or marriages among Brazilian residents in the country. Assuming that they are at least partially representative of Brazilians in the Kantō region, which includes places such as Ōizumi, the ratio of divorce to marriage is 1:2.07. In Brazil, in contrast, there were 215,376 divorces and 670,203 marriages in total in the Southeast and South regions in 2014 (IBGE 2015).[41] The ratio of divorce to marriage is 1:3.11. Needless to say, the comparative picture I am trying to paint here is incomplete to say the least, and perhaps misleading when judged from the most rigorous standards of statistical investigation. Given the sheer lack of large-scale quantitative data on conjugal relations among Brazilians in Japan, I chose to include these numbers and ask the readers to see them with a grain of salt. In any case, my intention here is to suggest that migrants like Ana may be grappling with greater structural effects of migration in an intimate, personal way.

Laboring Day and Night: Family on Trial

Work is another factor migrants frequently bring up when they discuss what they perceive as the prevalent problem of family estrangement in their lives. Specifically, many speak of long and unpredictable working hours as the chief source of growing distance between husband and wife as well as parents and children.

Among married partners who have long full-time shifts, work often figures as an obstacle to the maintenance of emotional intimacy. This may well be a universal issue many working couples experience in any industrialized society (Hochschild 1997). Temporary migrant workers, however, are especially prone to unpredictable and irregular

[41] The great majority of Nikkei Brazilians live in these regions.

working hours as they have little capacity to control their labor environment. Paula is a 31-year old woman who lives with her husband in Homi Danchi. After teaching her some Japanese upon her request (she gave up in a month) and going out several times to have dinner together, we became friends. One night, I saw her most recent status on Facebook, which simply read: "Feeling down [sad face]." I quickly wrote back, "I hope you are OK. Hugs." Roughly thirty minutes later, a rather lengthy message for a Facebook communication appeared on my screen:

> Thank you, Suma. God, I sometimes don't know what to do – we Brazilians are here in Japan to work and save money, but very often our marriage suffers because of this very purpose – work. Last week, Kenji [her husband] was asked to work *nikōtai* (alternate shift) and, this week, he is working *yakin* (night shift). He made it very clear when he started working at this factory that he just wants to do *hirukin* (day shift). But when the factory really needs it and pushes you, he can't say no. I asked for *teiji* (regular hours – typically from 8am until 5pm) at my factory so that I can be home early to fix him a meal before he leaves for work. They said no, this month is really busy and I have to do at least three hours of *zangyō* (extra hours) every day. When I get home around 9, Kenji is already gone, and when I get up in the morning and leave for work, he is on his way home. I haven't met MY OWN [sic] husband in a week! What life is this? I am OK with working a lot, after all we are *dekasseguis*, but I didn't agree to not seeing my husband for a week. For this reason I am angry and sad. This is why I want to go back to Brazil.

Night shifts, particularly shifts alternating between day and night, are quite taxing on the body. Since it is shunned by many full-time employees and typically pays 25% more than day shift, temporary workers with economic incentive tend to fill the positions. Irregular working hours, however, do have consequences on family ties, as Paula expresses here. Indeed, her distress resonates with many Brazilian migrant workers – especially working wives – in Japan.

Many migrants feel that potential consequences of such a life style, when prolonged, are not limited to physical health but also damaging to the social health of

family life. Some complain that they cannot have enough quality time with their children due to long working hours. Lara, Luana and João Pedro's daughter who was brought to Japan at the age of three, recounted:

> Back then, I didn't see my father at all – I was what, seven, eight, and used to go to bed long before my father would come home from work – I think he came home close to midnight. All my friends were Japanese at school, and my mother spoke some Japanese because she is Nikkei and studied it a little in Brazil. My father, he is white as you know, and didn't speak any Japanese. One day, he tried to speak with me and I didn't understand what he was trying to say. I looked at him like, "What is this ojisan (strange man) saying? I have no clue." Then he started crying, right then and there, in front of me. I was completely stunned. (…) He was sad, you know, and he told me later that he felt it was his fault… He let that happen, you know.

After the above incident, Luana quit her work at a local factory to become a stay-at-home mother and transferred Lara to a local Brazilian school. When her Portuguese improved to the basic level two years later, Luana transferred her back to the Japanese school but never resumed full-time work herself. To this day, she works part-time and teaches Portuguese to little Brazilian children born in Japan in her spare time.

The communication issues between first-generation immigrants and second-generation children are documented widely among various migrant communities around the globe (Portes and Hao 2002, Portes and Rumbaut 2001). How language and generation intersect with each other is slightly more complicated in the case of Nikkeis in Japan due to the process of dual diaspora. Although she is a *sansei*, Luana grew up in a neighborhood with an active Japanese association, which taught her some Japanese as a child. João Pedro, in contrast, is a non-Nikkei without any knowledge of Japanese. Consequently, it was the father who felt more shocked and guilty about the loss of Portuguese language – a primary marker of Brazilian identity – from his child.

While the two ethnographic examples above both illuminate how migrants come to view work as a cause of family estrangement, they also highlight the important role that gender plays in their reactions to perceived problems. It is Paula, and not her husband, that insisted on arrangements at work so that she could prepare meals for him at home. It is Luana, and not João Pedro, who quit factory work to care for their child full-time and ensure that she would not forget her Brazilian identity. Here we can see that the tasks associated with domestic sphere and care of children predominantly fall onto women's shoulders – a tendency particularly common among middle- and upper-classes in industrialized societies (Collier and Yanagisako 1987). To illuminate how migrant women experience such gender expectations, a brief comparison of dominant gender roles in Brazilian and Japanese cultural contexts may be useful.

Gender Roles in Japan and Brazil

In Brazil, the dominant ideals about marriage and family were historically constructed based on hierarchical, authoritarian, and patriarchal relationships, under the influence of the Catholic Church (Mayblin 2010). There was, however, a noteworthy variance in terms of family compositions and roles over different social strata, ethno-racial lines, and regions of the country (Samara 1997, Souza and Botelho 2001) Consequently, actual ramifications of patriarchal values and practiced gender roles all vary considerably depending on socioeconomic, cultural, and regional factors. The modernization of patriarchal gender system in the early and mid-20th century similarly affected women of different classes in different ways. In the case of urban middle-class families, which many Nikkei Brazilians are today, women's wage work began to be regarded more

favorably due to high rates of inflation and increasing need for cash – "as long as it did not tarnish women's reputations (…), compromise their femininity (…), or threaten the stability of the male-headed household (…)" (Besse 1996:7).

In modern Japan, both State Shintō and funerary Buddhism have hinged on the unit of ie – the extended family household in the patriarchal Confucian lineage that ideally consists of grandparents, their eldest son, his wife, and their children. Within the ie system, which was codified by law in 1898 by the Meiji Civil Code, women were expected to perform the role of ryōsai kembo, or "good wife and wise mother" (Wilson 2006). Women's activities within the domestic sphere gained nationalist meaning during this period since their labor within the household was considered necessary for the building of strong "national family (kazoku kokka)." In postwar Japan, the ie system has experienced dramatic changes due to urbanization, declining birthrate, aging, and women's increasing participation in labor force (White 2002). Although family forms continue to diversify and diverge from the ideological ie, it remains a powerful ideal. The heavy cultural emphasis on motherhood, for instance, persists to this day.

Thus, we can speculate that patriarchal values continue to shape many family relations and practices in both Brazil and Japan. For example, the divorce rate in Brazil has been lower than in Japan for many decades due to the legacy of the Catholic Church – until 2010, when the legal process for divorce was simplified. In Japan, in contrast, the divorce rate has been constantly on the rise since the end of WWII, except the past decade when it has seen a mild decrease. In 2014, the divorce rate in Brazil was 2.41 while it was 1.77 in Japan (per 1,000 persons) (IBGE 2015, Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare 2015b:1).

In Japan, due to the legacy of ie, what is more stigmatized than divorce is extra-marital children and, by extension, cohabitation that may precede the birth of such babies. Even today, children born out of wedlock (and outside ie, by implication) cannot receive all the rights and benefits that those born from legally married couples can (Yoshizumi 1993). In 2013, the ratio of children born out of wedlock within all the new births was 2.22% in Japan (Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare 2015a:5). In Brazil, it was 66% in 2009 (Lippman and Wilcox 2014:19). Single-mother households are much more common and cohabitation is less stigmatized in Latin America (Esteve, Lesthaeghe, and López-Gay 2012). Some Brazilian migrants seem to carry such societal norms with them to Japan. The ratio of non-marital children among Brazilian residents in Japan in 2013 was 29.2%, which is much higher than 2.2% among the Japanese majority. Given that inclusion of foreign residents in governmental statistics in this area is not thorough, the number can be higher in reality (Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare 2015a:5). Total fertility rate was 1.8 in Brazil and 1.4 in Japan in 2011 (Lippman and Wilcox 2014:17).

The legacy of patriarchy in contemporary gender relations is also clear in wage inequality and women's lower participation in labor force. In Brazil, working women's average income was 72.3% of men's in 2011 (IBGE 2012b). In Japan, it was 72.2% (Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare 2015c:4). Despite decades of continuous increase, women's participation in formal labor force also remains markedly lower than men's in both nations (see Table 3).[42] However, we can see one significant difference between Brazil and Japan in the labor participation of women of reproductive age. While

[42] Governmental statistics do not reflect women's activities in the informal sector of economy. In Brazil, for instance, women in lower socioeconomic strata often work as domestic servants, which large-scale governmental statistics tend to overlook.

the participation rate continues to increase incrementally among Brazilian women, it drops sharply among Japanese women from 79% in their twenties to 67.2% in their early thirties, when many choose to have children and focus on childrearing at home.

Overall, in both Brazil and Japan the gender ideology that associates women with home-oriented roles in domestic space remains influential, with frequent divergences between ideals and practices. The majority of adult Brazilian women who migrate to Japan, however, engage in wage labor in the same types of work (i.e. contingent manual labor) as their male counterparts. As the term *dekasegi* – "temporary migrant laborer" – makes clear, the purpose of migration is understood to be economic accumulation, and this imperative generates more pressure and desire for women to work. Migrant women such as Paula and Luana are consequently prone to a sense of moral dilemma between work and home. While Paula continued to work full-time despite her resentment toward the work environment that would not permit her to fix meals for her husband, Luana left her full-time factory environment to become a stay-at-home mother for her children. Given the dominant societal norms regarding the role of mother in Japanese society, Luana's decision may well have been shaped in part by the new cultural environment in which her family lived. I now turn to the discussions of motherhood in Japan.

Table 3: Participation in Labor Force by Age and Gender (Data Source: OECD 2016)

	Brazil	Japan
Labor force participation rate 2013, aged 25-29	Women 71.6% Men 92.2%	Women 79.0% Men 93.8%
Labor force participation rate 2013, aged 30-34	Women 72.8% Men 93.9%	Women 67.2% Men 95.6%
Labor force participation rate 2013, aged 35-39	Women 73.3% Men 94.8%	Women 69.6% Men 96.5%

Good Mothers, Japanese Style

Brazilian mothers in contemporary Japan – Nikkei or non-Nikkei – tend to struggle with the gender roles expected of motherhood. Dominant gender roles in Japan are strongly shaped by gender stratification in family structure, strong association of women with domesticity or "*uchi* (inside/home)," and cultural significance of mother as an all-embracing nurturing figure (Ashikari 2003, Kelsky 1999, Lebra 1985, see also Allison 1999). The culturally specific roles mothers are supposed to fulfill include, for instance, the preparation of obentō, or elaborately prepared box lunch. Mothers commonly prepare obentō for their children in nursery, elementary school, and oftentimes even up to junior high school to demonstrate their care and dedication. While many find enjoyment and fulfillment in this practice, they are also put under the watchful gaze of school teachers and other mothers who judge them by the obentō they prepare. Anne Allison observes:

> The making of the *obentō* is (…) a double-edged sword for women. By relishing its creation (…), a woman is ensconsing herself in the ritualization and subjectivity (subjection) of being a mother in Japan. She is alianated in the sense that others will dictate, inspect, and manage her work. On the reverse side, however, it is precisely through this work that the woman expresses, identifies, and constitutes herself (Allison 1991:203).

As White also notes, the core of middle-class child-rearing beliefs in Japan is that "(…) nurture, not nature, is critical in the creation of a successful child" (White 2002:134). Obentō is among the most cherished mediums of such "nurture," both physically and emotionally.

Many Brazilian mothers who send their children to Japanese schools cannot meet this culturally delineated path to proper motherhood due to work, lack of skills, or unfamiliarity with Japanese school customs. Lara, the daughter of Luana, related the following experience from her childhood:

> The level of obentō that Japanese mothers make is just – unbelievable, you know, on another level. Sausages cut into the shape of octopus, omurice[43] that looks like pikachu,[44] the perfect balance between meat and vegetables in terms of color and nutrients… So intricate. Can you expect that from a Brazilian mother? Well, not quite. I always hid my obentō from my friends and ate it as quickly as possible, because I was so embarrassed. Their obentō looked shiny to me, you know [laughs].
>
> Once I asked my mother, "Um, I wish I could also bring a cute obentō to school." It was the day of school excursion at Homi Elementary School. She said OK. The next day, when I opened it at lunchtime, I only saw a huge omurice with a smiley face drawn on it with ketchup. I closed it, sat a bit further away from my friends, and ate it really quickly.

Lara's story demonstrates how food plays a pivotal role in the negotiation of generational and cultural identity. Her desire to fit into the "Japanese" school environment by bringing a "Japanese" obentō could not be fulfilled because – she thought – her mother was "Brazilian." Oftentimes, it is children who feel the tensions between two "cultures" more acutely due to their dependence on their parents, on the one hand, and enrollment in educational institutions that too often pressure them into acculturation, on the other.

While some Japanese teachers interpret Brazilian mothers' unconformity to school customs as unwillingness to provide "appropriate care" for their children, others observe – more correctly – that this is due to cultural differencess between Japan and Brazil. This is why some NGO/NPO organizations in Homi Danchi offer classes on how to make obentō. For example, Torcida - the group that provides Japanese language classes to Brazilian youth – invited parents of its Brazilian students and organized a three-hour long obentō class one Sunday. A dozen mothers – no fathers – showed up to learn how to cut sausage into various shapes of animals, make onigiris (rice balls) in the shape of Hello Kitty, and so on. At one point, one mother exclaimed, "God, Japanese are

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[43] Japanese rendition of omelette, which come with fried rice inside.
[44] Pikachu is a popular character in Pokemon, a media franchise that ranges from video games to TV shows.

so detail-oriented! Why don't we just throw in some rice and meat, and that's it!" Everyone laughed at her playful tone, including the Japanese instructor after the interpreter translated it. While such events can help Brazilian mothers, they can also increase the pressure for social conformity by idealizing the role of "Japanese mother."

Obentō is just one of many instances where Brazilian mothers can suffer from the guilt of not providing "proper care" to their children in Japan. Other examples range from looking after children's homework – which they find difficult due to language barrier and long working hours – to jugyō sankan (classroom visit) on a weekday when many are unable to take a day-off. Brazilian mothers are not the only ones who feel frustrated. One Japanese teacher at West Homi Elementary School related, "The Brazilian kids in my class rarely do their homework. I thought their mothers maybe cannot help them because it's in Japanese, so I had several questions translated into Portuguese. Many children still did not get them done, and I was so upset – what else can I do? Maybe they are busy with work, but it really makes my job harder."

Thus, many Brazilian mothers – especially both Nikkeis and non-Nikkeis – struggle to perform culturally appropriate gender roles in Japan. Since the majority works at the same time as looking after children, they are prone to feeling a heightened sense of discordance between the expected gender roles and what they can actually fulfill.

Lost Generation in Japan?

In addition to gender roles, intergenerational ties are also subject to change and negotiation as migrant families build their lives in new social environment. Just as Japanese immigrants in Brazil struggled with the generation gaps with their Brazil-born

offspring decades ago, Brazilian parents in Japan today grapple with what they perceive as "problems" among the younger generations born or raised in Japan. Luana's life history illustrates the dizzy pace at which intergenerational ties have transformed over a matter of several generations. As a child in Brazil, she learned some Japanese at a local language center because her family did not want her to forget her "heritage." Today, as an adult in Japan, she teaches Portuguese to young Brazilians in and around Homi Danchi "because they are Brazilian and should be able to speak the language of our land." Just as her parents worried about their children's becoming "completely *gaijin* (non-Nikkei, Brazilian)," today Brazilian parents in Japan like Luana fret the loss of Brazilian identity among their children.

This preoccupation manifests itself in frequent remarks that stress the in-betweenness of younger Brazilians growing up in Japan. Flavio, a *sansei* college graduate from São Paulo who migrated to Japan at the age of 24, made the following observation about Brazilian youth in Japan:

> I think they have a conflict of… let's say… what culture they belong to, you see. They are neither Brazilian – because they came to Japan at an early age – nor Japanese because they live inside a Brazilian community. So oftentimes, they feel neither Japanese nor Brazilian. They can claim, "I am Brazilian." But they still don't know Brazil, you see, like the job market there… So with all this, I think they end up losing their identity, they don't have identity.

Many Brazilian adults who grew up in Brazil until their early adulthood make similar comments such as Flavio's, sometimes directly to the face of youngsters themselves. I was always struck by the composure the adolescents and young adults maintained upon being subjected to what I found as a rather rude commentary. One 19-year old Brazilian boy, for instance, shrugged his shoulders when I asked him how he felt when adults said that he was "not really Brazilian." He responded in a mixture of Japanese and

Portuguese: "*Bom,* shōganai tte kanji. Ryōhō desho, ore. *É verdade, o que eles falam.* (Well, I feel like, what can you do. I am both [Japanese and Brazilian], you see. It's true what they say.)"

The claim of "identity loss" made by older migrants seems to be fueled in part by their discomfort with the cultural competency among the growing younger generations in Japan. While many parents encourage and applaud their children's achievements in Japanese institutions such as school, some also feel ambivalent about what they perceive as a threat to parental authority within the household. One night, I was in a car with the Morenos, a family of four consisting of Nikkei father, non-Nikkei mother, and two children of seven and ten. The siblings were pupils at West Homi Elementary. At one point, they started a quarrel in Japanese about a fight they witnessed earlier that day at school. The mother asked in Portuguese, "What? What are you two arguing about?" One of the siblings said, "kenka ga attan dayo (there was a fight)." The mother, clearly frustrated, responded, "What is kenka? I told you to always speak in Portuguese at home, haven't I?" She later related to me the difficulties she faced in parenting:

> I got angry the other day. My son, when I was scolding him, he said, "Ah, but you don't know…" "What? I don't know what?" "You don't know Japanese. You don't know anything about I'm going through at school." "Oh, you say I don't know anything? Tell me, do you know how to write Portuguese?" "No, ma'am." "Well then I still know more than you! Now be quiet and do as I say." It's really hard, Suma. He is forgetting Portuguese, he is Brazilian! Not only that, he disrespects me because I don't know Japanese. When your children disrespect you like that, how can you maintain a family?

Many Brazilian parents similarly feel that the familiar model of intergenerational relationship starts to malfunction in their prolonged migratory lives. They believe that parents are supposed to hold more knowledge that they then transmit to their developing offspring. It is, however, increasingly difficult to conform to such a framework when

their children have more "knowledge" of the Japanese language and when their youth are qualified to do the same type of unskilled temporary work as theirs. Many Brazilian parents therefore perceive "family" as more disrupted and disintegrated in Japan.

"I am Half": Ethnic Ambivalence of Brazilian Youth in Japan

One night, I was at the Toyota Station with a group of church members who were there for weekly evangelization. Lara, addressing Japanese passers-by, started her message in Japanese with the following: "Well, you may wonder who we are – we are Brazilians, Nikkei Brazilians. I myself am hāfu (half, or biracial)…" Having visited her apartment in Homi Danchi many times to chat with her, I was surprised to hear her describe herself as a hāfu – the word Japanese commonly use to refer to those who are considered racially mixed. Derived from the English word "half," it points to the half-Japaneseness and half-foreignness of such individuals. She had never used the word during our conversations, even when she spoke about the ambivalence she felt toward her Nikkei mother and white father. When I asked her later if she thought of herself as a hāfu, she responded, "Ah, that was just so Japanese people could understand more easily. The only word in Japanese for people like me is hāfu. I myself don't really care about how people may perceive me."

It took Lara many years to reach this state of nonchalance, according to her parents. Both her parents – Luana and João Pedro – remember a number of ways in which Lara struggled with the difference she perceived between herself and her peers. João Pedro, for instance, narrated the following incident from when Lara was in kindergarten:

> Whenever I finished work early, or on my days-off, I went to (the kindergarten) to pick her up. I noticed that she didn't run up to me like other kids, it sometimes

> took a long time to even find her. Even when I – or the teachers there – found her, she was still very quiet and wouldn't come close to me. She was embarrassed by me, you know. She later told my wife, "Daddy's nose is weird." She didn't want other kids to see me…

Similarly, Lucas – a 25-year old Brazilian man who came to Japan at the age of three, related the following about the two years he spent at a local Japanese elementary school. His mother is non-Nikkei and his father is Nikkei.

> Well, my experience at the Japanese school was – just awful (laughs). From day one, I was bullied. They would leave me behind intentionally when all the children in the neighborhood were supposed to go to school together in a group. They would hide my shoes so I couldn't go home. They would call me "Butajiru-jin (Brazilian pig)!" To think about it now, it is quite normal for small children to pick on those who looked different – with face like this [points at his face], I stood out – my Japanese was still very poor, too. But at the time, it hurt me so deeply. I was only a child.

In the end, his parents transferred him to a Brazilian school since bullying did not seem to stop. Ironically, Lara had an inverse experience during the two years she spent at a Brazilian school. Since she could speak only rudimentary Portuguese with heavy Japanese accent, her Brazilian peers bullied her that she was "*Japa* (Jap)." For many years, she was "determined never to speak Portuguese again."

While racial mixture is often accepted as a norm and even celebrated as the essence of national identity in Brazil, it is greeted as a rarity outside of authentic "Japaneseness" and invites mixed reactions in Japan (Kaneko 2010, Creighton 2009, Fish 2009). The Portuguese word for individuals with mixed ethnic or racial heritage is literally "mixed (*mestiço*), which originally denoted the children born out of colonial encounter between Portuguese men and indigenous women in the Americas. In contemporary Japan, the closest term is "half (hafu)" as Lara observes, which does not focus on the unity of two components but rather highlights the distinctiveness of each of

the two "halves" – Japanese and foreign. "Half" individuals are at times coveted for the desirability of their foreignness, especially if they appear to possess "white" features – small round face, big eyes, long legs, pale skin, etc. (Murphy-Shigematsu 2001, Rivas 2015, Watarai 2014). For example, a number of models – both Japanese and foreign – with mixed ethnic heritage appear on magazine covers every week. They can, however, also be ostracized as a perceived threat to ethnic purity which is the centerpiece of national identity in Japan (Murphy-Shigematsu 1993, Willis and Murphy-Shigematsu 2007). As someone who appears to disrupt received cultural categories – "Japanese" and "foreign" – a "half" child it still today especially prone to bullying in school.[45]

Many Brazilian youth with mixed ethnic heritage become quite self-conscious of their appearances and mixed background as they grow up in this social context. While some are greeted with envy for their "white" "exotic" features, others grow to loathe their foreign "half" that seems to set them apart from their Japanese peers. The latter group – those who "conceal" their Brazilianness in the effort to "become Japanese" – is a frequent subject of conversation among migrants: "The daughter of so-and-so said she wanted to drain all the Brazilian blood out of her." "The son of so-and-so never brings his friends home because then they would know that he is Brazilian." "My daughter told me, 'Daddy, can you keep quiet when I bring friends home? You are Japanese if you don't open your mouth.'" The retelling of such episodes usually elicits gasps, rolling of eyes, or dry laughs from older migrants, furthering the widespread perception that family becomes disintegrated in their migratory lives in Japan.

[45] For the discussion of other less common terms associated with mixed individuals such as *ainoko* (mixed-bloods), see (Burkhardt 1983).

"Culture of Discipline" in Question

Thus far, I have discussed the common family-related issues that many Nikkei Brazilian migrants experience in Japan. Whether it is conjugal relations or parent-child ties, they attribute much of their pain and suffering to *afastamento* – emotional distance, separation, and estrangement. The perceived sources of *afastamento* are many: physical distance, demanding labor, unfulfilled gender roles, widening generation gaps, and alienated ethnic identity. All of these factors can breed a feeling of family disintegration among Brazilian migrants in Japan.

What is ironic about the discussion of common familial issues so far is that, in Brazil, Nikkeis are often characterized by family solidarity – the opposite of the separation, infidelity, and estrangement that permeate the migrants' stories. Ischida, who carried out an ethnography on Nikkei identity in contemporary Brazil, reports on the images of Nikkei family common among her informants: "the firmer structure and more united family life (*convivência*)," "discipline (*educação*) received at home," and "the gratitude to the family, to the parents and ancestors" (Ischida 2010:175, see also Cardoso and Ninomiya 1998).

Such stereotypes are furthered by the fact that intra-ethnic marriage used to be the norm among Japanese and Nikkei communities in Brazil at least until the early 1960s. Between 1908 and 1958, the ratio of inter-ethnic marriage was 2.57% among male Japanese immigrants and 0.38% among the female counterparts. The rate was slightly higher among Brazil-born Nikkeis; between 1923 and 1958, the ratio of inter-ethnic marriage was 7.57% for Nikkei men and 1.57% for Nikkei women (Comissão de Recenseamento da Colônia Japonesa 1964:198). In prewar Japan, roughly 70% of

couples married in the form of *miai*, or "arranged marriage" that involved two ie, not individuals, as participants in the arrangement (Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare 2013:73). Not surprisingly, Japanese immigrants brought the practice of *miai* to Brazil, where it served to promote intra-ethnic marriage and maintenance of ethnic boundary among *issei* and *nisei* generations (Ischida 2010:176).[46] In many cases, the familial and social pressure for ethnic endogamy bordered on *de facto* obligation and entailed social exclusion of those who chose to do otherwise.[47] Today, however, the situation is the opposite. "High levels of interethnic marriage (almost 46% overall and over 60% in some regions of Brazil) are a fact of life in the Nikkei community, due in part to the entry of Japanese Brazilians into the middle and upper classes, which has decreased the pool of partners for those unwilling to 'marry down'" (Lesser 2003a:13). Although inter-ethnic marriage has thus become the new norm, the memory of its stigmatization is still very alive in people's minds. A number of informants told me that their Nikkei/Japanese ancestors – grandfather, mother, uncle, etc. – were estranged or even disowned by their families upon marrying non-Nikkei Brazilians.

Nonetheless, many Nikkei migrants in Japan continue to evoke unity, harmony, and moral discipline when they speak of "Japanese family (*família japonesa*)" back in Brazil. Luana, for example, compared her Nikkei family and her husband's non-Nikkei family in the following manner:

> João Pedro, his family fought a lot, his mother and father. When his mother didn't provoke, the father would. When he remained quiet, she would start a fight. João Pedro used to think, "But what kind of life is this? I don't want a marriage like

[46] I could not locate large-scale statistical data on the frequency of arranged marriage among Japanese and Nikkei communities. Ischida, whom I cite here, simply writes that it was practiced among *issei* and *nisei* families.

[47] "Thus, there was little *mestiçagem*: only 3 percent of the pre-World War II generation of Japanese-Brazilians were of mixed blood" (Adachi 2004:69).

> this." (…) So he grew up believing that in marriage happiness did not exist. Because that was the only example he saw at home.
>
> I formed my concept of family differently. (…) My mother was at home with us, and my father would come home to have coffee, and my mother stopped doing whatever she was doing to sit down with him and listen to him. And he would tell her funny stories, and they would laugh together. So the image I have of family is this. "Wow, I want a family like this," you know. (…)
>
> Interviewer: When you came to Japan, did you imagine at all that you'd become a *crente* (born-again Christian)?
>
> Luana: Not at all! [laughs] It was João Pedro who had all these, um, well, we *nihon-jin* (Japanese) are raised to be proper. We have this culture of discipline and politeness (*educação*) already. Parents teach us early on, "Don't steal. Don't do wrong things. You'll get hurt if you hurt someone." So this was the teaching among us. We didn't know the Word of God, but we knew that we had to walk the right path. We had these information but nothing of Jesus, you know, in my family. (…)

While she does not overtly generalize that non-Nikkei Brazilians are more prone to family conflicts, she certainly contrasts the solidarity of her "Japanese family" with her non-Nikkei husband's disorderly home: "We Japanese are raised to be proper – we have this culture of discipline," as she puts it.

Another observation Luana makes in the interview excerpt concerns the role of mother within "Japanese family" in the context of Brazil: "My mother was at home with us (…) and my mother stopped doing whatever she was doing to sit down with him [her father] and listen to him." Her memory of the role her mother used to play within the family reflects popular images surrounding Nikkei mothers and, by extension, Nikkei women as well: subservient, dedicated, nurturing, and family-oriented (Ischida 2010:168-9, for sexuality and stereotype, see Lesser 2007:14-9).

The picture she paints of "Japanese family" corresponds with the positive stereotypes associated with Nikkei ethnicity in general in Brazil, such as honesty, politeness, and dedication. However, just like the ethnic prestige of Nikkeis, the perceived family solidarity of Nikkeis also seems to suffer in the process of migration. As

discussed above, Luana's father "found another wife" in Japan, a clear act of infidelity that shook her world when she discovered it (to this day, she and her sister keep it a secret from their mother). Likewise, Luana could not afford to become a stay-at-home mother – the ideal "Japanese mother" in her memory – in the first years of her life in Japan because the couple had to pay back the brokerage fee to their *empreiteira* (staffing agency) as quickly as possible. It was only when they realized, years later, that their daughter had forgotten Portuguese that Luana quit her job to assume the role.

Thus, experiences of family disintegration might be particularly painful for Nikkei migrants in Japan due in part to its incompatibility with the said images of "Japanese family" in Brazil. Nikkei migrants like Luana feel that the unit of family that used to transmit "the culture of discipline" starts to disintegrate in the process of migration – ironically enough, in the land of ancestors where "Japanese family" is supposed to originate from.

Superwomen in the Ancient Style: Christian Gender Roles

I have thus far outlined some of the major familial issues discussed and experienced by Brazilian migrants in Japan. Do Brazilian Pentecostal churches address such struggles, which are common among migrant converts?

The short answer is yes, oftentimes quite explicitly. Church leaders – the majority of whom are Nikkei migrant workers themselves – have had first-hand experiences with most of the issues outlined above and often speak about "restoring the family." At first glance, family restoration seems to be a part of evangelical trope and preoccupation that are "universal" – that is, existent in consistent forms across geographical and cultural borders (for the US, see, for example, Bartkowski 2001, Harding 2000:153-181). In the

context of Brazilians in Japan, however, migrant converts often experience family restoration in particular ways in relation to their migration history and issues. I will start with a discussion of two events provided at Missão Apoio Toyota – *Casados para Sempre* (Married for Life) and *Culto para Mulheres* (Worship for Women) – which are aimed at the betterment of marital relationship and reconfiguration of gender roles.

Married for Life is a weekly seminar that teaches married couples how to strengthen their marital tie as a life-long alliance grounded in the Word of God. Several couples who are regarded to have strong Christian marriage host the seminar every Sunday night to guide a group of other couples who wish to work on their relationships. Participants are encouraged to be as honest and candid as possible at each meeting – "If you don't open up your heart completely, God cannot work on your marriage," as one group leader said. To create a place for honesty and sincerity, all participants are required to sign the pledge to keep whatever they heard during study sessions to themselves. This practice is to protect individuals with painful or morally questionable experiences from social exposure and also to encourage them to completely open up in a safe environment. This meant I could not directly observe the actual study sessions of Married for Life. Data were therefore collected from past or present participants who were willing to share their own experiences of the study group.

The required textbook for Married for Life at Missão Apoio was a Portuguese translation of North American evangelical marriage manual entitled *Married for Life: Biblical Principles for Marriage – Married Couple's Manual* (*Casados para Sempre: Princípios Bíblicos para o Casamento Manual do Casal*). Mike and Marilyn Phillipps – American evangelical authors based in Colorado who run Nova Shalom Marriage

Ministries International and University of Family – created the first version of the textbook in English in 1986. The Portuguese version used at the church was provided by an evangelical group called Associação MMI Brasil (MMI Association Brazil) located in Atibaia, São Paulo.

One of the foci of Married of Life is the reconfiguration of gender roles according to its Christian vision. The textbook, for example, has a whole chapter dedicated to "Roles (*Papéis*)." It posits the ideal model for marital relationship as complementary: "b. Each [Adam and Eve] had qualities that the other needed. 3. The husband and the wife were created to complement each other and not to compete against each other" (Phillipps and Phillipps 1986:48). The remainder of the chapter lists and details "natural" roles to be fulfilled by each spouse, which I summarize in Table 4.

According to the official ideals, husband takes on active, protective, and leading roles while wife fulfills accompanying, supportive, and yielding roles. While some outsider observers may be tempted to characterize the women's roles listed here as "passive" and "subordinate," my informants would object such a generalization as inappropriate. While some words converts use indeed imply the passivity of women

Table 4: Ideal Gender Roles in Marriage for Life

HUSBAND	WIFE
Tranquilizing Protection	Assistant
Leader	Supporter
Provider	Administrator
Model of God's Heart	Reflection of God's Love
The One that Loves and Protects	The One that Loves, Companion
Model of God's Sovereignty	Reflection of God's Creativity
Intercessor, Fighter	Intercessor, The One that Discerns

(Phillipps and Phillipps 1986:51-7)

(e.g. "reflection" is never used when discussing men's roles), their view is that women can be just as active as men *as long as* they do not publicly override men's official authority.

Indeed, most female members at Missão Apoio Toyota, as far as I could see, were assertive and self-assured. They are eloquent, cheerful, expressive, demanding, and energetic. I knew quite a few activities – street evangelization, *célula* home gatherings, and special services – which would cease to continue without the unofficial leadership of women. While only (male) pastors and presbyters could give regular sermons, women spoke from the podium just as much and loudly as men at every service, delivering testimonies and other messages. In sum, my participant observation showed that the popular caricature of Pentecostal women as submissive victims of patriarchy was inadequate.

One message delivered at the Worship for Women[48] in March 2014 can bring this point home. The theme for this special service was "*Mulheres Modernas à Moda Antiga* (Ancient-Style Modern Women)." To roughly a hundred women who gathered that night, the *pastora* (the lead pastor's wife) began her sermon with a question: "Some people say that we are anti-modern because they think we embrace old irrational values – but are we really?" She listed three qualities of "modern women" – those who take up challenges, who take good care of themselves, and who are financially independent. She then elaborated on each of these characteristics, arguing that many female figures in the Bible were with exactly such characteristics and therefore already "modern." Abigail, for instance, was an intelligent, articulate, and wise woman who protected her husband

[48] Missão Apoio Toyota did not have Worship for Men at the time of my fieldwork.

whenever he was in trouble. She was also respectful of male authority and deeply pious. "She was brave, bright, and humble – she was ancient and modern. She is a superwoman from the Bible!"

Then, addressing women's financial independence, the *pastora* assured the attenders – the majority of whom full-time factory workers – that working hard to help your family does not go against Christian ideals. "If anything, you should be ready to work just as hard as men to help your husband." She does not fail to stress, however, that women's hard work should always be directed toward assisting others (particularly husband) and never to personal achievement. In other words, it is the purpose of work that can make women's labor Christian or un-Christian. She repeated a piece of advice she once gave to one of the female congregants:

> She came up to me and said, "*Pastora*, my husband is driving me crazy! I work so hard! I do four hours of *zangyō* (extra hours) every day but he does *teiji* (regular hours). He comes home at five and just sits there doing no house chores. When I come home at ten, exhausted, I have to do all the work at home! He says we don't need to do *zangyō* to survive and it's my choice."
>
> I said, "You don't need to but chose to do *zangyō*? Then it's your responsibility. You are trying to be a man, but earning is men's role. When you try to take that role, something goes wrong in the family. (…)
>
> Since many of us work in the factory side by side with men, I see a lot of women trying to be like men. Do not do it because there won't be any peace at home if you do. (…) If anyone tells you that men and women are just the same and should do the same thing, then think about this: After all, we women are not paid the same amount for the exact same service we provide, right, sisters? [many women nod deeply.] Right, at so many factories? They get 1,000 yen per hour and we get 800 yen. Think about it.

As aforementioned, wage inequality is a fact of life for many women in both Brazil and Japan. Working women's average income was 72.3% of men's in Brazil and 72.2% in Japan in 2011. The *pastora*, then, seems to be advancing a sharp social critique. She points out that the equality between men and women is not a reality but oftentimes

merely a "talk" in the larger society, whose members sometimes judge evangelical churches such as theirs as a promoter of gender inequality. She asserts that, by assigning men to the gender role of principal provider, women are making a rational choice because the overall labor condition is set up to men's advantage. Interestingly, she thus argues that Christian gender roles help women adapt to the capitalist system in Japan – which may not be too surprising given the patriarchal values shared by both Christian and Japanese cultures.

The *pastora* also touches on a common sentiment expressed by women converts who work or have worked long hours: That the identical work environment for men and women and the economic independence of women create "women like men," thereby disrupting ideal gender roles.[49] This may as well be a post-conversion reinterpretation of their prior lives through the lens of Christian gender roles. Any issues they had previously experienced in marriage – estrangement, conflict, and separation – can now be explained by their ignorance of "proper" gender roles at the time.

However, most women who related such comments still worked as much as men, meaning little had changed in their objective circumstances. What is the meaning of Christian gender roles for those women who continue to "do the same work as men" and retain relative economic independence? It is my belief that the sentiment of "men and women are becoming the same" is also connected to the anxiety arising from repetitive manual labor. That is, many unskilled laborers fear that the automated mechanical work reduces men and women to automatons, erasing all signs of human individuality –

[49] Yamamoto (2010) observes that the life as migrant workers in Japan makes many Nikkei women gain enhanced economic independence from men. Most of such women, however, continue to conform to traditional gender roles of domestic supporter in most part albeit with some inner conflict.

including gender-based differences. Christian gender roles can provide a way for active differentiation in such a context where migrant workers feel undifferentiated except in regards to the value of their bare labor (for similar discussion of factory labor's effects, see, for instance, Ong 2010, Striffler 2005).

Christian gender roles in this social context, then, are pragmatically and emotionally useful to many women in three ways. First, the official gender ideology does not hamper their actual leadership or sense of self-worth in most social contexts. Second, Christian gender roles hold men responsible for work, provision, and family survival, which is in alignment with the general labor environment that treats working women unequally. The Pentecostal community also gives women more social approval for working less and staying at home for children – which makes it easier for mothers to fulfill the expected roles in the Japanese society. Third, gender differentiation advanced by Christian ideals appeals to working women who feel that their sense of self is becoming "flat" due to mind-numbing repetition, automation, and mechanization, which characterize their wage labor.

My argument so far in large part supports the existing findings in the anthropology of Christianity and gender. Since the work of pioneering scholars such as Austin-Broos (1997) and Brusco (1995), who studied Pentecostal Christianity in Jamaica and Colombia, respectively, one question seems to have driven this body of literature: Why do so many women, who constitute the numerical majority in Pentecostal movement, voluntarily embrace an overtly patriarchal ideology which puts them in a subordinate position in relation to men? The scholarly response to date tends to agree on one point that female converts choose real gains over symbolic appearance (Burdick

1998, Chesnut 1997, for the focus on men but with similar argument, see Van Klinken 2011, Van Klinken 2012). Brusco (1995), for instance, famously analyzed that Pentecostalism works in women's favor by obligating men to marital fidelity and provision for family. She argued that Pentecostalism is a "strategic" women's movement (Brusco 1986) by which they redirect to the household the income their male partners used to spend on activities associated with *machismo* – performance of aggressive and exaggerated masculinity such as drinking, smoking, and illicit affairs (Gutmann and Vigoya 2005): "The machismo role and the male role defined by evangelicalism are almost diametrical opposites. Aggression, violence, pride, self-indulgence, and an individualistic orientation in the public sphere are replaced by peace seeking, humility, self-restraint, and a collective orientation and identity within the church and the home (…)" (Brusco 1986:137). Put simply, Pentecostalism "domesticates" men (Stoll 1990, see also Eriksen 2014:262-3).

While such a political reading of Pentecostal movement is certainly compelling, what is lacking from such a "strategy"-oriented framework is an attention to women's subjective and emotive experiences. I now turn to some of such affective narratives.

Married for Life: Learning to Love

Camila was a 34-year old married *sansei* woman with two little boys. She was merry, humorous, and quite fun to be around. We worked at the same food processing factory in Toyota for a few months. One day, as we stood side by side and took dozens of baked cheesecakes out of round pans, she started telling me about her experience in the Married for Life seminar at Missão Apoio Toyota:

> The other night, for example, I became very emotional (*emocionado*). We were supposed to confess anything that we hid or had not told our spouses, because between a husband and a wife, there can't be any secrets. And… João, he started telling me about this one time he cheated on me. I was stunned. I never knew. (…) He was crying so much – I had never seen him cry like that. "I'm sorry, so sorry." At first, I was angry. Apparently this happened when we were still dating – if I had known, I would not have married him and had kids! (…)
>
> He says he is so much happier and feels more affectionate toward me now. It's like this stone has been lifted from his heart and now he doesn't have any obstacle to truly love me, you know. Secrets are like rocks that block true intimacy. (…) So it's good…

Camila highlights the emotive force of this experience ("I became very *emocionado*") by recounting her husband's tears, her anger, and her eventual forgiveness that renewed his love for her. As she put it, "It's like this stone has been lifted from his heart and now he doesn't have any obstacle to truly love me."

Camila's husband's confession took place during the lesson on intimacy, when each participant was encouraged to recognize one's own past sexual sins, repent, and forgive. The textbook builds its ideal relational model for husband and wife on an interpretation of biblical verses on Adam and Eve:

> Genesis 2.25 reveals God's plan and the potential of our life of "One Flesh" as husband and wife. (…) c. There was no shame or darkness (sin) between them. Imagine oneself completely naked in all the senses – physical, emotional, and spiritual – together with your spouse, without any shame, without any obstacle! d. "Transparent" in spirit, soul, and body; free to be just themselves, with total openness and sincerity. e. This is God's plan for your marriage as well (Phillipps and Phillipps 1986:35).

The Married For Life seminar thus promotes a marital relationship that is "transparent" and "open" in the "physical, emotional, and spiritual" senses. In this view, any obstacles to the expression of "true love" – such as secrets – must be eliminated from the conjugal relationship. The ideal conjugal relation at Missão Apoio is therefore a companionate

marriage – a marriage in which emotional intimacy and romantic love play a pivotal role (Hirsch and Wardlow 2006, Padilla et al. 2008)

While companionate marriage was the ideal form of marital relationship for most congregants even before their conversion, they feel that emotional estrangement (*afastamento*) prevalent in Japan makes it more challenging. In this context, Pentecostalism provides them with a community in which their commitment to romantic love can be renewed. At the "graduation ceremony" of the Married for Life seminar I observed, for example, participants and guests dressed up in suit and long dress as if it were their romantic date night. When each graduating couple moved to the front of the church to receive a completion certificate, they hugged, kissed and smiled at one another. Some husbands went down on one bent knee, a popular gesture of romantic love, to quickly confess their renewed love for their wives; wives responded with a huge smile and the crowd with a loud cheer. Many attendants believed that one becomes naturally more expressive and affectionate in relationships that are inspired by Christian values – a view that occasions such as this support and thereby cement.

One essential practice among churchgoers indeed seems to enhance the perception of enhanced affection (*carinho*) and love (*amor*) among converted couples and families: verbalization. Just as faith is fortified through belief in heart (i.e. internal conviction) and confession with mouth (i.e. outward expression) in Pentecostal framework, the fostering of other virtues also requires tangible and intentional articulation. As Harding succinctly stated, "speaking is believing" (Harding 2000) in evangelical Christianity. Speech is a medium of self-transformation. Loving expressions are strongly encouraged in this social context, especially from male spouses.

The Interpreters of the Sacred

I have thus far elaborated on how Pentecostal networks, practices, and philosophies help converts cultivate more satisfying familial – primarily marital – relationships. This section shifts the focus to the issue of generational identities among younger Brazilians who were born and/or raised in Japan.

The church serves as a place where Brazilian youth can affirm their in-betweenness as a positive aspect of their identity. Missão Apoio Toyota has two activities outside of regular services that are geared toward young members in their adolescence and early twenties: *Culto para Jovens* (Worship for Youth) and *Culto em Japonês* (Worship in Japanese). The latter was organized for Japanese members and visitors but in reality was attended by Brazilian youth who spoke fluent Japanese. At the time of my fieldwork, there were three regular Japanese attendants and only one of them – a young woman in her twenties – was converted. The other two were middle-aged men who were brought to the church by their Brazilian acquientances. None of them spoke Portuguese.

One practice through which affirmation of youth identity takes place is interpretation. At regular services, Japanese members and visitors are provided with earphones, with which they can listen to simultaneous interpretation of sermons and testimonies in Portuguese. Half a dozen Brazilian members – all of them born and/or raised in Japan – take turns every week to fulfill the role as an interpreter. In this way, bilingual and bicultural youth can put their intermediary position into service for divine purposes. The in-betweenness of youngsters turns into an indispensible strength that transforms them into cultural brokers for the sacred to cross linguistic boundaries.

This positive conceptualization of bilinguality was highlighted at Missão Apoio's Youth Congress in Hamamatsu, which gathered young members from roughly a dozen churches in March 2014. Pastor Laelso Santos, the co-founder of the congregation, exclaimed from the center stage to a few hundreds of youth in Portuguese: "Those of you who can speak Japanese, raise your hand! You, young men and women, have the power. Power to translate the Word, transmit the Word, and plant the Word in this Japanese soil. You have the gift from God!" Many youth pumped their fists in the air in response and shouted "*Aleluia!*"

Pentecostalism also informs the new ways in which young migrant converts conceptualize and experience their in-between positionality in the Japanese society. Their intermediate marginality becomes the powerful rhetorical and experiential springboard to claim belonging in the "third," more "transcendent" culture. Flavio, a long-term member of Missão Apoio Toyota who occasionally offered motivational talks and workshops for the youth at church, had the following to say on one of such occasions:

> In Japan, the culture is that everyone has to think the same way. See, they say that the nail that sticks out gets hammered down – you are put in your place. This was their industrial culture in Japan. Today, we have an advantage, which is, in our head, our mind is part Brazilian and part Japanese. So you are in Japan, study in Japan, you have to take this as an advantage, not as a flaw. "Ah, I'm embarrassed to be Brazilian… at school… I want to be like Japanese…" No. You have to think this way: "Thanks to God, God gave me two cultures. I have a Japanese-Brazilian culture. So I will create a third culture, an international culture."

He urges the youngsters to think of their identity not as "half" but as "double" – "God gave me two cultures." He argues that such a realization will make them more apt to "create" yet another culture, which can rise above national confinements. He thereby posits that the lack of self-containment within a single ethno-national boundary does not lead to marginality but instead enhances the aptitude for transnational transcendence.

A similar theme was brought up frequently at the church events for youth. One leader of youth group – himself a *yonsei* Nikkei Brazilian raised in Japan – made the following point on one of such occasions:

> So many people say, "Are you Japanese, or are you Brazilian?" [the audience laughs] Right, brothers and sisters? Have you heard that one before? But why that question when we have the culture of God? Why worry about it, when we have the culture that God taught us through his Word, the culture of love and peace? (…) And love, above all love, is universal – it doesn't matter where you are or who you are. Love your neighbors and forgive them. This is the culture of God, and it is the same everywhere.

The youth group leader upholds love as the marker of their "universal" and "global" culture. He implies that the cultivation of love as a member of "God's culture" is more important than all-common preoccupation with ethno-national self-identification: "Why worry about it, when we have the culture that God taught us (…)."

Brazilian youth are thus encouraged to reclaim their mixed heritage not as a curse but as a blessing; they are also reminded repeatedly that membership in the Kingdom of God - "God's culture" – takes precedence over ethno-cultural identification or belonging. Such messages should resonate particularly strongly with people haunted by in-between identity and contested belonging, such as Nikkei youth growing up in Japan today. Their generational identity and mixed ethnic heritage, as discussed earlier, pose a set of unique issues that older migrants may not experience. And what binds those who belong to this "third culture" together, they argue, is the cultivation of love.

From Culture of Discipline to Culture of Love

While converts regard love and affection as universal Christian qualities, the ways in which such values are invokes in the specific context of Brazilian migrants in Japan draw

on common images associated with "Japanese" and "Brazilian." Migrant converts frequently imply in their casual comments that love and affection are traits more "Brazilian" than "Japanese."[50] For example, the contrasting characterization of "cold (*frio*)" Japanese and "warm (*carinhoso*)" Brazilian is common among Brazilians in Japan (Kawamura 1999).

The popularity of such a comparison is ironic in that, in Brazil, Nikkeis are often stereotyped – by the Brazilian majority as well as by themselves – for being more cold, rigid, and square. Those who see themselves as more integrated into the Brazilian majority culture – typically second, third, and later generations – in particular attach such images to their ancestors. In this context, migrant converts view their conversion to Pentecostalism as a break from cold and traditional "Japanese family" toward loving and affectionate "Christian family" (cf. Meyer 1998). Mariane, a *sansei* woman who converted in Japan, related:

> When I was young I thought my mother didn't love me. All of my friends at school, their mothers kissed them, hugged them, called them "my little love (*amorzinho*)" and "my pretty thing (*fofinha*)" and everything. I had nothing of it. (…) I was thirsting for love, but I could not get it, because my parents were very Japanese. They didn't say any warm things to me, didn't hug me, didn't even kiss each other! When I realized that she didn't know how because of this, you know, the way she grew up, I was so moved. I forgave her. She is only human, you know, that's all she knew, because that's the only culture she grew up in.

For her, Christianity is the cure for the emotional wounds left by the loveless and cold "culture" of her "very Japanese" parents, which plagued her natal family for generations. Mariane, a past participant of Married for Life, is today deeply content with her Christian marriage with another Nikkei convert, which she characterizes as warm and loving.

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[50] "Japanese" here can refer to the Japanese majority in contemporary Japan as well as their ethnically Japanese parents, grandparents, and ancestors in Brazil.

Here we can see that migrant converts often experience the "Christian family" in both ethical and ethnic terms. While the cultivation of love is an ethical project of self-transformation, it also involves the remaking of ethnic identity. On the one hand, "Christian family" is stable and united – as seen in the Pentecostal emphasis on companionate marriage. On the other hand, it is loving and affectionate – as the Married for Life seminar encourages. Stability and unity, as discussed above, are also common qualities associated with the "culture of discipline" among Nikkeis in Brazil, which many migrants see as disrupted upon their migration to Japan. Love and affection are perceived to be "Brazilian" traits that the Japanese in Japan and Nikkeis in Brazil often fail to embody. In fact, one of the best-known Brazilian films on Nikkeis, *Gaijin: The Road to Freedom* (Yamazaki 1980), deals with the issue of gender, love, and generation in a substantive way. The main protagonist, Titoe, is a Japanese woman who enters into an arranged marriage with a Japanese man whom she does not know and immigrates to Brazil. "The director highlights sharp differences in relations between genders: Brazilian gallantry and romantic manners are contrasted to the violence and perceived coldness of a Japanese arranged marriage with no room for romance" (Moniz 2002). The movie ends with a hint of romantic relationship between Titoe and Tonho, an Italian immigrant, thereby suggesting a future with miscegenation and trans-ethnic class solidarity. While "Brazilian family" is thus codified for love and romance in migrants' imaginations, it is also stereotyped for disorder and instability, as Luana's narrative above indicated.

We can see here that "Christian family" embodies the best of both worlds – the best parts of "Japanese family" and "Brazilian family." It is at once united and affectionate, stable and warm, and enduring as well as loving. What is more, not only

does it combine the positive characteristics but it also augments them by drawing on Christian values and aspirations. Brazilians may be more open in expressing their love than Japanese and Nikkeis, but migrant converts are quick to add that they are also prone to confounding love with sexual desire. Love in Brazil, migrant converts observe, is too entangled with sensuality, carnality, and sexual sin – which are all egocentric desires. Love in the Kingdom of God, in contrast, is holy and unconditional – an expression of sacrifice and selflessness. Therefore love for migrant converts is primarily a Christian affect, only a better version of "Brazilian" love that they imagine to be excessively sensual.

Likewise, "Japanese/Nikkei" family may be stable and unified but – migrant converts imagine – it stays together primarily out of obligation to tradition. Christian family, in contrast, is unified in "love" – that is, deeply-felt genuine affect. In other words, the former is *obligated* to stay together by structures and obligations *from without*, while the latter is *free* to follow genuine desires *from within*. Such a contrast is frequently evoked, for instance, when migrant converts discuss the historical practice of arranged marriage among Nikkeis in Brazil: "I can't believe my *bachan* (grandma) did it. But family was so strong (*forte*) back then that she couldn't say no, you know. I can't marry someone I don't love, that is not real marriage!" Remarks such as this imply that, for migrant converts today, family solidarity (supposedly) maintained by societal pressure and obligated conformity is not authentic no matter how "strong" it may have been. Christian marriage and family, they indicate, are morally superior since they are founded on genuine affect. Mazzaerlla notes, "(…) affect points us toward a terrain that is presubjective without being presocial. As such it implies a way of apprehending social

life that does not start with the bounded, intentional subject while at the same time foregrounding embodiment and sensuous life (Mazzarella 2009:291, see also Massumi 2002). In other words, affect is an embodied – and therefore experientially compelling – force that underpins migrants' claims for authenticity.

My account of the transition from "culture of discipline" to "culture of love," then, demonstrates how many migrant converts experience Pentecostal practices in both ethical and ethnic terms to incorporate it into their project of self-remaking.

CHAPTER 4

Accompanied Self
Debating Christian Personhood in Multicultural Japan

[Accepted in Ethos]

Christianity, Religion, and the Self: An Uneasy Alliance

In 1946, Ruth Benedict introduced what she interpreted as two distinct modes of ethics in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1989[1946]). Shame-governed morality or "shame culture," she observed, relies on "external sanctions for good behavior" and therefore requires "an audience or at least a man's fantasy of an audience." In contrast, guilt-driven morality or "guilt culture" is grounded on "an internalized conviction of sin." As such, it consists in "living up to one's own picture of oneself" instead of explicit signposts of good conduct or others' expectations of oneself (Ibid. 223-224). She wrote, "Shame has the same place of authority in Japanese ethics that 'a clear conscience,' 'being right with God,' and the avoidance of sin have in Western ethics" (Ibid. 224).

To Benedict, "being right with God" did not involve a "fantasy of an audience." Her claim, however, would sound quite odd to the roughly 584 million Pentecostal and charismatic Christians in the world, who make up 26.7% of the global Christian population today (Pew Research Center 2011). Pentecostal and charismatic Christians place upmost emphasis on a personal relationship with God, which can become real through a repertoire of sensory practices (Luhrmann 2012). In other words, God does not represent a disembodied principle but exerts an experientially compelling presence in converts' lives. What is more, some Pentecostal Christians live in Japan today – a country where Christians make up less than 1% of the population (Tokyo Christian University 2015). Many of them are Brazilians of Japanese descent – or Nikkei Brazilians – who

migrated to their ancestral homeland. Through the "return" migration of Nikkeis, Pentecostal Christianity from Brazil is gradually changing the religious landscape of Japan from its social margins.

What constitutes Christian personhood? Does it radically diverge from Japanese selves that have often been characterized as contextual and relational (Kitayama et al. 1997)? In this chapter, I will examine these questions in light of the debate on the relationship between Christianity and individuality that has been revitalized by the growth of the anthropology of Christianity (Robbins 2014). The notion of the individual, the hallmark of "Western" personhood in much of anthropological literature (Geertz 1984[1974]), has been receiving renewed discussion from this relatively new subfield. For example, Joel Robbins (2004) has described how charismatic converts among the Urapmin in Papua New Guinea struggle to become individuals-in-Christ, the sole unit of salvation in Pentecostal eschatology. Such a Christian vision of individuality, however, often generates social tension in the context where traditional relational values persist. Urapmin converts thus find it challenging to fully embrace Christian emphasis on the individual mind's interiority and autonomy, which leads to the prevalent self-perception as "sinners." Webb Keane (2007) has provided an equally compelling account of Christian conversion from the mission encounter between Dutch Calvinists and inhabitants of Sumba in Indonesia. Missionaries and local converts placed central emphasis on the self's internal sincerity and disentanglement from social and material interrelationships. Sincerity, at its most basic level, refers to a congruence between expressed affirmations and subjective feelings and a view that one's interiority constitutes the primary locus of "true self" (cf. Trilling 1972). Such ethical ideals

promoted a certain vision of the autonomous individual. This individualist concept of the person, however, did not resonate well with most unconverted inhabitants who partook in traditional ritual life and maintained a different set of ideas about agency.

Thus, some aspects of individualism show through both Robbins' and Keane's ethnographic materials and analyses. They are, however, almost always contested in the larger social environment where certain relational logics continue to be valued. The presumption that Christian individualism is a static accomplished state can therefore be misleading and perhaps inaccurate. Indeed, many scholars are quite attentive to the ambiguities, nuances, and limits of Christian individuality (Coleman 2006, Daswani 2011, Vilaça 2014). The question of the individual in Christianity, then, is open for more theoretical explorations as the consensus is yet to be reached (see, for example, Mosko 2010, Robbins 2010b).

Examining Christian individuality through a case study from Japan can expand the debate to a new direction for two reasons. First, Japanese emphasis on relational selves can provide a fertile ethnographic context in which ramifications of Christian individualism can be examined. In the anthropological literature, Japanese self has been variably characterized as "dependent," "interdependent," "sociocentric," "interactional," "situational," "contextual," "contingent," and "flexible," among others (Doi 1981, Kitayama et al. 1997, Kondo 1990, Lebra 2004, Ozawa-de Silva 2007, Plath 1980, Rosenberger 1992, Smith 1983). Doi (1981), for instance, observed that the ideal self in Japan is fostered in interpersonal relationships that cultivate the feeling of amae (translated in the English version as "dependence"). Kondo (1990) argued that there was no "self" among Japanese women she studied but instead "selves" in the plural – shifting,

variable, and contextual. Rosenberger (1992) conceptualized the Japanese self as three intersecting levels: ki, or psycho-social energy, amae, or the taking and giving of indulgence, and the shifting in context between formality (omote) and informality (ura). While such authors do not necessarily agree with each other, they echo one another in one general observation: that individualist logics of the self are seldom socially endorsed in Japan. Insofar as we remain careful not to conflate cultural ideals with stable reality, "individual" and "relational" can therefore serve as two analytical themes which are "good to think with," just as the conceptual juxtaposition of "individual" and "dividual" has stimulated a lively discussion among ethnographers of Africa and the Pacific (Bialecki and Daswani 2015). Second, it is increasingly common for Pentecostal Christianity rekindled in the global South to travel to the North with the ever-growing flows of transnational migrants (Corten and Marshall-Fratani 2001). A case study of Brazilian migrant converts in Japan responds to the increasing need to include transnational migrant populations in the study of global Christianity (Robbins 2010a:173).

In what follows, I will approach the question of Christian personhood in Japan in four steps. First, I will present an overview of ethnographic context and methods. Second, I will elaborate on dominant cultural logics of the self among Brazilian Pentecostal migrants and the Japanese majority in Japan, respectively. I use "the Japanese majority" gingerly here with an awareness of the growing multiculturalism and economic inequality that are undermining the illusion of "the homogeneous Japanese." The phrase is meant to refer to the ethnic, religious, and cultural majority in the country who tends to view their Buddhist-Shintō syncretism as a quintessentially Japanese tradition. Third, I will focus on

"moments of encounter," or how migrant converts experience and interpret the dominant framework of relational selves reflected in Japanese customs and religions. Lastly, I will elaborate on what I call the "accompanied self" which Pentecostal converts seek to cultivate by blurring the boundary between inner self and outer Other. Although the Pentecostal emphasis on authentic inner self appears individualist compared to relational selves among the Japanese majority, the ideal self for converts is neither bounded nor autonomous but instead "accompanied" by the presence of the divine Other. The training of the accompanied self consists in the cultivation of an inner sincere self, blurring of the line between "inner" and "outer" when it comes to God, and the eventual enmeshment of the sense of self in the presence of the Other. I will argue that, in that they both arise from interdependence between the self and the Other, Pentecostal personhood and Japanese selves are not utterly dissimilar.

Crazy for Jesus, But Not Religious

Every Tuesday evening, a group of young Brazilians from Missão Apoio Toyota would gather at Toyota Station for street evangelization. While some play and sing worship songs, others disperse to hand out flyers to passers-by, many of whom are working men in suit on their way home. It is Lara – who grew up in Japan and speaks Japanese virtually as her first language – that speaks most of the time, trying to bring God's message to Japanese souls. The others do not speak Japanese as well, although they do their best to communicate with the passers-by who stopped for a conversation. Such brief

interactions between Brazilian converts and Japanese passers-by on the street can provide fleeting but telling evidence of diverging cultural understandings of religion[51] and the self.

One night, a lean middle-aged Japanese man in a casual black suit stopped before Lara – who was singing worship songs – and stayed there for some twenty minutes until she finished delivering a short message. He listened attentively the whole time, with a soft smile on his lips and a sign of excitement in his eyes behind the glasses. His head was clean-shaven and, as soon as Lara spoke to him, he introduced himself as a monk at a nearby Shingon Buddhist temple, on his way home from a gathering with others in the same profession in the area. He obviously felt significant affinity for the youth from the church: "I personally think that, at the root, all religions are the same (*donna shūkyō mo nekko dewa zembu onaji*). Whether in Christianity or Buddhism, the most important thing is to care for the people around you, isn't it? You are all so young and yet doing something great in this cold!" My friends from Missão Apoio had ambiguous smiles on their faces. Although it was clear that they were happy to see someone stop for a conversation, none gave enthusiastic response to the gentleman's improvised interfaith dialogue. Politely but firmly, one member spoke out: "But we don't follow a religion, we do this for the Lord Jesus Christ (*shūkyō tteiuka sōja nakute shu iesu kirisuto notameni yatterundesu*)."

Most interactions between the evangelization team and curious passers-by followed a similar pattern. The latter, in an attempt to say something affirming to the youth, inadvertently ends up relativizing their faith by relegating it to a position of "just

[51] By "religion" I generally mean the phenomenological understanding of the term, as predicated on a sense of alterity and Otherness (Csordas 2004). As this chapter demonstrates, however, I also balance this phenomenological definition with a significant attention to discursive and historical formations of the category of religion (Asad 1993, 2002).

one of all religions." The former then responds – sometimes hesitantly, sometimes emphatically – that what sustains their faith is not a "religion (*shūkyō*)" but instead something besides it. In fact, one of the biblical passages the evangelization team members cited the most frequently is from John 14:6 – that Jesus is "the way and the truth and the life" and "no one comes to the Father" except through him. One night, a young man from the church gave a small speech to passers-by based on this biblical phrase, as Lara translated his words into Japanese. As soon as it came to a close, a middle-aged Japanese man approached the group and complimented them on their passion to "improve people's inner lives." He then added, "No other country is as tolerant as Japan toward religions. Whether it be Christianity or Islam, if it's good for your heart, then follow it by all means (*kokoro ni īkoto wa dondon yareba īyo*)." I could almost hear a sigh from the person who had just delivered the message. Someone then explained to the Japanese man, again, that what they were doing did not quite pertain to a "religion."

What lurks behind these brief encounters between Brazilian Pentecostals and Japanese individuals are diverging cultural logics concerning the category of religion (Asad 1983, 1993). Pentecostalism in Latin America typically expanded as a movement posed against the institutional hegemony of the Catholic Church (Chesnut 1997). In this context, Pentecostals have often associated the term "religion" with Catholicism and other traditions that have historically coexisted with the Church by accepting its dominance (Mariano 2011). To them, "religion" thus refers to Catholicism or, more generically, manmade practices inherited through tradition without deliberate reflection (Smilde 2007:106). Among Pentecostal migrants with whom I worked, "religion

(*religião*)," "religiosity (*religiosidade*)," and "tradition (*tradição*)" continued to signify "the past" and, by extension, the state of being "trapped" in rigid conventions.

At first glance, Brazilian Pentecostalism and Japanese syncretism of Buddhism and Shintō seem to diverge radically from one another; the former upholds commitment to faith and "purified" religious boundaries (Latour 1993) while the latter places emphasis on liturgical practices and the blurring of lines between religions. The majority of Japanese, however, also distance themselves by self-identifying as "non-religious (*mushūkyō*)." This is because the dominant Japanese understanding of the term is based on the Protestant model of religion which places emphasis on private belief. In light of this definition, most Japanese judge themselves to be without religion. The prevalent equation of "religion" with Judeo-Christian monotheism sometimes feeds into nationalistic discourses which suggest the superiority of polytheistic, syncretic, and "non-religious" Japanese as uniquely immune to religious intolerance and conflicts (Kishida and Kotaki 2002, Shimada 2009, Umehara 1995).

I now turn to the diverging ways in which claims of "non-religion" reflect cultural ideals of the self among Brazilian Pentecostals and the Japanese majority, respectively.

"Beyond Religiosity": Sincere Self among Pentecostal Converts

Sara is a third-generation Nikkei in her mid-twenties who converted to Pentecostalism in Japan in 2008, several years after her arrival. While her "*japonês* (Japanese-Brazilian)" father is "Buddhist," her "*brasileira* (non-Nikkei Brazilian)" mother is Catholic and took Sara and her sister to church every Sunday when they were little. As she recounted her conversion in Japan, she constantly contrasted her current Pentecostal identity with her

childhood religion. "God is your best friend (*o melhor amigo*), you see," she repeated the phrase churchgoers often use to stress the personal relationship converts aspire to cultivate with God. "When I prayed with my own words for the first time, as if I were talking to my best friend, it felt so good!" She then continued:

> In Brazil, at the Catholic church, I didn't understand anything, you know. It was all ceremony (*cerimônia*), people did what they did because of religiosity (*religiosidade*).
> [Author] For example?
> [Sara] Well, the rosary. "*Ave Maria, Cheia de Graça, O Senhor é convosco...*" I didn't understand what it meant! And no one understands, maybe fathers, yes, but no one cares about the meaning because no one explains. You are just told to repeat the same thing again and again. I didn't feel anything because I didn't understand, but I still did it as a child because I thought I had to.

Here Sara contrasts the intimacy of Pentecostal prayer with the "ceremonious religiosity" of Catholic practices such as the rosary. According to her, while the former consists of "one's own words" and is therefore more transparent and spontaneous, the latter is centered on repeating fixed phrases, whose meaning is not readily available to lay practitioners.

We can see how Sara's sense of authentic self is firmly connected to the ideal of sincere and transparent speech – a classic inheritance from Protestantism. Webb Keane's concept of "semiotic ideology" is useful here. The concept is based on the idea of "language ideology," which indicates "cultural notions about the nature of language and its use" (Robbins and Rumsey 2008:411). While "semiotic ideology" overlaps with "language ideology" to some degree, the former also highlights non-linguistic forms of signification between signs, persons, and objects. Keane defines the concept as "basic assumptions about what signs are and how they function in the world," which determines "what people will consider the role that intentions play in signification to be, what kinds

of possible agent […] exist to which acts of signification might be imputed, whether signs are arbitrarily or necessarily linked to their objects, and so forth" (2003:419).

According to Keane, Protestant semiotic ideology upholds the ideal of sincerity by requiring speaking subjects to closely monitor the alignment between their inner intentions and their outward speech. They are expected to "mean what they say" to cultivate the moral self since doing otherwise is to undermine human agency entrusted to the individual's interiority. Indeed, Calvinists insisted "words are merely the external expressions of inner thoughts" (Keane 2007:15). Keane claims that this "semiotic ideology of sincerity" lies at the root of "moral narrative of modernity," which involves:

> the cultivation of and high value given to individual agency, and inwardness, the goal of individual self-creation, and, paralleling these in the domain of the social, the devaluation of tradition in the name of historical progress. At the heart of this vision of modernity is the work of purification that aims to abstract the self from material and social entanglements. (Ibid. 201)

Needless to say, Calvinism and Pentecostalism are two rather distinct forms of Protestantism. Keane's insights, however, can still illuminate the background assumptions behind Sara's remarks. Her characterization of Catholicism – that is, dependence on formulaic expressions, "ceremonious" ritual practices, and inattentiveness to words' semantic meanings – points to the semiotic ideology of sincerity at work. For her born-again sensibility, Catholics seem insincere in that some of their prayers do not express "authentic inner self." Pentecostals, Sara thinks, pray in words that are semantically accessible as well as reflective of the speaker's inner intention.

Sara appealed to the word *religiosidade* (religiosity) to point out what she identified as compromised sincerity and morality. It is well known that Pentecostalism in Latin America typically expanded as a movement posed against the institutional

hegemony of the Catholic Church (Chesnut 1997). In this context, Pentecostals have often associated the term "religion" with Catholicism and other traditions that have historically coexisted with the Church by accepting its dominance (Mariano 2011, Smilde 2007:106). Among Pentecostal migrants with whom I worked, "religion (*religião*)" – along with other terms such as "religiosity (*religiosidade*)" and "tradition (*tradição*)" – more generally signified uncritical adherence to "external forms" such as conventional formulae, rules, and customs. Consequently, most converts distanced themselves from the ways of life meant to be represented in such words since conversion is ideally to "make a complete break with the past" to embrace sincere modern selfhood (Meyer 1998). The semiotic ideology of sincerity and the moral narrative of modernity thus jointly shape Pentecostal discourse of "non-religion."

A survey conducted in 1991 by Research Center of Japanese-Brazilians in São Paulo reports that 53% of Nikkeis self-identified as Catholic and 31% as belonging to various Japanese religions[52] (Matsue 2006:122). While the ratio of Catholics increases among younger generations, some Nikkei families continue to adhere to Japanese religions such as Buddhism, Shintō, and Japanese New Religions. New Religion (shinshūkyō) generally refers to a group of religions founded in Japan since the mid-nineteenth century (Reader 2005). This means that, for some Nikkei migrant converts in Japan, "traditional religion" conjures up memories of such Japanese religions instead of Catholicism. Gustavo is a second-generation Nikkei from Mogi das Cruzes in São Paulo who has been living in Japan for over 20 years. He grew up in a family that follows Seicho-no-ie, one of the most successful Japanese New Religions in Brazil (Carpenter

[52] Protestants constituted 7 %, an absolute minority.

and Roof 1995, Shimazono 1991). While elements of psychology, philosophy, and other world religions are found in its eclectic teachings, many of the central practices are influenced by Buddhism and Shintō, such as memorial services for ancestral spirits.

Gustavo recounted his first visit to a Pentecostal church in his early twenties by sharply contrasting it to the rituals for ancestral spirits he experienced as a child:

> It was a whole new experience for me. The songs, testimonies, sermon, screaming, jumping, and dancing! Just the expressions on people's faces, so alive, so happy, full of emotions. I had never seen anything like it in Seicho-no-ie. All I remember about it is, let's see, when I was a child, a monk occasionally came to our house to chant Buddhist sutras (*rezar okyō*) – in such a monotonous way [he mimics intonated voice used for chants]. All of my relatives would sit forming neat lines, staying still for such a long time until the sutras were over. Sometimes, I'd look around and see my uncle nodding off. Nothing touched me, not once, because my family was doing all this only out of obligation. It's mere religiosity.

Like Sara, Gustavo characterizes his childhood memory of religious practices with what he regards as markers of insincerity: formulaic "monotonous" sutras, passive participation "out of obligation," and ritual code oriented toward external forms (i.e. sitting still in neat lines). Coming from such a background, he found Pentecostal styles of worship "alive," "full of emotions," and spontaneous. In such a narrative, religion comes to be equated with practices "only in form," which do not comprise spontaneous expressions of inner sincere emotions.

As aforementioned, the semiotic ideology of sincerity valorizes the self's psychological interiority as the chief source of meaning and agency, which in turn fuels the "moral narrative of modernity" – a view that the autonomy of the inner self from social entanglements enables the surmounting of "tradition." To the extent that, as Keane argues, the cultivation of the sincere self is a modern project, converts such as Sara and Gustavo are embodying modernity through conversion – a point that has been made by a

number of anthropologists of Christianity (Meyer 1999, van der Veer 1995). In such a project of self-transformation, converts ideally experience something like a moment of awakening from "tradition" and "religion," which did not, they look back as new subjects, allow for deep interiority, sincere intention, and transcendence from social and material entanglements. Indeed, many Brazilian converts make critical comments about what they see as "the Japanese tradition," thereby implying that their ideas and practices are more modern, if not morally superior. In this vein, conversion to Pentecostalism can be read as a collective endeavor to restore and rebuild in Japan the modern social status they once had in Brazil. Such an interpretation also resonates well with Robbins' argument about the link between social humiliation and religious conversion (2004). In other words, the failure of progress as upward mobility – material or social – through their initial project of migration is being compensated for by spiritual advancement to "modern" religious sensibility through conversion. Here, we can certainly observe a version of individualism at play in the remaking of the moral self among migrant converts.

"Non-Religion" and Disciplined Selves among the Japanese Majority

Emiko, a Japanese housewife in her forties, was an active volunteer who frequented the NGO/NPOs for foreign residents in Homi Danchi. She was learning Portuguese to communicate better with the mothers of the Brazilian friends her three children – all enrolled in local schools with large Brazilian student body – often brought home. One day, I visited her home for an interview. When I explained to her that I was a researcher studying the role of religion among Brazilian migrants in the area, she responded, "Oh, you mean, like that building down the road with the green roof?" Since she was referring

to one of the Brazilian Pentecostal churches in the neighborhood, I answered that I indeed studied such groups. She told me that she guessed it was a church but was never sure. I asked if she had heard of Pentecostal Christianity (pentekosute-ha or seirei-ha).[53] With a quick laugh, she responded, "No, I have no clue. I don't know much about religion." Then she added rather firmly, "Because I am non-religious (watashi mushūkyō desukara)."

When I asked her a few follow-up questions later in our conversation, however, it became clear that she engaged in a number of folk Shintō and Buddhist practices on a regular basis. Before the construction of their house, for example, she and her husband invited a Shintō priest to hold jichinsai, a ceremony to calm the spirit of the land and ask for permission to work on it. The ohuda (rectangle-shaped paper amulet) from this ceremony years earlier was still on the wall of her living room. She had participated in similar activities on many more occasions. When I challenged her jokingly that some may find such activities "religious," she tilted her head with a doubtful look and paused for a moment. Then she countered:

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[53] I also asked Emiko if she knew evangelical Christianity (hukuin-ha). While evangelical and Pentecostal branches of Christianity tend to have distinct social identities in North America, in Latin America they often overlap in discursive and experiential terms for three reasons. First, Pentecostalism is the largest Protestant group in many Latin American nations, thus overshadowing so-called mainline Protestantism that may claim the identity label of evangelical Christianity. Second, it is common in Brazil for Pentecostals to refer to themselves as *evangélico* (evangelical), thus blurring the discursive boundary. Third, many (but certainly not all) researches define evangelical Christianity as a trans-denominational movement that includes some Pentecostal denominations such as the Assemblies of God. According to Pew Research Center (2011), evangelicals are Christians who (1) believe in the centrality of the conversion or "born again" experience in receiving salvation; (2) believe in the authority of the Bible as God's revelation to humanity; and (3) have a strong commitment to evangelism or sharing the Christian message. Many self-identifying Pentecostals would not have a problem with characterizing themselves as evangelical following these criteria. The most common self-identification labels among congregants at Missão Apoio, in fact, were *crente* (believer) and *evangélico* (evangelical).

> But I don't think these things have absolute meaning. Well – how can I say this – it's all up to how you hold your heart (ki no mochi yō). Just the fact that you visited a shrine and did something about what worries you already makes you feel a little lighter (ki ga hareru). This paper amulet [points at the ohuda from the ceremony], I don't really believe in it. I mean, it doesn't have any real supernatural power, everyone knows that, right? But it's soothing (ki ga shizumaru) to see it and feel that you are protected. It also feels more fulfilling to pray (te wo awaseru) to ohuda than toward somewhere in the sky – supposing there is some god up there – without any focus.

To Emiko, religion primarily consists in "believing" and "finding absolute meaning in" ritual actions and objects. Since she doesn't, she thinks it is only appropriate to characterize herself as "non-religious." Such a belief-centered understanding of religion is widespread in contemporary Japan. For example, in the survey conducted by The Institute of Statistical Mathematics (2013), only 28% of the 1,591 respondents had religious faith (shinkō) or devotion (shinjin) while 72% answered that they "do not have faith or devotion, do not believe, or not interested in such matters." While the majority of Japanese do not "believe in" religion, a different picture emerges when we shift our attention to practice in religious contexts. According to Yomiuri Newspaper's Public Opinion Poll (yoron chōsa) (2008), the majority of the 1,837 respondents answered that they engaged in the following practices: "frequently pray (te wo awaseru) to Buddhist or Shintō altar at home" (56.7%), "pay visit to family's grave on the Buddhist holidays for commemoration of ancestral spirits (*bon* and higan)" (78.3%), and "visit local shrine or temple for New Year's Day (hatsumōde)" (73.1%). Furthermore, 94% answered that they "have a feeling of deep respect for ancestors," which reflects the close historical tie between Buddhism and veneration of ancestors in Japan (Rowe 2011).

As Reader and Tanabe succinctly put it, *lived* religion in Japan is "less a matter of belief than it is of activity, ritual, and custom. The vast majority may not assert religious

belief but (…) that same majority participates in religious activities and rituals" (1998:7). Many Japanese, when explicitly inquired about their motive for participation in such activities, respond that it is not because of "religion" but rather due to the sentiment of nantonaku – a general feeling of traditional and social norms (Ozawa-de Silva 2014). This cultural focus on practice, coupled with the popular understanding of "religion" as a product of self-conscious belief, sustain the dominant self-image of "non-religious" among the Japanese majority. The discourse of "non-religion" also fuels a widespread perception that "religion" is for the foreign Other who "believes." Like Emiko, many Japanese associate the term with institutionalized monotheism, most commonly Christianity.

The underlying cultural logic behind the claim of "non-religion" among the Japanese majority, then, clearly diverges from the semiotic ideology of sincerity invoked by Brazilian Pentecostal migrants. For Emiko, what Pentecostals typically perceive as insincere and thus immoral – that is, a "gap" between inner intention and outward act – is not necessarily immoral, or even insincere. Take how she spoke about the act of prayer, for example. Both Emiko and the Public Opinion Poll used the phrase te wo awaseru, the literal translation of which would be "to put one's palms together." While there are other Japanese words such as inoru which refer to a certain state of mind and thus better approximate the connotation of "to pray," te wo awaseru is in itself a purely descriptive phrase which focuses on the outwardly visible form of prayer. Such a focus on form is closely tied to the theory of ki, which can be loosely translated as "energy field." Ki, a central concept in many East Asian medicines, continues to shape thoughts and experiences of many contemporary Japanese. It is an "organizing force-field" (Ozawa-de

Silva 2002:28, see also Yuasa 1993) that unites seemingly disparate domains of life such as nature, the self, mind, body, and well-being. To Emiko, the efficacy of practices in religious context does not lie in meaning, belief, or intrinsic power of objects but in "how one maintains one's own energy field (ki no mochiyō)." In this framework, material objects such as amulets help her "quiet the energy field (ki ga shizumaru)" while formal actions such as visit to shrine similarly "clear the energy field (ki ga hareru). In other words, what matters to Emiko is not whether "genuine" inner desire preceded and gave rise to "spontaneous" actions but instead how form-centered ritual behavior can facilitate the alignment of the self through bodily practices and material mediations.

Following Dorinne Kondo, here I refer to such a cultural vision as "disciplined selves." Her insights highlight the cultural emphasis placed on the interdependence between form, relationship with others, and self-cultivation in Japan:

> Yet the moral weight is placed not on some sense of the "self" as inviolable essence, separate from "society," but on the construction of disciplined selves through relationship with others and through forms we might find coercive. (…) But it is by first keeping the rules which define the form, even if one's understanding is incomplete or one disagrees with them, that a sincere attitude is eventually born. (Kondo 1990:107)

Sincerity in the cultural framework of discipline, then, is not so much the individual's transcendence from social and material contexts as a well-trained alignment between social roles, other persons, and the self. Kondo adds, "Sincerity, *magokoro*, becomes sensitivity to social context and to the demands of social roles – not dogged adherence to an 'authentic,' inner self to which one must be true, regardless of the situation or the consequences for others" (Ibid. 107-108).[54]

[54] Magokoro (□□) literally means "true (ma) heart (kokoro)." Since kokoro is conceptualized as the seat of emotion, thought, spirit, etc. in Japanese culture, it is often translated as "mind-heart."

While both Brazilian Pentecostal converts and the Japanese majority frequently engage in the discourse of "non-religion," the underlying cultural logics for such a claim vary between the two. Migrant converts invoke "religion (*religião*)" as an unreflective adherence to inherited ritual forms. They detach themselves from it because the cultivation of modern sincere selfhood hinges on transcendence from material and social entanglements. Many Japanese, on the other hand, understand "religion (shūkyō)" as a self-conscious articulation of consistent internal belief. They distance themselves from it since the cultural framework of discipline places greater emphasis on the interdependence between the self, material forms, and social others. Interestingly, what counts as "religion" in the vision of sincerity is precisely what does *not* count as such in the framework of discipline, and vice versa. The diverging ways in which the category of religion is invoked reflect how multiple logics govern the cultivation of moral self in multicultural Japan (Asad 1993).

Encounters: Insincere Japanese?

Given the divergences between the logics of sincerity and discipline, what does it entail to be born-again Christian in a country where Buddhist-Shintō syncretism and the vision of relational selves predominate? Compared to evangelical Christianity, Shintō and Buddhism in Japan do not place as much emphasis on proselytization but rely on inherited familial and communal units as well as commercialized activities such as tourism for their continued existence. Recent foreign migrants – especially those who

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Magokoro thus means true mind-heart, genuine spirit, whole-hearted sincerity, and so on. Makoto (□ or □) is another reading of "ma" in magokoro. It means truth, authenticity, loyalty, allegiance, etc. In some cases, it signifies truthful devotion to obligations, duties, and social roles.

regard their life in the country as temporary – are seldom incorporated into such local units called danka or ujiko. Most Brazilian residents of Homi Danchi therefore base their working understandings of Japanese religions on their experiences of local festivals at shrines and temples – if they make the effort to attend – and, more likely, the Japanese media's coverage of religious festivities around the nation.

However, cultural logics crystallized in religious practices often extend beyond such contexts and inform many activities in people's day-to-day life. Cleaning, for example, is at once a part of Zen ascetic life as a training of mind-body unification as well as a regular activity at Japanese schools and companies aimed at furthering general ethics (Reader 1995). This means that the contexts in which migrant converts encounter the logic of discipline are not limited to explicitly religious practices but also include their daily interactions with Japanese society. Some, for example, complain about *chōrei* (morning ceremony), a customary practice at many Japanese companies which consists of daily briefing, collective recitation of fixed phrases such as company slogan, and sometimes brief warm-up exercise. At the factory where Takashi worked, employees collectively vocalized a set of greeting phrases such as "yoroshiku onegai shimasu (please)" and "arigatō gozaimasu (thank you)" during *chōrei*. He expressed his distaste in a mixture of Portuguese and Japanese:

> It doesn't make sense (*não faz sentido*). I don't need to shout these phrases every day to remember them. When we don't say them loud enough, *hanchō* (team leader) is like, "Gen ki nai (You don't have energy)." And in my head, "Gen ki aru. Shitakunai (I am well, I just don't want to)." [laughs] I just don't like it, you sound like a robot, repeating the same thing mechanically every day.

He then shook his head and added, "I really like Japanese people, but I just don't like the meaningless tradition – so rigid. No human warmth (*nenhum calor humano*)."

While Takashi himself is a longtime Pentecostal who converted in Japan, a similar perception about the rigidity of Japanese society and people is widely shared among Brazilian migrants at large. Like the interlocutors of Daniel Linger, who conducted fieldwork in Homi Danchi almost two decades before me, my Brazilian friends also implied to me repeatedly that "Brazilians are warm; Japanese are cold" (Linger 2001:290). Brazilians are expressive, playful, and open; Japanese are rigid, serious, and closed. As stereotypical as they are, such contrastive images persist in part because they reflect a certain experiential truth from the migrants' perspective. In Brazil, "(…) spontaneity in interaction is of the utmost importance. (…) Interactional selves should be more than status constellations; inner selves should show through" (Ibid. 299). Coming from a society in which interpersonal improvisation is highly valued, most Brazilian migrants perceive Japanese emphasis on context and social role as lacking in intimacy. The irony is that, in Brazil, Nikkeis are also stereotyped for being more square and serious than non-Nikkei Brazilians. Life among the Japanese majority in Japan, however, typically strengthens Brazilian identity among Nikkeis, as encounters with conventional customs reinforce the image of "rigid" Japanese Other (Tsuda 2003). Collective ritualized vocalization thus gives out a strong impression of inauthenticity to Brazilian migrants because it focuses on adherence to fixed form rather than spontaneous "showing through" of "inner selves."

For Pentecostal converts like Takashi, such practices also go against the semiotic ideology of sincerity cultivated in their religious commitment. In its formulaic character, vocalization practice at Japanese workplace resembles the styles of prayer that do not reflect the Pentecostal ideal of sincerity, such as the Catholic rosary and Buddhist sutra.

In fact, my interlocutors used two separate verbs to distinguish "sincere" prayer from "insincere" ones: *orar* (to pray) for what they considered as spontaneous prayer with one's own words and *rezar* (to pray) for form-centered prayer based on fixed phrases – or what Pentecostals often call "vain repetitions (*vãs repetições*)" invoking Matthew 6:7. Both Sara and Gustavo – who, as I mentioned above, converted from Catholicism and Seicho-no-ie, respectively – used *rezar* to refer to fixed prayers in other traditions and *orar* to describe "spontaneous" prayers in born-again Christianity. The majority of congregants at Missão Apoio Toyota did the same. In Pentecostal framework of thought, then, *rezar* holds a similar function to other terms such as *religião* and *tradição*; it linguistically constructs and marks off the insincere pre-modern subject, which the sincere modern person must transcend through a set of techniques such as speech reflexive of "inner self."

Catholics, of course, would not agree with such views, since their techniques for self-cultivation are grounded on a different set of logics centered on materiality, embodiment, and "saintliness" (Corwin 2012, Lester 2005, Mafra 2011). Commenting on the importance of material and physical mediums in Catholicism, for example, Mary Douglas writes, "To make the deity inhabit a material object (…) is ritualism at its starkest. The condensation of symbols in the Eucharist is staggering in its range and depth" (Douglas 2003 [1970]:47). She continues:

> The crux of the doctrine is that a real, invisible transformation had taken place at the priest's saying of the sacred words and that the eating of the consecrated host has saving efficacy for those who take it and for others. (…) It assumes that humans can take an active part in the work of redemption, both to save themselves and others, through using the sacraments as channels of grace – sacraments are not only signs, but essentially different from other signs, being instruments. This touches on the belief in *opus operatum,* the efficacious rite, whose very possibility was denied by the Protestant reformers (Ibid. 47-48).

The creation of "efficacious rite" in Catholicism is inseparable from "the technology of embodiment" (Lester 2005) – both of which Protestants defied during the Reformation through the emphasis on sincere belief and plain speech. Mitchell and Mitchell, who studied the Catholic ritual of Communion, argue that the cognitive acceptance – of "belief" in – of the capacity of the host plays a relatively insignificant, if any, role compared to performative bodily gestures:

> (…) the reverence with which these Catholic communicants act does not demonstrate an inner orientation to the host in Communion – a 'belief in' its capacity for salvation – but actively constitutes it. Their performance of deference *is* deference, not a representation of it. They are not 'acting out' belief, but performing it (Mitchell and Mitchell 2008:86 original italic).

The training of bodily susceptibility to "the gestural repertoire of performative deference" (Ibid. 87) first starts with imposition from without, typically when practitioners are still little (Hérault 1999, 2007). Over time, many become more competent in the usage of the embodied technology of self-cultivation: "Informants report a tingling sensation or feeling of warmth as they ingest the host and so internalize Christ. This is a pre-objective and spontaneous consequence of the successful embodiment of Catholic habitus, generated within and through bodily performance" (Mitchell and Mitchell 2008:87).

Extending on the central role fulfilled by physical, material, and bodily mediums in Catholic culture, Mafra proposes a concept of "semiotic ideology of saintliness," which she thinks is widespread in contemporary Catholic-majority Brazil in small acts such as making the sign of the cross when walking past a church. In this framework, the self can be cultivated through a combination of physical proximity, physical engagement, and participation. She writes: "As the condition of ordinary human beings is separate and distinct from these exceptional beings [i.e. saints], they must search for mediation

through participation" (Mafra 2011:451). According to her, the ideology of saintliness was "central during the Middle Ages and marginalized in the Modern Age" but remains influential in countries with long-standing Catholic tradition (Ibid.).

Her observation about the marginalization of saintliness in modernity echoes Lionel Trilling's account (1972) of the rise of sincerity in Western literature as a distinctly modern ideal, starting in the 16th century. The moral imperative for sincerity – or the avoidance of being false to any man through being true to one's own inner self (Ibid. 5) – gave rise to the psychological "depths" presumed to lie below the surfaces of observable social life. This moral shift was accompanied, Trilling argues, by a radical change in social and cosmological structure at the time. As the hierarchical, cosmically grounded order of Christendom disintegrated, people started to envision themselves as actors with psychological interiority with ever-changing roles in "society."

Like Catholic Brazilians, many Japanese would not agree with Pentecostal migrants' characterization of their religious practices. The rationale behind the disciplinary pedagogy is still widely accepted in Japanese society: namely, katachi kara hairu (enter through the form). "The process of true learning begins with a model, a form, repeated until perfectly executed. Without this form, there can be no transformation of the *kokoro* [mind-heart]" (Kondo 1990:106). Kata – standardized postures, movements, and compositions – forms the foundation of training process in many Japanese arts and religions, ranging from martial arts to meditation practice. Kata training aims "to fuse the individual to the form so that the individual becomes the form and the form becomes the individual" (Yano 2003:26). Along the similar vein, Yuasa writes about the technique of kata in Japanese traditional dance: "(…) when there is repeated training in the practice of

performing techniques, the body-mind is disciplined, then the state of conscious movement changes into one which the hands, legs, and body unconsciously move of themselves. This is the state of 'no mind'" (Yuasa 1993:31). Granted, very few would reach such an advanced level Yano describes in ascetic and spiritual training. Yet the fundamental premise of the disciplinary philosophy of *kata* is still reflected in the emphasis placed on proper form in many social contexts in contemporary Japan (Bardsley and Miller 2011, see also Ozawa-de Silva 2002). To Takashi and many other Pentecostal Brazilians, however, the pedagogy of kata that underlies practices such as collective vocalization gives out an impression of insincere superficial conformity; indeed, Japanese preoccupation with form often invited an opinion that Japanese people seem *falso* – "fake."

I must quickly point out here that, contrary to my Brazilian informants' perception, many Japanese do find the pedagogy of kata coercive. Although Takashi attributes his frustration to the lack of "meaning" in the "tradition" of "Japanese people," not all Japanese workers support such activities. During my participant observation at an auto parts factory in Toyota, I heard virtually all my fellow Japanese part-time employees openly complain about these practices as mendokusai (troublesome, tiresome). Full-time employees who enjoyed more job security and therefore saw themselves firmly belonging to the workplace, in contrast, seldom if ever expressed similar feelings. There was, in fact, a sense of resentment among part-time workers about the fact that they were being forced to "discipline" themselves for social others – which includes social superiors – who could dismiss them on a day's notice. As the Japanese labor system becomes increasingly neoliberal, flexible, and unequal (Allison 2013, Kamata 1983), more and

more marginalized Japanese workers are starting to share the same frustration that Takashi expresses. We must therefore be careful not to reduce class issues to innate cultural differences.

That being said, I would summarize that the logic of sincerity places emphasis on ethical cultivation "from within" while disciplinary pedagogy foregrounds embodiment "from without." At the same time, I must also stress that the points I have made thus far are not so much about a "clash" between two groups, religions, or cultures as about diverging logics that govern the shared grammar for self-cultivation.

Accompanied Self: Is Pentecostal Selfhood "Individual"?

Is the ideal self in Pentecostal culture an individual? The logic of sincerity indeed places great emphasis on individualist visions such as agency reserved to inner self, transcendence from material mediations, and abstraction of the self from social embeddedness. It appears individualist especially against the backdrop of disciplined selves in Japan, which seek to train the alignment between the self, context, and social others. Given such apparent divergences, it is indeed tempting to conclude with a contrastive picture between Christian individualism and Japanese relationalism, as some have in the past (Lebra 2004:224-254).

The individual, however, remains a contentious concept among Brazilian Pentecostals with whom I worked. That is, the cultural emphasis on sincerity and interiority does not necessarily equal the idealization of bounded autonomous subject who exerts free will. In fact, efforts to control one's own self by sheer conscious will are devalued in Pentecostal culture as depending on oneself (*depender de si próprio*)," the

antithesis of the ultimate virtue which is to rely on God (*depender de Deus*).[55] Congregants certainly used the word "individual" to stress the inviolability of person-in-Christ as the sole eschatological unit (e.g. "Everyone should have an individual relationship with God; no one, not even your parents, can tell you to convert"). On the other hand, they also invoked the concept of individual in a negative light, especially in remarks critical of what they perceived as liberal morality in the "relativist world." On rare occasions when my friends brought up contentious issues such as abortion, the word *individualista* was used as a virtual synonym for "lacking fear of God." Pentecostal selfhood, then, is multifaceted, and divergent from the bounded subject with autonomous free will on two interrelated points.

First, the Pentecostal person is not a bounded subject. As culturally significant as the self's interiority may be as the locus of sincere selfhood, such inner self is not closed but open to the divine Other – God and God's associates such as Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Lara, for instance, explained the ideal of utter transparency and openness toward the Other with a metaphor of the self as a house. Many people, she observed, "hide dirty things about oneself in the rooms on the second floor" while welcoming Jesus to "the clean living room on the first floor." One day, a demon breaks into the house and starts destroying the second floor, but Jesus remains on the first floor and does not do anything about it. When the host blames Jesus that he could easily expel the demon with his power, he answers that he could only enter the rooms the host lets him in. "If you open up

[55] There are similar themes in Japanese Buddhism called jiriki and tariki. The former refers to the reliance on one's own effort to attain salvation. Hōnen, the founder of the Pure Land School of Buddhism, rejected such an idea and instead claimed that it was necessary to rely on tariki (other-power, namely the power of Buddha) for salvation. While such parallels are intriguing, scholars must be careful not to prematurely interpret Buddhist philosophy in Protestant terms, or vice versa, because of the differences in cultural contexts (Ozawa-de Silva 2006:124-126).

only half of yourself to Jesus, then Jesus can work in only half of your life. If you let him into all the rooms of your heart, then his power permeates all of your self," Lara concluded.

What is significant about Pentecostal Christianity is that its sensory and immersive practices seek to transform such a story from a mere metaphorical allegory to experiential reality. As the pastor put it, "God is not an abstract idea but someone (*alguêm*)" for dedicated congregants. Takie, for example, was known for being quite skilled in the art of prayer among church members. Since I attended the weekly Friday night home gathering hosted by her and her husband, I saw her pray for and with others many times, and she always seemed absorbed in the practice. Indeed, she related during an interview how she would sometimes lose track of time during prayer: "Sometimes, I come out of prayer and think, 'Wow, it's this late already? I have to start cooking dinner!'" When I asked her to describe the experience in more detail, she responded:

> It's like a ball of warm energy getting bigger and bigger inside you. As I keep praying, it swells up and fills me completely from within like a big warm balloon. Then, sometimes, it's like I am not thinking the words any more, but they are coming out of my mouth like a river. That's when I know that I am flowing in the Holy Spirit (*fluindo no Espírito Santo*).

Takie seems to be describing a state of mind which Tanya Luhrmann refers to as absorption, or "the capacity to focus in on the mind's object (…) and to allow that focus to increase while diminishing our attention to the myriad of everyday distractions that accompany the management of normal life" (2012:200). As Luhrmann's study on a branch of evangelical Christianity in the United States demonstrates, immersing oneself in such activities with rich sensory components can, over time, make God real:

> People train absorption by focusing on sensory detail. They practice seeing, hearing, smelling, and touching in their mind's eye. They give these imagined

> experiences the sensory vividness associated with the memories of real events. What they are able to imagine becomes more real to them, and God must be imagined, because God is immaterial. (Ibid. 221-222)

Training to interpret affective and mental movements in one's mind as the experience of an external presence teaches people "to blur the distinction between inner and outer, self and other" when it comes to God (Ibid. 222). Inner self, or a realm of immediate subjective experiences, is ideally neither bounded nor private in such forms of Christianity. The conventional boundary between "inner" and "outer" becomes porous. Although interiority continues to be identified as the locus of sincerity, it must also be trained as an interactive realm open to the presence of alterity.

Since the notion of sincerity does not fully capture the centrality of the Other in the construction of Pentecostal selfhood, here I will refer to it as "accompanied self." In much of Pentecostal Christianity, the ideal person is not self-sufficient but instead susceptible to and reliant on the divine Other, whose presence people seek by training to reinterpret the boundary of the self. The training of accompanied self consists in the emphasis on inner sincere self, blurring of the line between "inner" and "outer" when it comes to the divine Other, and eventual enmeshment of the sense of self in the presence of alterity. As such, the accompanied self does not replace sincere self but instead builds and expands on it. Common phrases such as "I am filled with the Holy Spirit" and "Jesus Christ lives in me" reflect the moral weight placed on the vision of accompanied selfhood.

Second, Pentecostal selfhood is not autonomous, at least not when it comes to the relationship with God. The blurring of the line between inner self and outer other leads to a shift in perceived locus of agency from conscious mind to the realm of perceived Other.

Accompanied self places moral emphasis on enhancing the self's suppleness to the agency attributed to the divine Other, thus delimiting the monopoly of will by individual consciousness.

Lucas' testimony can serve as an example here. Lucas, a 25-year old third-generation Nikkei who served as an interpreter at Missão Apoio Toyota, was first brought to Japan at the age of three. Although he started his education initially at a local Japanese public school, his parents were forced to transfer him to a Brazilian private school after several months due to severe bullying. Since all classes were taught in Portuguese, he could not speak good Japanese despite the fact that he virtually grew up in Japan. In fact, he detested the language. Some years after his conversion in late adolescence, a Japanese man walked into the church one Sunday. Since Lucas happened to be the only one present who could speak some Japanese, he had to translate the whole procession for the man, including a sermon with biblical quotes. The result, Lucas felt, was disastrous: "*Cabou!* (It's over!) This man will never come to our church again!" To Lucas' great surprise, the man kept on coming back every week and Lucas continued to interpret for him despite his reluctance to do so.

> So I started praying to God. "Lord, what should I do? I can't speak Japanese well, you know that!" Then, He answered my prayer, "You are the interpreter of my Word. You will be used by me." But I was still resistant to God, because back then, my favorite subject was mathematics! I hated languages – Japanese, especially. But then, God talked to my heart, "Lucas, who made your tongue? I did. Do you think you'll be speaking with *your* tongue? No. I made it, so why do you think that you cannot do something with the tongue I made?" I said, "Alright, God." And I started studying like a crazy person that day. I would come home from [Brazilian] school, then I would sit down and just write *kanji, kanji, kanji* (Japanese alphabet)… God was working in me, God was using me.

Here, the agency of his own conscious thoughts and emotions is overridden and deemed "incorrect" by that of alterity. The sense of the Other inhibits the monopoly of will on the part of individual consciousness.

Lucas' testimony adds an important layer to how the self is understood and cultivated in Pentecostal culture. Not only is the self open and susceptible to the presence of the Other but it is ideally also yielding to the Other's agency. That is, alterity – that which is perceived to arise from the margin of consciousness – can exert just as much, if not more, agency as one's conscious mind. In fact, any markers of the autonomous self – self-will, self-control, and self-reliance – must be surrendered to the agency of the divine Other to cultivate the ideal accompanied self in this cultural context. Many of my interlocutors referred to this ultimate virtue as "obedience to God."

Conclusion

What constitutes Christian selfhood? A case study of Brazilian Pentecostals in multicultural Japan yields a twofold response to this question. First, some individualist logics do inform Pentecostal visions of moral self, as seen in the ideals of sincere speech, agency of human interiority, and abstraction of the self from material and social interdependence. Such an ethical emphasis stands out especially in the Japanese context, where relational selves and disciplinary pedagogy – which do not necessarily value "inner self" – predominate. The ethnographic picture, however, is more complex than the relational Japanese/individual Christian dichotomy, which brings me to the second point: The ideal self in Pentecostal culture is "accompanied" by the Other, that is, neither bounded nor autonomous. In fact, its primary focus is on the direct relationship with the

divine Other, to whom the self must be open and transparent. Ideally, the dependence on the conscious "I" eventually yields to the obedience to the transcendent "Him," whose agency is rendered tangible and real through a set of sensory and bodily practices. Thus, while Christian personhood may be characterized as an individual, it is certainly not without a fantasy of an audience. In fact, in that they both place great emphasis on self/Other relationships, accompanied self and disciplined selves are not completely opposed to each other. While the ways in which people envision and enact such relationships are distinct, the need for such a relationality with the Other remains constant (Ozawa-de Silva 2016).

What I characterize as accompanied self in Pentecostal visions of moral personhood, then, can be considered as a kind of relational individual. While it is individualist in its focus on person-in-Christ as the eschatological unit and inner self as the locus of sincerity, it is relational in its emphasis on the relationship with the transcendent Other as the site of ethical cultivation. These observations point to the fundamental role the Other plays in the formations of the self, particularly when it comes to moral pursuits. A fantasy of an audience is alive and strong in today's increasingly multicultural Japan.

CHAPTER 5

Layered Faith:
Language, Meaning, and Belief in Pentecostal Practice

Opening: Sincere Nonsense?

How do Brazilian Pentecostal converts understand the relationship between language, meaning, and faith? Does such an understanding shift depending on the context of practice, or does it remain constant? I started thinking about these questions when several ethnographic scenes began to point to their importance. For example, after a regular church service one Sunday, I carpooled with a dozen young congregants to a nearby restaurant in downtown Toyota. I shared a table with Leonardo, Bruno, and Bruno's girlfriend. As we sipped coffee and chatted after the meal, Bruno, Leonardo's younger brother, asked me where I had been the previous Sunday. "I didn't see you at church. Were you sick?" With some hesitation, I told him that I had to travel to my mother's natal city to attend a Buddhist commemoration ceremony called isshūki for my deceased uncle. "Oh," he responded, "You mean, like, a ceremony where a monk does chants (*faz rezas*) for ancestral spirits?" I confirmed that chants were indeed part of the ceremony. "But look, Suma," Leonardo, the older brother, interrupted with a serious look. "God doesn't hear those meaningless chants very well. He wants His children to speak to Him in simple, honest words, like you are talking to your best friend." I mumbled something like "I see" and scratched my head. By this point of my fieldwork, I was fully aware that any mention of my familial background in Japanese Buddhism could invite critical comments from some of my Pentecostal friends – especially younger converts who were new to and passionate about their faith.

Although I had heard similar comments about Buddhism (and Catholicism) many times, this particular exchange with Bruno and Leonardo stood out in my mind for one reason. Earlier in the evening, I had heard them speak in tongues during the special prayer session led by a visiting pastor from Brazil. After a vigorous sermon, he invited the congregation to step forward to receive blessings. They quickly moved all the chairs to the sides to make more space and moved closer to the front podium, where the visiting pastor had started praying aloud fervently. Some congregants remained on foot while others knelt down on their knees; almost everyone prayed with eyes shut, arms up, and palms open to the sky. Many were sobbing. Several minutes into this collective prayer, some – probably a handful – started speaking in tongues, and Bruno and Leonardo were among them. Leonardo then started shaking and fell down to the floor while being assisted by the people around him who noticed his erratic movements. The Resting in the Spirit – a form of charismatic bodily expression in which an individual falls to the floor while experiencing religious ecstasy – was a relatively rare occurrence at Missão Apoio Toyota. That two people did by the end shows the fervor of this particular prayer session. I happened to be standing next to Bruno and saw tears streaming down his cheek as he uttered nonsensical syllables. The wave of collective voices gradually toned down after ten minutes or so, as if there were a shared sense of rhythm that they all could feel with their skin.

Speaking in tongues, or glossolalia, is a free-flowing vocalization of speech-like syllables that lack any readily comprehensible meaning. Although the speaker does not understand the meaning of the words, it is said that God does. Charismatic Christians thus consider tongues to be the language of the heaven and the divine, due in part to its radical

departure from daily language whose meaning is accessible to the speaker. Put otherwise, the shared appreciation of tongues as a gift from the Spirit hinges on the transcendence of its meaning beyond human comprehension. Authentic tongues must, at least on the semantic level, be "nonsense."

Given that both Bruno and Leonardo prayed in nonsensical utterances just hours earlier, I decided to probe why they were so confident in characterizing Buddhist chants as "meaningless." It is true that many Buddhist chants lack transparent referential meaning to the majority of lay Japanese practitioners today; but, I thought, so does tongues in Pentecostalism. "Look," I started hesitantly, "It's true that most Japanese people probably don't understand what chants mean. But when you speak in tongues, you also don't understand what you are saying, right?" They looked at me with a blank expression. Leonardo opened his mouth after a few seconds. "But speaking in tongues builds up the faith and builds up oneself (*edifica a fé, e edifica a si mesmo*).[56] It's not the same thing. It's the language from the heaven, it's for reinvestment of power." His tone indicated that he was not being defensive but simply surprised at such an inquiry. While his response mostly reiterated the common biblical phrases regarding speaking in tongues, Leonardo remained unshaken.

Faith Beyond Belief

How can speaking in tongues "build up the faith and oneself"? The ethnographic scene above suggests that language, meaning, and faith are closely intertwined in the cultivation of charismatic faith. According to Bruno and Leonardo, how one speaks shapes how one believes, which in turn changes who one is. What is more, the exchange also indicates

[56] Most of these phrases draw on the Bible, particularly I Corinthians 14.

that their understanding of language, meaning, and faith is layered in distinctive ways. Effective prayer can encompass both ordinary speech ("honest words like you are talking to your best friends") and radical nonsense ("the language from the Heaven"). It follows that faith can be cultivated with *and* without reflective understanding of what words mean. The triangulation of language, meaning, and belief thus seems to be a promising point of departure to interrogate the constituents of Pentecostal faith in this ethnographic context.

This chapter engages the emerging debate in the anthropology of Christianity that calls the equation of faith and belief into question. In the anthropological study of religion, belief has long been a ubiquitous and yet contested category. Geertz, for instance, highlighted belief as a cognitive readiness to find meanings in otherwise meaningless things and phenomena: "one must first believe to know" (Geertz 2002 [1966]:74). In such a view, belief is what creates the path to knowledge in religion. By stressing the distinction between "common-sense world" and "religious reality," Geertz's writing also implicitly painted religion as a separate reality that remains beyond the reach of non-believing minds unless the entry permit – belief – is obtained.

Rodney Needham, in contrast, describes what he sees as a certain "emptiness" of belief in *Belief, Language and Experience* (1972:1-2):

> It was certain that the Penan spoke of the existence of a spiritual personage named Peselong; his attributes were well agreed, and these gave him an absolute preeminence in the universe to which in the English language the designation 'God' was appropriate. But the Penan had no formal creed, and so far as I knew they had no other conventional means for expressing belief in their God. Nevertheless, I had been accustomed to say, to myself at any rate, that they believed in a supreme God. Yet it suddenly appeared that I had no linguistic evidence at all to this effect. Not only this, but I realized that I could not confidently describe their attitude to God, whether this was belief or anything else, by any of the psychological verbs usually found apt in such situations. In

> fact, as I had glumly to conclude, I just did not know what was their psychic attitude toward the personage in whom I had assumed they believed.

He later suggests, "Like the promise, belief is an artificial contrivance for the convenience and advantage of society, and to the furtherance of these interests men have indeed 'feigned' a new act of the mind" (Ibid.150). In describing these thoughts, Needham was articulating what has come to be a common feature of anthropological discussions of belief. A number of commentators have questioned its utility as a cross-cultural analytical category. For example, Asad (1993) famously argued against belief's value in the anthropology of religion because of its ties to Reformation Christianity. He was particularly troubled by the bias toward individual, cognitive, and conscious assent to discrete propositional truths: "Geertz's treatment of religious belief, which lies at the core of his conception of religion, is a modern, privatized Christian one because and to the extent that it emphasizes the priority of belief as a state of mind" (Asad 1993:198). In his view, to assume an interiority-oriented posture toward belief, and to make it inseparable from all things religious, is to unwittingly invoke a Protestant scheme of salvation consumed with the individual acceptance of core doctrines. Maya Deren (1983) similarly challenged the primacy of belief in her study of Haitian vodou by analyzing the sensory, bodily, and phenomenological aspects of religious practices.

But does "modern" Protestantism really prioritize "belief as a state of mind"? Today, an array of ethnographies on Global Christianity challenges such a statement. Granted, Protestant branches of Christianity have been interpreted first and foremost as cultures of sincere belief (Keane 2002). However, an increasing number of ethnographers have been reevaluating the equation of belief with individualized propositional assent. Kirsch (2004), for example, advocated replacing *belief*, defined as an achieved, stable

interior state, with *believing* defined instead as a condition that is constantly sought after and always in the process of being internalized. Similarly, in an article entitled "Faith Beyond Belief" (2008) based on a study of American evangelical churches, Elisha asked: "Is it possible that evangelical Protestants are not quite the believers that they appear to be?" (Ibid. 57). He argues that the analytical vocabulary of anthropologists should prioritize *faith*, or "the practice of performative rituals and religious disciplines" (Ibid.).

In this chapter, I build on such developments that extend "faith beyond belief" by elaborating on how speaking in tongues can indeed "build the faith and the self." Put otherwise, I will articulate the ways in which such speech practices can have desired moral effects on the convert's sense of self through non-semantic, embodied pathways. While glossolalia seemingly contradicts the semiotic logics in other forms of Pentecostal prayer, I will argue that this is because faith is a layered construct in charismatic Christianity. In fact, despite the total spontaneity accorded to speaking in tongues, very few Pentecostals burst out into nonsensical utterances on the first day of their converted life. This fact indicates that, contrary to my interlocutors' self-understanding, tongues-speaking does involve learning and skill. An analysis of glossolalia's relationship to faith must therefore be preceded by discussions of other forms of speech, meaning, and faith that often precede and/or coexist with it.

My argument will therefore be in three steps. The first part will focus on faith as sincere belief, or as mental acceptance of articulable truth statements. This view on faith reinforces what Stromberg (1993) calls the referential ideology – the idea that words refer to preexisting things, states, and meanings. I will illustrate these points with the ethnographic data on how my Pentecostal interlocutors reacted to a local Shintō festival

called Hōnensai, on the one hand, and how the church organized water baptism, on the other.

Propositional assent, however, is in no way the only dimension of faith that can be gleaned from the spectrum of practices at Missão Apoio Toyota. The second part of this chapter will shift attention to the unofficial perspectives of those who underwent water baptism in 2014 during my fieldwork. Specifically, I will discuss the case of one recent convert whom I call Leticia because her story shows how actual experience can diverge in creative ways from what church leaders endorse. I argue that, for members such as Leticia, faith consists primarily in relational commitment. As such, her speech during water baptism can be understood not as a propositional assent but rather as a speech act (Austin 1975), which draws its efficacy from the constitutive power of language (Stromberg 1993). I also will argue that, although the ideal of individual sincere belief is always officially endorsed and culturally foregrounded, relational commitment is in fact a foundational layer of charismatic faith.

Having investigated faith as propositional assent and relational commitment, I will then turn to the dimension of charismatic faith that is the least studied: faith as embodied disposition. Speaking in tongues will be discussed at length in this last section as a case study. For charismatic Christians, glossolalia is one of the "evidences" of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (*batismo no Espírito Santo*), which is differentiated from water baptism on several accounts. One common explanation is that water baptism is done by men whereas the baptism in the Holy Spirit is done by Jesus. The fact that church members clearly differentiate between the two indicates that they have a layered understanding of faith as something to be cultivated over time. By comparing the

differences between the two baptisms, two forms of prayer, and two layers of faith, I will argue that the ingenuity of Pentecostalism lies in the fact that it draws on a theory of mind that reinvents itself – from referential language to nonsensical tongues, from sincere belief to embodied faith, and from sincere interiority to accompanied self. It is in this last sense that "speaking in tongues builds up the faith," as Bruno and Leonardo claimed.

Belief in the Eye of the Beholder

One spring night, I visited the apartment of Luan and Sachi in Homi Danchi. Luan is a non-Nikkei Brazilian who first migrated to Japan with his Nikkei ex-spouse. Sachi is a third-generation Nikkei who arrived in Japan with her parents. Having converted to Pentecostalism roughly at the same time at Missão Apoio Toyota, the two were engaged and living together with a plan of upcoming wedding several months afterward in Sachi's hometowm in Brazil. "God told us that our time in Japan is up. Time to return to my country," Luan affirmed with a smile. "Japan has been great – above all, we now have faith and will bring it back to Brazil to start our new life with God."

After the interview, Sachi and Luan started talking about a "strange" festival in Komaki, a city one-hour drive away from Homi Danchi. The festival took place the previous week (on March 15) and they came across its footage online. Hōnen Festival at Tagata Shrine is best known for its 280 kg (620 pound), 2.5 meter (96 inch)-long wooden phallus. While the wooden phallus is carried around on the street, people try to touch it as it is the embodiment of prosperity, bountiful harvest, and fertility. "*Nossa!* These women flock to the phallus and try real hard to touch it! They believe they can get pregnant that way!" Taken aback by their incredulous look and critical tone, I asked if they thought

such Japanese women actually "believed (*crer*)." "Yes!" they responded in unison. "The way they tried to touch it was intense!"

I had been invited to attend the festival by a group of Japanese friends who lived in the area, which I turned down since I had a Japanese class to teach at a local NGO that day. After I left Sachi's place, I called one of them, Junko, to see if she "believed" in the power of the phallic object. "Believe? Believe what? (shinjiru tte, nan'no koto?)," she responded. I hesitantly asked if she was convinced of its impregnating power. Junko laughed. "I touched it but I don't expect to get pregnant!" She then added, "I can't speak for others, but I feel it's not really about believing. Just look at all the foreign tourists who came![57] No one would ask you about what you believe, that's for sure."

As Junko herself admits, she "cannot speak for others" and it is not my purpose here to speculate the inner states of the visitors at the festival. Instead, this ethnographic scene can illuminate how some Pentecostal converts project their own understanding of belief onto other religious practices. In the comments made by Luan and Sachi, contemporary Japanese folk Shintō figures as a mirror on which their own ideas about what belief does is reflected. To them, participation in ritual (i.e. touching the phallus) and self-aware belief in its meaning (i.e. impregnation) are supposed to be welded together. This is why they deduced that everyone who makes an active effort to touch the object must "believe" in its meaning and end effect. Their reaction to the ritual, however, reveals more about Pentecostalism than about Japanese folk religions, as Junko's response implies. We could say, in this case, that belief may be in the eye of the beholder.

[57] The media – both Japanese and foreign – often characterize the Hōnen Festival as a "rare" and "strange" tradition (*kisai* or *chinsai*) and cover it extensively. The event consequently attracts a large number of tourists from both inside and outside Japan. In Japanese Shintō, however, tourism is not necessarily considered antithetical to the religious value of such festivities.

Roadmap to Water Baptism

To inquire why Sachi and Luan reacted the way they did, I now turn to the Pentecostal ceremony that I think best illustrates Missão Apoio's view on the relationship between ritual, meaning, and faith: water baptism, or "the baptism in the waters (*batismo nas águas*)." Water baptism is widely regarded as the definitive moment of conversion. Missão Apoio Toyota holds it once a year on the riverbank of Yahagi River, which runs through the center of the city.

The church invests a considerable amount of time and energy to ensure that all the new converts "know what it means" to take part in the occasion. When I observed the process in 2014, they were asked to go through several steps before the ritual of water baptism itself. Several months prior to the ritual, which was scheduled in August, the leaders of my home group started asking whether anyone (unconverted) had the intension of participating in the baptism that year. "If you want to be baptized, please come talk to us," they would say, "because you want to make sure you know what you are getting yourself into. There is no way of de-converting once you are baptized." Those who were judged ready for water baptism by home group leaders then attended the study session on the subject, which took place roughly two weeks before the big day. The pastor lectured on the meaning of conversion every born-again Christian must know, such as the acceptance of Jesus Christ as one's savior. Then potential converts were asked to fill out and turn in a form that attests their sincere intention to convert, which included items such as "describe previous experiences with God." Finally, the weekend before the day of water baptism, those who had fulfilled all the previous requirements performed what is called "confession of faith." One by one, prospective converts stepped forward and stood

before the whole congregation to give a short speech about their sincere desire to follow Jesus Christ. Each and every one received waves of warm applause and hallelujahs from the audience. In sum, the church lays out a closely monitored roadmap to the moment of conversion "to make sure everyone understands what the ceremony means," to borrow the pastor's phrase.

The water baptism took place during the second week of August, a period commonly referred to as *obon yasumi* (*obon* vacation) in Japan. *Obon* is a Japanese Buddhist custom to commemorate the spirits of one's ancestors, who are supposed to revisit the household altar during the three-day *obon.* It is customary to travel to ancestral family places and visit ancestors' graves, which is the official reason why many workers are given leave during this period. The majority of Brazilians in Japan, however, are not Buddhist and the custom of *obon* does not concern most of them. But the *obon* vacation, which is seven day long in the Toyota calendar,[58] does. Since most congregants at Missão Apoio Toyota worked in factories that granted *obon yasumi*, they treated it as if it were a collective vacation for everyone. It was also the last opportunity for most of them to enjoy the summer before it ended. Some families left immediately for a beach in Southern Aichi, neighboring Mie, or even Okinawa. Most of those who remained in Toyota gathered on the riverbank of Yahagi River to welcome the new members of the church.

[58] The Toyota calendar ("Toyota *karendā*" in Japanese) determines the workdays and holidays of all the employees working in factories affiliated with or under contract with Toyota Motor Corporation. *Obon* is one of the only three occasions in a year when workers can take days off outside the weekend (the other two being in May and the end of the year, respectively). In Toyota, it is common to experience traffic jams during commuting hours even on national holidays, since many of them are not registered as "holiday" on the Toyota calendar.

Around noon, those who were going to be baptized – roughly two dozens of them – put on white robes and formed a circle, which was in turn surrounded by all the other attendants. The ceremony started with a reading of biblical passages about the baptism of Jesus Christ by John the Baptist. The microphone went back and forth between the pastor and the interpreter after each verse to provide a bilingual procession. For example, "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him (Matthews 3:16)," sounded like the following:

> [pastor] *Assim que Jesus foi batizado, saiu da água. Naquele momento os céus se abriram, e ele viu o Espírito de Deus descendo como pomba e pousando sobre ele.*
> [translator] イエスはバプテズマを受けると、すぐに水から上がられた。すると天が開け、聖霊がハトのように彼の上に来るのをご覧になった。

While the majority of new converts understood only the pastor's words in Portuguese, several of the younger participants – two of them born in Japan, as far as I knew – likely listened primarily to the interpreter. After the reading, the pastor reviewed the meaning of water baptism once again. It is a reaffirmation of a life of sanctity separate from the world; it is grounded on your own decision to have a personal relationship with Jesus; it is a moment of death to the old self and rebirth of the new self. Then, led by the pastor and presbyters, the initiates started down the riverbank toward the water. Due to the typhoon that had just passed, the water was brown and the current was rather fast. The pastor, presbyters, and the first convert to be baptized stepped into the water with great caution. "Sister Aline," Pastor Cid started:

> "Is it your free and spontaneous will to be baptized?" "Yes."
> "Do you believe that our Lord Jesus died and resurrected for your sins?" "Yes."
> "Do you promise to serve and love Him every day of your life?" "Yes."

"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I baptize you."[59]

Aline was immersed into the water and then pulled up by the pastor and the assisting presbyter. The crowd clapped and congratulated her with warm welcoming words. Baptism proceeded swiftly from there. The line of initiates became shorter and shorter and, as each new convert got out of the water, family members and friends dashed to embrace his or her soaked body in joy.

The Line between Bath and Baptism: Faith as Sincere Belief

The structure of water baptism – from its preparatory steps to the culminating moment of immersion into water – is organized toward two interrelated objectives: understanding of symbolic meanings associated with each ritual action and sincere agreement with the core tenets of born-again faith. Participation for participation's sake – just to please one's parents, for instance – is strongly discouraged throughout the process. By the day of water baptism itself, participation is ideally an *expression* of preexisting sincere commitment to the relationship with God, not a *means* to achieve or strengthen social ties to each other.

One reason why churches such as Missão Apoio prioritize self-aware understanding of meanings represented in acts and signs is that, without it, their rituals would resemble those of Catholics. That is something they want to avoid. During the study session for prospective converts, for instance, one woman stood up and asked if she could be baptized again when she had already been baptized in the Catholic Church at

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[59] *É de libre sua spotánea vontade batizar?*
Crê que Jesus morreu e ressucitou para seus pecados?
Promote a servir e amá-lo todods os dias da sua vida?

birth. Pastor Cid responded that, to born-again Christians, infant baptism is not authentic because it is not based on an intentional decision with a clear understanding of the act. He then went on to recollect his mother's experience of water baptism, which took place in a small town in São Paulo when he was twelve. When she stepped out of the small indoor pool where the church was holding the ceremony, the first thing she said to him was that it was "a good bath (*bom banho*)." He chastised his mother, saying that it is not a mere bath but instead a moment of death to the old self and rebirth in the life-giving blood of Jesus Christ. "Without this deep reflection on the meaning of the act, you'll be just taking a nice bath during water baptism, just like my mother," the pastor added with a smile. "And she reverted to the old way of smoking, drinking, and quarreling with my father very soon after the baptism. She stopped going to church in a few years and, to this day, she remains deviant (*desviada*)." He himself converted several years after her mother and remains firm in his faith to this day, which presumably means his baptism was not a "good bath."

The Pentecostal leaders of Missão Apoio thus place the efficacy of ritual action in the inner sincerity of the participant rather than the ritual itself. A set of implicit views on language, meaning, and faith support this official stance. First, the ritual process is designed to encourage interiority, individuality, and intentionality. At every step, each participant is urged to reflect on one's inner intention to ascertain that oneself – and no one else – is the author of one's own decision. Church leaders also place strong emphasis on the learning of each action's symbolic meaning because decision unfounded on articulate understanding is ultimately void. Ideally, prospective converts must engage in such actions with a full understanding of what they are supposed to stand for. It follows

that sincere intention requires understanding of symbolic meaning. Without it, there would be little difference between Pentecostal converts and infants in Catholic baptism. Second, church leaders privilege the referential aspect of language, that is, a view that words represent pre-existing entities and states (Stromberg 1993). Thus each word and action has symbolic meaning – it stands for something else other than the act itself. Immersion into water *symbolizes* death and rebirth; bread and grape juice *symbolize* the body and blood of Jesus; saying "yes" *stands for* one's inner sincerity. As a number of researchers have noted, these are common characteristics of Protestant language practices:

> Viewed as a gestalt, then, the Christian language 'ideologue' put forward in this literature could be identified by a rather small though recurrent constellation of features, chief of which are a marked predilection for sincerity, interiority, intimacy, intentionality, and immediacy as an ethics of speech, and a privileging of the referential aspects of language. Concomitant with this, there is a tendency towards discomfort with, if not an outright rejection of the social, material, and historic substrate of language (among which we might count ritualized speech genres), which sometimes extends to a suspicion of fixed texts and other non-personalized instances of language use. (Bialecki and del Pinel 2011: 580)

Lastly, water baptism constructs faith as sincere belief, or intentional assent to discrete doctrines. Seconds before the immersion into water, initiates are asked one last time to verbally articulate their assent to the three core propositions on which Pentecostal faith rests: spontaneous free will, belief in Jesus Christ as the savior, and commitment to the relationship with Him. All the previous preparatory steps are implemented to best ascertain that each convert truly *means* what he or she says in this crucial moment.

The way in which Missão Apoio organizes water baptism shows that the church upholds a certain view on faith, which is propositional assent to articulable meanings and

tenets.[60] But is this how actual participants of the ritual understand and experience faith as well? To probe possible divergences between the official ideal and actual experiences of congregants, I now turn to the case of one woman whom I will call Leticia.

Conversion with Ancestral Spirits' Permission: Leticia's Experience

53-year old Leticia Kikuchi had been living in Japan for over 19 years – 13 years of which in Homi Danchi – when I acquainted her during my fieldwork. Having lost her husband to cancer in 2004, she was living with the youngest two of her four children, 25-year old Kenji and 16-year old Sakura. Sakura was born in Japan and schooled only in Japanese schools; whenever Leticia talked to her in Portuguese, responses came back only in Japanese. Kenji, on the other hand, was six when he was brought to Japan and spent four years of his adolescence with his uncle in Brazil. While he could speak both Japanese and Portuguese, he often described his language skills as "*chūto hampa* (half-baked, unfinished)." The education he received in either country was intermittent, which left his vocabulary and reading skills of either language incomplete. Due to his fluency in spoken Japanese and Portuguese, he frequently received requests for translation from his

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[60] While I imagine water baptism can be an emotionally fulfilling experience with sensory details for many converts, I personally could not collect any vivid accounts of this ritual from my informants. While this may be because I happened to interview those who did not have such an emotionally vivid memory of water baptism, there are several other possible reasons for the scarcity of data in this area. First, I may have interviewed some of them too early when they had not absorbed the experience (I spoke to a handful of new initiates during the celebration of water baptism in 2014). Second, congregants at Missão Apoio regarded water baptism as a "ceremony," a category of events that Pentecostals generally view negatively due to its perceived lack of spontaneity. Consequently, there could have been a cultural expectation that spiritual experience is more difficult to come by in water baptism – which they thought of as a ritual "done by men" (in contrast to Spirit baptism, which is "done by God"). While I do not have substantial data on the vivid emotional experiences of water baptism that some converts may have had, I would also like to emphasize that the primary purpose of my depiction of the ritual is to illustrate *the church's official stance* on what it achieves, not necessarily the participants' experiences of it.

Brazilian friends. He found some of them difficult since writing was involved. It was Kenji that I first became close to because he occasionally asked me to assist him in translating or writing Japanese texts.

Leticia and Kenji did not particularly look alike to my eye and I did not realize that they were related for several weeks. One Sunday, the presbyter asked if there were any volunteers who wanted to testify on their experiences of the church event that had taken place during the previous week. *Veredas Antigas*, or Ancient Paths, is a three-day long weekend retreat which, according to the circulated poster, seeks "restoring eternal family values (*restaurando os valores eternos da família*)." Recommended primarily for parents and children, it is aimed at healing "traumas" and "frustrations" that haunt familial relationships through Christian values and practices. Kenji raised his hand and walked up to the front. Slowly, he related how the conversation with God during the retreat made him realize that he still held unresolved bitter feelings toward his parents for painful childhood memories. "But God told me that, you see, everyone is human. We have to forgive just as Jesus forgives us and loves us." His eyes were teary and his voice was trailing off. The presbyter then asked Kenji's mother to step forward for a moment of reconciliation. Leticia – who had also participated in the retreat – walked up, embraced her son affectionately, and murmured her love for him. "I love you too, Mother." There was a wave of alleluias; everyone was applauding.

I also met Leticia and Kenji on Fridays because we attended the same Friday night home group gathering held at Shinji's – Leticia's second eldest son who also lived in Homi Danchi with his wife. Since Leticia always spoke passionately of God, I assumed she was also a convert like Kenji, Shinji, and Shinji's wife. One spring

afternoon in 2014, I visited her apartment for an interview. Like most of my interview participants from Missão Apoio, one of her first questions was about my faith: "So, where did you convert?" (Some assumed I had to be a rare Japanese born-again Christian to decide to study a place like their church.) I responded that I was not a Christian but instead a "non-practicing Buddhist (*budista não praticante*)" just like many Japanese people. "Oh, so you are not *crente* (born-again Christian)?" "No." "Me either." I was rather taken aback. She added, "My sons are, but I am not... Not yet, at least."

Leticia was born in 1961 in a São Paulo neighborhood with a sizable Okinawan community. Okinawa is the present-day southernmost prefecture of Japan, which comprises hundreds of tropical islands called Ryūkyū Islands. Until the annexation by the Meiji government of Japan in the late 19th century, it maintained political independence as Ryūkyū Kingdom and its culture remains distinct from the rest of the country. Okinawan emigrants and their descendants in Brazil consequently developed an ethnic identity distinct from – and sometimes opposed to – the rest of Nikkeis. When I inquired Leticia about her family, for instance, she immediately responded, "My father is from the Higa family and my mother from Shimabuku. You know, they were both *Okinawa-jin*!" Aside from the distinctly Okinawan surnames, her parents also maintained some Okinawan dialect in their household, especially when Leticia's grandparents were still alive. As a third-generation Nikkei, she herself grew up speaking mostly Portuguese. When she was eight, the family moved to Goiânia, where they lived in a "mixed" neighborhood with non-Nikkei Brazilians. In the new city, the family was no longer embedded in a tight Okinawan community network because the few Nikkeis they

acquainted were "*nihon-jin* (Japanese)" – which, to Leticia, is quite different from "*okinawa-jin* (Okinawan)."

In terms of religion, Leticia's upbringing was shaped by Roman Catholicism as well as Okinawan rites of ancestral commemoration. She was "raised in the Catholic Church (*criada na Igreja Catolica*)" because her mother was active in the local church. When it came to her kin, however, she stressed that "we are Shintoist because Okinawan is Shintoist – Okinawan is not Buddhist."[61] While she spoke of Catholicism as a fact of public life in Brazil, Shintō was a distinct marker of Okinawan identity to Leticia since she associated Buddhism with non-Okinawan Nikkeis and Japanese people (*japoneses*). When I asked her what Shintō was for her, she answered that it primarily consisted in taking care of the family altar (*cuidar do oratório da família*) in gratitude toward one's ancestors. "There, have a look," Leticia said as she slid open the door to the next room. On a wooden dresser, at eye level, was a small black house-shaped altar with a triangle roof and double doors. "That's the altar." "Many Okinawans have one?" "Yes, but this one is from Seichō-no-ie, because that's where I learnt how to take care of my ancestors." To my puzzled look, Leticia continued her story.

When she was 23 years old, her mother, whom she loved greatly, passed away. The death sensitized her to the question of how to venerate the spirits of the dead according to the traditional ways of Okinawan culture, which her mother had firmly embraced throughout her life. It was a critical issue that troubled her for several years after her mother's death but, to her frustration, her six siblings did not seem to share her concern. In fact, all of her six siblings married "*brasileiros* ('Brazilians,' by which she

[61] *Nós somos xintoísta porque okinawa-jin é xintoísta né... okinawa-jin não é budista.*

meant non-Nikkeis)" one after another during this period. It seemed to Leticia that the eldest son, who is supposed to continue the veneration of ancestral spirits by looking after the altar he inherited, was not doing much to keep the tradition going. Not being the eldest male of the household, she did not possess a family altar. "It was this desire to learn how to properly look after the family altar that drew me to Seichō-no-ie, because I wanted to take care of my mother's spirit." Three years after her mother's death, Leticia joined the religion. Seichō-no-ie does not have any historical ties to Okinawa as it was founded by a Japanese man named Masaharu Taniguchi in the Japanese mainland in 1930. What attracted her was the primal emphasis Seichō-no-ie places on the veneration of the ancestral spirits. The founder, for example, wrote a whole book on the spiritual necessity of commemoration of the dead, entitled *Commemoration of Ancestors Determines Our Life* (*Jinsei wo Shihaisuru Senzo Kuyō*) (2004 [1974]). In his words, "The earth is God, The root is ancestors, the trunk is parents, and I am the branch; for the branch to grow flowers of prosperity, one must first look after the ancestors who reside at the root" (Ibid.195). Seichō-no-ie officially encourages everyone – including those who are neither male nor the eldest – to engage in the practices to venerate the dead. Leticia also found out with joy that Seichō-no-ie upholds the principle of *bankyō ki'itsu* (All Teachings Return to One), a view that all religions are one and the same at the root. There were no rigid rules as to which style of family altar members must acquire – it could be Shinto-style (*kamidana*), Buddhist (*butsudan*), or something else. She obtained a small altar for herself. Seichō-no-ie provided her with philosophies, practices, and communities with which to strengthen the perceived ties with the ancestors in ways that did not conflict with her desire to maintain Okinawan "Shintō" heritage.

Soon after she joined Seichō-no-ie, she met another Nikkei member who served as a lecturer at the center she frequented in Goiânia. He was a "*naichi*," which means non-Okinawan Nikkei Brazilian in this context. They married within a year and had three sons in the first four years of their marriage. In 1995, the family migrated to Japan due to financial hardship. Like many Nikkei migrants at the time, they intended to stay in Japan for "a year or two, save money, and go home." Leticia and her husband were so sure of their plan of immediate return to Brazil that, for the first year, they did not send their sons to school. After a year, the municipal education committee of Seto City showed up on their doorsteps because the neighbors had notified the city that several school-aged children were at home without receiving education. The children started going to Japanese elementary school, Leticia became pregnant with another child, and Sakura was born. A year turned into two, then five, and then a decade. When her husband passed away in Japan in 2004, she realized that "there was no way" they could go back to Brazil and start a decent life there.

Since there were no branches of Seichō-no-ie that she knew of in either Seto or Toyota, the two cities the family had lived since their migration, they could not maintain active participation in Japan. It took them roughly two hours by bus and train to reach the closest center in Karya City from Homi Danchi. Several years after her husband's death, around 2009, her two younger sons – Kenji and Shinji – started frequenting Missão Apoio Toyota. "At first, I found it wonderful, you know, that they were searching the path of God (*caminho de Deus*)," Leticia reminisced. "But as soon as they started messing with me, you know, we had a conflict." What troubled her was the Pentecostal emphasis on purified religious boundary. As someone who had never found fault with

religious syncretism and moved seamlessly between Catholicism, Okinawan ancestral worship, and Seichō-no-ie, her sons' "lack of tolerance" toward other religions felt like an "attack" to her sense of self. As her sons learnt Pentecostal ideal of immaterial faith, they started framing her relationship with the family altar as "idolatry"; her inner turmoil reached its peak. "*Eles abominam, eles não querem, não aceitam* (They just abominate, don't want it, don't accept it)," Leticia said, using one of the strongest words to describe her sons' distaste toward the altar. "Now what? What's going to happen? Who will take care of the altar when I die? What will happen to our ancestors, and my mother?" Although her eldest son was not converted, he had been living in Tokyo for years to make his career in Japan and simply indifferent to such matters. There was "no peace" in her mind.

I was speechless. Having interacted with her only in the context of church, I could never have imagined the extent of her inner turmoil until then. Remembering the scene of reconciliation that I had witnessed at church several months earlier, I asked if the conflict still continued. Leticia responded no. "What sensitized me," she explained, "was prayers of my sons. When they told me, with tears in their eyes, that they were praying for me with all their might, I finally stopped to think. It was the biggest gift in my life, because that's what I wanted – someone praying for me. I had been only praying for others all my life, you know." She gradually opened up to her sons and began to participate in church activities. At the same time, she visited the Seichō-no-ie center in Karya to "ask for permission." She explained to the leaders there that she did not want the "disharmony in the family" to continue because of the conflicts she had with her sons. She was reassured to hear them affirm that "God is one and the only, including Jesus Christ. Walk with your

friends and relatives, because family cannot walk on two separate paths for there to be harmony."

In addition to the representatives of Seichō-no-ie, she also sought permission from God and ancestral spirits:

As time went by, God made things clearer for me. "Yes, my child, you know the truth. The truth is one. Take the path with your sons, because I will be with you. Independent of others, what you have already learnt will continue within" – in my mind, in my heart. So, do not worry.	*Mas Deus, com passer do tempo, foi esclarecendo para mim, mostrando para mim né. "Sim, filha, você conhece a verdade. A verdade é uma só. Toma o caminho com teus filhos. Porque eu estarei com voce. Independente de outras, aquilo que você já aprendeu vai continuar dentro" – aqui, na minha mente, na minha coração. Então, que não me preocupasse.*

As Leticia prayed, not only God but also her ancestors came to understand her decision. Instead of the scriptures of Seichō-no-ie, she started reciting some passages from the Bible to the altar, and she sensed their approval. "My ancestors, too, understand, because what matters is family – family is important."

By the time of my fieldwork, Leticia had been participating in the church activities just like any other member, if not more actively. Every Sunday, she attended a service at Missão Apoio Toyota with her three children. Her bible was filled with sticky notes, passages marked with highlighters, and notes in the margin. However, there was one thing Leticia had not conceded to her sons: the family altar will stay until her death. To her sons who would insist that "there is a way" to discard it, Leticia explained that an altar cannot be thrown away "just anywhere, in whatever way (*em qualquer lugar, de qualquer jeito*)." She elaborated:

I already asked for permission, so there is no connection. But, (…) I want you [her sons] to place it in my coffin. If I die here in Japan, I want that, um, to be cremated together with them [ancestors]. They will be cremated together with me. Because I asked for the permission in that way.	*Já pedi permissão então não tem nunhuma ligação. Só que, (...) eu quero que vocês coloquem dentro do meu caixão. Se eu morrer aqui no Japão, eu quero que, um, ser cremado junto com eles. Eles vão ser cremados junto comigo. Porque assim eu já pedi a permissão.*

"As long as they can do it," she sighed, "my soul will rest in peace (*minha alma vai ficar tranquila*)." Leticia then asked me if my family commemorated the spirits of dead ancestors. I told her that I had actually traveled to my mother's natal city several months before to attend a Buddhist ritual for the first anniversary of my uncle's death. "I have to go visit my family's graves again in a month, you know, because *obon* is in August," I added. "That's wonderful," Leticia nodded with approval. "You are blessed. Continue respecting your parents, because the ancestors of the parents are the ancestors of God. Understood?"[62] I nodded and answered yes. I realized that all the rituals of ancestral veneration that I took for granted, and even found bothersome as a child, were something Leticia had fought hard to maintain as a way to make sense of her heritage, identity, and cultural belonging. I thought of Shinji, with whom I had had many lengthy conversations as we worked together on translation. I had never heard the word *okinawano* from his mouth.

Leticia did convert that year together with her daughter Sakura. She was one of the last initiates to step into the river water, and did so with a big bright smile. Her sons were behind her, capturing the moment with their iPhones. Leticia gave a firm and loud yes to all the three questions, and then she was under water. "Eitcha Gloria!" She exclaimed as she walked back to the bank all soaked up, with her arms high up in the sky.

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[62] *Você tá sendo abençoada, continua reverenciando e respeitando seus pais, porque avós dos pais é avós de Deus. Entendeu*?

Her sons helped her back to the bank and hugged her while the whole congregation surrounded them with smiling faces. Several weeks later, I visited her apartment in Homi Danchi again to do some translation. The altar was still there.

Between Ancestral Personhood and Sincere Self

Leticia's experiences diverge from the church's official views on faith in a number of ways. For example, how she envisions God differs from the dominant narrative in Pentecostal culture, which emphasizes the transcendental character of God and the radical break between the human and the divine (Robbins 2009). To Leticia, who creatively combines a number of approaches accumulated through her past religious affiliations, what characterizes the space between the human and the divine is not a radical rupture but gradual continuity. This is the most obvious in how she relates to the ancestral spirits, including her own deceased mother. Here, living humans eventually transition into ancestral spirits, making the continuous character of human-divine relationship tangible. To Leticia, this human-divine continuity across generations is essential to the sense of cultural identity – in her case, being Okinawan. She cherishes the family altar as a material medium that crystalizes her continuing ties with the ancestors, spirits, and homeland. Additionally, it is a tangible nexus of what Hickman calls "ancestral personhood," or "a particular view of the life course as eternally embedded in kinship-based relationships and hierarchies that are enacted through ritual and discourse (Hickman 2014:323).

Initially, she was deeply hurt by her children's insistence on immaterial faith and purified religious boundary, which undergirded the accusation that she was practicing "idolatry." Although she eventually opened up to her sons and started participating in

church activities, her narrative still resists the radical break from the past that often accompanies Pentecostal conversion (Meyer 1998). Indeed, she asked for a permission to convert from Seichō-no-Ie leaders as well as ancestral spirits, in which we can see her effort for peaceful transition rather than radical break. She also rejected her sons' request to discard the family altar. While she "severed the tie" with the object, she insists that the ancestral spirits gave her permission to do so only on the condition that they would be cremated with her upon her death.

Furthermore, how she describes her motive for conversion also defies the model of individual sincere belief that church leaders uphold. To Leticia, "what matters is family – family is important." Her participation in Pentecostalism is in large part driven by her desire to restore "harmony" in the family, which runs counter to the primary emphasis church leaders place on the individual relationship with God.

Faith as Relational Commitment

Does all this mean that her conversion was inauthentic? Or, to put it more blatantly, did she *lie* when she answered "yes" to all the three questions seconds before immersing herself into water? While no one except Leticia can ever know what was going through her mind during water baptism, many of her fellow congregants would likely perceive her action as inauthentic should they discover the altar at her home. As far as the official views of the church are concerned, maintaining an ancestral altar contradicts the tenet expressed in one of the questions – to "serve and love Him every day of your life" – because doing so is to allow the presence of other spirits to linger on. Leticia's desire for familial harmony, along with the principal role it played in her decision to convert, may also go against the church's interpretation of "being baptized out of your free and

spontaneous will." While the firmness of her will is hardly contestable, she seems to draw her strength from her connectedness – with her children, family, and ancestors – rather than individuality. Conversion driven by the sense of commitment to family is something that the church typically frowns on, since it is ideally the personal relationship with God that moves one to such a decision.

Of course, that the church has to repeatedly stress the individuality of conversion experience indicates that there are always some who fail to meet this ideal. A handful of congregants at Missão Apoio Toyota indeed told me that they had initially undergone water baptism out of the sense of obligation to their converted family members. Lana, for instance, told me matter-of-factly that she underwent baptism "following everyone's lead (nori-de)" at the age of 15. "Everyone was getting baptized, so I thought it was only natural for me to do the same thing." Not surprisingly, such an admission often comes from "second-generation *crentes*," or the younger generation who grew up in the church. Typically, it is their parents who migrated from Brazil and converted to Pentecostalism in Japan. The church leaders are aware of this generational shift, along with the moral threat it poses to what they view as authentic conversion experience. After the reading of biblical passages during water baptism, the pastor called two prospective converts to the front. He wanted them to speak a little about their experiences with God before the immersion into the water. The first man, seemingly in his 40's, spoke about his hard life as a migrant in Japan, indulgence in sinful ways of life to fill the emptiness he felt within, and eventual encounter with Jesus Christ as the Savior. Before the microphone was passed onto the next person, a teenage girl with a shy smile, the pastor inserted his view on "the new generation of *crentes*." "Since she grew up in a godly home, she never

experienced the world (*aproveitou o mundo*). Sometimes this makes it more difficult to understand how precious the encounter with God is, but here she is – she wants to have an individual relationship with God for the rest of her life!" Her parents – third-generation Nikkei mother and non-Nikkei father who had converted together in Japan right before her birth – were smiling with pride in front of her. Then she spoke about her happiness to accept Jesus as her savior, in Portuguese with Japanese accent. The pastor's remark in this scene ironically suggests that a sizable number of converts – particularly the younger ones raised in Pentecostal homes – go through water baptism in ways that do not live up to the ideal of individual sincere belief. And many church leaders were aware of such a "risk" – conversion as familial obligation and social conformity.

And this is where I would like to highlight *relational commitment* as an integral part of faith. Most of my interlocutors, of course, would disagree with me; to them, those who convert only to commit to their families and friends – are inauthentic. As an ethnographer, however, my concern encompasses both the exemplary and the pragmatic – that is, both envisioned ideals as well as actual practices. When a sizable number of my interlocutors consistently diverge from the "ideal," I must entertain the possibility that they are more than a bunch of exceptions but rather a legitimate constituency that shapes the shared cultural reality.

I am not the first to point out that Christians – even charismatic Christians – are not quite the believers as they claim or appear to be. Howell (2007) argued that the cross-cultural study of Christianity would benefit from recasting *belief* as *commitment*. The Filipino Baptists of his ethnography were less concerned with whether everyone affirmed the same doctrines than whether everyone was equally invested in everyday religious life.

Taking my cues from Howell, I suggest that faith as it is practiced among charismatic Christians such as those at Missão Apoio is more than just an individual cognitive belief but also a relational commitment to others. Seen in this light, Leticia – or anyone else who converted to "follow the family" for that matter – were not necessarily being inauthentic during water baptism. Characterizing her action as insincere is to privilege the referential aspect of language. Words, however, do not merely *represent* but also *act, achieve, and perform* (Austin 1975; Stromberg 1993; Harding 2000).

If "yes" in water baptism is a speech act rather than a descriptive statement, what does it do? The most obvious answer in the case of converts like Leticia is that it performs faith as relational commitment. By declaring "yes" to a circle of audience who was there to bear witness, she publicly declared and to some degree achieved her commitment to social others. If the personal relationship between oneself and God were truly the only dimension of faith, water baptism would not require the presence of witnesses – social others who watch, listen, embrace, and applaud new converts. Yet it very much does.

In fact, the ceremony of water baptism itself was only a small part of the day's gathering. While the ritual was over by early afternoon, most congregants stayed on the riverbank until dark to enjoy a large Brazilian-style barbecue party (*churrasco*) afterward. As soon as the "official" part ended, people quickly gathered around a dozen barbecue grills that they had set up and started partying. They ate thick meat chunks, drank *Guaraná*, grilled pineapple and banana for dessert, played soccer when they became full, and listened and sang to Brazilian gospel music from the large speakers someone had brought on a truck. "*Crentes gostam muito de comunhão* (Born-agains love

communion)," they told me cheerfully when I commented that everyone seemed to be having so much fun. *Comunhão* in this context refers to a fellowship of brothers and sisters in faith. Sharing the same Latin root with the words *commun* (common), *comunidade* (community), and *comunicar* (communicate), the term connotes the act of sharing and signifies companionship. Interestingly, *comunhão* also means the Eucharist in Portuguese, the central rite of Christian worship in which believers remember the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. At Missão Apoio, however, congregants referred to the Eucharist as *santa ceia* and reserved the word *comunhão* for the companionship of Christian fellows. The multivocal character of the term *comunhão* points to the inseparability of fellowship from faith in the lived experience of charismatic faith.

From the very onset of one's life as a *crente*, then, the human-human relationality is the very condition on which faith can be cultivated. This is why I argue that relational commitment is an indispensible part of charismatic faith, not a byproduct. In this view, converts like Leticia are not inauthentic pretenders but sincere practitioners of faith.

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

At Missão Apoio Toyota, members distinguished between two different kinds of baptism. The first is water baptism, which I have described and analyzed in detail. I now turn to the other baptism, which is Spirit baptism or the baptism in the Holy Spirit (*batismo no Espírito Santo*). Unlike the former, it is not a planned event on a set date. According to my interlocutors, it is a spontaneous phenomenon that takes place whenever and wherever the Holy Spirit manifests to baptize a person. As such, the church leaders cannot organize Spirit baptism as they do with water baptism. The total spontaneity that churchgoers accorded to Spirit baptism was clear in their unwillingness to view it as a

ritual. While many – including the pastor – would concede that water baptism was a "ritual (*rito*)" or "ceremony (*cerimônia*)," they would never use such terms to characterize the other baptism. This is because, as one congregant put it, "the baptism in water is done by men but the baptism in the Spirit is done by Jesus." Since the latter cannot be achieved by human will alone but instead dependent on the divine agency, it is beyond what they saw as the realm of ritual – that is, the means to facilitate human efforts to reach God.

Given that the Holy Spirit is immaterial, how can congregants know that they have been baptized in it? While there are several signs to confirm this, many regarded speaking in tongues as the chief evidence of Spirit baptism. Thus, while church members acknowledged that the two were not exactly the same, they often referred to glossolalia and Spirit baptism interchangeably –when you speak in tongues, the Holy Spirit is baptizing you. Despite its apparent spiritual importance, however, glossolalia received significantly less attention as a subject of explicit teaching. For example, the weekly bible study usually dedicated one or two full weeks to give clear instructions on sincere prayer – with themes such as "How to Pray" and "How to Speak to God." Such lessons emphasized the importance of simple and transparent speech as the basis of effective prayer. God, often compared to the Father and the Best Friend, prefers honest, unpretentious, and genuine words from His children. Since many of my interlocutors saw me as a potential convert, they were eager to give me advice on how to pray, especially in the beginning of my fieldwork. Compared to the abundance of clear guidelines on sincere prayer, the scarcity of the same kind of information about how to speak in tongues stood out. Whenever I inquired, experienced members of the church were eloquent about their

own experiences of tongues but offered noticeably little on how to speak in tongues.

It is clear that, while both were considered as "baptism," there were significant differences in how people viewed and experienced water baptism and Spirit baptism. Samuel, for instance, had the following to say when I asked him why there are two baptisms:

> I think that many are baptized in the Holy Spirit after the baptism in water. Why? Well, the first baptism is much easier. The baptism in water, you just need to understand what you are getting into, what it all means, and accept it. You don't need to do much, in my opinion. But the baptism in the Holy Spirit is way beyond what you can understand with your head (*cabeça*).

While a handful of long-term members at the church agreed with Samuel that people tend to experience Spirit baptism after water baptism, the attributed reasons were not always the same. Another person, Gaby, speculated that it was probably because the water baptism is an occasion for converts to dissociate from worldly sins (such as drinking), thus "readying the body (*preparar o corpo*)" for the reception of the Holy Spirit. In her opinion, keeping the body – the vessel of the Spirit – clean and holy is crucial for any chance of Spirit baptism.

The perspectives of Samuel and Gaby converge on one point: the Spirit baptism shifts the locus of agency away the intentional human subject. Samuel thinks it cannot be understood or willed by one's "head." Gaby believes one has to "prepare the body" to accept the Spirit. Such remarks suggest that the experience of Spirit baptism hinges on certain embodied pathways that go beyond the control exerted by conscious mind.

This does not mean that church members saw speaking in tongues as an automatic process that simply takes over the speaker's consciousness. Instead, many who had experienced glossolalia reported a heightened sense of focus in the moment. Joana, for

instance, told me:

> Praying to God as if you were talking to a friend is a natural form of prayer. Praying in tongue is a spiritual form. (…) [Speaking in tongues feels as if] warm water is gushing out of my heart, body, and soul… like a river of gratitude that never ends. What is leaving your mouth is not under your control, but God never takes away your consciousness. People think believers are crazy because we look possessed, but we are actually very aware, super aware. God is a gentleman, and He never possesses you against your will. You can stop speaking if you wish. It is demons who take away your consciousness.

On one level, the remark can be read as an effort to distance Pentecostalism from other religions that some converts view as "demonic," especially afro-Brazilian religions such as Umbanda. The word possession (*possessão*) reminds many Brazilians of such traditions known for spirit mediumship (Seligman 2010, Burdick 2013).

On another level, however, Joana is also hinting at a significant theory about the relationship between language, prayer, and the self. Speaking in tongues is a "spiritual" form of prayer that involves "heart, body, and soul." While utterances are not formed through purposeful articulation ("not under your control"), glossolalia also makes the speaker "very aware, super aware." In fact, she claims she can stop speaking if she wishes. Joana stresses this point by contrasting Spirit baptism with demonic possession, which takes away one's sense of agency against one's will. Taken together, her comment suggests a state of energized focus in the present accompanied by a temporary suspension of reflective self-consciousness – what some call "flow" or "zone" (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi 2002:90, see also Csikszentmihalyi 1991).[63]

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[63] Flow is characterized by the following qualities: intense and focused concentration on what one is doing in the present moment, merging of action and awareness, loss of reflective self-consciousness (i.e., loss of awareness of oneself as a social actor), a sense that one can control one's actions; that is, a sense that one can in principle deal with the situation because one knows how to respond to whatever happens next, distortion of temporal experience (typically, a sense that time has passed faster than normal), experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding, such that often the end goal is just an excuse for the process.

Just like Bruno and Leonardo in the opening scene, many tongues speakers regarded such a flow-like absorption in verbal utterances as a way to "build (*edificar*)" one's faith and self. Tomomi, who spoke in tongues regularly, told me:

> Speaking in tongue strengthens oneself (*se edifica*). You don't understand what you are saying but God understands. He knows what you need, even if you don't know it yet yourself. (…) The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not something of the mind (*da mente*). It is something by faith (*pela fé*). You feel it in your heart (*coração*).

Like Samuel, who thought Spirit baptism was beyond "what you can understand with your head," Tomomi also stresses that it is "not something of the mind." Instead, it is in "your heart" and "by faith." The faith that Spirit baptism cultivates, then, is not coterminous with the model of faith reinforced during the ceremony of water baptism. While the latter encourages articulable belief affirmed by conscious mind, the former shifts the locus of faith to embodied mind.

Faith as Embodied Disposition

Lakoff and Johnson, in their book *Metaphors We Live By* (2003 [1980]), speak of "the myth of objectivism" that is influential in Western views on language and meaning. The myth of objectivism dictates that the world is made up of objects of innate properties, and words express fixed meanings that fit preexisting things, concepts, and categories. In such a view, "[e]xpressions (…) can be said to have objective meaning only if that meaning is independent of anything that human beings do, either in speaking or in acting. That is, meaning must be disembodied" (Ibid.199).

Speaking in tongues reveals the limits of objectivism by collapsing the distinction between words and things, signs and meanings, and the signifier and the signified. As it

consists in semantic non-meaning, or "nonsensical" utterances, glossolalic speech cannot stand for preexisting objects separate in existence. Instead, its meaning comes from the act of speaking itself and therefore to a great degree episodic. The conventional separation between the signifier and the signified is no longer tenable here because meaning cannot be separate from the speaker, the place, and the time from which utterances are born – in other words, the speaker's embodied existence as part of the world. As Thomas Csordas put:

> The stripping away of the semantic dimension in glossolalia is not an absence, but rather the drawing back of a discursive curtain to reveal the grounding of language in natural life, as a bodily act. Glossolalia reveals language as incarnate, and this existential fact is homologous with the religious significance of the Word made Flesh, the unity of human and divine (1990:25).

Speaking in tongues is thus a pathway through which the speaker can experience embodied meaning, meaning that is founded not on mental representation but on sensory intelligibility.

This does not mean, however, that each speaker of tongues can invent any kind of meaning that he or she wishes to experience. That would be to make a subjectivist error. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003[1980]), "the myth of subjectivism" is an influential counter-discourse to the objectivist perspective that upholds the primal importance of feelings, intuitions, and sensibilities. In the subjectivist view, meaning is purely subjective, personal, and private. Put otherwise, meaning is unstructured and free-forming, and therefore resistant to be shared between different persons. However, subjectivism ignores the existence of socially informed body, or *habitus*, which provides a foundation for embodied meaning. As I mentioned earlier, very few – virtually none – congregants start speaking in tongues on the first day of their born-again life; while many

– but not all – eventually experience Spirit baptism, the church does not offer articulate instructions on how to make this happen. These facts indicate that glossolalia is a learnt skill that is acquired on a tacit bodily level.

Larissa, for instance, recounted the following story. In 2007, she participated in the Encounter with God, a three-day prayer camp that the church organizes annually. While she had never spoken in tongues, her desire to do so was very strong. She had heard other church members say that glossolalia enables Christians to "have the boldness to pray better, and better understand the bible (*tem usadia para orar melhor, entender melhor a bíblia*)." She was curious to find out what it meant. At the end of the camp, leaders held a special prayer session in which all the participants were encouraged to pray together for the manifestation of the Spirit. Fervent prayers filled the room. Soon, some participants – who were considered spiritually mature – started speaking in tongues. Those who wished to experience Spirit baptism were told to just keep on praying with earnest passion. Despite her enthusiasm, Larissa did not seem to be able to speak in tongues. Sensing her frustration, several people came over and prayed with her, but she still could not. Just as she was about to give up and stop praying, someone Larissa looked up to as "a very spiritual person" – her home group leader – walked over to her. She told Larissa that words were "boiling in her belly," trying to get out. "But I see a knot in your throat. That's in the way, preventing the boiling words to come out. Now I will pray to make that knot disappear, so you pray aloud with me with all your might while I do it, OK?" The home group leader started praying, and soon her words turned into tongues. Larissa also prayed, feeling the touch of the leader's palm on her throat. Then, at last, she started speaking in tongues. "It was, shall we say, like baby's tongues (akachan no igen),"

Larissa told me, “Because I had just started speaking. It sounded different from the leader’s tongues, you know, like a baby. But it was still speaking in tongue. I was not thinking to speak. It felt amazing.”

Larissa’s recounting of her first experience of glossolalia demonstrates that the learning process is more mimetic and tacit than instructional and explicit. The only explicit direction given during the prayer session is to pray aloud with as much ardor as one can muster. Implicit cues, in contrast, are abundant. The participants in the camp were encouraged to pray with other more experienced practitioners of prayer, many of whom started speaking in tongues right in front of their eyes. When newer members seemed to be having a difficulty, other congregants – typically those with leading roles in the church – would come over to speak in tongues in closer proximity. When even this did not work, Larissa’s home group leader placed her palm on her throat to “bring out the boiling words” from her belly. With this tactile encouragement and demonstration of glossolalia from someone she personally looked up to, Larissa could finally speak in tongues, but in its rudimentary form. Larissa’s acknowledgement that it was only “baby’s tongues,” however, reveals her view on glossolalia as a skill that one learns, develops, and masters over time. Thus, speaking in tongues involves a mimetic training of the body through intense social moments shared with others in the community.

If speaking in tongues “strengthens the faith,” then, this faith must be rooted in embodiment – a preobjective and inchoate process of the self that is socially informed and experientially tangible (Csordas 1994). Faith in this sense is no longer a semantic articulation but an embodied disposition. It is this dimension of faith that can give converts a renewed sense of unity across ethnic, national, and linguistic boundaries.

During my fieldwork, guest pastors visited Missao Apoio Toyota from around the world – Indonesia, Kenya, the US, and South Korea, to name a few. Naturally, the congregants relied on the interpreters to understand their sermons and regular prayers. Whenever a guest pastor started speaking in tongues, however, the translation into Portuguese immediately stopped. Glossolalia cannot be translated in the conventional sense and, for this very reason, everyone understood it without translation as a gestural and embodied act. It is in this sense that speaking in tongues could help charismatic Christians experience "Pre-Babel lucidity" (Csordas 1990:25)

Conclusion: Layered Faith, Layered Self

How can speaking in tongues cultivate faith, when churchgoers uphold the ideal of sincere prayer and belief? This chapter started with this question that emerged out of a conversation with Bruno and Leonardo. My subsequent analysis of relevant ethnographic data suggests that the "layered" character of charismatic faith gives rise to different kinds of speech and meanings. First, faith is a propositional assent to articulable doctrines. This view on faith as sincere belief is the public stance that the church endorses in its key rituals such as water baptism. Second, faith is a relational commitment to social others. While church leaders typically frown on the "social" motivation behind the decision to convert, it is indeed what drives a sizable number of congregants – including Leticia – to take the step, at least initially. A closer look at the gathering for water baptism as a *comunhão* also shows that, in the context of charismatic church, the line between the "social" and the "religious" is porous to say the least. Lastly, faith is also an embodied disposition. Speaking in tongues, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit that it evidences, was

explored in detail to illustrate this point. Faith in this last sense asserts the unity of body and mind, which congregants refer to as the Spirit. Here, faith is no longer a product of reflective self-consciousness, as the model of sincere belief would have it, but instead a process through which the inchoate and embodied self becomes more tangible to the speaker. My argument on the previous pages can be summarized in the table below.

Table 5: Elements of Layered Faith

	Speech/Meaning	**Faith**	**Self**
1	referential (*orar*)	as propositional assent	sincere self
2	constitutive (*rezar*)	as relational commitment	interdependent self
3	Constitutive/nonsensical	as embodied disposition	accompanied self
Thesis: Pentecostal faith consists in a synthetic bricolage of these distinct layers (although #1 is typically the officially upheld stance).			

The ingenuity of Pentecostalism lies in this versatility of faith, not in its singularity. Some converts may start out with an understanding of faith as sincere belief and, over time, come to deepen it to the level of embodied disposition. Others may join the church to commit to social others and later internalize the ideal of sincere belief. A very small number of churchgoers – less than a handful – also claimed that they had spoken in tongues during the first weeks of "experimenting" with a Pentecostal church without undergoing water baptism. My participant observation data could not ascertain the existence of this last group (i.e. all the regular tongues-speakers were converted members at the time of my fieldwork). If some do indeed speak in tongues prior to any serious commitment to a Pentecostal congregation, this could mean that, sometimes, the compelling experience of embodiment drives the subsequent process of conversion and internalization of sincere belief. On the other hand, there are always some congregants who do not speak in tongues despite their senior positions in church and what many

consider as their maturity in faith. Trajectories are certainly patterned – for instance, most informants who spoke in tongues reported to have experienced Spirit baptism after water baptism, or after a significant time spent among the congregation while postponing their participation in water baptism. The most common scenario is a beginning in sincere belief, discovery of embodied disposition, and constant deepening relational commitment along the process. Still, instead of emphasizing one dominant pattern, I would like to highlight the diversity of trajectories that migrant converts may take when it comes to the cultivation of faith. In other words, charismatic faith, far from being a global state of mind, is a generative process – a process that can be different for each person.

In my opinion, it is this generative and versatile character of charismatic faith that is the most consequential for the identities and selves of transnational subjects such as Nikkei converts. The reason is because the multivocality of faith can mediate a wide range of claims, desires, and experiences while simultaneously generating a sense of community, or *comunhão*.

First, as I have noted multiple times in this dissertation, the ideal of sincerity is deeply tied to the notion of modern personhood in Pentecostal cultures. The cultivation of sincere belief can therefore encourage a modern identity among migrant converts, which in turn promotes a future-oriented attitude that moves away from "tradition." "Tradition" can mean many things for people with a complex history of transnational mobility such as Nikkeis. On the one hand, it can conjure up the images of their Japanese immigrant ancestors, "oriental" religions in Brazil, and institutionalized Catholicism among Brazilians. By breaking with such "traditions," migrant converts can see themselves as moving forward away from the complex past toward a new future. On the other hand,

"tradition" also signifies the dominant cultural ethos of the Japanese majority in contemporary Japan. In this latter case, migrant converts can re-envision themselves as spiritual moderns vis-à-vis the "economically and technologically modern," but "spiritually traditional," Japanese.

Second, the layer of relational commitment can facilitate the creation of space where their Brazilian ethnic identity can survive and thrive in diaspora. The barbecue party that ensued water baptism, for instance, was full of Brazilian identity markers – thick *churrasco* meat, iconic Brazilian soft drink *Guaraná*, grilled tropical fruits such as pineapple and banana (which are not eaten warm in Japan), soccer, and Portuguese worship songs. Even though Leticia has not succeeded in handing down her Okinawan Nikkei heritage, she did secure, through conversion, a part of her past in the future of her children in Japan – that of a Brazilian. The relational dimension of faith, and the socio-religious fellowship of *comunhão* that it fosters, can thus effectively mediate the continuity of cultural identity in diaspora.

Lastly, the layer of embodied disposition can call for a creative rearrangement of all of such social, ethnic, and cultural distinctions reinforced by preexisting identity categories. As a gestural "nonsensical" language that defied the semantic structure of ordinary speech, glossolalia can disrupt the daily reality cemented by a number of discursive labels. When migrant converts immerse themselves into verbal utterances that derive meaning from their embodied existence in the world, are they being "Nikkei," "Brazilian," or "Christian"? Of course, such a discursive reification of the act can occur as an immediate afterthought and reinforce their identity as a "Pentecostal" – after all, speaking in tongues is a cherished marker of charismatic spirituality. In the very moment

of absorption in utterances, however, it may be possible to fleetingly experience the reality not as a discursive subject but instead as an inchoate self. As Csordas' idea of "pre-Babel" lucidity hints at, such an embodied experience may be able to mediate a trans- or pre- ethnic sense of the self.

And, most importantly, the diverse identities, desires, and experiences mediated by the three layers of faith are not mutually exclusive. They overlap, interact, and sometimes merge. Migrant converts can shift back and forth between different identity claims, self-images, and registers of experience, depending on the context. Yet they all still insist: it is one God, one Jesus, and one faith that unite them all. I therefore propose that charismatic faith is a versatile cultural apparatus with which transnational subjects such as Nikkei Brazilians can foster the sense of unity through diversity.

Epilogue:
National Borders, Ethnic Boundaries, and Ethical Margins

Ethics of Ambiguity

Simone de Beauvoir, in her 1947 book *Ethics of Ambiguity*, states that humans face ambivalence arising from two dimensions of life: immanence as defined facticity and transcendence as conscious subject. On the one hand, they are shaped by natural and social orders of which they are part, such as the situations defined by the past and the fact of death. On the other hand, they possess the power for conscious reflection and creative choice, with which they can stand back from the immanent world in which they are embedded. In other words, a person is both "a sovereign and unique subject" and "an object for others" (De Beauvoir 1948:23). The constant tension between the two creates the ambiguity of existence. Beauvoir asserts that ethics consists in grappling continuously with this fundamental ambiguity of human life.

If I were to describe in one word the condition of Nikkei Brazilian Pentecostals in Japan, that word would be ambiguity. Most of them inhabit the fluid ethnic, national, and religious boundaries as naturally as they breathe, although feelings of suffocation are also common. In other words, ambiguity has long become a fact of life to my interlocutors. The multivocality of the term ambiguity also makes it an apt word to capture Nikkei Pentecostal experience. Ambiguity means resistance to clear and singular classification; it signifies openness to multiplicity and uncertainty of meanings; additionally, it also connotes the state of dilemma, tension, and struggle, as De Beauvoir indicates. In all of its senses, Nikkei converts quite literally live ambiguity, and this dissertation is my attempt to illuminate some of its process through an ethnographic lens. The five

preceding chapters illustrated, from different angles, how migrant converts navigate the ambiguous borderlands between shifting ethnic identities, diverging forms of belonging, and multiple registers of the self. Before proceeding, I will recapitulate my main arguments.

In "Return to the Present: The 'Temporal Tandem' of Migration and Conversion," I explore the ambiguity of the past, the present, and the future that their "return" has amplified. While Nikkeis enjoy the social image of "modern" minority in Brazil, they become a "backward" minority in Japan due in large part to their working-class profile and ambiguous foreignness. Given this context of social humiliation, conversion to Pentecostalism in Japan can be read as a collective effort to restore their modern identity, not in ethnic but spiritual terms. This "return to the future" as a spiritually modern minority, however, is only one of many narratives that the Pentecostal myth facilitates. On the top of the profound sense of class downgrade, Nikkei migrants also suffer from the feeling of temporal suffocation in Japan. As many set the goal of *dekasegi* life as an eventual return to the comfortable middle-class future in Brazil, they often learn to sacrifice the present for the future. In short, life becomes, and feels, suspended to many migrants. The predominant sense of suspension is clear in common phrases such as *deixar de viver*, which literally means "to stop living," or "to put aside living." When life in Japan turns out to be less temporary than they had initially intended, however, many start to crave the life in the present that they had "put aside" upon arriving in Japan. In addition to returning to the future, then, migrant converts also "return to the present" by reclaiming their immanent life through the charismatic temporality of "right now, right here." Sensory and immersive practices such as prayer help converts focus on the present,

where they feel liberated – no matter how fleetingly – from the preoccupations about their uncertain future as migrant laborers.

"Of Two Bloods: Nation, Kinship and Belonging" then delves into the ambiguity of national kinship and belonging that the special Japanese descent visa brings to the fore. The preferential visa treatment of Nikkei foreigners points to the "Japanese blood" as the link that ties Japanese diasporic populations to the national kinship of contemporary Japan. Insofar as the unifying power of "Japanese blood" is predicated on naturalized essence, its vision of relatedness can be termed "material kinship." Nikkei migrants, most of whom were born and raised in Brazil, resist the logic of material kinship by strengthening their attachment to their *terra natal* – "natal land" – and Brazilian identity. Some also resist the ideology of "Japanese blood" by performing it, that is, by enacting their Japanese persona just to the Japanese majority audience. Those who convert to Pentecostalism, however, go a step further by creating a new form of kinship. In Pentecostal culture, the blood of Jesus is the medium of Christian fellowship that cleanses converts of past sins and transforms them into brothers and sisters in faith. Since converts emphasize the symbolic – and definitely immaterial – character of Jesus' blood, the form of relatedness mediated by the divine blood can be termed symbolic kinship. While Pentecostal symbolic kinship helps migrant converts sustain their Brazilian ethnic space in diaspora, it also assuages, somewhat paradoxically, their fear of assimilation. This is because they envision the spiritual kinship of Pentecostalism as transcendent from naturalized ethnic kinship. They can find solace in the belief that, even if they become completely "Japanized" in a few generations, they will always be distinct as Pentecostals.

"Culture of Love: Family, Ethnicity, and Religion in Affective Terms" then shifts the attention to a more intimate unit of kinship: family. It investigates how Pentecostal churches respond to the sense of ambiguity exacerbated by what many migrants perceive as migration's negative effects on family solidarity. Whether it is conjugal relation or parent-child relationship, migrants speak at length of *afastamento* – emotional distance, estrangement, and alienation. While a number of structural factors such as work condition and school environment shape the foundation of *afastamento*, most migrants experience it in affective terms as a deprivation of love necessary for the continuation of family. It is an emotional human crisis. Pentecostalism, with its rich repertoire of affective idioms and practices, steps in to "restore the eternal family values" among migrant families. Love, in particular, is a polyphonic affect that is at once divine and human, which makes it an effective medium for converts who aspire to work on their relationships with others – both social others as well as the divine Other. Love is thus an ethical affect. To many migrants, however, it is equally an ethnic affect because they interpret and experience love within their particular migratory history. Specifically, many Nikkei congregants frame Christian love (*amor*) as a unique blend of Brazilian affectionateness (*carinho*) and Japanese discipline (*educação*). Thus, migrant converts experience Pentecostal affective practices in both ethical and ethnic terms to incorporate them into their project of self-remaking.

"Accompanied Self: Debating Religion in Multicultural Japan" examines a different kind of ambiguity – the ambiguity of Pentecostalism as a minority religion in Japanese society, where Buddhist-Shinto syncretism predominates. I analyze the diverging ways in which the category of religion (*religião* or shūkyō) is conceptualized

among Pentecostal Brazilian migrants and the Japanese majority. While both Pentecostal converts and the Japanese majority often think of themselves as "non-religious," the underlying logics of non-religious self are quite different. To Pentecostal converts, *religião* signifies a set of ritual practices that people inherit through family, custom, and tradition. By extension, they see *religião* as an enforcer of social conformity that results in obedience only in form. Since their vision of ideal selfhood is sincerity that emanates from deep interiority, they distance themselves from the label of *religião* and from the traditions that they categorize as *religião,* such as Brazilian Catholicism and Japanese Buddhism. To the Japanese majority, religion – or shūkyō – means something quite different. They understand it as adherence to the inner self that believes in a set of explicit doctrines, often associating it with institutionalized monotheism such as Christianity. At the same time, the common visions of self-cultivation in Japan, such as "to enter through the form," deemphasize the inner self and instead value the alignment of the self through physical and social engagements. Consequently, many Japanese consider themselves "non-religious" even as they frequently engage in Shinto and Buddhist practices. In such a context, the cultivation of Pentecostal self, which is individualist in its orientation, often furthers a sense of ambiguity in interactions with Japanese social environment. The ethnographic picture thus appears to warrant a dichotomous opposition between the "individualist Pentecostal" and the "relational Japanese." However, a closer look at Pentecostal selfhood complicates such a view. That is, converts envision the inner self as an interactive domain that is open to the divine Other and experience it as a site where the relationship with God is fostered. In this view, the inner self and the relational self are coterminous, at least when it comes to the

experiences of divine alterity. Thus, Pentecostal selfhood may well be understood as "accompanied self," a kind of relational individual.

"Layered Faith: Language, Meaning, and Belief in Pentecostal Practice" extends the discussion of ambiguity to yet another direction by teasing out the different registers of experience – or "layers" – from charismatic faith. As far as the converts' self-understandings are concerned, Protestant Christianity – of which Pentecostalism is part – is first and foremost a culture of sincere belief. This official view on what makes a believer, however, does not monopolize converts' actual experiences of charismatic faith. In addition to the faith as articulable belief, a sizable number of converts also experience it as a way of relational commitment to social others as well as an embodied disposition cultivated through the socially trained body. The ingenuity of Pentecostalism, I argue, lies precisely in this ambiguity of faith. Each congregant, who inevitably comes into the church life with her own histories, desires, and secrets, can craft her own journey by responding variably to the three layers of faith: propositional belief, commitment to sociality, and embodied knowledge. The acknowledgement of such variability is crucial especially for a study of people like Nikkei Brazilians in Japan, for whom representativeness is not a very useful concept. A *nisei* man who used to work as a white-collar professional in metropolitan São Paulo but now feels stuck on a factory floor in Toyota may grasp on the layer of sincere belief as a marker of his newly acquired modern Christian identity. A *sansei* woman who worries about the loss of Brazilian heritage in her Japan-born children may be attracted to the layer of radical sociality as a means to foster her offspring's Brazilian identity. A *yonsei* adolescent with mixed cultural heritage who has been bullied by both his Japanese and Brazilian peers may find profound solace

in the practice of speaking in tongues as an occasion to forget himself, together with all the problems discursive identity labels have caused him. I have met many people like them during my fieldwork. Rather than flattening such a diversity to fit it into one generalizable observation, I choose to keep my analytical idiom inclusive so that theory can accommodate my informants' experiences. It is my belief that the ambiguity – or layers – of charismatic faith is able to mediate the multiplicity of selves that they have developed as transnational subjects in dual diaspora.

Thus, throughout this dissertation, the analytical orientation is firmly "and/also" rather than "either/or." Conversion is a return to the future *and also* a return to the present. The spiritual kinship mediated by the blood of Jesus fosters Brazilian ethnic space *and also* a sense of transcendence from ethno-national kinship. Love is an effective affect for converts who wish to work on their selves because it is Christian, human, divine, *and also* a blend of what they understand to be Japanese and Brazilian cultural traits. Pentecostal selfhood is individualist *and also* relational; it is a sincere inner self *and also* an accompanied self. Charismatic faith is layered with propositional belief, radical sociality, *and also* embodied knowledge.

My insistence on "and/also" is not a rhetorical trick but a reflection of the diversity of claims, desires, and experiences that transnational subjects such as Nikkei migrant converts carry with themselves. In other words, my analytical ambiguity is a deliberate effort to illuminate the ambiguity of selves in dual diaspora.

Ethics from the Margin

The ambiguity of living between and across ethno-national boundaries has shaped Nikkei converts' ethical aspirations in distinct ways. For example, migration and conversion are mutually reinforcing processes that can be seen as a "temporal tandem." Expanding De Beauvoir's insight on the ethics of ambiguity beyond philosophical contemplation, in this epilogue I will observe how ambiguity and ethics interact in this ethnographic context.

Anthropologists have long been interested in the quality of ambiguity characteristic of the in-between space and period, and referred to it with such terms as liminality, communitas, and liminoid. Of particular relevance in regard to Nikkeis in Japan is the concept of "marginal":

> [Marginals] (…) are simultaneously members (by ascription, optation, self-definition, or achievement) of two or more groups whose social definitions and cultural norms are distinct from, and often even opposed to, one another (…). These would include migrant foreigners (…), persons of mixed ethnic origin (…). Marginals like liminars are also betwixt and between, but unlike ritual liminars they have no cultural assurance of a final stable resolution of their ambiguity (Turner 1975:233).

As I have demonstrated in the previous chapters, Nikkeis in Japan can be considered as marginals in many ways due to the sense of ambiguity that permeates their temporal, spatial, ethno-racial, and psychological experiences.

The anthropological study of morality suggests that the sustained sense of ambiguity – or "marginality" in the sense of marginal-hood – may make people particularly susceptible to moral concerns and aspirations. Jarett Zigon, for example, observes that one of the moments when "one must perform ethics" is "in the moment of the ethical dilemma" (2007:137). Joel Robbins (2007a) argues that "radical cultural change" is one of the contexts where the morality of freedom – or the inclination to make

a conscious choice – becomes salient. While ambiguous situations may thus call forth a readiness to engage in ethical actions, anthropologists are also skeptical of a view that equates the agent of such moral decisions with the individual autonomous mind – what Steven Parish describes as "a traditional philosophical picture, one that privileges the private mind, set apart from society and life experiences, as the source of morality" (Parish 2014:31). Consequently, current debates tend to center on alternative approaches to the unit of ethical cultivation, ones that do not reify the abstract image of private mind. One promising framework in this regard is the relationality of the self and the other. Foucault, for instance, argues: "(…) in the practice of the self, someone else, the other, is an indispensible condition for the form that defines this practice" (cited in Laidlaw 2014:116). Parish likewise proposes the "space between persons" as the indispensible nexus of moral life: "The recognition that people can suffer and flourish—and that one's acts can make them suffer or help them flourish—seems necessary to the bare possibility of morality. To experience moral presence, one has to know others as *persons*" (2014:37 italics original). Following Charles Taylor, Parish also characterizes the person as "a being who can be addressed, and who can reply" (Taylor 1985:97).

The Space Between the Self and the Other

This dissertation expands such a framework by arguing that "the other" who participates in the process of ethical formation can include both social others as well as divine alterity. To many people, the boundary of the person – "a being who can be addressed and who can reply" – extends beyond the human to encompass non-human beings such as animals, spirits, and God. In the case of Pentecostal Nikkeis, the acknowledgement of the

duality of the other – social and divine – matters in particular. This is because their religious practices are as much about a negotiation of social identity as a cultivation of the self in relation to God.

On the one hand, Pentecostalism facilitates and combines a number of social claims and identities – ethnic, national, or cultural. Its networks provide an ethnic space where migrant converts can reaffirm their "Brazilian" identity. Migrant converts interpret the "Christian" idiom of love as a unique mixture of "Brazilian" and "Japanese" cultural characters. The "Christian" fellowship is envisioned as a trans-ethnic form of relatedness that can extend beyond the bounds of "Japanese" ethno-racial kinship. That Pentecostalism enables such diverse and flexible identity presentations is important because it helps migrants strategically negotiate their place in the world. For people like Nikkeis in Japan who inhabit the space of marginality, Pentecostal idioms and practices serve as an effective tool to reinterpret and redraw the lines between "us" and "them."

On the other hand, Pentecostal's emphasis on immersive practices can also shift converts' focus away from the discursive identities toward the embodied sense of self. Self-absorption in "right now, right here" is one example. The cultivation of faith as embodied disposition through glossolalia is another. The ethical vision of accompanied self is yet another case in point. In all of these instances, the relationship between "I" and "Him" plays a pivotal role in the process of self-cultivation. The analytical idiom of reflexive self-consciousness, which "negotiates" and "strategizes," cannot duly accommodate such embodied registers of experience because it does not take the experiential reality of alterity seriously. As Amira Mittermaier puts it, some modes of religiosity – and some registers of self, I would add – center not on "acting against" or

"acting on" but instead on "being acted upon." She elaborates:

> What their stories do offer, however, is insight into a particular articulation of subjectivity, one that emphasizes openness and the dreamer's relationship to an Elsewhere and to multiple invisible Others. (…) For my interlocutors, the dream has ethical and prophetic potential precisely because it does not originate in the dreamer's self (Mittermaier 2010:260).

The phenomenological and existential sources of alterity are many. It can range anywhere from the functioning of the body that bypasses conscious mind (Csordas 1994) to extraordinary incidents that seemingly defy human control (Mittermaier 2012) to the fact of death that faces all humans (Ozawa-de Silva 2006). Whatever the culturally dominant conception of alterity may be, it is the space between the self and the other that matters for ethical self-cultivation.

Thus, the case study of Nikkei Pentecostals in Japan shows that the space between the self and the other constitutes the unit of ethical formation in two interrelated ways. First, it is in this ambiguous space between boundaries of identities that marginals appear and negotiate their place in the world. Second, it is the relationship between the self and alterity that drives many moral aspirations among Pentecostals. The ambiguity of self-other relations thus invites an analytical framework that accommodates both the discursive and the embodied, and the political and the psychological.

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