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[ARTIGOS]
As notícias diplomáticas na época da Restauração de Portugal
—Gazeta, Novembro de 1641—Julho de 1642—

Megumi Ogino 1

Sob o Cruzeiro do Sul — Os imigrantes vistos através do haicai

Helena Hisako Toida 13

Worshiping in (Un) Familiar Land:
Brazilian Nikkeijin Migrants within the Roman Catholic Church in Japan

Martín Hugo Córdova Quero 25

Japanese-Brazilian Transnationalism: Migration to Japan and Remittances to Brazil

Aaron Litvin 39

[RESENHAS]

Hotel Memória

Mauro Neves 47

A Ideia de Europa no Marcelismo 1968-1974

Yasuhiro Nishiwaki 51

[NOTÍCIAS DO CENTRO]
Atividades

57

Nota do editor

58

Centro de Estudos Luso-Brasileiros
Universidade Sofia
Worshiping in (Un) Familiar Land: Brazilian *Nikkeijin* Migrants within the Roman Catholic Church in Japan

Martín Hugo Córdova Quero

“The ‘church of Japan’ is also turning into a ‘Church that is in Japan’, a Catholic church, more universal... This is a result of the efforts of Japanese and of immigrants, who, overcoming many troubles, succeeded in receiving and valuing the differences in their cultures, traditions and languages.”

Rt. Rev. Marcelino Tani Daiji,
Bishop of Saitama¹

“Migrations, while bringing together the multiple elements of the human family, attempt, consequently, to the construction of a social body that is broader and varied, almost as an extension of the encounter of different people and races that in Pentecost, because of [the action of the] Spirit, transformed them into a church fraternity.”

*Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*²

1. Introduction

Since 1990 Japan has witnessed the increasing flow of migrants in order to work at the industrial sector. Among the migrants, those of Japanese ancestry have constituted a particular case. Socio-economic as well as historical processes have been the primary target of academic research on the field. However, very few cases are related to the study of issues of daily life, particularly those related to religion. In those few cases, the goal has been an attempt to map the rich and yet complex world of religion beliefs among the migrants. The present article seeks to contribute to that task by examining the particular experience of Brazilian *Nikkeijin* (Japanese descendants born outside Japan) within the Roman Catholic Church in Japan. The next few pages are some preliminary notes from my undergoing fieldwork among Brazilian *Nikkeijin* migrants who attend mass at Roman Catholic parishes throughout the Kanto region and other areas of importance such as Hamamatsu City in Shizuoka prefecture.

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2. Migration routes

The year 2008 will mark 100 years of the Japanese migration to Brazil. After the signing of the Tratado de Amizade, de Comércio e de Navegação Japão-Brasil (Treaty on Friendship, Commerce and Navigation) between Japan and Brazil in Paris on November 5, 1895, Brazil saw the first Japanese migrants arriving São Paulo in 1908. According to the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the official Japanese agency in charge of migrations to Latin America, in their report of the centenary of the Japanese migration to Brazil:

The Japanese migration to Brazil began in June 18, 1908 with the arrival of 781 individuals comprising 168 families on board of the ship Kasato Maru. The vessel was an Old Russian ship-hospital taken by imperial troops during the Russian-Japanese War (1904-1906) and adapted for passengers use. Kokuko Shokumin Kaisha, an official immigration company of Japan, contracted the trip to Brazil, which took 52 days from the harbor of Kobe. In Brazil, the first Japanese [immigrants] were guided to six contractor farms in the State of São Paulo. The coffee growing business in São Paulo faced a huge shortage of labor force due to the slavery abolishment, and it found in the immigrants a way to solve that crisis. However, the conditions were so adverse that in September of 1909 only 191 people remained in the contracting farms. Until today [which is 2003] the major concentration of Japanese Brazilians resides in São Paulo, with a population estimated at about 1.3 million. Other states and cities have also received the migrant flux of Japanese Brazilians issei (first generation).

According to this study, Japanese were allowed to migrate in order to work on plantations in several parts of the world. As the United States was closing its quota of Japanese migrants, Brazil became an important place where to migrate next. On this, JICA reports that there were over a total of 1,040,000 immigrants from Japan to different parts of the world from 1868 until after World War II. Brazil received 240,000 immigrants. The rhythm of population growth among Japanese in Brazil was steady and in increments. When the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the first migrants was celebrated in 1958, there were 430,000 Brazilian Nikkeijin, and on its 80th anniversary in 1988, the number increased to 1,228,000. Of a population estimated at 2,500,000 of Japanese immigrants living outside Japan, 1,300,000 are concentrated in Brazil, and the United States estimates its population of Nikkeijin at about 1,000,000. One of the results of the increment of population of Brazilian Nikkeijin was social mobility, from working class -first in plantation and later in factories-, to middle and upper middle class. From 1920 onwards, but especially after World War II, the increment of conversions to Christianity, especially to Roman Catholicism occurred.
However, since the mid-1980s the migration route reverted. That is, some of the descendants of Brazilian *Nikkeijin* have returned to Japan as migrant workers. According to the Annual Statistics of the Bureau of Immigration, Ministry of Justice of the Government of Brazil, 250,000 Brazilians *Nikkeijin* migrated to Japan between 1989 and 2001. Most of these Brazilian *Nikkeijin* represent the *nisei* (second generation) and *sansei* (third generation) of Japanese descendants in Brazil, and there are even some few *yonsei* (fourth generation) among them.

The genesis of the *dekasegi* (temporary migrant worker) movement, as it is also referred to in academic publications, is rooted in multiple factors: 1) the increasing demands for cheap labor from Japanese corporations and factories due to the economic boom in the late 1980s; 2) the low degree of population growth in Japan; 3) and the fact that most of young, educated Japanese will not take low-skilled employment, such as factory work. The increasing presence of undocumented immigrants, especially from South East Asia, motivated the Japanese Parliament to enact the *Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law* on December 8, 1989. While this law sharply reduced immigration into Japan from surrounding Asian countries, it facilitated Brazilian and other *Nikkeijin* migration on the grounds of ethnicity. In other words, not only do Brazilians *Nikkeijin* offer a low-wage, low-skilled, temporary labor force for the Japanese market, but they were also encouraged to migrate because the Japanese Government perceived them as not disrupting the ethnic homogeneity of Japanese society. However, Brazilians *Nikkeijin* in most cases have been socialized in Brazilian culture, which renders them as foreign to Japanese culture.

*Dekasegi* are also known in Japan as the “Three K” or “K Cycle” people. This

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10. This also benefited some Brazilian *Nikkeijin* seeking Japanese citizenship, since Japan recognizes *jus sanguinis* as a way to grant citizenship up to *sansei* (third generation.) See Tsuda, “Migration and Alienation”, 30, Note 1.

11. According to Apichai Shipper, in the Japanese foreign work hierarchy, *Nikkeijin* are below *zainichi gaikokujin* (Japan-born Koreans and Chinese) and above other non-Japanese temporary workers such as Filipino, Vietnamese and Iranians among others. This indicates that Japan clearly organizes its hierarchy of foreign workers according to “race” and “nationality.” See Apichai W. Shipper, “The Political Construction of Foreign Workers in Japan,” in *Critical Asian Studies* 34. no. 1 (2002): 42.

comes from the Japanese words *kiken* (dangerous), *kitanai* (dirty) and *kitsui* (tiring). They basically work in small and medium sized factories of about 30 to 50 employees. *Dekasegi* populations were originally concentrated around the industrial areas of Aichi, Nagano, Shizuoka, and Gunma prefectures. Today, it is possible to find them in every city and rural area of the country, and a growing number of them are working and living in Tokyo and Chiba prefectures. Currently reaching 300,000 people in Japan, Brazilian *Nikkeijin* has become the third community of foreigners in Japan.\(^ {13} \)

3. Christianity in Japan: The Roman Catholic Church

One of the areas where Brazilian *Nikkeijin* everyday life is affected in Japan resides in the issue of how to express religious beliefs. Resembling the religious map in Brazil, many and varied expressions of beliefs can be found among them. Although it could be fair to affirm that majority of Brazilian *Nikkeijin* are Roman Catholics, there are still many other Christian denominations as well as other religions that count them as members.\(^ {14} \) Historically, most Japanese who migrated to Brazil professed either Shinto or *Jodo Shinshu* Buddhism as their religious belief. However, in the process of integration to Brazilian society, it was inevitable that some experienced conversion to Christianity, to Afro-Brazilian religions such as Umbanda, Kimbanda and Candomblé, or to other religions. Nonetheless, some of them remain Buddhist and today there are sizeable *Jodo Shinshu* Buddhist communities in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Curitiba, and other cities of Brazil.

Among the many branches of Christianity, Brazilian *Nikkeijin* in Brazil are very active within the Roman Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church, many Protestant Churches, Pentecostal churches, and in the last three decades, within new religious movements (NRM) such as the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God). But, as foretold, they are also active in relation to *Jodo Shinshu* Buddhism, Shinto and Japanese New Religious Movements such as *Soka Gakkai* and *Sekai Kyuseikyo*.\(^ {15} \)

It is very difficult to have certainty about the number of Christians in Japan. It is estimated that less than one percent of the 130 million population of Japan is Christian. The census in Japan does not include a section related to religion, which makes the estimations to be approximations yet not completely accurate. We also encounter a second problem when it comes to estimations about Christianity, which is the lack of incorporation of migrants into

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14. Throughout this article I will use the terms “Roman Catholicism” and “Roman Catholic Church” as a particular expression within Christianity, reserving the term “Christianity” to those cases when referring to the Christian religion, of which the Roman Catholic Church is one among many branches of Christianity.
15. On this, see Regina Yoshie Matsue, *Religious Activities among the Brazilian Diaspora in Japan: The Case of the Catholic Church, Sekai Kyuseikyo and Soka Gakkai* [Doctoral Dissertation] (Tsukuba, Ibaraki: University of Tsukuba, 2006), especially chapters 4 and 5.
many of those estimations. According to Mullins, who relies in official reports, the population of Christians in Japan is about 0.892 percent of the total population. He states:

As of 2005, the Catholic Church reports a membership of 476,013. Combined with the membership of other Protestant and Orthodox churches, the total number of Japanese belonging to a Christian church of any kind is 1,138,752, which constitutes 0.892 percent of the population (...). 

This projection of Mullins shows us that Christianity is a minority in Japan. But when we put the numbers in contrast between Japanese and non-Japanese, the picture shows a more surprising reality. According to data provided by the Minoshima Pastoral Center in Fukuoka prefecture, Japanese Catholics are a minority in relation to non-Japanese. The center states that while Japanese Catholics in Japan are about 441,906 (46%), non-Japanese are 480,000 (54%). Therefore, the importance of the study of the interaction of migrants within the Roman Catholic Church in Japan is relevant and necessary. Allow me to describe some of situations that are observed in the life of the Roman Catholic Church in Japan.

Although the Roman Catholic Church is a universal church that embraces every member through the rite of Baptism, the way Roman Catholicism is expressed around the world differs from region to region. In my case study I identify two different patterns interacting in Japan. On the one hand, Roman Catholicism as it is lived in Japan and, on the other hand, Roman Catholicism as it is lived in Brazil. I would say that other migrant groups such as Filipino or other Latin Americans such as Peruvian Nikkeijin, are beyond the scope of my research and, therefore, I cannot describe how the performances of Roman Catholicism among them interact within the Roman Catholic Church in Japan. I will now turn to show the two different processes of Roman Catholicism in Japan and Brazil that intersect in my case study.

Roman Catholicism first arrived to Japan with Father Francis Xavier, a Jesuit missionary who in 1549 established the first Roman Catholic mission in Kagoshima. Many Protestants, especially related to Dutch traders also arrived to Japan around the same time. That was the time that Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands were expanding their territories by forming new colonies. All Asia was a target for this. In Japan, although many converted to Roman Catholicism and Odo Nobunaga favored Christianity from 1571 to 1582, soon political decisions would make it difficult for foreigners, including Christians, to remain peacefully in the country. With the ascension to power of Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1586, the first actions against Christians started, which ended in the closing of country to foreigners throughout

the Edo period. 18 But even before that period, in 1597, twenty-six Roman Catholics (priests and lay people) were crucified in Nagasaki. After the establishment of the Tokugawabakufu in 1603, Christianity did not have a better time. 19 Although according to Nosco, “perhaps as much as two percent of the Japanese population had embraced the Christian faith by 1614”, 20 Christianity was not tolerated in Japan. A few years later, in 1622, fifty-one Roman Catholics were massacred in Nagasaki. Since then, persecution and prohibition of Christianity interacted with such power that in 1637 only five missionaries remained in Japan. 21

By 1639 Christianity was officially eradicated in Japan, although now we know that about 150,000 Christians, known as kakure kirishitan (hidden Christians) – which are distinguished from the general term senpuku kirishitan or all underground Christians during the Edo period- remained practicing their faith in secret throughout the Edo period and after. 22 Until the end of the Edo period in 1862, no Christian missionary was allowed to enter Japan. It was only during the Meiji restoration period that Roman Catholic missionaries, especially from Northern Europe and the United States were allowed to enter Japan and established the first churches. This was made possible due to the promulgation of a religious freedom law in 1873. There were some activities prior to 1873, including a new persecution in 1867. 23 After the law of 1873, although most of kakure kirishitan returned to the Roman Catholic Church, some still remained independent. 24 Protestant denominations as well as the Russian Orthodox Church also sent missionaries. They were also allowed to enter Japan and established churches. 25

The fact that Roman Catholic missionaries came from Northern Europe and the United States molded the spiritual life of Japanese Catholicism. One important characteristic is the way the mass is performed. For Roman Catholicism in Japan mass is a space of prayer

22. See Nosco, 3.
24. See Nosco 5.
and contemplation. Music is related to organ, as Roman Catholicism both in the United States and in Northern Europe have been influenced by protestant traditions. However, this is not the case of Roman Catholicism in Portugal and Spain, from where strong flows of missionaries also arrived to Japan. In terms of Mullins, the arrival of missionaries to Japan during the Meiji Restoration period is a "multinational effort". The point is that the development of Roman Catholicism in Japan took a different route than the one in Brazil, due to different historical, political and social circumstances.

In general, it could be said that Roman Catholic buildings in Japan are very simple in architecture, and rarely can one find any other image rather than a crucifix, the Stations of the Cross and the Virgin Mary. Although some buildings have taken elements from both broader Japanese culture and from Buddhist religion, most of them are influenced by modern European architecture, with a distinctive austerity, which is very rare in their sister churches in Latin America. Because of the low number of Catholics in Japan, not every city or town has Roman Catholic churches or chapels, as it would be the case in Brazil. During the World War II many temples were destroyed. Some of them were rebuilt. Recently, some buildings that were old have been renovated or conditioned to fulfil the anti-seismic regulations of Japan. However, situation is that the first church to be built in its entirety in the last forty years is located in Joso City in Ibaraki prefecture, which is expected to be inaugurated by Christmas 2007. As much as 99% of Catholics at Joso community are Brazilian Nikkei
din.

Roman Catholic Church in Brazil, on the other hand, has taken a different route. Although heir of an orthodox Catholicism from Portugal -very close to that of Spain which has modelled most of Latin American Catholicism-, it has changed over the years. From the later 1960s and the early 1970s, it has received a strong influence from Liberation Theology. At a time when military dictatorships were abducting and assassinating people in many countries in Latin America, Roman Catholics bishops, priests, theologians and lay people reflecting on their theology came to conclude that the involvement of the Roman Catholic Church in society should be in favour of those who suffer injustice, especially economic injustice. From the hand of Juan Luis Segundo, Leonardo Boff, Gustavo Gutierrez and Jon Sobrino, among many others, theologians helped in creating a theology that would renovate and invigorate

26. See Mullins, 3.
27. Many buildings in Japan were influenced by Old Oura Church in Nagasaki, whose French style was taken as a model throughout the country. [See Archdiocese of Nagasaki, Guide to Pilgrimage Sites and Churches in Nagasaki. [Nagasaki Heritage Guide Map #2] (Nagasaki: Nagasaki Bunkensha, 2005), 20-21. However, many churches and chapels were designed by Swiss architect Karl Freuler between 1948 and 1968. Those buildings are a dialogue between modern European schools such as New Architecture and New Objectivity, and local Japanese elements. Freuler built churches and chapels in many places in Japan, including Tokyo, Nagoya, Kyoto, Hokkaido and Nako. [See Fabrizio Brentini, Karl Freuler: Architecktur fiir die Kirche (Baden: Lars Müller, 1992), 21-23.]
the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America. Brazilian Roman Catholic Church took many initiatives, especially its Council of Bishops issued statements that became pillars of Catholicism in that country, allowing for many people to commit to both Christian faith and social activism.

Following Vatican Council II, many reforms were made in order to bring the Roman Catholic Church to understand and live the painful realities of millions in Brazil. As a result, its influence can be seen, for example, in the participation of lay people in the life and leadership of the church as well as the enculturation of the mass to daily life. Brazilian Nikkeijin in São Paulo, but also in other parts of the country, are very much involved in the life of the Roman Catholic Church. Popular Catholicism is also present in the daily life of the people through a strong veneration of the Virgin, the prayer of the rosary, and home gatherings. Following Portuguese tradition, churches remain having both many statues of saints and many altars; and people continue to be very devoted to many advocations of the Virgin Mary and other Saints. Finally, a distinct mark of Latin American both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism is the increasing presence and number of Charismatic spirituality, which is changing the face of Roman Catholicism in countries were Latina/o Catholics are migrating. Combined, these different realities are part of the traditions that migrants bring to Japan.

Once in Japan, Brazilian Nikkeijin have joined the Roman Catholic Church in Japan. Although at the beginning the role of the Roman Catholic Church in Japan was only as a place of socialization for Brazilian Nikkeijin, we agree with Mira that today the spiritual role of the Church is growing more and more. Carvalho has also noted that many Brazilian Nikkeijin joined the church more actively in Japan, while in Brazil prior to their migration they were only nominal Catholics. Several of my interviewees have reported this to be their case. Nonetheless, it should be said that Roman Catholicism in most parts of the country is ahead of other churches, such as Protestant denominations, in terms of guaranteeing a space for worship in the language of the migrants. On my research contact with several Protestant religious organizations I have not found churches which host services in languages other than English, which is the case of just a few places. This means that those migrants, who are not English-speaking oriented, do not have a place for worship in their own language

31. Carvalho, 102.
among mainline Protestant denominations. Nonetheless, the migrants have done what other migrants in other parts of the world have done, which is to form their own communities and call a pastor/minister to take care of them. A word should be said here about referring to these mostly-independent churches as “sect”. In Western societies, the use of the term “sect” has been loaded with negative prejudices. On this, Miguez Bonino affirms:

I believe that we need to be careful with what I call “discursive terrorism” when using the term “sect”. We take a term [“sect”] whose boundaries are flexible, elastic, and we characterize it in the most pejorative way possible. (...) I believe that we should not use the term “sect” in this way. I would dare to say it could be a healthy step to abandon completely the use of the term “sect” or proclaim a ban on it.

Therefore, studies of Christianity would benefit in recognizing the social role and pastoral praxis of different denominations in Japan, including Roman Catholicism, without trapping those studies into a truth/false dichotomy.

Returning to the interaction of Brazilian Nikkeijin within the Roman Catholic Church in Japan, these two completely different worlds -that is different spiritualities and different theologies within the same confessional Church-, meet in Japan. The encounter is not easy. It could take hundreds of pages to narrate the failures produced in that encounter. But humanity learns through “trail and error” and, therefore, there are some examples of positive interaction. Not only that, but due to the number of Brazilians Nikkeijin and their compromise with the Church, some parishes have even been invigorated by the migrants and their efforts. As the quotation of the Bishop of Saitama at the beginning of this article reads, there are some places where people have overcome their differences in order to work together. The next section will deal with one example of this positive interaction.

4. A multicultural case: The Grupo Esperança

In October 1994, just a few years after the massive arrival of Brazilian Nikkeijin to Japan, Father Higa in Hamamatsu City received a phone call telling him about a “Brazilian” living on the streets as a homeless. Immediately, Father Higa and some members of the Catholic Church went to the streets to find the reality of no Brazilians but of Japanese people living in the streets, or under the bridges at the close-by creek. That reality compelled Father Higa to share this news with the community. As Christians, they could not stay without acting

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32. A complete list of Mass and Protestant Services in different languages can be found in: Kobayashi Kengo (ed.) Manual de Consultas para los Trabajadores Migrantes: Información para Vivir Dentro de la Comunidad de Residencia (Kawasaki City: Centro de Solidaridad con los Migrantes / Diócesis Católica de Yokohama, 1997), 223-253. What this list shows is that the churches that hold services in languages other than Japanese and English are independent Evangelical churches.


in solidarity with those in need. After many months preaching at Church and asking for donations in order to help the homeless people in the streets of Hamamatsu, Father Higa and other members of the Catholic Church founded the Grupo Esperança (Hope Group) in 1995.  

Hamamatsu is an emblematic city in terms of the interaction of Japanese and the migrants. Located in an industrial belt with several motor companies, Hamamatsu is one of the cities with a large number of migrants. Over a total population of 820,808 inhabitants Brazilian Nikkeijin are 19,188. Other nationalities are also highly represented among the population of Hamamatsu. Due to this fact, Hamamatsu Government has encouraged several actions in order to guarantee the interaction and the communication between the Japanese and the migrant residents. For example, the Hamamatsu Foundation for International Communications and Exchanges (HICE) has become an important advocate for the migrants. Not only that, but in 2001 Hamamatsu City took the initiative to form the Council of Municipalities with a Large Foreign Resident Population. Initially twelve other Municipalities joined Hamamatsu in forming this council and by 2007 the number of Municipalities has increased to twenty-two. This has also motivated for the formation of the Council for the Promotion of Multicultural Communities, a group of five prefectures and one city who are working towards a better understanding, cooperation and interaction between Japanese nationals and migrants.

Given this spirit, the Roman Catholic Church has come to face the same situation. Although masses are said in different languages (Japanese, Portuguese, Tagalog, English and Spanish), the main festivities are performed in different languages in the same mass. Instead of saying the same part of the mass in the different language at the same time, the option in Hamamatsu has been to say every part of the mass in one different language. In one of my fieldtrips I attended the masses for Easter festivity. One of the masses was done in Japanese, Portuguese and Spanish and the other was done in Japanese, Tagalog and English. One could think that given the fact that the mass will be in different languages, people would not feel comfortable and, therefore, the attendance would be low. On the contrary, on the first mass there were more than 600 people and in the second mass there were more than 300 people. We can see that Hamamatsu Roman Catholic Parish has become a multicultural church. Due to this situation, we can understand how the Grupo Esperança has kept his service to the broader community for more than twelve years. That is, the common efforts of many people, whether they be Japanese or Brazilian Nikkeijin. Every Saturday from 9 am to 4 pm, a group of mainly Japanese and Brazilian Nikkeijin women gather to prepare onagiri,

36. Source: Boletim Informativo de Hamamatsu 102 (Marco 2007), 1.
soup and other food along with clean clothes and toiletries that would be distributed that night to the homeless people. They set up everything in containers and transportable pots in order to keep the food warm and to facilitate its distribution. After Saturday night mass in Portuguese, a group of young Japanese, Brazilian Nikkeijin, Peruvian Nikkeijin and volunteers from other nationalities, gather at 9:45 pm in downtown Hamamatsu. Some volunteers have already picked up the food and clean clothes and have them divided in four groups that will cover the four destination points for their distribution. After prayer and orientation, Father Higa and all the volunteers will walk with their group towards the distribution point. According to one of my interviewees, the group serves 130 Japanese people who are homeless. At one point, there were some Brazilian Nikkeijin who became homeless due to the recession after the “Bubble economy” in Japan, but soon they moved to other areas and took jobs in the local factories.

What is important in this case is that Japanese nationals and migrants are working together for the benefit of the whole community. I am sure that the coming together has not been easy and probably problems arise in the past, but what is also clear is the intentionality of being one community in service of others and their 12 years of service witness that fact.

Given this examples and the foretold reality of the migration of Brazilian Nikkeijin to Japan, it is clear that more situations of dialogue and mutual collaboration should be encouraged. In other words, the migration will continue along with those who already reside in Japan. Although many of my informants report their willingness to return to Brazil back to their families, properties and/or professions, the reality is that they continue residing in Japan, especially when there are new generations of Japan-inborn children. The presence of Brazilian Nikkeijin constitutes a phenomenon that will continue as well as will encourage Japan to open its eyes towards the issue of multiculturalism. On this, Mita Chiyoko states that “without any doubt, Brazilians are contributing to transform Japanese society into a multicultural one.”

Takeyuki Tsuda has also studied the phenomenon of long-time settlement of Brazilian Nikkeijin in Japan through what he calls “structural embeddedness”. On this he concludes:

(...) Immigrants with families become long-term settlers not only because of increased living expenses and the resulting inability to meet financial goals. They become increasingly committed to the host country as their connections and involvement in the surrounding community intensify and their children become fully assimilated members of the majority society. Therefore, short-term economic changes in Japan or Brazil that reduce the economic incentives for settlement have a very limited effect on the stability of the Japanese-Brazilian population in Japan, which is no longer determined by purely economic motives, but by social concerns that keep immigrants firmly embedded in Japanese society.


In these two quotations resides an important message to the reality of Brazilian Nikkeijin within the Roman Catholic in Japan. That message is that they will continue to interact in the life of the church where -along with other migrants-, they are a majority while within the broader Japanese society they continue to be a minority. While this could be a paradox, it calls for innovation, for true understanding, for cooperation and for communication in order to enhance a multicultural experience by living together in harmony. As Mita affirms:

> Today, in the age of globalization where we live, the coexistence with different cultures is the image of the Japanese society that will certainly come. The presence of Brazilian Nikkeijin taken as negative, needs eventually to be taken as positive as a way to promote the understanding of different cultures within the Japanese society.40

If Mita is right in this quotation, we will see more examples within the Roman Catholic Church in Japan and the broader society of positive coexistence.

5. Future Research

In this article we have focused on the experience of Brazilian Nikkeijin and their relation to the Roman Catholic Church in Japan. We have explored the historical events that produced the migration of Japanese to Brazil at the beginning of the twentieth century and the later migration of second, third and fourth generation of Japanese descendants to Japan.

We have also explored how religion, as an important part of daily life, is brought together with all the rest of the experiences of migrants. As a result, their interaction within the Roman Catholic Church in Japan produces the encounter of two different ways to live the Christian faith. The result is a strategy of re-negotiation, communication and understanding that parallels that of broader society.

I have presented an example on how one community is dealing successfully on the issue of the interaction of Japanese and Brazilian Nikkeijin within the Roman Catholic Church in Japan. It is certainly a case that points towards a multicultural coexistence due to the broader spirit present in the surrounding broader society.

Future research on the subject will benefit by looking at these experiences of coexistence, dialogue and cooperation that occur outside the realm of labor issues, which has been traditionally the site for research of many scholars in the past. Only by pointing to these “other” experiences we will see more examples of -paraphrasing Bishop Daiji-, Japanese and Brazilian Nikkeijin overcoming many troubles, and succeeding in receiving and valuing their

mutual differences in their cultures, traditions and languages.

1990年以降、日本において産業セクターで働く外国人移民の流入の増加が著しくなった。移民の中でも日系移民が特殊な位置を占める。この論文はローマカトリック教会における日系ブラジル人の実際の経験を実地調査することにより、学会に貢献しようとするものである。論文は三つの部分から構成される。はじめに日系ブラジル人が日本にいたようになった歴史的経過を簡単に振り返る。次にブラジルと日本でどのようにローマカトリック教会が発展してきたかの分析がなされ、そして最後にブラジルの日系移民を快く受け入れながら、多文化共生の道を探る日本のカトリック教会を成功例として見ていく。この論文は関東の教区全般、そしてまた静岡県浜松市などその他の重要な都市においてカトリック教会のミサに参加する日系ブラジル移民のなかで行われた私の実地調査に基づくものである。

（上智大学ポルトガル・ブラジル研究センター客員研究員・カリフォルニア州立大学バークレー校カンディデート・ドクター）