The Nativization of East Asian Buddhism in Brazil

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Abstract

Die angemessene Erforschung des Buddhismus in Brasilien setzt eine Revision von Modellen voraus, die in der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Buddhismus in anderen westlichen Ländern gewonnen wurden. Erstens zeigt eine statistische Bestandsaufnahme ein für Brasilien bestehendes quantitatives Übergewicht von buddhistischen neureligiösen japanischen Gruppen wie Sôka Gakkai oder Reyûkai. Zweitens ergeben sich qualitative Besonderheiten aus der für Brasilien allgemein charakteristischen ethnischen Vielfalt und Tendenz zur Synkretismusbildung. Diese genannten Spezifizierungen werden durch eine Typologie untermauert, im Sinne einer Unterscheidung zwischen einem ethnischen, einem intellektualisierten und einem karmischen Zweig des in Brasilien anzutreffenden Buddhismus ostasiatischer Provenienz. Der ethnische Buddhismus ist das Ergebnis von Asien ausgehender Immigrationswellen. Der Komplex wird von japanischen Schulen wie Jôdoshû und Jôdo Shinshû dominiert, die sich im Zuge der dauerhaften Etablierung japanischer Einwanderer nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg institutionalisiert haben. Der sogenannte intellektualisierte Buddhismus wird im Wesentlichen von Brasilianern repräsentiert, die der gebildeten Mittelschicht entstammen und sich vor dem Hintergrund einer universalistischen Spiritualität bzw. kulturübergreifenden Esoterik vor allem vom Ch'an- bzw. vom Zen-Buddhismus angezogen fühlen. Der Zweig des „karmischen Buddhismus" ist geprägt durch das Bedürfnis nach unmittelbaren konkreten Resultaten und positiven Nutzanwendungen religiöser Praktiken, die sich an der Idee des Karma orientieren. Neben der umrissenen dreiteiligen Typologie greift die Analyse auf das Konzept der *Nativierung* zurück, das sowohl auf die von Roger Bastide vorgenommenen Studien zu afro-brasilianischen Religionen als auch auf linguistische Theorien der *Relexifizierung* rekurriert. Das bedeutet im Fall des ethnischen Buddhismus, dass aus Asien einwandernde Bevölkerungsanteile im Verlauf ihrer Integration in die brasilianische Gesellschaft ihr angestammtes buddhistisches Repertoire mit katholischen Elementen angereichert haben. Analog lässt sich mit Blick auf den intellektualisierten Buddhismus festellen, dass eine universalistische Perspektive die Eingliederung des Buddhismus in einen mystischen bzw. esoterischen weltanschaulichen Rahmen erleichtert hat. Der karmische Buddhismus schließlich ist charakterisiert durch ein Zusammenspiel von Praktiken, die unter Absehung ihres ursprünglichen kulturellen Entstehungszusammenhangs kombiniert werden, um innerweltliche Ziele zu erreichen.

Schlagwörter: Buddhismus, Brasilien, Synkretismus.

The Nativization of East Asian Buddhism in Brazil
Zusammenfassung auf Deutsch

1. Vorbemerkungen

Das Hauptziel dieser Arbeit ist die Erforschung der Bedingungen und Formen der Anpassung des ostasiatischen Buddhismus in Brasilien. In einem ersten Schritt wurde der Forschungsstand bezüglich der Buddhismusrezeption in anderen westlichen Ländern, vor allem in den USA und in Europa aufgearbeitet. Vor diesem Hintergrund treten die in Brasilien geltenden spezifischen Rezeptionsbedingungen hervor. Unterschiede gegenüber anderen westlichen Ländern ergeben sich insbesondere aus den folgenden drei Faktoren: erstens handelt es sich im Falle von Brasilien um ein sogenanntes "Schwellenland" mit sozialen Eigenheiten die sich auch auf religiöse Akkulturationsbedingungen auswirken. Zweitens hat sich die Entfaltung des ostasiatischen Buddhismus unter den Gegebenheiten eines mehrheitlich katholischen Landes vollzogen. Drittens besteht innerhalb der brasilianischen Bevölkerung ein ausgeprägter Trend zum Synkretismus.

Mit dem Ziel einer quantitativen Bestandsaufnahme der Situation des Buddhismus in Brasilien wurde auf die Ergebnisse der letzten nationalen Volkszählungen zurückgegriffen, die vom brasilianischen Institut für Geographie und Statistik [IBGE] regelmäßig publiziert wurden. Aus dem Vergleich der auf den Buddhismus bezogenen Daten aus den Jahren 1950, 1960, 1980 und 1991 mit den letzten, im Jahre 2000 erhobenen Zahlen ergibt sich ein aussagekräftiges Bild bezüglich der numerischen Gesamtentwicklung des brasilianischen Buddhismus, seiner geographischen Verteilung und der Proportion asiatischer Ethnizitäten, die sich explizit dieser Religion zurechnen. Die letzte Volksbefragung aus dem Jahre 2000 erbrachte die Zahl von 214.873 Buddhisten, von denen ungefähr 37,8 % asiatischer Herkunft waren.

Ebenfalls quantitativen Kriterien ist eine entwickelte Datenbank verpflichtet, mit deren Hilfe die Anschriften alle buddhistischen Institutionen bzw. Zweiginstitutionen in Brasilien erfasst wurden. Auf dieser Basis war es auch möglich zu ermitteln, zu welchen Anteilen sich

das Spektrum relevanter auf die „klassischen" Hauptrichtungen des Buddhismus [Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana] verteilen. Die Datenbank führt mittlerweile 309 Anschriften von Institutionen und Zweigorganisationen in Brasilien auf. Auf dieser Basis erarbeitete Statistiken zeigen u.a., dass die Institutionen, die dem Nichiren Buddhismus [hauptsächlich Sôka Gakkai, Honmon Butsuryushû und Reyûkai] zurechenbar sind, mit 34% das größte numerische Gewicht haben. An zweiter Stelle folgt mit 24% der Buddhismus des Wahren Reinen Land mit seinen Zweigen Higashi Hoganji und Nishi Hoganji. Auf der Grundlage dieser quantitativen Datenerhebungen lassen sich die numerischen Verhältnisse des brasilianischen Buddhismus auch mit denen in Europa und den USA vergleichen. Hier zeigt sich, dass der brasilianische Buddhismus numerisch eindeutig von einschlägigen neuen religiösen Bewegungen und Gruppen des ethnischen japanischen Buddhismus bestimmt wird. Diese Situation findet sich sonst in keinem anderen westlichen Land.

Die Feldforschung konzentrierte sich auf mündliche Befragungen in repräsentativen Tempeln, wobei zum einen deren offiziellen Vertreter [Expertenbefragung], zum anderen gewöhnliche Mitglieder interviewt wurden. Ergänzendes Material stammt erstens aus dem Internet, wobei neben der Analyse der homepages der betreffenden Gruppen auch die Diskussion in den fünf brasilianischen Diskussionslisten zum Thema Buddhismus (buddhismo-l, vajarayana-l, zen chungtao, budismosgi [Sôka Gakkai] und zulai [Fo Guang Shan]) kontinuierlich verfolgt wurden. Zweitens wurden relevante Sekundärquellen in Wochenmagazinen [z.B. den Wochenzeitschriften Veja, Isto é, Época] und Tageszeitungen [z.B. Estado de São Paulo, Folha de São Paulo] ausgewertet.

2. Empirische Aspekte

2.1 Ethnischer Buddhismus

Theoretischer Ausgangspunkt eines ethnischen Buddhismus ist das Konzept der ethnischen Gruppe, die sich über soziale Interaktionen konstituiert[1]. Ein grundlegendes Problem für die Anpassung einer Religion an einen neuen kulturellen Kontext ergibt sich aus den unterschiedlichen Werthaltungen von Immigranten und Einheimischen bzw. Konvertiten[2]. Diese können sich z.B. in einem Gefühl kultureller Übergelegenheit artikulieren oder sich aus technologischen, sozialen oder wirtschaftlichen Differenzen zwischen beiden Gruppen ergeben. Asymmetrien dieser Art wirken sich auf die Adaptationsbemühung der Immigrantengruppe aus. Bis zu welchem Grad eine Adaption gelingt, ist weniger eine Frage der "Qualität" der betreffenden Religion. Wichtiger erscheint das geschichtlich gewachsene Verhältnis der beiden Gruppen zueinander[3]. Vor diesem Hintergrund erscheint es problematisch, die mit Blick auf europäische und US-amerikanische Verhältnisse gewonnenen Theorien ohne weiterführende Analysen auf Brasilien und die dort wirksamen allgemein sozio-historischen bzw. spezifisch immigrations-historischen Bedingungen zu übertragen. Das zeigt sich vor allem am Fall der japanischen Immigration, d.h. der statistisch signifikantesten buddhistischen Gruppe in Brasilien.

Die Geschichte des Buddhismus in Brasilien war anfänglich eng mit der Einwanderung von Japanern verbunden[4]. Das Jahr 1908 markiert den Beginn der japanischen Immigration in Brasilien. Damit besteht ein unmittelbarer zeitlicher Zusammenhang mit Immigrationsbeschränkungen in den USA. Bedingt durch die Sklavenbefreiung im Jahre 1888 wurden die Japaner ursprünglich als Ersatzkräfte in den Kaffeeanpflanzungen herangezogen. Insgesamt kam es zu zwei großen Migrationswellen. Vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg kamen ca. 190.000, zwischen 1952 und 1965 noch einmal 50.000 japanische Immigranten nach Brasilien. Die wichtigsten geographischen Konzentrationspunkte waren die Bundesländer São Paulo (70 %) und Paraná (12 %).

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[1] Vgl. Barth 1997 [1969].
[2] Vgl. Baumann 1995.
[3] Ein Beispiel wäre der Gegensatz zwischen der Adaptationsfähigkeit des Christentum in China im 18 Jh. und in Sri Lanka vom 16. bis zum 20 Jh.. (vgl. Baumann 1995). Ähnliches gilt für die Adaptation des Christentums in Lateinamerika.
[4] Zum Buddhismus in Brasilien, vgl. Usarski 2002. Zum Zen Buddhismus in Brasilien vgl. Rocha 2003, zu Sôka Gakkai vgl. Pereira 2001. Zu neuen religiösen Bewegungen aus Japan in Brasilien vgl. Clarke 1999.

Am Anfang gab es auf der brasilianischen Seite Vorurteile gegenüber und Übergriffe auf die als "geschlossen" geltende japanische Gemeinschaft. Aus Angst vor Spionage belegte die brasilianische Regierung im Zweiten Weltkrieg die im Land lebenden Japanern mit Restriktionen. Eine der Maßnahmen war das Verbot des Gebrauchs der japansichen Sprache. Der Erlaß bedingte innerhalb der Immigrantengemeinschaft ein Mangel an Informationen, der zu ernsten internen Konflikten führte. So glaubte die Mehrheit der in Brasilien verweilenden Japaner, die Heimatnation habe den Zweiten Weltkrieg gewonnen, eine irrige Vorstellung die u.a. die Shindô Renmei Gruppe zu Terroraktionen inspirierte.

Die in der japanischen Gemeinschaft aufbrechenden Spannungen waren bereits vorgängig latent angelegt. Sie gehen auf die erste Hälfte des 20.Jahrhunderts zurück und haben entscheidende ideologische Wurzeln im Umgang der Japaner mit ihrer konstruierten historischen und kulturellen Identität und ihrem Rekurs auf den Staats-Shintoismus. Im Verhältnis zwischen den mehrheitlich in der Meiji-Zeit sozialisierten Japanern und der brasilianischen Gesamtgesellschaft wirkte sich vor allem das Gefühl der Immigranten negativ aus, Angehörige einer spezifischen ethnischen Gruppe zu sein.

Trotz dieser Hindernisse, bemühte sich die japanische Gemeinschaft um eine Anpassung an die brasilianische Gesellschaft, nachdem die Niederlage Japans im Zweiten Weltkrieg den Traum von einer Rückkehr ins Heimatland zunichte gemacht hatte[5]. Sie machte zunächst in der Landwirtschaft große Fortschritte, und knüpfte nachfolgend an ihre Erfolge im Zuge der Migrationsbewegungen in die großen Städte an. Entscheidend dafür waren Merkmale wie Sparsamkeit, die Betonung der Gemeinschaft, das Bemühen um eine gute Erziehung im Geiste der japanischen Kultur, aber auch die Hochkonjunktur in den Nachkriegsjahren. Mit ungefähr 1,5 Millionen Japanern und japanischen Nachkommen, gilt Brasilien heute als das Land mit der größten japanischen Gemeinschaft außerhalb Japans. Bedingt durch einen bemerkenswerten sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Aufstieg der einstigen

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[5] Vgl. Maeyama 1973a, Maeyama 1973b.

Immigranten und ihrer Nachkommen [*Nikkei*] hat die japanische Gemeinschaft inzwischen einen privilegierten Status innerhalb der brasilianischen Gesellschaft erlangt.

Während die Integration des japanischen Bevölkerungsanteils in die brasilianische Gesellschaft inzwischen abgeschlossen ist, schafft der Buddhismus häufig nach wie vor einen Raum, in dem die ethnischen Ursprünge, die angestammte Kultur und das überkommene Erbe der Immigranten lebendig gehalten werden können. Unter diesem Gesichtspunkt repräsentieren die Nikkeis im Sinne des Konzepts der Ethnizität auch heute noch einen eigenständigen Kontext gegenüber der brasilianischen Gesamtgesellschaft. In diesem Zusammenhang gilt es festzuhalten, dass sich die Nikkei in religiöser Praxis und in ihren Überlebensstrategien nicht nur von der brasilianischen Mehrheitsbevölkerung sondern auch von der traditionellen japanischen Ursprungsgesellschaft abheben. So ist der japanische Buddhismus in Brasilien durch eine nur geringe Neigung zur Anpassung und der Vermittlung seiner Lehren gegenüber den Brasilianern charakterisiert. Diese Tendenz zeigt sich bereits am Mangel portugiesischer Übersetzungen von Zeitungen, buddhistischen Schriften und Ritualtexten. Auch darüber hinaus finden sich keine systematischen Adaptationsbemühungen auf religiösem Gebiet. Hinzu kommt, dass die Traditionsübermittlung an die jeweils nächste Generation ihre Grenzen hat. Viele Nachkommen der Immigranten haben keine Beziehung zu den Tempeln mehr, zumal die im engeren Sinne religiöse Sozialisation in den Einrichtungen keine herausragende Rolle spielt.

Auf der anderer Seite haben die japanischen Einwanderer im Verlauf der Generationen in dem stark zum Synkretismus neigenden Einwanderungsland ihre angestammte multireligiöse Einstellung beibehalten. So sind sie typischerweise nicht nur dem Buddhismus verpflichtet, sondern praktizieren auch den Katholizismus der brasilianischen Bevölkerungsmehrheit. Diese Simultaneität ist für die *Nikkei* im doppelten Sinne funktional. Zum einen dient der Buddhismus der Vergewisserung ihrer Identität als ethnische Gruppe. Zum anderen integrieren sie sich über den Katholizismus in die Gastkultur, wodurch dem Christentum nunmehr eine ähnliche Rolle zufällt wie einst dem Shintoismus innerhalb der Ursprungskultur.

Für den quantitativ weitaus weniger bedeutsamen chinesischen Buddhismus in Brasilien gilt, dass die ihm zugrundeliegende Einwanderung erst in den 60er Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts zu einem nennenswerten Phänomen geworden und die Mehrheit der Immigranten vor allem im Südosten des Landes zu finden ist. Während die chinesische Gemeinschaft ethnisch und kulturell stark differenziert ist, spielen die religiösen Gruppen eine integrative Rolle mit Blick auf die Konstruktion einer kollektiven Identität in der Diaspora. In einigen Fällen, namentlich dann, wenn Mitglieder die säkularisierte Vision eines „Reinen Landes" teilen und diese Vorstellung ein sozial-karitatives Engagement impliziert, geht von der buddhistischen Gruppe ein Stimulus zur Integration ihrer Institution und ihrer Mitglieder in die brasilianische Gesamtgesellschaft aus. Chinesisch-buddhistische Gemeinschaften, die über globalisierte Organisations- und Lehrstandards verfügen, stehen darüber hinaus für eine Re-Interpretation des Buddhismus im Einklang mit westlichen Konzepten. Das in diesem Sinne schlagendste Beispiel ist Fo Guang Shan, deren facettenreiche religiöse Offerte mit dem Interesse der brasilianischen Mittelklasse nicht nur am Zen-Buddhismus, sondern auch an einem gesellschaftlichen Engagement und der Suche nach alternativen Wegen im Bereich des Gesundheitswesen einschließlich Tai Chi Chuan und Akupunktur konvergiert. Außerdem ist die Fo Guang Shan-Gemeinschaft in der letzten Zeit aufgrund der kürzlich erfolgten Einweihung eines gigantischen und architektonisch beeindruckenden Tempels in Cotia, im Bundesstaat São Paulo, ein beliebtes Thema der öffentlichen Medien.

Ob der chinesische Buddhismus in Zukunft in Brasilien weiter an Bedeutung gewinnen wird, hängt indessen davon ab, inwieweit die zahlreichen Adaptationsprobleme überwunden werden, die generell für den ethnischen Buddhismus charakteristisch sind. Zusätzlich zu teilweise noch immer bestehenden Sprachbarrieren sind in erster Linie Schwierigkeiten seitens des potentiellen brasilianischen Publikums zu bedenken, sich mit unverwechselbar chinesischen ästhetischen und doktrinären Elementen zu identifizieren. So bleibt abzuwarten, bis zu welchem Grade die jeweiligen kulturellen Gegebenheiten tatsächlich kompatibel sind und die nach wie vor bestehende Diskrepanz selbst im Falle von parallel laufenden Subkongregationen für Buddhisten chinesischer Abstammung einerseits und Konvertiten nicht-chinesischer Herkunft andererseits auf dem langfristigen Weg zu *einer* brasilianischen buddhistischen Gemeinde tatsächlich überwunden werden können.

2.2 Intellektualisierter und karmischer Buddhismus

Gewöhnlich wird in der Fachliteratur über den Buddhismus im Westen zwischen „Immigranten" und „Konvertiten" unterschieden[6]. Für Immigranten erfüllt der Buddhismus die Funktion einer Bewahrung ihrer ethnischen bzw. kulturellen Identität, die sich über Ritualen und eine devotionale Grundhaltung ausdrückt, die mit ihrer angestammten religiösen Tradition verbunden sind. Der Buddhismus der Konvertiten zeichnet sich demgegenüber durch eine rationale Interpretation der Religion und durch die besondere Betonung der individuellen buddhistischen Praxis, insbesondere der Meditation aus. Konvertierte Buddhisten gehören häufig der gebildeten Mittelschicht an und haben über eine entsprechende Lektüre den Einstieg in den Buddhismus gefunden.

Bezüglich des intellektualisieren Buddhismus ist zunächst zu bedenken, dass auf Seiten des brasilianischen Publikums außerhalb von Kreisen asiatischer Einwanderer ein nennenswertes Interesse am Buddhismus erst nach den 60er Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts konstatiert werden kann. Diese Tatsache unterscheidet die Buddhismusrezeption in Brasilien von den Bedingungen sowohl in westeuropäischen Ländern, vor allem England und Deutschland, als auch in den USA. Auch in der Folgezeit hat sich eine intellektuelle Buddhismusorientierung nicht in der in anderen westlichen Kontexten üblichen Breite entwickelt. Damit entfiel, anders als in den oben zitierten Ländern, schon allein aus quantitativen Gründen die Grundbedingung für die sukzessive Ausarbeitung eines westlichen bzw. brasilianischen Buddhismus. Im Bedürfnis nach Legitimität assoziierten sich die frühen Vertreter eines intellektualisierten Buddhismus in Brasilien statt dessen mit bestehenden ethnischen Gemeinschaften und ihren Tempeln. Ab den 80er Jahren artikulierte sich die Suche nach Adaptationsstrategien, die die traditionellen religiösen und sozialen Formen im Sinne eines stärker „globalisierten" Buddhismus relativierten. Es handelt sich hierbei um einen noch immer fließenden Prozess mit bislang nicht immer eindeutig operationalisierbaren Ergebnissen, was eine Systematisierung der bisherigen Adaptionsstrategien erschwert.

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[6] Vgl. Prebish 1999: 57ff.

Allerdings ist klar erkennbar, dass das Streben nach einer größeren institutionellen Flexibilität sowohl in unabhängigen Zentren mit Zen-buddhistischer Ausrichtung und in bereits weltweit organisierten Bewegungen wie der Fo Guang Shan am stärksten ausgeprägt ist.

Mit dem Begriff des „karmischen Buddhismus" ist ein unter brasilianischen Buddhisten anzutreffender Konversions-Typus bezeichnet, der von der internationalen und nationalen Fachdiskussion bislang nicht befriedigend thematisiert wurde. Ein Grund dafür ist, dass gängige Konzepte häufig Bedingungen zum Standard erheben, die in Gesellschaften anzutreffen sind, in denen des Protestantismus traditionell stark und ggf. mehrheitlich ausgeprägt ist. Unter diesen theoretischen Rahmenbedingungen und basierend auf empirischen Feldstudien werden in der Dissertation Fallbeispiele angeführt, die auf die Existenz einer "populären Variante" des von einheimischen Konvertiten konstituierten Buddhismus hinweisen. Diese Konversionskategorie steht in gewissem Widerspruch zu den "konventionellen" Theorien, die sich auf Konversionen westlicher Buddhisten beziehen. Zugleich legen die Ergebnisse der Studie eine Relativierung bzw. Erweiterung von bereits vorliegenden Modellen nahe, die zum Zwecke der kategorialen Binnendifferenzierung des brasilianischen Buddhismus entworfen wurden.

Analytisch interessant ist am karmischen Buddhismus eine ansonsten so nicht anzutreffende Konversionsmotivation, die vom Bedürfnis nach unmittelbarer Problemlösung, vor allem im finanziellen Bereich, im Falle von gesundheitlichen Problemen oder von familiärer Disharmonie geprägt ist. Es handelt sich dabei um einen „Buddhismus der Resultate" auf der Grundlage der Karmalehre, die zum einen als Begründung für die Existenz negativer Lebensumstände herangezogen wird, andererseits aber auch die Möglichkeit eröffnet, das eigene Schicksal ins Positive zu wenden.

In Brasilien entwickelte sich der karmische Buddhismus, bzw. der "Buddhismus der Resultate" vor allem aus der Fusion von Elementen die *simultan* der japanischen und der brasilianischen Volksreligiosität entstammen. Dieser Tatsache verdanken diverse neu-religiöse Bewegungen in Brasilien ihren Erfolg. Aufgrund der bestehenden Ähnlichkeiten zwischen japanisch-volksreligiösen und brasilianisch-volksreligiösen Anschauungen und

Praktiken besteht auch für die Buddhismusrezeption eine Ausgangsposition, die sich von der in westeuropäischen Ländern und der in den USA unterscheidet. So charakterisiert, finden sich im karmischen Buddhismus Züge, die auch innerhalb von Strömungen wie dem Kardecismus oder der Umbanda gegeben sind und außerdem für den volksreligiösen Ahnenkult typisch sind. Grob gesehen, artikuliert sich der karmische Buddhismus in Brasilien in zwei Varianten, nämlich erstens als esoterischer Buddhismus und zweitens im Kontext von neu-religiösen Bewegungen auf der Basis des japanischen Nichiren-Buddhismus. Für den esoterischen Buddhismus lässt sich eine stärkere Interaktion mit brasilianischen bzw. afro-brasilianischen Religionen konstatieren, die zum Zwecke der Lösung unmittelbarer Probleme einen Kontakt mit der spirituellen Welt herstellen. Im Falle neu-religiöser Bewegungen auf der Basis des japanischen Nichiren-Buddhismus, vor allem der zahlenmäßig dominanten Gruppen Sôka Gakkai und Reyûkai, sind es demgegenüber die vom traditionellen Buddhismus abweichenden Organisationsstrukturen und Missionsstrategien durch die Konvertiten und Sympathisanten erreicht werden.

3. Theoretische Aspekte

3.1 Funktionale Muster

Die dem analytischen Teil der Dissertation zugrunde liegenden theoretischen Elemente entstammen der Auseinandersetzung mit der Diskussion über das Konzept des Synkretismus. Dabei haben sich vor allem drei Kombinationsmuster als konstruktiv erwiesen[7].

Das erste Muster – modellartig von Roger Bastide in seinen Studien zu afro-brasilianischen Religionen dargelegt - ist das der religiösen Kombination mit spezifischen Konsequenzen für die ethnische Integration. Bastide zufolge bilden sich aufgrund eines im Verlauf von Generationen enger werdenden Kontaktes zwischen zwei ethnisch distinkten Gruppen und in Abhängigkeit von zusätzlichen externen Faktoren Lücken im überkommenen

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[7] Vgl. Bastides Modell und die entsprechende Unterschied zwischen magischen und religiösen Kombinationen (Bastide 1971b), die für den afrikanischen Religionen in Brasilien herausgearbeitet wurde.

kollektiven Gedächtnis einer betroffenen Gemeinschaft[8]. Ein analoger Vorgang läßt sich für die japanischen Immigranten und ihrer Nachkommen in Brasilien konstatieren. Aufgrund der sozialen Wechselwirkung mit der brasilianischen Gesamtgesellschaft ist die ethnische Identität brüchig geworden. Die buddhistische Umdeutung von Elementen der brasilianischen Gesellschaft und des dominanten Katholizismus sind in diesem Kontext zu sehen.

Im Falle von Brasilianern nicht-Asiatischer Abstammung sind zwei andere Kombinationsmuster typisch. Für das erste bietet sich als technischer Terminus der Begriff „doktrinäre Kombination" an. Das zweite Muster bedarf einer etwas umständlicheren Beschreibung und soll hier "Kombination in Funktion der Steigerung eines innererweltlichen Nutzens" genannt werden.[9].

Mit dem Stichwort „doktrinäre Kombination" ist folgendes gemeint: Sofern zwischen Lehren oder Mythen unterschiedlichen Ursprungs Parallelen bestehen, kann es zu einer Relativierung des Wahrheitsanspruchs der religiösen Inhalte kommen und eine Analogie zwischen ihnen postuliert werden. Auf diesem Hintergrund lassen sich die Elemente dann kombinieren, wobei die synkretistische Verbindung mit Verweis auf die Mystik, die Psychologie oder das Konstrukt einer *philosophia perennis* legitimiert wird. In diesem Sinne liefert die von den Medien unterstützte intellektuelle Globalisierung Vorlagen für den Import eines "Westlichen Buddhismus", der jedoch stets durch lokale Gegebenheiten in landestypischer Weise "eingefärbt" wird.

"Kombinationen in Funktion der Steigerung eines innerweltlichen Nutzens" sind Ergebnisse individueller Entscheidungen und als solche gewöhnlich weitgehend unstrukturiert. Sie werden unter Ausblendung logische Inkompatibilitäten im Verhältnis der

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[8] Vgl. Bastide 1971b: 333ff.
[9] Roger Bastide beschreibt Ähnliches mit Blick auf den Synkretismus von Katholizismus und Candomblé. Vgl. Bastide 1971a: 154, Reuter 2002: 223-272. Erwähnenswert ist auch die von Rudolph vorgenommene Differenzierung zwischen einem reflektierten bzw. bewussten und einem volksreligiösen unbewussten Synkretismus. Vgl. Rudolph 1979: 207-208. Des weiteren registrierte Hubert Seiwert bezüglich chinesischer religiöser Bewegungen eine religiöse Kombination die sich dem intellektuellen Verständnis der Beteiligten entzieht. Vgl. Seiwert 2003: 161.

Teile zueinander aus Elementen unterschiedlichen Ursprünge gebildet und subjektiv als sinnvolle Einheit erfahren. Entscheidend für die Auswahl der Teilaspekte ist das unmittelbare Interesse des betreffenden Individuums an konkreten Resultaten der religiösen Praxis. Insofern sind die „Kombinationen in Funktion der Steigerung eines innerweltlichen Nutzens" dynamische Konstrukte, die entsprechend des Grades ihrer innerweltlichen Effektivität ggf. spontan abgeändert bzw. erweitert werden. Kombinationen dieses Typs sind nicht nur charakteristisch für volksreligiöse Zusammenhänge Brasiliens sondern finden sich auch innerhalb des japanischen Religionen.

3.2 Strukturelle Prozesse

Studie zum Erwerb einer Zweitsprache und zur Bildung kreolischer Sprachen liefern interessante theoretische Modelle der Konversion, der religiösen Anpassung, des Synkretismus und der Bricolage. In diesem Zusammenhang gilt zunächst folgendes: Die erste Generation von Immigranten ist in der Regel einsprachig, einige Einwanderer erwerben die Sprache des Gastlandes als Zweitsprache. In der zweiten Generation sind viele der betroffenen Personen zweisprachig, häufig kommt es bei ihnen zu einer Vermischung sprachlicher Codes und zu grammatikalischen Entlehnungen. Die dritte Generation beherrscht die Sprache des Gastlandes, behält aber Eigenschaften der Immigrantensprache im Sinne eines alternatives Wortschatz bei.

Aus soziolinguistischem Blickwinkel bietet es sich im Fall der Erforschung des Buddhismus in Brasilien an, relevante Prozesse in Begriffen der "Relexifizierung" und der "grammatikalischen Übertragung" theoretisch zu thematisieren. Folgt man diesem Sprachgebrauch, dann kann man formulieren, dass im Falle synkretistischer Praktiken bzw. im Verlauf von Prozessen der Bricolage Elemente einer gegebenen religiösen Lexik aus ihrem originären grammatikalischen Zusammenhang gelöst und nach den alternativen Normen einer differenten lokalen Grammatik verwendet werden. Für einen solchen Fall ist der Begriff *religiöse Relexifizierung* angebracht, ein Terminus, der besagen soll, dass das Repertoire einer bestimmten Religion in einen neuen strukturellen Kontext eingebettet wird und nun im Vergleich mit den herkömmlichen Verwendungsregeln einer anderen Logik unterworfen

wird. Die religiöse Relexifizierung geht einher mit Uminterpretationen bzw. semantischen Modifizierungen.[10]

Für den ethnischen Buddhismus in Brasilien ist charakteristisch, dass er sich einzelner religiöser Elemente der dominanten Gesellschaft bedient und originär buddhistische Sachverhalte mit christlichen Begriffen wie "Messe", "Priester", "Bischof" oder "Katechese" belegt. Diese Fälle repräsentieren Beispiele einer sogenannte "Relexifizierung durch Substitution". Im Rückgriff auf Roger Bastide und dessen soziologische Analyse der wechselseitigen Durchdringung zivilisatorischer Kontexte lässt sich ein solcher Prozess als Folge des Verlustes des kollektiven Gedächtnisses einer ethnischen Gruppe und der nachfolgenden "Auffüllung" der entstandenen Lücke durch lokale Elemente interpretieren.

Im Gegensatz zum Prinzip der "Substitution" liegt eine "Addition" buddhistischer lexikaler Elemente vor, wenn Aspekte kombiniert werden, die sich in verschiedenen Religionen in ähnlicher Weise finden. Beispiele für solche kulturübergreifende Konzepte sind "Geistwesen", "Karma" oder "Besessenheit". Solche Elemente sind gewissermaßen zweiseitig "konvertierbar". In solchen Fällen ist im Gegensatz zum Prinzip der „Substitution" charakteristisch, dass buddhistische lexikale Elemente einer Grammatik "hinzuaddiert" werden, die von brasilianischen Religionen bereitgestellt wird. Vergleichbares meint der brasilianische Soziologe Cândido Procópio, wenn er von einem *Kontinuum* der brasilianischen Religionen der Besessenheit spricht, das auf der einen Seite vom Pol des Spiritismus und auf der anderen Seite vom Pol der Umbanda-Religion begrenzt wird. Die zwischen den einzelnen Strömungen bestehende inhaltliche Kontinuität ist eine Folge eines intensiven Austausches von Elementen, die bis zu einem gewissen Grad von allen im Kontinuum befindlichen Phänomenen geteilt werden. In vergleichbarer Weise sind Begriffe

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[10] Die bis heute ausführlichste Arbeit zur Relexifizierung als Konstruktionsprinzip einer kreolischen Sprache stammt von Claire Lefebvre. Die Studie geht von der Hypothese aus, dass es sich bei der haitischen Kreolisch um eine relexifizierte Variante der west-afrikanischen Fongbe-Sprache handelt. Dabei weist Lefebvre nach, dass die haitischen Kreolisch grammatikalisch auf der Fongbe-Sprache basiert, der originäre Wortschatz aber durch französche Begriffe ersetzt ist. Der Entstehungsprozess wird von Lefebvre mit dem Vorgang des Erwerbs einer Zweitsprache verglichen. (Lefebvre 1998: 12, 34-35).

wie Zen, Meditation und Karma das Allgemeingut einer ganzen Reihe von in Brasilien vorfindlichen Praktiken, die im Bedeutungskreis der zitierten Termini mit dem Anspruch auf therapeutische Funktion auftreten.

Während mit dem Begriff der Relexifizierung die Einverleibung ursprünglich fremder religiöser *Elemente* thematisiert wird, steht das Konzept der *"grammatikalischen Übertragung"* bzw. der *"grammatikalischen Entlehnung"* für einen Synkretismus, der auf einer "tieferen" Ebene angesiedelt ist. Gemeint ist eine in der Regel intellektuell fundierte Kombination der *Grammatiken* bzw. *Strukturen* verschiedener Religionen. Das soll bedeuten, dass über die Einverleibung von lexikalischen Elementen hinausgehend auch Regeln übernommen werden, die die Beziehungen zwischen den Elementen in einem Gesamtsystem definieren.

4. Abschließende Überlegungen

Abschießend sei noch einmal thesenartig betont, dass die angemessene Erforschung des Buddhismus in Brasilien eines theoretischen Modells der Nativierung bedarf, das in der Lage ist zwischen verschiedenen Kombinationsprozessen zu unterscheiden. Die nachstehende Tabelle fasst die grundsätzlichen Aspekte noch einmal übersichtlich in schematischer Form zusammen:

	Ethnischer Buddhismus	Intellektualisierter Buddhismus	Karmischer Buddhismus
Lexikalischer Rahmen	Katholizismus	"Westlicher" Buddhismus	Japanische Neu-Religionen
Substrat	Asiatischer Buddhismus	Pseudo-Synthese gegründet in der Einheit der Religionen	Karmisches Kontinuum und brasilianische Volksreligiösität
Funktion der Kombination	Integration in die Gesellschaft und in neue Generationen	Ausgleich von konzeptionellen Differenzen im Zuge der Konversion	Maximierung der Möglichkeit des Wohlergehens in dieser Welt
Strukturelle Methode	Relexikalisierung durch Substitution	Grammatikalischer Transfer	Relexikalisierung durch Addition

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to describe and systematize East Asian Buddhism in Brazil. The study of Buddhism in Brazil includes a revision of the models used in other western countries given that 1) statistical data reveals that a majority of Buddhists in Brazil belong to new Buddhist movements [Sôka Gakkai, Reyûkai], 2) different ethnic relations and the presence of syncretic combinations configure a different type of reception environment. The analytical approach of this thesis includes initially a typology that divides East Asian Buddhism in Brazil into its ethnic, intellectualized and karmic streams. Ethnic Buddhism is a result of Asian immigration to Brazil. In this stream are many Japanese schools [Jôdoshû, Jôdo Shinshû] that were institutionalised with the definitive settlement of Japanese immigrants after the Second World War, although Chinese Buddhist movements have had a increasing importance, some attracting Brazilians converts [Fo Guang Shan]. An intellectualized Buddhism arose from a middle class attraction to Zen and Ch'an. With individual and independent initiatives, this branch represents the selective transplantation of global flows. The karmic Buddhism, at least, represents a search of "this-worldly" benefits through a religious practice based on the concept of karma improvement. In this sense, the blending of Brazilian and Japanese popular religiosity [Shingon], or the expansion of the new religious movements in the 1980s [Sôka Gakkai, Reyûkai] has configured the evolution toward a more widespread karmic Buddhism in Brazil. Besides the proposed typology, the analytical approach is completed by a model of religious nativization, inspired in the studies of Roger Bastide for the Afro-Brazilian religions and in linguistic theories based on relexification. It is argued that the nativization of East Asian Buddhism in Brazil is developing through three main patterns of combinations with the local religiosity. What has occurred in the case of ethnic Buddhism is the appropriation of Catholic contents due to the social integration of Asian descendents and the filling of gaps inside the religious collective memory. In intellectualized Buddhism, a more universalistic approach established the incorporation of Buddhism through mysticism and esotericism. In the case of karmic Buddhism the combination is not systematized and is frequently given through the addition of different practices with a common pursue of concrete results.

Keywords: Buddhism, Brazil, syncretism.

Acknowledgements

> "I became free from being caught by the impending feeling that I had to connect my peripheral birthplace directly to the center, that I become a meaningless being otherwise."

Kenzaburo Oe

Contents

Introduction

It is easy to imagine that many Buddhists in western countries wake up early to perform their religious practices, while the majority is still fast asleep. Many of these Buddhists were inspired by the reading of a book, and in general have an intellectual education and economic level which is above average for society. For many of these practitioners, the most important morning practice is individual meditation, most often through concentration on breathing and attention to body posture, whereas for others, the main spiritual training is another contemplative practice or even sutra chanting. In the weekends, they gather for sessions of meditation, retreats or group sutra chanting and discussion. In this sense, many Buddhists reflect on the necessity for, and implementation of, adaptations to Buddhism in a western context, often reducing beliefs and devotional aspects to a minimum, which is frequently done on a psychological basis or with emphasis on social engagement.

However, there are many ways to experience Buddhism in the West. Even though Buddhists are still a minority group, frequently elite in western countries, Buddhism becomes popular, receiving other influences in the process. In Suzano, for example, a town on the outskirts of São Paulo, Brazil, every morning there are people to receive "blessings" from the "priests", as the ritual of consulting the Shingon monks is called. These rituals of consulting the Shingon monks are performed in two small rooms. The majority of participants are women and Brazilians, however not being Japanese descents. Each visitor pays a small amount for the so-called "consultation" and "blessing" (port. *benzimento*), joining a queue to be attended. During this waiting time, each devotee writes the problem or difficulties the participant is there for. Most of the situations that they hope to resolve are problems of health, unemployment or family disharmony and it is not rare that they see the cause of their problems as *macumba* (black magic, in this context). In the weekends, there are ceremonies attended by Brazilians, such as the cult for the ancestors and the ritual of fire (jap. *goma*), but there are also ceremonies to protect against car or home theft, with a clear social appeal. Despite Shingon being a small group in Brazil, its characteristics show that its adaptation pattern is very different.

In an attempt to describe temples like these, the general objective of this dissertation is to analyze Buddhism in Brazil, comparing its development with the models supplied by more general theories about Buddhism in western countries. Whenever possible, I will try to complement and critique these perspectives with the Brazilian case. In fact, this study is the result of a dissatisfaction with the idea of only one western Buddhism and a feeling of deficiency of the existent analytical perspectives when applied to Buddhist communities in Brazil. Therefore, parallel to the historical description of Buddhism in Brazil and the presentation of the situation of the main Asian groups, whenever possible, I will review the categories for the comprehension of the Buddhist phenomenon in western countries with Brazilian data. The different interactions of Buddhism with Brazilian religiousness and society will be the main argumentative axis of this dissertation. In theoretical terms, the focus will be on the description of Buddhist combinations with other religions through syncretism and an approach based on structural linguistics, in a reflection on religious combinations that seem to be initiating in the case of Buddhist Studies in the West.

This division of tasks is part of a spiral between local context description and general analysis necessary to study under the discipline of Religious Studies, which is normally divided into a historical and descriptive task in one hand, and on the other, more theoretical and comparative research[1]. More specifically, the present work can be placed in the intersection of two academic areas. One of them is Buddhist Studies, in the subdiscipline that refers to Buddhism in the West. In the last years several researchers, mainly from subjects of Religious Studies and Social Sciences, have attempted to understand the growing effort to systematize the presence of Buddhism in a Western context. This research area is being constructed through the study of several processes of adaptation to local contexts because of Buddhist communities' internal factors. In this aspect, Buddhist communities in western countries have been described through concepts such as ethnic religion, transplantation and new religious movements. The other academic area present in this intersection is the studies

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[1] Wach's classic orientation is here assumed (cf. Wach 1924), as well as an emphasis on *Religionswissenschaft* as a discipline responsible for integrating the knowledge produced by several more specialized sciences (cf. Antes 1986). This integration gives a new sense to results obtained separately and promotes new questions for more specific researches. This should not deter an effort towards models and proper theories, cf. Wiebe 1983, as in the compared study of religions, that gathers similar processes and correspondent concepts in different religions. Besides the empirical and analytical tasks, a critical role of *Religionswissenschaft* is assumed, following Rudolph 1979 and Rudolph 1991.

religions in Brazil, in the research of Asian immigration and sociology of the oriental religions. In this sense, this work uses the results of the pioneering researches on Japanese religion and immigration in Brazil of anthropologists such as Takashi Maeyama since the 1960s and more current studies that considered Brazilian converts to new Japanese religions.

The empirical field of this dissertation is concentrated on the East Asian Buddhism in Brazil[2]. Academic studies on Buddhism in Brazil are relatively scarce, and the few articles in existence are almost entirely dedicated to specific schools of Japanese Buddhism. The situation has improved in the past years, for example, through the book edited by Frank Usarski about Buddhism in Brazil, the doctoral dissertation by Ronan Alves Pereira about Sôka Gakkai and the dissertation by Cristina Moreira Rocha about Zen in Brazil. Some of these works were developed in parallel and present overlapping analyses with the present work, although the focus of each research is distinct. As many groups have not previously been researched yet, a more thorough analysis about the presence of Buddhism of the Far East in Brazil has not been carried out. In this context, this dissertation aims to include and detail Buddhist groups not described in previous works, filling in the gaps in order to give a more complete panorama of East Asian Buddhism in Brazil.

The quantitative results obtained also represent an advance in the knowledge of Buddhism in Brazil. They included for the first time the collection of statistical facts on the numerical evolution, ethnic and geographic distribution of Buddhism and oriental religions until the IBGE 2000 Census was taken. Moreover, an appropriate database was developed on the addresses of Buddhist institutions in Brazil, including branch temples and institutions.

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[2] The concept of Buddhism of the Far East used in this thesis is derived from Jikido 1994, who defines it historically as based on the Chinese canon of Buddhist scriptures, initially brought through Central Asia. Presenting quite different characteristics and devotions in comparison to Buddhism in India and South Asia, the derived sects of this transplantation were transmitted to the entire Far East through its export as a cultural asset in the political and tax system that characterized the changes of Chinese civilization with other less developed areas. In spite of having interacted, for instance, with Korean and Japanese native religions, the Chinese canon since its formation is considered sacred and used until today in Korean and Japanese ceremonies, even though Chinese cannot be understood by the majority of adepts. Besides having a very well established concept in Buddhist Studies, this more general geographical classification is the most correct for the empiric field investigated, given that the focus of this study is Buddhist sects brought by the Japanese, Chinese and Korean immigrants. In opposition to the Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana division, the classification also describes the theme of this thesis better because there are sects of the Far East that do not belong to Mahayana, but they are interesting examples of Brazilian popular religion influences in Buddhism, as already mentioned in Shingon's case.

With this database, it was possible to obtain a quantitative measure of the main Buddhist organizations and the type of Buddhism practiced. In the database version of 09.24.2003 there are 309 addresses of institutions and branch organizations registered in Brazil. They show that in first place are the new religious movements originated from Nichiren Buddhism (mainly Sôka Gakkai, Honmon Butsuryûshû and Reyûkai), with 34% of the addresses registered. In second place, with 24%, are the institutions of ethnic Japanese Buddhism from the Pure Land Buddhism (Higashi Hogwanji and Nishi Hogwanji orders), that was the form of Buddhism practiced by most Japanese immigrants, mostly farmers. These facts already indicate that the percentage division between the majority of organizations types in Brazil are very different from the ones observed in the European and American contexts. Not only does Japanese Buddhism define the quantitative number of institutions, despite the presence of Chinese and Vajrayana schools, but also several Japanese new religions had in Brazil a success that was not repeated in any other western country. In order to demonstrate these facts, a summary and graphs with these statistics are presented with the geographical distribution and the size estimation of the main organizations.

The result of the qualitative data was possible through a field research that relied on programming analysis and material made available by the temples, activities and ceremonies observation, interviews with devotees and with employees of the temples, besides in depth interviews with monks and snowballing interviews with devotees selected because of their commitment[3]. The material collected in the field research also includes images and ritual descriptions focusing mainly on religious combinations. The field work was carried out in a way to include groups that have not been described yet, such as the Chinese, the esoteric Japanese Buddhism or some new Japanese religious movements. Systematic periods of field activity were accomplished from 1999 to 2002. Regarding this qualitative data the result obtained was organized in a fieldwork register containing around 25 institutions among the most representative of Far East Buddhism in Brazil. This summary is also complemented with a broad use of information publicized on the Internet, in several home-pages and in five existing discussion lists about Buddhism (buddhismo-l, vajarayana-l, zen-chungtao,

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[3] This collection of qualitative data follows a research methodology influenced mainly by Greschat 1988 and Baumann 1992. Baumann's methodology, in 1992, has already been used in a research on Buddhism in Germany (cf. Baumann 1995b). More than these theoretical references, however, the utilized methodology is influenced by the learning through a partner research with Prof. Frank Usarski.

budismosgi [Sôka Gakkai] and zulai [Fo Guang Shan]). The monitoring of these lists allowed one to collect some information and views without a directed and sometimes unnatural confrontation with the researcher.

These quantitative and qualitative data form a collection of empiric materials that provide a theoretical discussion about the particularities of nativization of Buddhism of the Far East in Brazil. In the presentation of this material, the main results will be whenever possible studied in opposition to the analytical perspectives in the USA and Europe. In this sense, I will try to show the general motives for differentiated aspects of Buddhism in Brazil, which can offer a review and complementation to the more general international patterns of adaptation from Buddhism in the West. Briefly, these Brazilian elements are the different ethnic relations and identities, a presence of a Catholic majority, a folk religious worldview influenced by Spiritism and Umbanda, a tendency toward syncretism and the presence of Brazil in the "Third World". Despite the influence of globalization, there are some social elements in Brazil that are very different from other countries, especially the USA and Europe.

In fact, starting from an ethnicity concept based on the social interaction, it is possible to analyze different tendencies in the adaptation of Japanese religions in Brazil, after the changes caused by the migration of the immigrant community to urban centers. In this sense, the Brazilian nikkei (Japanese descendants in Brazil) were characterized as an ethnic group independent of the Japanese and Brazilian. With the immigration, many factors that supported Buddhism in the social structure of origin were broken, having to be abandoned or reinterpreted in Brazil. From the institutions' point of view, in a more general theoretical statement, religions brought by the immigrants oscillate since the 1970s between two strategic poles, in reference to its social permanence. In one of them is the ethnic nikkei Buddhism, in which the cultural identity of the group is priority and an opening accompanies only the evolution of the borders of the ethnic group itself, which had a more radical identity change through the Second World War or with the new generations. At present an economical sustentation joins an ethnical and cultural enclave, being more conservative in its adaptation and facing a great challenge with the change of the group's language. In this case, it is important to analyze the criteria that define the group's limits and the religious practices that can transmit this ethnic identity, including those promoted by the nikkei reflux to Japan.

The opposite pole, characterized mainly by the new religious movements, maximizes the cultural opening in the sense of enlarging the number of native followers, but aiming at eventually maintaining a constant ethnic base that guarantees its sustenance. The immigrants and the descendants who follow these movements were led to a more universal and favorable purpose to cultural integration, being stimulated in this process by their own religion. Although, it is common to observe that the globalized organizational structure present in the new religious movements impose an *asymmetrical relationship*, in which the nikkei are the political and spiritual leadership with a very close contact with Japan, where the headquarters are located and from where the majority of funds that support the Brazilian branches originate. Although at the same congregation, a social asymmetry in favor of the immigrants and the presence of Brazil in the Third World intensify this distance, making it very difficult to have an equalized relationship between Brazilians and Asian descendants.

In regard to what was designated as intellectualized Buddhism, there are other tensions between Brazilians and Asian descendants, starting from different legitimate mechanisms. Initially it is necessary to observe that Buddhism in Brazil began by the immigration and was defined by patterns of the immigrant community's adaptation. In Brazil's case there was no interest nor philological knowledge that resulted in an independent organizational development nor a solid import of Buddhism. Even if some intellectuals have had an interest in Buddhism since the 1920s and more decisively since the 1960s, most of them looked for Buddhism starting from the Japanese Buddhist missions in Brazil. This results in the fact that any transplantation model to be applied in Brazil has to consider the ethnic community as an additional factor besides the local society and the religion to be transplanted. The ethnic community is a very significant factor if economical means for an independent religious development are inexistent. Recently an important trend in Brazil is that a more independent institutionalization is happening starting from more globalized movements. This institutionalization is still unstable due to a fragile organizational base and a reduced number of followers. The formation of monks, additionally, is still almost exclusively accomplished abroad. In a more individual and less systematic level, a strong American influence can be verified in Buddhism in Brazil, being found more restricted to more intellectualized movements and the upper middle class. A global Buddhism, mainly American, is the contemporary Buddhism imported in Brazil, through books, masters' visits and produced films. In this sense it is the Buddhism of other western countries that is transplanted and sometimes reinterpreted as authentic and true Buddhism in Brazil. In spite of being influenced

by globalization, this imported Buddhism presents differentiated characteristics in relation to the European and American environment, existing legitimate mechanisms that go through comparisons and intellectualized combinations with Brazilian religions.

In another type of Buddhism reinterpretation, another important characteristic of Brazil while being an environment for Buddhism is the success of a karmic Buddhism. This stream reaches a lower intellectualized social class, comprising followers of different sects initiated by Japanese immigrants, mainly new Japanese and nikkei religions. In this sense, quantitative data and the motivation to conversion show that a significant portion of converted Brazilians search to find the solution of their problems starting from Buddhism, which provokes different patterns of practice and other adaptation strategies. The new Japanese religions began as ethnic religions in Brazil, frequently transmitting an anti-acculturation ideology, but since the 1970s opting for a proselytization of Brazilians. Concepts such as karma, sutras recitation and the cult of the ancestors find acceptance among Brazilians when they associate to concrete results or justification for existent problems, in opposition to its rejection when understood in the elite or intellectualized Buddhism.

After the systematization of these main streams of Buddhism in Brazil, I pursued a more theoretical objective, arguing that a process of *nativization* of Buddhism in Brazil is occurring through combinations with local contents. The term nativization is not intended to describe a transference of geographical origin, but rather the focus is on the transmission of foreign religious contents. Formally defined, religious nativization is a process of transmission across societies *and* generations; it transforms a foreign religiosity into stable religious concepts to be acquired in the first socialization of new generations. The word nativization was borrowed from linguistics, where the term means the process by which some variety of speech that was not one's native language is learned by people in that community as their first language. Something analogous occurs with new generations of immigrants *and* converts in the case of Buddhism, since they receive a Buddhist practice mixed with local particularities. The foreign religion is transformed in a local context and repassed through first socialization. The religious nativization becomes effective and stable only through new generations and the first socialization of children, but it is clear that the process is defined by the way in which the local social context affects the contents repassed by immigrants and converts. In this sense, immigration and intelectual transplantation can be understood as precedents of religious nativization. Contrary to more localized terms as Americanization or Europeization of

Buddhism, the concept of nativization aims to be theoretically oriented and free from ideological connotations regarding legitimation and representativity.

The concept of religious nativization requires a theoretical approach on religious combinations. The logic of religious combination and the structural processes of syncretism represent an important field for a comparative science of religions, but at the same time involve difficulties for theorization, since many assumptions such as conversion and even the boundaries of religions must be reevaluated. In Brazil, nikkei Buddhism presents a pattern of ritual division with other religions, mainly Catholicism. This practice resulted from the fact that multiple religious practices are frequently found as much in Brazil as in Japan. In Japan and Brazil, religions frequently assume functional and contextual aspects in the follower's life, although the same does not occur among the majority of western countries as receptive environments for Buddhism. To put it simply, from a historically point of view, if in Japan Shinto as primal religion represented a national belonging and was used at birth ceremonies, in Brazil a national belonging occurred often through Catholic baptism. Of course, as Shinto influenced Japanese Buddhism, the same occurs with Catholicism and nikkei Buddhism in Brazil. In the case of converts there is often the practice with other religions or adaptations through influences from New Age and ecological movements. These elements are the mirror of a diluted Buddhism, caused by the adoption of separate components. Since many differences of doctrine and practice are not important or not perceived as relevant by converts and sympathizers, Buddhism is sometimes adopted as a philosophy of life without a religious practice, often as a practice without a religious doctrine, or even diluted in aesthetic and esoteric ways. Attracting people for different motives and not as a whole, this type of adoption is often open to *bricolage* or even syncretism with other elements.

The dissertation structure can be described in the following way: in Chapter 1 the differences of Brazil as a reception environment for Buddhism are introduced. After a proposal of systematisation of East Asian Buddhism in Brazil in Chapter 2, through the quantitative data collected and the observed patterns of conversion, I detailed the history and the present situation of Japanese Buddhism in Brazil in Chapter 3. The history of Buddhism in Brazil is mainly related to Asian immigration, especially Japanese. This Brazilian environment progressively changed the religious life of Brazilian nikkei. A new ethnic religiosity emerged through traditional Japanese Buddhism and consequently the worship of ancestors and familiar religiosity assumed a more ethnic character for many nikkei.

Furthermore, because Brazil has also received hundreds of thousands of Chinese and Koreans since the 1970s, I described in Chapter 4 the most important Buddhist temples resulted from this immigrant stream, mainly Chinese ones. In Chapter 5, I focused my attention to an intellectualized Buddhism. In contrast to the USA and Europe, Brazilians did not have much interest in Buddhism before the 1960s, but an intellectualized interest on Zen and Ch'an developed since then, especially in the last decades. In Chapter 6, the focus is on the karmic Buddhism, analyzed as an encounter of the Brazilian and Japanese folk religiousness, often renovated and supported by the organizational structure promoted by a globalized new religious movement.

In the last chapters, I analyzed with more detail the combinations of Buddhist practices and Brazilian religions, and with the results I proposed three *functional* patterns of Buddhist combinations in Brazil and a formal perspective for the *structural* analysis of combinations. The main objective of these last chapters is to develop the model of nativization of a foreign religion starting from its task division and combinations with the local religiosity. In Chapter 7, in the description of functional patterns of Buddhist combination in Brazil, Roger Bastide's works on the African religions in Brazil were of great inspiration. His concepts in the description of an interpenetration of the civilizations were presented quite relevantly in the transformations that the derived religions of the Asian immigration go through in its establishment process and continuity. In Chapter 8, I try to develop a more formal approach of syncretism and *bricolage* through cognitive studies and the Lefebvre's relexification proposal for the structural linguistics of creole languages[4]. In this context, I propose for the religious combinations the concepts of religious relexification through addition and substitution, as well as another level of structural combination through grammatical transference. This typology is exemplified in the case of ethnic, intellectualized and karmic Buddhism in Brazil, being also indicated in Afro-Brazilian religions. Moreover, it is indicate for some cases the possibility of a theoretical treatment through the formal concept of grammar. A formal treatment is proposed in the case of syncretic religious altars with a detailed analysis of a

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[4] Theories based on creolization have already been mentioned in the study of hybrid cultural ways. Stephen Prothero indicated a differentiation between grammar and religious lexicon in Henry Olcott's religious ideas, analyzed as a Protestant grammar in which elements of other religions were incorporated (cf. Prothero 1996: 7, 176-177). Cristina Rocha also indicated recently that the creolization concept in her analysis of Zen Buddhism in Brazil (cf. Rocha 2003: 189ff), a point that I was developing in parallel.

Shingon altar. In the final reflections, I summarize the differences found in the adaptation of East Asian Buddhism in Brazil and the analytical framework proposed.

Chapter 1 - "Western" Buddhism: Looking for Brazil

1. Introduction

Over the last few years, several indications show that the presence of Buddhism in the West has intensified. If, on one hand, the number of followers is percentually low, Buddhism has had a regular presence in the media and has exerted considerable influence in the contemporary religious world. This attraction for Buddhism in the Western world also has, as a catalyzing factor, the presence of a large number of Asian immigrants, who settled during migration waves since the 19th century. From these two factors, that make themselves present in a historical and especially in a contemporary way, many Buddhist groups representing different doctrines arose in several Western countries[5].

From this presence of Buddhism, the theoretical problem of social adaptation of religions arises for the Religious Studies, with the objective of contributing to a better understanding of the transformations of Buddhism inside other cultures. The first theoretical approach to this problem can be made by systematizing the elements that interfere in the reception process. The cultural insertion of a religion can be initially described being defined by three components[6]:

Ideology and Practice: Ideology, in this context, is the theology or global view of religious tradition. Practice is the required degree of participation and proselytism. It is also understood as practice the sensorial dimension, being particularly important in cases where religion is less rationalized.

Organization: Organizational structure and orientation for the group's activities. This orientation is placed between two poles: centrifugal orientation - active and fairly well adapted to the host culture - and centripetal - more passive and with a focus on the immigrant

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[5] See, among others, Baumann 1997a.
[6] Cf. Carpenter and Roof 1995, in their study on Seicho No Ie in Brazil and utilizing the framework described by Mark Mullins.

group[7]. In addition to this differentiation, it is possible in some cases to add a third aspect, that is, an organization already globalized.

Environment: Religious, political and social context in which religious tradition will be inserted. More specifically, the environment is referred to the culture that is host to an external religious tradition, particularly its point of view in regard to the immigrants' religiousness.

Adopting this initial model, it is possible to observe that the study of Buddhist communities in the West presents many challenges. A general overview is a very hard task because the Buddhism adaptation occurs in several receptive cultures, with different organizational structures and with different doctrines and practices. Moreover, these communities can be linked to several ethnic groups with unique immigration histories.

In this sense, even if some people use terms such as "Western Buddhism", there is little agreement on what these terms really mean. Outside the academic world, as a result of simplification caused by current research, these views are frequently recognized by many groups as the essence of Buddhism. They are used in a normative way, creating a reality that closes a vicious circle. The history of Religious Studies has many examples on the danger of constructed realities, which can also occur inside the discipline[8]. It is reasonable to assume that the evaluation of these factors depend on the theoretical and cultural background of each researcher[9]. Despite the common assumption that the differences in the religious adaptation are clearly determined by the local history and culture, the label of "Buddhism in the West" is often reduced to a research determined by an analysis based on empirical data in the European (mainly in England and Germany) and American environments. From these critical points of view, this work tries to increase the diversity with the Brazilian case. Brazil has a significant

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[7] This organization as a methodological classification centered on the immigrant group or the host culture can be also found in Abramson 1979.

[8] Writing on Protestant influence on Buddhism in Germany, Baumann remarks that "a overriding textual orientation points to a hidden Protestant legacy of interpreting Buddhist religion; a Protestant assumption, however, which not only applies to Buddhist interpreters alone but to a wide range of scholars of Buddhism and the history of religions as well" (Baumann 1994: 52). For postcolonial reflections and a description of women stereotypes in the Religious Studies, see Joy 2001. For a discussion centered on the hindrances of the European perception, see Ahn 1997.

[9] Cf. Prebish 1999: 173-202.

number of Buddhists and has also the largest community of Japanese and its descendants abroad. However, Buddhism in Brazil has been little discussed in the analytical generalizations about Buddhism in the West.

The main purpose of this chapter is to introduce Brazil as a different environment for Buddhism acceptance in the West. Through a summary of the history of religions in Brazil and its contemporary aspects, topics that seem to be important for the history and praxis of Buddhist groups in Brazil will also be selected. Differences regarding other cultural environments will be emphasized, especially those from which the theories about Western Buddhism were developed. More detailed conclusions will only be possible after a presentation of the history of Buddhism in Brazil, as well as the description of the main groups in the following chapters.

2. Buddhism in Protestant and Intellectual Shape

An influence in the adaptation of Western Buddhism is the so-called Protestant Buddhism, a concept originally developed for Sri Lanka as a simultaneous rejection and reappropriation of elements belonging to Christian missionary activities[10]. This movement concentrated mainly on the intellectual and urban environment[11]. Important factors for this reaction were the association of Christianity with colonial interests in Sri Lanka, that generated a Buddhist movement with a strong nationalist content. The debates between Buddhists and Christians were decisive in this confrontation, particularly the Panadura's debate in 1873. They were responsible for a significant renewed interest of the local religion. Buddhism was considered to be more compatible to modern times than Christianity, that was considered to be its rival[12].

This heuristic concept of "Buddhism in a Protestant shape" was also used as a source for understanding the nativization of Buddhism in Europe. In Germany, the predominance of rationalistic approach is emphasized, because of the importance attributed to the natural

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[10] For an updated description of the proposal of Obeyesekere, see Gombrich e Obeyesekere 1988. Also consult Bechert 1966 (volume 1), 1967 (volume 2), 1973 (volume 3). In this context, what is later described as Protestant Buddhism by Obeyesekere, is called Modern Buddhism by Bechert. For a description of Protestant Buddhism as an example of the westernization of Buddhism, concomitant to a valorization of textual sources, see King 1999: 150-154.
[11] Cf. Mürmel 2000.
[12] Cf. Gombrich e Obeyesekere 1988, Mürmel 2000.

sciences in that period as well as the criticism and "protest" against traditional Christianity[13]. In addition, the concept of "Protestant Buddhism" can historically have a heuristic explanatory value of what was emphasized and of what caused the adaptation of Buddhism not only in Germany but also in England, the United States of America and Australia[14].

The characteristics of this "Protestant Buddhism" are: 1. The textual source as knowledge of the religion, to the detriment of worship, rites and symbols. As a consequence of this overvalued textual source, there was an attempt to purify the Buddhist Scriptures from subsequent historical interpretations and to eliminate traditional magical elements. 2. The importance of the layman and the short distance in regard to the monks resulted in the presence and the attempt of having monastic elements in the laymen's daily lives, and in an organization and leadership closer to the lay values. Therefore, in a general overview, the individual perspective of salvation is more highlighted. 3. The emphasis on the interpretation of Buddhism as a philosophy and not as a religion. Buddhism is understood as being compatible to science and rationalism, being, therefore, superior to Christianity and to the devotional and popular additions to Buddhism itself. As a result, systematic studies were considered more important to the understanding of Buddhism than rites and worship, traditionally found in Asia. Summing up, the significance of an intelectuallized source, the rationalism and the search of a original and "pure" religious identity as well as the lack of devotional, ritual and magical aspects, can also be understood as a reflection of these protestant aspects in local religious trends.

Romanticism and the translation of sacred texts of East also promoted a religious interest among intellectuals. Because of historical studies, Thomas Tweed proposed a typology for the converts and sympathizers of Buddhism in the American environment[15]. He divided the converts in the USA, between the 1875-1912 period, in romantics, esoterics and rationalists. The romantics had a stronger aesthetical and cultural attraction for the exoticism of Asian culture associated to Buddhism. They were the largest number of Americans interested in Buddhism in this period. The esoterics believed in a transcendental reality that could be contacted and they had a particular association to the theosofic movement. In turn,

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[13] Cf. Usarski 2001, Baumann 1995a, Baumann 1997b.
[14] Cf. Baumann 1997b: 284-285.
[15] Cf. Tweed 1992.

the rationalists emphasized the reasoning and the study of Buddhist scriptures, with an independent and critical spirit, as a means of practising Buddhism. In spite of the fact that this typology was established with a basis in the United States, Martin Baumann believes that the same characteristics can also be observed in Buddhism in England and Germany in the same period[16]. However, most converts in the beginning of Buddhism in Germany, can be placed in the class of the rationalists. Influenced by their own studies, these first Germans converted willingly to Buddhism as a rational religion, centered on the study of Buddhist scriptures. They did not have a very intense contact with Asian Buddhists nor a concern for the devotional and syncretic Buddhism actually practiced in Asia.

In a certain way, it can be said that these elements had an important impact on the comprehension of Buddhism in many Western countries. The reflections of these concepts, such as the importance of the individual and the short distance between the monk and the layman, can be found even in Buddhism's subsequent waves, whilst the emphasis on the rationalized aspect was partially replaced by the practice of meditation and an emphasis on experience. From the 1960s, the element that Tweed links to the romantics and esoterics reappears popularly and with intensity, represented by a stronger interest in the typical Asian aesthetics, culture and spirituality. This occurs especially with the influence and attraction felt by westerners for Zen, mostly from the *Beat Generation* and the hippie movement. Even in the case of Zen, a strong importance was given to a tradition based on individual meditation and many westerners became interested in Zen by reading books.

At present, in contrast to Buddhism practised by the immigrants or Buddhism in Japan, there are very few prayers and worship of ancestors in westernized Zen. There has been almost an elimination of the devotional and ritualistic elements, associated to a gradual decontextualization[17]. Regarding Shin Buddhism in the USA, a Protestant influence can be verified in the ethnic temples of Buddhist Churches of America (Ôtani branch from Jôdo

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[16] Cf. Baumann 1997b. For the study on the different attitudes between Protestants and Catholics in China, as well as the reflections of this attitude on the study of Buddhism in Western countries, see Reinders 1997.

[17] Cf. King 1999: 158, who, in addition to a decontextualization, cites a therapy of Zen, especially in the writings of Daisetz Suzuki. For a more personal experience of the American influence on the adaptation of Zen and the differences with Japan, consult Hori(2) 1998. For a difference between ethnic and convert temples in the USA, see, among others, Asai and Williams 1999.

Shinshû), such as the use of terms like "minister", "hymns" and "brotherhood of Buddhists" or the establishment of congregations and Sunday schools[18]. They are very different from temples in Japan, which are based on hereditary transmission and owned by a family. In Theravada communities, Numrich described Protestant influences on converts' Buddhism[19]. As for the relatively recent Tibetan boom, ritual and devotional aspects started to be revalued. In spite of that, in the case of Tibetan Buddhism, it is also possible to state that a tendency is the intellectualization of the Vajrayana contents. In the USA case, the study and publication of tantric texts, that were secret until then, are a component especially emphasized in the Gelugpa and Sakya schools, often through study centers and universities. In addition, it is also common in the so-called American Vajrayana as well as in other Buddhist schools, the trend of adapting monastic practices to the layman. Therefore, many tantric rites that were previously more secretive, are being performed by laymen, who have been introduced to these practices by more open and collective initiations[20].

3. Analytic Perspectives on Buddhism in Western Countries

By and large, academic studies have divided Buddhists in Western countries between immigrants and converts[21], that are different trends in adaptation, with different associated processes. Buddhism of the immigrants has as its main characteristic the preservation of an ethnic identity from specific rites and worships. The main characteristics of Buddhism of the converts are a more rationalized interpretation of Buddhism and a close association to meditation having as a social profile characteristic educated people, who belong to middle and upper classes of society. These two trends show relatively independent development and autonomous practices, and they often share the same physical space and the same religious leaders. In most cases, these communities seem to present little interaction.

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[18] Cf. Seager 1999: 56. See also Yoo 2002 for the Americanization and other clear influences of Protestantism.

[19] Cf. Numrich 1996: 67. In his research on the current practices in two Theravada temples, he describes that monks have a pastoral relationship with the converted Americans, in contrast to their relationship with the immigrants.

[20] Cf. Lavine 1998: 112-114. Many of the first Buddhists associated to Tibetan schools were motivated to the academic study and research of Buddhist texts. These incentives were also given as a means of preserving Tibetan culture that was threatened by the Chinese ethnic and religious policy, cf. Seager 1999: 119-135.

[21] Already in Prebish 1979 is present a division in Buddhism practiced by immigrants and by European Caucasians, the latter being replaced later by the category of the convert, cf. Prebish 1999: 62.

On account of this situation and from the field study of Theravada Buddhism in the USA, Paul Numrich coined the term "parallel congregations", reaffirming the trend of associating the religious practice to ethnic elements[22]. The concept of parallel congregations consists in the verification of the existence of two distinct groups of followers in Buddhist temples, who frequently use the same physical space and who even share religious leaders, but they do not interact because of cultural, linguistic and religious practice differences. One of the results of this division is also the existing different theoretical reference, in order to analyze each one of these congregations that, according to Numrich, must be differentiated from each one of them. While the concept and the sociological theories on New Religious Movements are useful in studying the converts, the same cannot be said in regard to Buddhism resulting from immigration[23].

In the USA, that division of Buddhism has caused an intense debate, linked mainly to representativity[24]. The predominance of studies on American Buddhism is frequently stated as a counterweight to the contribution of Asian immigrants to Buddhism. Excluding the ideological debates and the potential ethnic disputes arising from that division, the fact is that Buddhism of the converts was more studied and documented in the USA, using mainly as reference the New Religious Movements. However, in the past years, there has been a strong influence of ethnic concept in the analysis on the adaptation of Buddhism in the USA[25]. Asai and Duncan show, for example, that in Sôtô Zen temples, built before the 1960s, there is an ethnic and ritualistic pattern that does not exist in the understanding of Zen converts, who have a practice more associated to meditation[26].

Regarding the immigrant communities, most of the studies in the American continent, still start from a correlation between ethnic religiosity and Buddhism even in more advanced generations of descendants. Based on the loss of ethnic conscienciousness of the immigrants'

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[22] Cf. Numrich 1996: 63-79.
[23] Cf. Numrich 1996: 78.
[24] See, among others, Fields 1998.
[25] As an example, Chandler 1999 can be cited; in this work, he proposes a classification of ethnical combinations, suggesting that a hierarchy of ethnic influences are decisive for the self-understanding of what it means to be a Buddhist.
[26] Cf. Asai and Duncan 1999.

descendants, Mark Mullins proposed a three-phase model for the lifecycle of religious institutions founded by immigrants, based on Japanese Buddhism in Canada[27]. In the first phase, members of the religious community are only immigrants who developed a cultural and religious space similar to that existing in their native country. In the absence of a cultural center and a religious group in their native tongue, it is natural that the immigrants create these spaces for their ethnical gathering. Besides the language, an additional factor for the creation of these communities is that, in many cases, the immigrants were discriminated in the countries where they settled. In a second phase, with new generations of descendants and a stronger acculturation of the immigrant group, it is important that the religious group start educating priests who are bilingual, in addition to the work of translation of main texts and ceremonies, aiming at some members who do not have fluency in the language of their ancestors. As time goes by, the structural assimilation of the community of immigrants and descendants occurs through interracial marriages, geographical mobility and free participation in entities with no orientation or link to the ethnic community, particularly regarding education. At this stage, the religious community, founded by immigrants, enters a third phase, presenting a great dilemma. On one hand, the community was founded having the ethnic identity as orientation, being still controlled by the immigrants and having a certain tendency to conservatism. However, most native immigrants have already died and the new generations are fully integrated in the other country. The dilemma of these institutions is that they must redefine their purpose for social existence, and give a cultural leap that also represents the difference between generations, but still having the concern for maintaining a religious orthodoxy, which is often confused with the immigrant culture by the worshippers. Based on this dilemma, Mullins foresees that, excluding cases of a new migratory wave or a discriminatory wave against the ethnical group, the religious community founded by the immigrants must become multiethnical or it may disappear, losing its social objective. Nonetheless, the religious group with only one ethnic basis tends to disappear.

As for the converts, the use of sociological concepts for new religions is also a case of division from theoretical perspective chosen in the study of Buddhism in the West. Some studies analyse the diverse Buddhist groups beginning from the perspective of new religious

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[27] Cf. Mullins 1987.

movements[28], while others ignore this approach. One well-known case in which the study of Buddhism as a new religion is frequent, is the works on Sôka Gakkai, which inspire new analytical perspectives to systematize the different types of conversion to Buddhism. Among others, Jan Nattier's proposal can be pointed out, which centers its classification not on the ethnicity but on ways of transmission[29]. The practical result is also the differentiation of Buddhism from the degree of proselytization, as its classification is based on active agents of transmission. The division proposed by Nattier is the following:

1. Import Buddhism: Resulting from an interest of people in the local culture, which can be triggered by reading, trips or intellectual interest. As this interest is generally triggered in middle and upper classes, Nattier also considers this type of transmission of Buddhism as forming a elite. The spiritual practice of this group is strongly centered on meditation as a means of spiritual development. This elite Buddhism is frequently found in Zen, Vipassana groups or in Tibetan Buddhism.

2. Export Buddhism: Groups that have an active involvement in the disclosure and attempt to convert people. In general, this differentiation tries to consider the strong proselytist approach of some Buddhist groups, for example, Sôka Gakkai, that attract members from all social and ethnic classes in contrast to the traditional groups of converts who are associated to meditation and a high social-cultural and economic profile.

3. Baggage Buddhism: It is mainly associated with immigrants who are closely linked to the ethnic identity of the immigrant group. The religious disclosure is not the main religious motivation of the immigrants, as opposed to Buddhism for exportation. Because of its association with the preservation of an immigrant culture, Nattier also considers this type of transmission as ethnic Buddhism.

In recent studies, there has been an attempt to replace a classification of Buddhists that substitutes the division between converts and immigrants. Martin Baumann has presented arguments that try to exclude the classification from the perspective of a division based on

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[28] Cf. Clarke 2000.
[29] Cf. Nattier 1998, Prebish 1999:60.

ethnicity, notwithstanding the usefulness of this focus for the first generation of immigrants[30]. Especially in the case of Buddhism, Baumann defends that the division between immigrants and converts has a short duration, since this class would not make any sense either for the second generation of immigrants or the second generation of converts[31]. As a new analytical proposal, Baumann suggests a division of Buddhists between traditionalists and modernists, a division based on religious concepts and practices being followed, which is more coherent to the study of the development of Buddhism as a religion in the West, in addition to pointing out the reverse consequences of the development of Buddhism in Asian countries. Despite the fact that traditionalist and modern Buddhism are fairly pluralist and heterogeneous, the basic difference between them is that the modern trend is the result of an effort to reform and revive Buddhism. These modern movements are not only the natural result of Western influence but often it is also the result of historical factors in Asian countries. Therefore, as an example of Baumann's perspective, Sôka Gakkai is considered a modern movement in Nichiren Buddhism[32]. One of the main factors for this modernization is also the Western influence, that searches for the discovery of the "essence" in Buddhism, purging Asian elements as magic and protection practices that are considered unnecessary or often harmful to the Buddhist way of liberation. These modern movements may arise from diffuse and abroad influences and affects the development of Buddhism in Asian countries, configuring according to Baumann a new phase of postmodern or global Buddhism.

4. Folk Trends on the Brazilian Reception of Buddhism

The objective of this section is to indicate that Brazil is a very different environment for the reception of Buddhism as compared to Europe or the USA. The history of Buddhism in Brazil is mainly related to Asian, particularly Japanese, immigration. Few Brazilians had interest in Buddhism before the 1960s, in contrast to the situation in Europe and the USA, where there was much earlier philological research being done. With the beginning of Japanese immigration in 1908, Buddhism came to Brazil, but its definitive institutionalization occurred only after the Second World War and after a redefinition of the nikkei identity. Since the

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[30] Cf. Baumann 1999.
[31] For a critique of this classification as provisional, as well as a proposal from a new analytic perspective, see Baumann 2001. For a similar attempt, based on change and identity, see Spuler 2003: 119.
[32] Baumann 2001: 62.

1980s, through the immigration of Chinese and Tibetan groups, there has been more diversity of Buddhist activity in Brazil. Before the 1980s, however, the influence of Buddhism in Brazil remained restricted to Japanese Buddhism, and was therefore associated with ethnic Japanese identity, despite the fact that many nikkei had abandoned the Japanese religions.

How does the social and cultural environment of Brazil affect the adaptation of Buddhism? The influence of Catholicism on religions in Brazil already suggests that others concepts could be applied to the study of Buddhism and its history in Brazil. Although many new religious movements with Pentecostal origins have acquired an importance that has threatened the hegemonic situation of Catholicism, it still presents an incontestable majority[33]. Moreover, as an environment of reception for other religions, Brazil is well known by its tendency toward syncretism. Although traditionally persecuted by the Catholic Church, they had a strong influence on folk customs and devotional practices[34]. In this context, a wide concept of syncretism has been utilized for the description of so-called postmodern religiosity, its characteristics anticipated and intensified in Brazil[35].

Consequently, the environment into which Buddhist groups settled and currently live together in Brazil is characterized by the tendency towards religious syncretism as well as the strong presence of Catholicism, potentially diluting the identity of Buddhists in different ways. Many people appear in the statistics as Catholics, but baptized as infants, they later committed themselves to another religious practice. This is demonstrated by statistical facts that indicate also an acceptance of some Buddhist concepts. A recent survey showed that

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[33] Although innumerable secondary factors that influenced this process can be mentioned the most important one seems to be the strong urbanization and modernization that took place in Brazil since the 1950s, that generated a change in environment that, in turn, caused a symbolic reorganization of the Brazilian imaginary, cf. Mello and Novais 1998. Many new religious groups were established in this process of migration and fast social transformation, frequently occupying a religious space that once typically belonged to rural Catholicism. For a more quantitative analysis of the diversification of the Brazilian religious field, consult Usarski 2002d. According to Pierucci e Prandi 1996: 262-266, in the city of São Paulo, approximately 26% of the adult population is comprised of converts.

[34] Because the tendency toward syncretism is not an isolated religious phenomenon, but a cultural fact for all of Latin America, Christián Parker has defended the concept of a "syncretic thought" in the popular ideology of Latin America. For details, see Parker 1996: 315. About the syncretism of New Age groups in Brazil, see Amaral 1998.

[35] For a general view of Brazilian religiosity, see Sanchis 1997. Through his typology of a pre-modern, modern and post-modern religiosity, one may verify, simultaneously, the transformation, combination and permanence of different historical phases in Brazilian contemporary religiousness.

belief in the existence of God is shared by an overwhelming majority of 99 percent[36]. But despite this, it is still possible that certain Buddhist concepts could be accepted[37]. A belief in reward or punishment after death is assumed by 69 percent of Brazilians. The same research showed that 15 percent of the Brazilians surveyed believe that they will reincarnate, second only to the number expecting reward or punishment after death. A study carried out in 1992, from ISER (Advanced Institute for the Study of Religion), showed that 64 percent of Brazilian Catholics accept reincarnation and are acquainted with some forms of Spiritism or Afro-Brazilian religions[38]. Although reincarnation and karma have distinct meanings in Brazil, as compared to those of orthodox Buddhism, the popular concepts are already there. In addition, a relationship to the ancestors, present in the majority of Japanese Buddhist movements in Brazil, presents a possibility of cultural acceptance in mainstream Brazilian religiosity, since ancestor worship was also common among the Indian and African peoples that formed the Brazilian nation, and played an important role in the formation and devotional practices of Umbanda[39]. The influence of Spiritism in Brazil, with its concepts of reincarnation and karma, indicates a possibility for the acceptance of some important Buddhist beliefs, not through their orthodox formulation in Buddhism but through a peculiar syncretic reappropiation. Conversely, "Asian" elements are present in Afro-Brazilian religions and New Age movements in Brazil, with a folk Brazilian meaning. In particular, there are already in many Umbanda centers an oriental line, with Hindu and occasionally Buddhist contents. In books produced by the Afro-Brazilian religions, it is not rare the presence of oriental and Buddhist elements[40].

In fact, even the media reports on the Buddhist boom in Brazil and the benefits of meditation also point out an instrumentalization and dilution of Buddhism[41]. In the folk

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[36] Cf. Veja, "A people that believes", (port. "*Um povo que acredita*").

[37] For an analysis of the process of internalization of the reincarnation concept in a Tibetan group in Brazil, see Usarski 2002c.

[38] Cf. Carvalho(1) 1992: 2.

[39] The worship of ancestors and nature spirits through magical and sacrificial practices were characteristics of the religious practices brought to Brazil by ethnic African slaves. In this sense, it is interesting to contrast the virtual disappearance of the African cults in Protestant America, as illustrated in Bastide 1971a: 152-169.

[40] Cf. Corrêa 1999. See also Ortiz 1978: 151ff for a former incorporation of Asian elements in Umbanda.

[41] Cf. Isto é, "The Brazil of Buddhas" (port. *"O Brasil dos Budas"*); Revista da Folha, "Cross-legged Faith" (port. *"Fé de pernas cruzadas"*); Isto é, "A Buddhism of Results" (port. *"Budismo de Resultados"*); Isto é, " Silence of the Mind", (port. *"Silêncio da Mente"*).

context, it is important to mention as qualitative data the popular view of Buddha, because of a statue found in many Umbanda places in Brazil as well as the beliefs associated to this statue. The image associated to this popular Buddha is of someone fat, smiling and seated. There is the idea that the statue brings luck and money and that placing a coin under the statue would bring fortune. According to popular belief, he must also always be facing the wall. This popular Buddha is Hotei (Ch'i Tz'u 916, also known as Pu-tai Master), a mythical Chinese monk and one of the seven Japanese gods of happiness[42]. The origin of this custom and this belief in Brazil still appear to be unknown, if it was brought by the Chinese or by the Japanese, as well as the reason why this statue became associated with Buddha in the popular imaginary for decades[43]. However, even though this popular image of Buddha is not a parameter for the study of Buddhism in Brazil, as a Buddhist cannot be defined as possessing this statue, it still shows, besides the limited rationalist and philological basis, different standards of assimilation, closer to Catholic worship and magical reasoning that are central in the history of religions in Brazil. Because of the peculiarities of Brazilian religiousness, Buddhist sympathizers, intellectual or popular, are potential mediators between ethnic religiousness and society in general, although sometimes the image of Buddhism is distorted or diluted, being adapted to the Brazilian religious world and to the role of religion in this social context.

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[42] For details on Hotei, in the Japanese context, see Reader and Tanabe 1998: 160-161.
[43] For considerations about this statuette, see also Nakamaki 2003: 101ff.

Chapter 2 - General View of Buddhism in Brazil

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, Brazil was introduced as a different receptive environment for Buddhism. The first aim of this chapter is to present quantitative data of Buddhism in Brazil, which will improve even more this perception of a different pattern. It is possible to obtain a panorama on Buddhists in Brazil through quantitative sources and estimates on the number of members of the same groups. This information will be summed up in the subsequent sections. The main source for these data is the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), which is complemented by some independent research and data given by the groups. Following the quantitative presentation, an analytical perspective of Far East Buddhism in Brazil will be proposed, which will structure the other chapters.

2. Quantitative Data on Buddhism in Brazil

2.1 Numerical Evolution

According to the IBGE census of the year 2000, 214,873 Brazilians declared themselves Buddhists. In spite of the low number, in comparison to the total Brazilian population - around 170 million – this number is higher, for example, than the declared Candomblé followers[44]. Regarding the so-called world religions, Buddhism is certainly the one that has the largest number of followers in Brazil, after Christianity. The number of Buddhists is, for example, fairly higher than the sum of declared Jews, Muslims and Hindus.

There are no reliable historical series on the number of Buddhists and the division among converts, immigrants and their descendants as well as the proportion of Buddhists in

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[44] In spite of that, it is always worth noting that there is a known problem regarding the quantitative data in Brazil. Even though it is a country with a Catholic majority, the religious behavior of the Brazilians shows a profound syncretism and a multiple religious harmony. The Brazilians' religious life is not characterized by faithfulness to a creed and, in general, it is very difficult and financially non-viable to analyse combinations and syncretic standards by quantitative research studies, even if there are data and qualitative research works that prove this situation.

several schools and geographical regions. The scarce existing data must be mentioned, having as a background different methodologies and categories, with punctual and non-continuous results, that have often to be complemented by data on the Asian immigration to Brazil and, at other times, analyzing the status of Eastern religions as a whole[45]. These data can be analyzed in the table below which sum up the data on Eastern religions and Buddhism recorded in the censuses realized in the last decades in Brazil.

	Buddhists(Yellow Color)	Buddhists (Total)	Followers of Eastern Religions
1950	152,572 (1)	152,572 (1)	152,572
1960	179,464 (2)	179,464 (2)	179,464
1970	-	-	-
1980	-	-	257,006
1991	89,971	236,405	368,578
2000	81,345	214,873	373,787

Table 1.1: Followers of Eastern religions and Buddhists according to color[46] from the IBGE censuses of 1950, 1960, 1980, 1991 e 2000.

(1), (2) Even though some NRMs were not identified in these censuses, historically they have always existed. Although, in the censuses of 1950 and 1960, the only Eastern religion reported was Buddhism. Since Buddhism had an insignificant penetration with Brazilians, it is supposed that the Buddhist were composed only for the Asian descendeants.

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[45] The category of Eastern religions of the IBGE excludes Islamism and Hinduism and they could be better called by the generic label of "religions of the Far East". When data on Buddhism were not computed, this category was used as an indicator of historical evolution.

[46] IBGE adopts, as a criteria for ethnicity, a variable denominated "color", created by self-identification. Speaking in a simplified way, "white" is the color of European descendants with no mixed blood, "black" is referred to African descendants without mixed blood, "mulatto" is the equivalent of mestizos between whites and blacks and "yellow" for Asians and descendants. As this variable is pointed out by self-identification, the proportion between the different values varies in accordance with movements of renewal and ethnic affirmation.
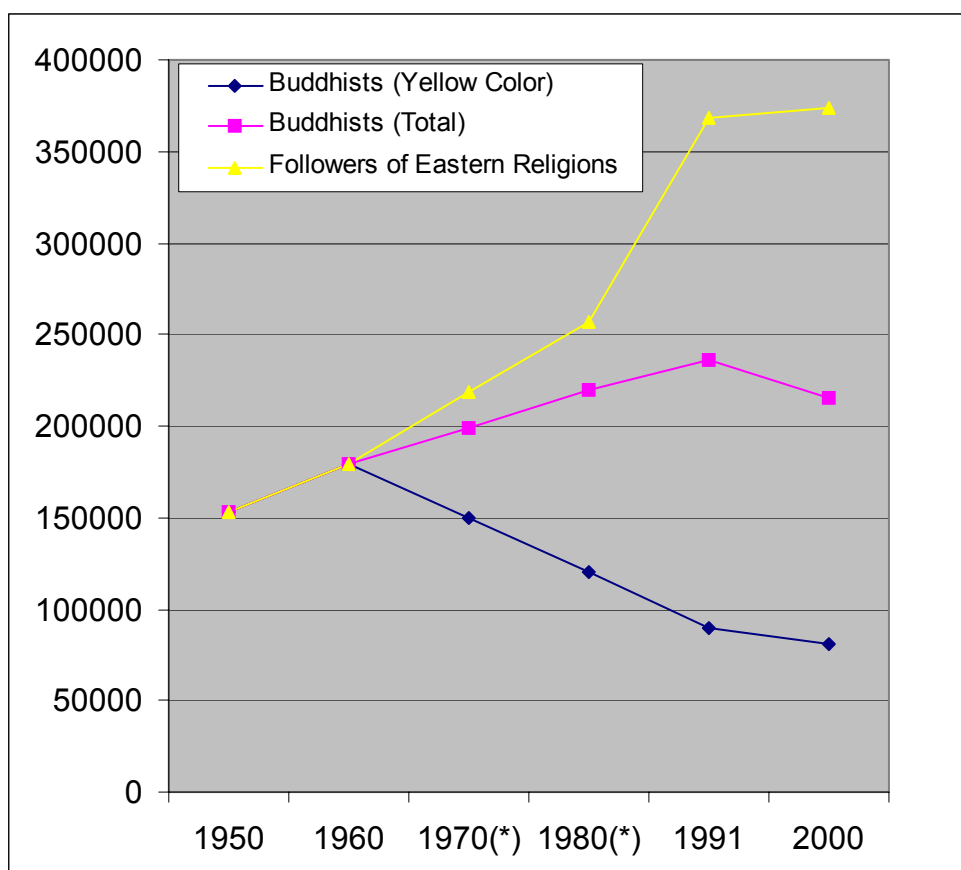
(*) Because of lack of data, increase or decrease considering a linear function.

Chart 1.1: Evolution of Buddhists of yellow color, total Buddhists and followers of Eastern religions. Source: IBGE Censuses.

Usually, it can be said that Eastern religions - essentially new Japanese religions - registered in the 1980s a boom among Brazilians with no Asian ancestry. A decline in Buddhism is accompanied by a decrease of Buddhists, not only in the ethnic community but also among the converts. The absolute number of Buddhists declined in the last decade, mainly because of the passing of generations and subsequent death of the generation of immigrants who came to Brazil. Moreover, it is also probable that the expansion of neo-Pentecostal groups in the 1990s also attracted some Buddhists from groups as Sôka Gakkai.

2.2 Ethnicity, Religions and Buddhism

In the corresponding table and chart that follow, the relative differences between the national average and by the yellow color for religion, were computed as a way to evaluate the influence of the ethnicity on the religion practiced (the absolute values according to religion and color can be consulted in IBGE tables).

Religion	Total	Yellow Color	Difference
Roman Apostolic Catholics	73.57%	63.90%	9.67%
Evangelicals of missions	4.09%	2.96%	1.13%
Evangelicals of pentecostal roots	10.37%	4.25%	6.12%
Spiritist	1.33%	1.54%	-0.21%
Umbanda	0.23%	0.10%	0.13%
Candomblé	0.08%	0.04%	0.03%
Buddhism	0.13%	10.68%	-10.55%
Other Eastern religions	0.00%	0.29%	-0.28%
New Eastern religions	0.09%	2.85%	-2.76%
No religion	7.35%	10.47%	-3.12%
Others	2.76%	2.92%	-0.16%

Table 1.2: Computed proportion among the religions according to the Brazilian national average and the yellow color from the IBGE data for the year 2000.
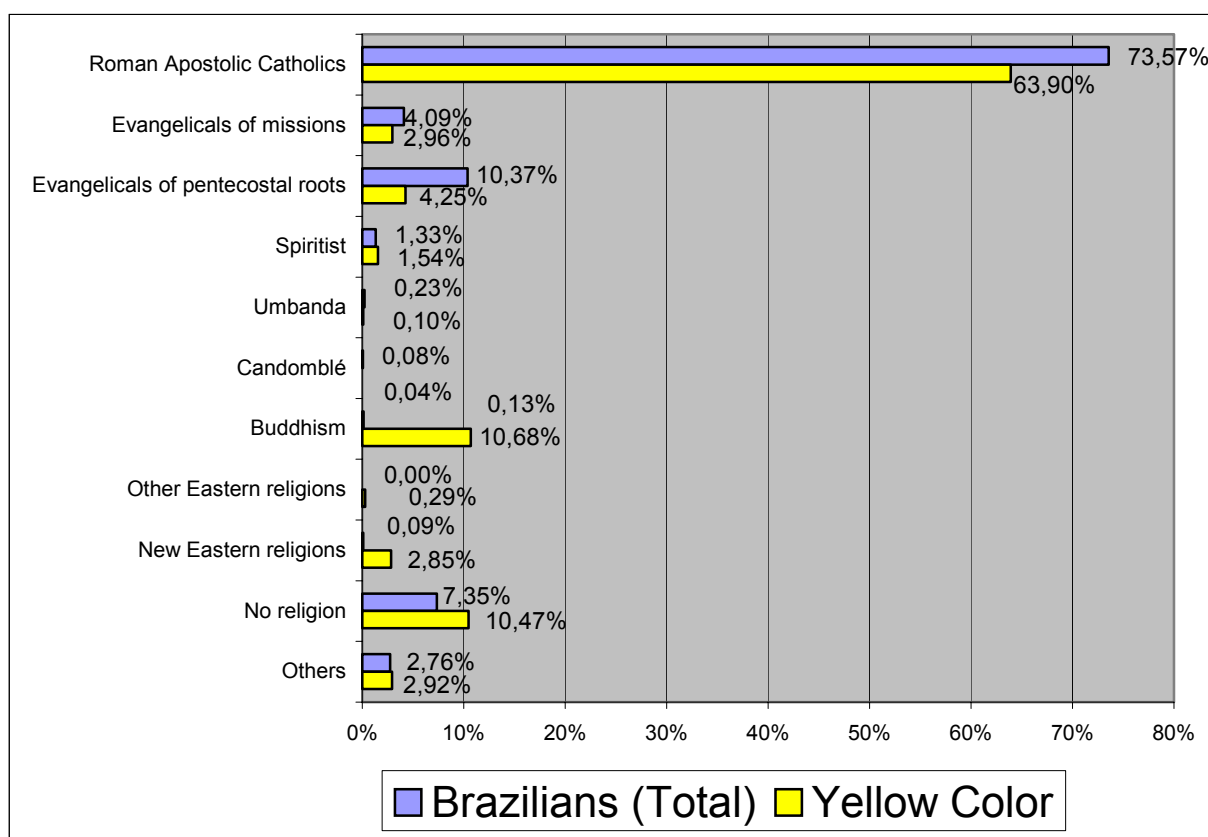
Chart 1.2: Proportion of religions between Brazilians and those of yellow color according to the IBGE census for 2000.

The number of Buddhists among the yellow color is rather low compared to the proportional size of other religions, which shows a significant evasion. In fact, according to the Japanese Consulate, the Nippo-Brazilian community is currently around 1.5 million people, the largest concentration of Japanese and descendants out of the Japanese archipelago. The Chinese community is estimated at 190,000 and the Korean community at 80,000[47]. In this sense, the number of Buddhists of yellow color - 81,345 according to the IBGE census of the year 2000 - represents a fairly advanced religious assimilation of Asians and descendants. However, in the chapters that follow, this quantitative data will be relative to the qualitative data observed.

The fact is that generally most Brazilian Buddhists are already comprised of Brazilians with no Asian ancestry. Although, in spite of the decline of ethnic Buddhism, the proportion

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[47] According to estimates of the Immigrant's Memorial in São Paulo, obtained through the Internet at http://www.memorialdoimigrante.sp.gov.br, acessed on 05.05.2003.

of Buddhists with Asian ancestors is still significant in some groups, reaching more than 90% in some cases. In general terms, the ethnic division between Buddhists is shown in the chart that follows.

Buddhism and Ethnicity in Brazil (2000)

Legend: White, Black, Yellow, Mulatto, Indigenous, Not Declared

0,4%
0,2%
17,4%
38,7%
37,9%
5,4%
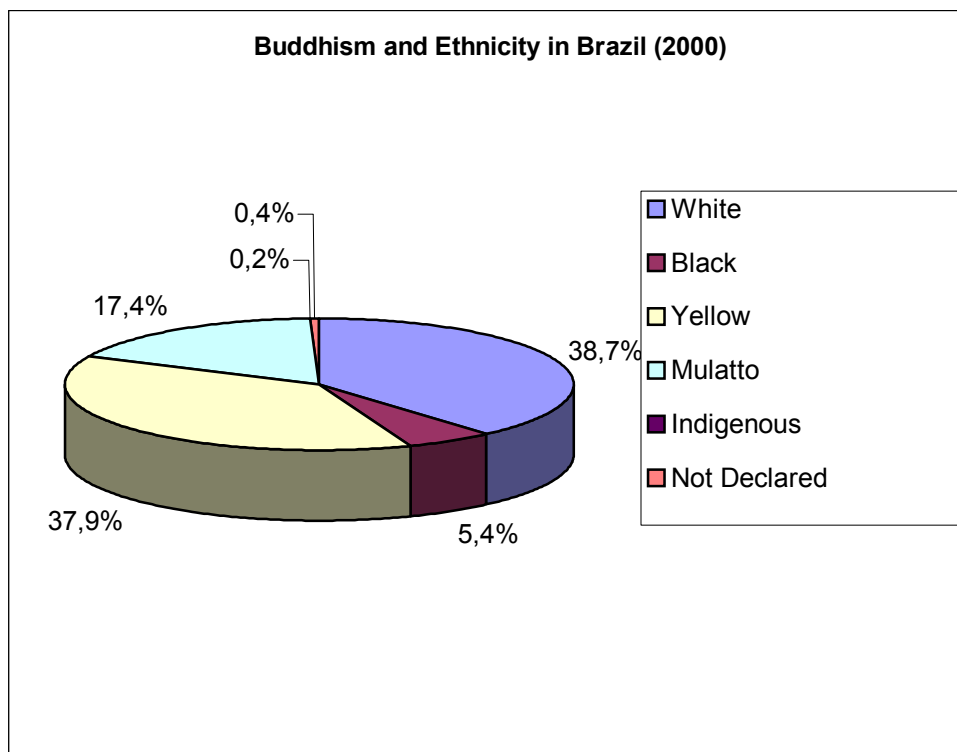
Chart 1.3: Ethnic division of Buddhism in Brazil. Source: IBGE Census of the year 2000.

The ethnic proportion appears to have remained stable. In the last decade, considering IBGE data for 1991, approximately 38% of Buddhists were considered to be of yellow color.

2.3 Geographical Distribution

The geographical distribution of Buddhists in Brazil is clearly influenced by the areas where the Japanese immigration arrived. These are the basis for expansion of temples and new Japanese religions between the non-descendants of Asians. This can be verified when the table that follows is correlated with the fact that Japanese immigration concentrated in São Paulo - the Capital and the central and western regions of the State - in addition to also having a significant presence in the North of Paraná. Added to this data, it can be observed that a number of Brazilian Buddhists is based in Rio de Janeiro.

State and Number of Buddhists in 1991	
Rondônia	430
Acre	-
Amazonas	1,408
Roraima	386
Pará	4,431
Amapá	145
Tocantins	20
Maranhão	542
Piauí	127
Ceará	671
Rio Grande do Norte	345
Paraíba	217
Pernambuco	986
Alagoas	153
Sergipe	68
Bahia	2,240
Minas Gerais	5,924
Espírito Santo	758
Rio de Janeiro	22,288
São Paulo	164,485
Paraná	17,303
Santa Catarina	1,058
Rio Grande do Sul	2,089
Mato Grosso do Sul	5,089
Mato Grosso	1,487
Goiás	870
Distrito Federal	2,885
Total in Brazil	236,405

Table 1.3 Geographical Distribution of Buddhists in 1991. Source: IBGE Census 1991.
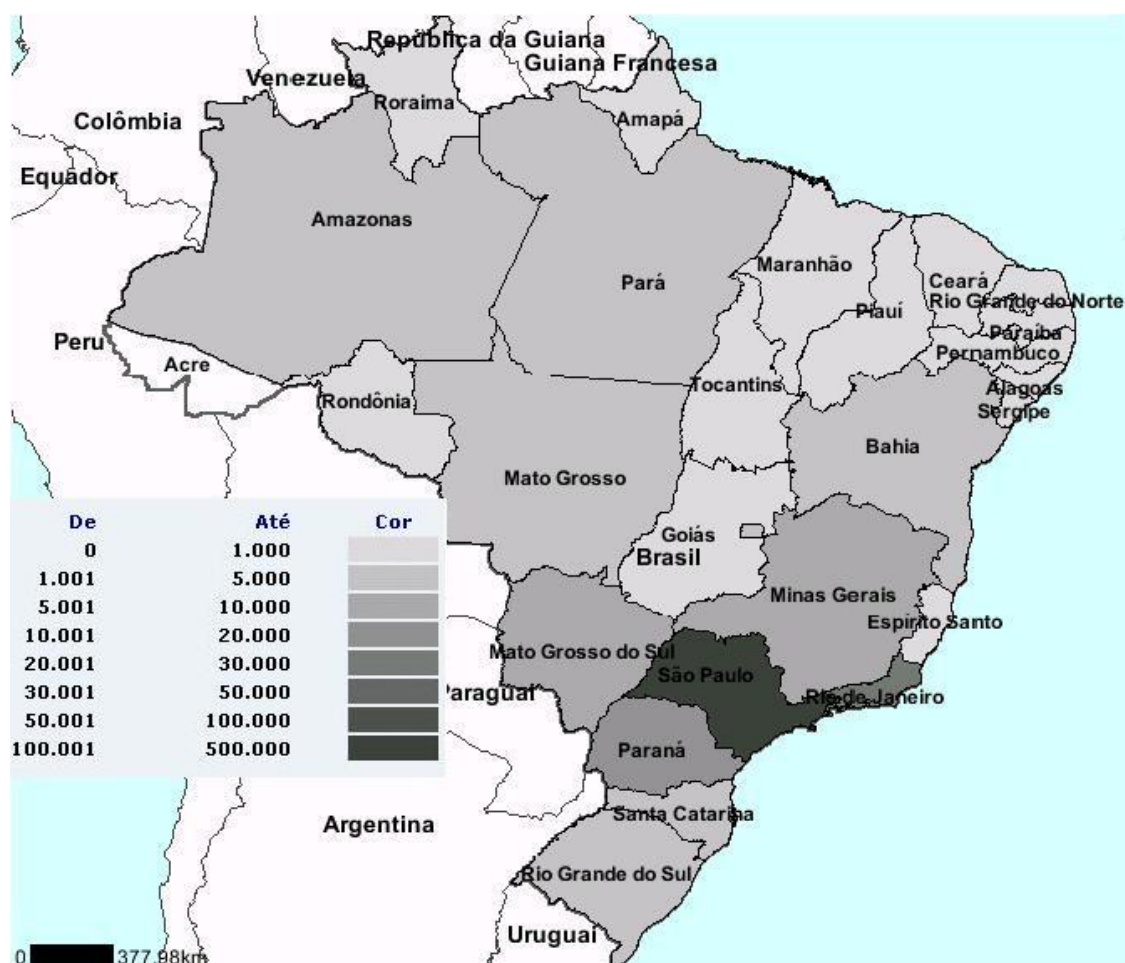
Map 1.1 Geographical Distribution Map of Buddhists in 1991. Source: IBGE Census 1991.

In the map that follows, data related to Eastern religions in the IBGE geographic mesoregions were used, so as to illustrate graphically, with more precision, the geographical distribution of Eastern religion followers in Brazil. In this sense, the Eastern religions and Buddhism can be seen as an urban phenomenon, located mainly in the southeastern region.
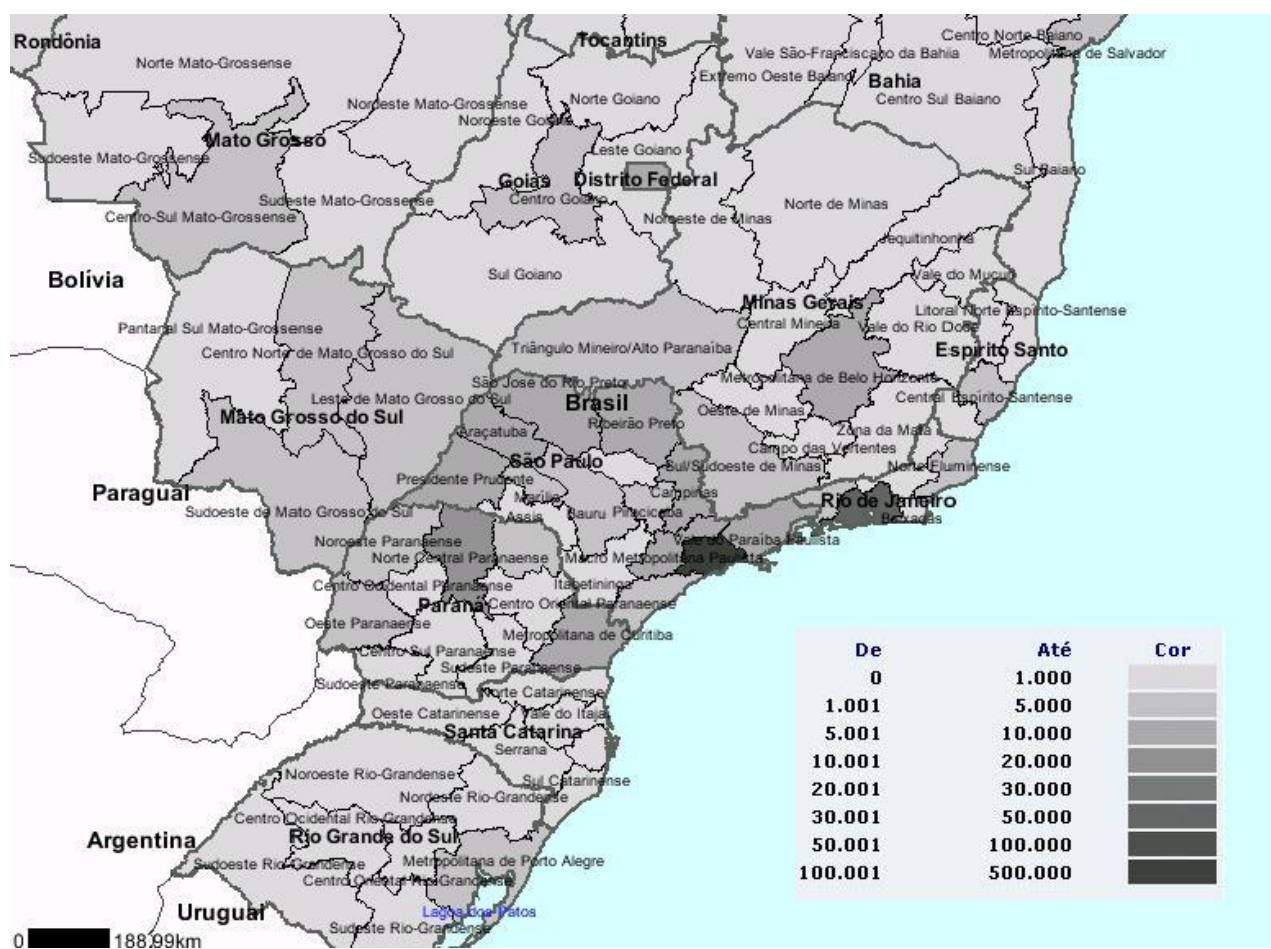
Map 1.2 Geographical Distribution Map of the Eastern Religion Followers in 1991 according to geographical mesoregion. Source: IBGE Census 1991.

3. Statistic Data on Buddhist Institutions

3.1 Institutions according to Type of Buddhism

Based on the data recorded in a database of all of the addresses of Buddhist institutions in Brazil (September 24, 2003 version), including affiliates and temples or associated groups, it was possible to make a projection of the different types of Buddhist practices shown in the table below. A large number of Japanese ethnic Buddhism institutions belong to the Orders of Jôdo Shinshû (Higashi Hogwanji and Nishi Hogwanji), which was the form of Buddhism practiced by most Japanese immigrants, mainly farmers. Firstly, however, there are new movements with roots in Nichiren Buddhism - mainly Sôka Gakkai, Honmon Butsuryûshû and Reyûkai. These data show that the percentage of division among the doctrinal types of Buddhism in Brazil are very different from the American and European contexts, considering

that not only Japanese Buddhism seems to define quantitatively the number of institutions, but also several new Japanese religions reach a success in Brazil that is not repeated in any other Western country.

Type	Quantity
NRM (Nichiren branch)	106
Jodo Shinshû	77
Vajrayana	48
Sôtô Zen	31
Cha'n/Chinese Pure Land	11
Ecumenic	9
Theravada	5
Shingon	5
Jodoshû	3
Tendai	2
Korean	2
Nichirenshû	1
Other	9
Total	309

Table 1.4: Number of institutions according to type of Buddhism, including affiliates and associated groups.
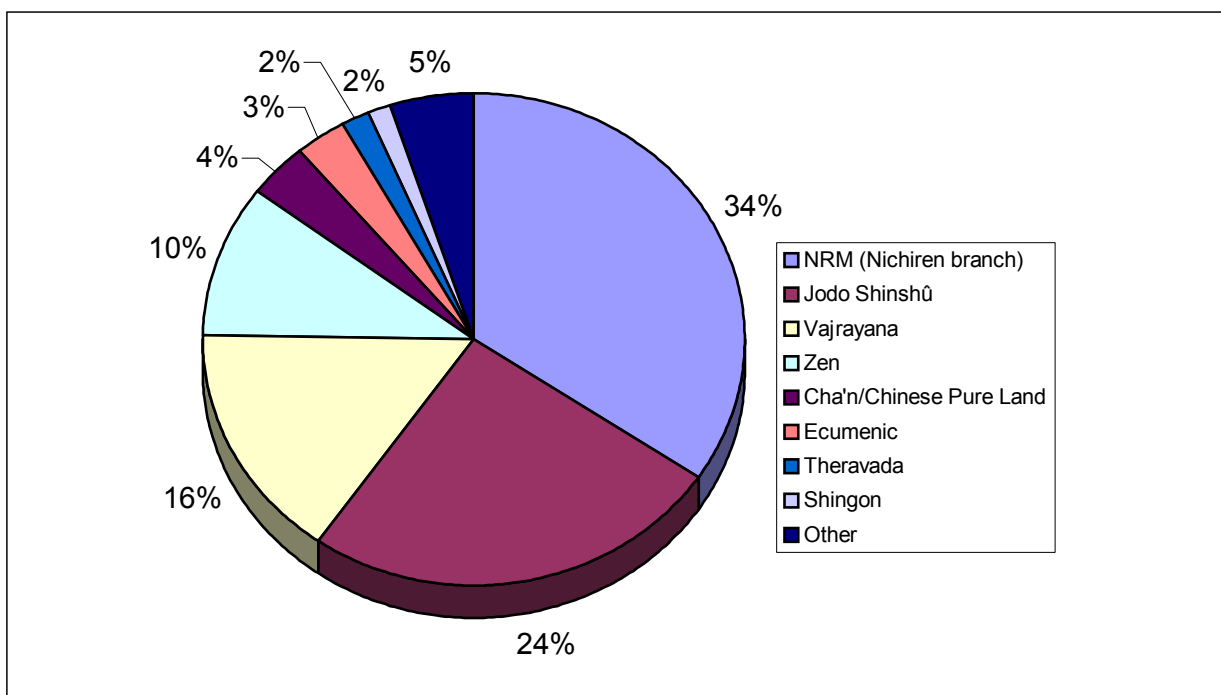
Chart 1.4: Percentage of institutions according to type of Buddhism, including affiliates and associated groups.

3.2 Geographical Distribution of Institutions

The geographical distribution of institutions registered in the database reflects the geographical distribution of Buddhists according to the IBGE. The final results are shown in the tables and chart below.

State	Quantity
São Paulo	156
Rio de Janeiro	35
Paraná	32
Rio Grande do Sul	16
Minas Gerais	12
Distrito Federal	8
Santa Catarina	7
Mato Grosso do Sul	5
Pernambuco	4

Mato Grosso	4
Goiás	4
Ceará	4
Bahia	4
Amazonas	4
Paraíba	3
Piauí	2
Alagoas	2
Espírito Santo	2
Pará	2
Sergipe	1
Maranhão	1
Roraima	1

Table 1.5: Absolute number of institutions according to each State, including affiliates and associated groups.
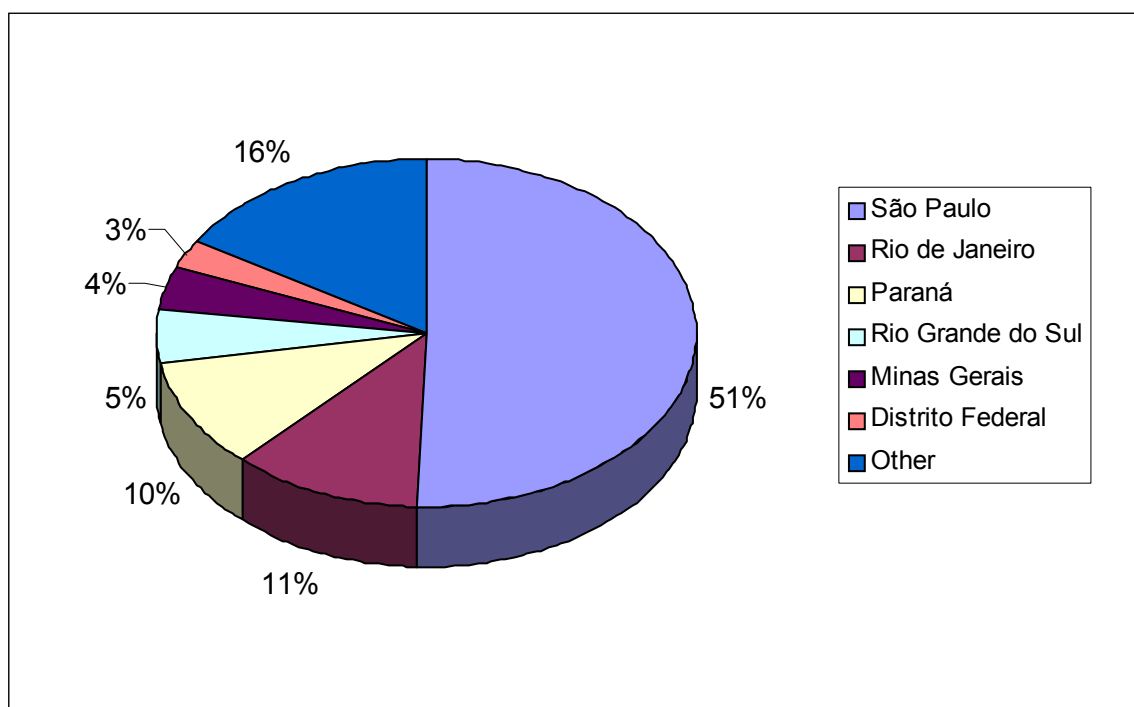
Chart 1.5: Percentage of institutions according to each State, including affiliates and associated groups.

From the results of the database, it is possible to identify different trends of Buddhist practice depending on the Brazilian geographical region. A distribution according to the type of Buddhism in São Paulo (Chart 1.6) follows the national average trend, as São Paulo houses more than half of Buddhist institutions. In this sense, Buddhist environment in São Paulo is characterized quantitatively by the new religions movements with roots in Nichiren Buddhism, and by the presence of the ethnic Buddhism from the Pure Land schools. Qualitatively, there is a great diversity in São Paulo, as the city is the headquarters of practically all Japanese and Chinese Buddhist groups. In Rio de Janeiro, there is a stronger trend of Brazilian Buddhists with no Asian ancestry, which can be verified in Chart 1.7 below. Moreover, in Rio de Janeiro, there is a stronger tendency for an ecumenical Buddhism and a larger eclecticism with other Eastern religions, also noticed in the field work that was done. In Paraná (Chart 1.8), because of the Japanese immigration influence, the number of Jôdo Shinshû institutions comes in first place. In Rio Grande do Sul (Chart 1.9), there is a larger presence of Zen groups and Tibetan Buddhism, having, in this quantitative aspect, a trend of Western converts similar to what happened in Europe. However, in spite of having centers associated with important Brazilian Zen personalities like Master Tokuda and Master Moryama and having the important Chagdud Gorpa Khadro Ling monastery, located in Três Coroas, its participation in the national average is rather low (around 5% of the institutions and 1% of Buddhists in Brazil).
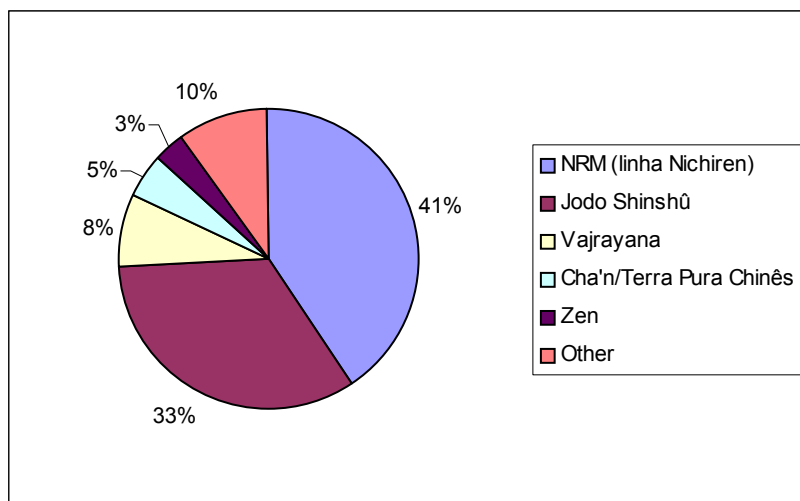
Chart 1.6: Percentage of institutions in São Paulo according to type of Buddhism, including affiliates and associated groups.
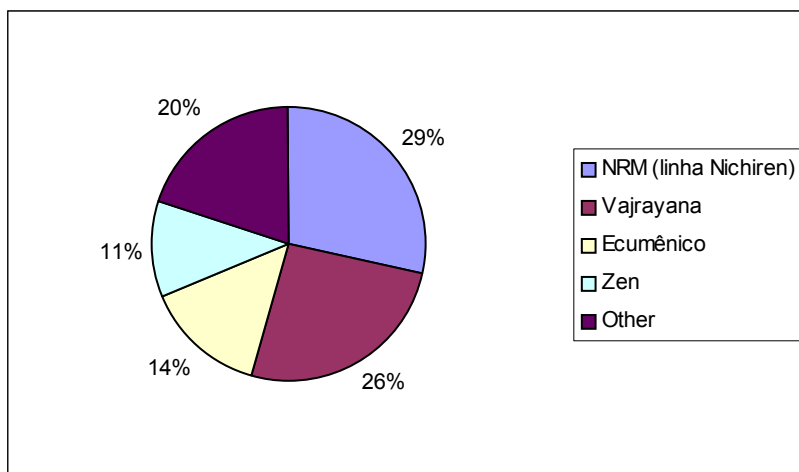
Chart 1.7: Percentage of institutions in Rio de Janeiro according to type of Buddhism, including affiliates and associated groups.
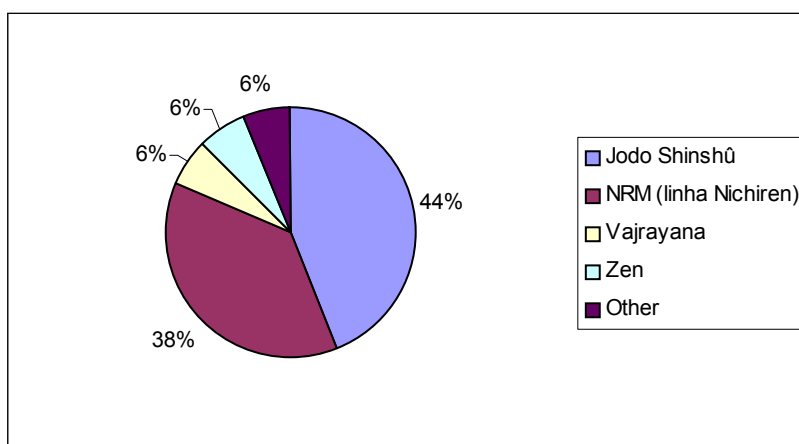
Chart 1.8: Percentage of institutions in Paraná according to type of Buddhism, including affiliates and associated groups.
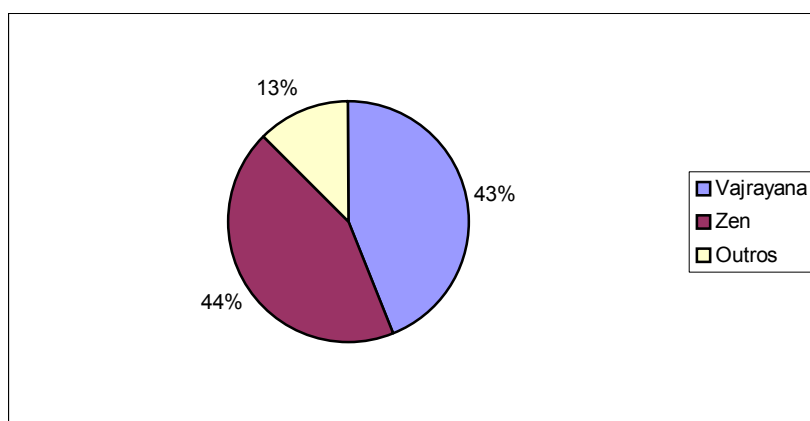
Chart 1.9: Percentage of institutions in Rio Grande do Sul according to type of Buddhism, including affiliates and associated groups.

3.3 Estimates on the Size of Institutions

Table 1.6, which is seen below, shows the approximate number of affiliates and associated groups according to main institution. According to what was previously stated, these quantitative results reflect the role that new Buddhist religious movements have in the definition of the profile of the converts to Buddhism, mainly Sôka Gakkai. Although there are few Zen centers that are more or less independent, the total number of followers or sympathizers of these centers is rather low in comparison to the total number and there is still a rather low number of active people in each center. In the case of ethnic Buddhism, Honpa Hogwanji has the greatest participation, although Nambei Hogwanji also has a significant number of temples.

Group	Affiliates or Associated Groups
Sôka Gakkai	81
Honpa Honganji (Jôdo Shinshû)	50
Nambei Honganji (Jôdo Shinshû)	26
Honmon Butsuryûshû	11
Reyûkai	8
Zen (Tokuda Sensei)	8
Fo Guang Shan	4
Sôtô Zenshû	4
Koyasan Shingonshû	4
Nichiren Shoshû Brasil	4
Jodoshû	3
Risshô Kôseikai	3
Zen (Moryama Sensei)	3
Templo Quan Inn	2
Templo Amitabha	2
Zen (Coen Sensei)	2

Table 1.6: Number of affiliates or associated groups in Far East Buddhism in Brazil.

The results of the registered institutions are proportional to the number of followers given by the largest institutions (see Table 1.7 below). An exception is Reyûkai that estimates having around 112,000 associates, but only eight locations for collective practice. This can be explained by the fact that Reyûkai is based on meetings of followers and worship services at home, having few facilities for their own community meetings. On the other hand, it is known that the numbers, estimated by the same religious groups have always a tendency of being exaggerated and even consider an informal association in their figures. In these figures, a multiple religious harmony must also be considered; that makes the sum of the followers lower than the criteria of exclusive belonging used in the IBGE numbers.

Group	Estimates on Members or Associates
Sôka Gakkai	120,000 people
Reyûkai	112,000 people
Honpa Hongwanji (Jodo Shinshû)	10,000 families (a)
Nambei Hongwanji (Jodo Shinshû)	8,000 families (a)
Honmon Butsuryushû	10,000 people
Sôtô Zenshû	10,000 people
Jodoshû	1,000 families (a)
Risshô Kôseikai	700 people
Fo Guang Shan	500 people

(a) Like in Japan, the practice of nikkei traditional temples in Brazil is oriented towards the family, the same occurs in the statistics provided by some temples. The association to the temple is considered according to the family and not according to the individual.

Table 1.7: Number of estimated followers in the largest groups of Far East Buddhism in Brazil. Source: Estimates provided by the groups.

4. Analytical View on East Asian Buddhism in Brazil

An analytical division of Buddhists in Brazil will be proposed in this section. This systematization will be used as a guide in the following chapters and also as a presentation of the different elements of the Far East Buddhism in Brazil, in comparison to the theories developed in the USA and Europe.

There are already some classifications in relation to Japanese religions in Brazil. Nirochika Nakamaki, in an analogy of Japanese religions with illnesses, classifies Japanese religions as hereditary, restricted to the Japanese community, and epidemical, that expand among the non-descendants[48]. He places mainly Shintoism and Schools of the Pure Land Buddhism in the category of hereditary religions. Sôka Gakkai and Seicho no Ie, are especially classified in Brazil as religions with epidemical characteristics. In a similar way, Peter Clarke divides Japanese religions from criteria that are inherent to the New Religions. Even in the study of Buddhist traditional trends, there is a comparison to the New Religions in Clarke's writings[49]. With another theoretical orientation, Frank Usarski has proposed an analytical classification that identifies different currents of Buddhism in Brazil[50]. In this perspective, there are three waves of Buddhists in Brazil, being the first one composed of Asian immigrants. The second branch is erudite, individual and universalist. The third wave is globalized, comprised of Western Zen, Sôka Gakkai and Tibetan Buddhism.

The focus that I intend to point out is the motivation for conversion and the religious practice performed, pinpointing the different ethnic relationships in Brazilian society and the influence of Brazilian religions in the processes of adaptation. *Ethnic Buddhism* is a category that appears in most studies of Buddhism in Western countries; it is also adopted in the analysis of nikkei (Japanese descendants) and in the recent Korean and Chinese communities Diasporas. With the immigration, arises the question of the definition of ethnic identity in an unknown cultural context, and the relation of this identity with the religious tradition of the immigrants. In the immigrants' and descendants' cases, there are no conversions and the religious practices are motivated by an ethnic attachment. In the case of nikkei, the worship of ancestors also involves an ethnic and familiar identity, which will be further analyzed. There are few reasons, from the ethnic group's point of view, for a general expansion of its beliefs, being religion a more common characteristic for the identity of the group. On the other hand, the social relations and the need for acceptance in the local culture have a crucial importance for the new generations, as well as an imposing adaptation process for the religious practice.

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[48] Cf. Nakamaki 2003: 106. He uses this analogy not with the purpose of disdaining Japanese religions, but as a source for identifying patterns of transmission.
[49] Cf. Clarke 1994, Clarke 2000.
[50] Cf. Usarski 2002a: 12, Usarski 2002b: 164.

Following Mullins's model, ethnic Buddhism in Brazil faces a dilemma of a new social meaning or extinction, as a result of the progressive cultural integration of descendants and the disappearance of the pioneer immigrants. This situation occurs in almost all nikkei ethnic temples and has already begun within the Korean and Chinese Buddhism. In the nikkei's case, an ethnic identity can be verified even through generations; the social strategy of survival of many temples is to make adaptations aiming mainly the descendants. This strategy presumes that an ethnic religiousness can be simultaneous to a linguistic and cultural adaptation. The correspondent pattern will be explained using a concept of ethnicity regardless of the cultural preservation and centered on the dynamic character of social interaction, as proposed by the anthropologist Fredrik Barth. In comparison to the Buddhism in the USA and Europe and with a more global Buddhism in general, ethnic Buddhism in Brazil reflects a different social interaction between the Asian immigrants and the general society. The existing social problems in a country like Brazil result in different relations between the ethnic community and the Brazilian society.

In relation to the converts in Brazil, I think that it is essential a division between an *intellectualized Buddhism* and a *karmic Buddhism*[51]. The intellectualized Buddhism will be discussed through transplantation models[52], the karmic Buddhism will be analyzed in the context of New Religious Movements (NRMs) and also the interaction of the Japanese folk religion, a decisive influence in the emergence of Japanese NRMs, with the magical and popular religions in Brazil. In the intellectualized Buddhism, the motivation of conversion or

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[51] One related division can be found in Spiro 1982: 11-14, used in the organization of his book on the Burmese Theravada Buddhism. As Spiro writes, "Although fundamentally a salvation religion, even normative Buddhism is not disinterested in man's fate in this world. Hence, in addition to two types of soteriological Buddhism, we may distinguish still a third type of Buddhism, one which is concerned with man's wordly welfare: the curing of illness, protection from demons, the prevention of droughts, and so on. This being so, Buddhism is best viewed as comprising not one, but three separate if interlocking systems: two soteriological systems (one normative and one nonnormative) and one nonsoteriological system. Since the latter is primarily concerned with protection from danger, I shall call it *apotropaic* Buddhism. The two soteriological systems may be called *nibbanic* and *kammatic* Buddhism, respectively." (Spiro 1982: 12). As I will argue through this study, this ideal division presents some similarities with the Brazilian setting. In the convert Buddhism, the *nibbanic* Buddhism is more related with an intellectualized transmission. The *kammatic* and *apotropaic* Buddhism are often connected to the search of worldly results and strong associated in Brazil. They are not clearly distinguishable in Brazil. Also related, using the theoretical approach of Stark and Bainbridge, Hubert Seiwert emphasizes a distinction between religious and mundane rewards in his analysis of heterodox religious movements in China (cf. Seiwert 2003: 165ff).

[52] Cf. Pye 1969 and Baumann 1994.

practice is a spiritual improvement and the attainment of enlightenment. This objective is frequently motivated by meditation, reading and courses, configuring a more intellectualized environment. With the present process of globalization, a frequent motivation is also the cultural interest for the exotic and an attraction to an esoteric status. On the other hand, in the karmic Buddhism the reason for practice or conversion is the solution to health problems, financial difficulties or family conflict. These two specific motivations, one intellectualized and the other worldly problems oriented, generate different practices and ways of transmission. In the intellectualized Buddhism, the religious practice is often developed through an individual search or a private relation with a master. In the karmic Buddhism, the practice is frequently constituted by sutra chanting and even ancestors' worship, in order to relieve karmic effects. Furthermore, in the karmic Buddhism, there is an active proselytizing in the Nichiren Buddhism and an emphasis on the realization of rituals frequently modified by Brazilian influences, as seen in Shingon and Tendai Buddhism. In this branch, the most important doctrinal concept is the karma, individual or related to ancestors, which is the reason for existing problems.

The influence of the Brazilian religiousness can be identified in the intellectualized Buddhism, whilst in the karmic Buddhism a more significant influence arises through factors inexistent in the USA or Europe. In the conversions or participation of Brazilians in the Nichiren and Esoteric Buddhism, it is possible to find more popular characteristics, originated from the Brazilian folk religion and magical thinking, which in some cases contribute to a religious syncretism present in the history and individual expression of the Brazilian religiousness.

The division between an intellectualized Buddhism and karmic Buddhism proposed in this study is a combination of already existing perspectives and supported by the quantitative data collected. Although the focus is the Brazilian case, the perspective tries to be as general as possible for Western countries, using references from the Buddhist practice in many contexts. In contrast to the models that offered a classification based on the way of transmission, here the motivation and the religious practice and concept are the most important aspects. In this case, these factors determine a subsequent way of transmission and not the contrary, since the effort of proselytizing and the rituals practiced make sense only in a religious context that can give a motivational meaning to this activity.

In the following chapters, I describe in detail these tipology of Buddhism in Brazil. Whenever relevant, a comparison with the USA and Europe will be done, characterizing an approach centered on differences instead of similarities.

Chapter 3 - The Nikkei Ethnic Buddhism in Brazil

1. Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to present Japanese immigration to Brazil and the associated institutionalization process of Buddhist communities. For this description, it is first important to define ethnicity, which will be developed in its use as social interaction. Some of the aims of this ethnicity concept are to point out the interaction strategies from a group with origin in immigration by accompanying the dynamic character of these transformations and boundaries. Accordingly, it will be able to study the Japanese community and its descendants in Brazil as an independent ethnic group that developed boundaries not only with Brazilians but also with the Japanese thereby diminishing the boundaries according to context and social convenience. The use of multiple identities can better be described as a strategy of adaptation and accommodation, which has resulted in a mixed identity rather than a true absence of boundaries.

For an analysis of the differentiation of nikkei concerning the Japanese and Brazilians, it will described the history of social interaction between the immigrants and the majority of Brazilian society. Due to the quick and profound transformations that Japan experienced after the Second World War, the cultural references for the immigrants were progressively from a Japan that did not exist anymore. As a result, the history of their descendants in Brazil established an ethnic identity that existed between a constructed vision of Japan and the necessary assimilation into Brazilian society. This history can be located inside the religious practices that developed, which show transformation within the ethnic environment. Subsequently, current Buddhist practices from nikkei will be described, and it will be analyzed the survival dilemmas and the simultaneous practice with other religions.

2. Ethnicity as Social Interaction

In the USA, mainly after the abandonment of assimilation theories, ethnicity has been constantly utilized to study the immigrant communities and their descendants. As a matter of fact, empirical research has shown a growing conscience of ethnic identity associated with the reaffirmation policy for minorities[53]. Even if the term immigrant cannot be attributed to descendants, there is a religiosity derived from experience as ethnic community that can be prolonged by diverse generations and can be labeled as *ethnic*. In order to develop this assertion and to justify the concept of an ethnic religion even for the descendants, it is necessary to specify the concept of ethnicity used in this dissertation, which is derived from the proposals found in the work of Fredrik Barth[54]. From Barth and anthropologists that have followed in his theoretical line, arose a more dynamic concept of ethnicity that could have more explanatory value and reflect better the boundaries of the ethnic group.

Briefly, in this perspective ethnicity is conceived of as a form of social interaction. Instead of putting emphasis on aspects of race or culture in the ethnic identification of groups, ethnicity is stated as a form of interaction and social organization grounded in the differentiation between those who belong to the group and others. Traditionally an ethnic group had its formation justified to a supposed isolation, which contributed to cultural, racial and linguistic differences[55]. Although important, these factors are not the only criteria for ethnic identification, particularly in contemporary societies. Considered as social interaction, even if these cited differences continue to be important elements for the definition of an ethnic group, the more important factor is self-definition as a differentiated social unit with a distinct criterion for belonging. The process of identity formation, in this sense, occurs only in dynamic contact with the majority society. In this approach, the relational and dynamic character of ethnic identity is emphasized more, given that only through this communication a pattern of comparison and self-differentiation is recognized. Because the identity of the ethnic group is changing accordingly and through the contact established, redefinitions and

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[53] Cf. Poutignat 1997: 65-84.
[54] A fundamental work for this conception of ethnicity is Barth 1997 [1969].
[55] Cf. Barth 1997 [1969]: 189-190.

transformations in group boundaries arise. In the case of ethnic groups resulting from immigration, ethnic identity is transformed not only through the changes in the host society, but also due to new generations of descendants that are normally more acculturated. Moreover, the original society of immigrants also changes, and often the preserved customs in the Diaspora communities are only history in their original context.

Perhaps the most important outcome of this view is that the ethnic group can maintain boundaries even if many cultural aspects and the original language are abandoned. Despite the attempt at cultural and linguistic preservation within ethnic groups, an approach centered on interaction emphasizes the boundaries built between the group and the outside world. This ethnic group practice can be described as a "game with other rules", with different ethical standards, behavior and communication patterns, absorbed through the experience of an ethnic identity. Because this "internal game" is transformed throughout generations, the identity of the ethnic group does not represent a barrier for the incorporation of elements from the majority society. Moreover, a common phenomenon is the pragmatic and strategic use of multiple identities, mainly in the case of descendants.

From the viewpoint of Religious Studies, it is important to develop what an ethnic religiosity means. As Poutignat and Streiff-Fenart emphasized, one form of ethnic identity construction occurs through a fictitious kinship, often associated with myths of a common origin[56]. Group unity is established in an immemorial time and the preservation of ethnic identity is achieved through religious socialization. This differentiated group identity is constantly revitalized through rituals and rite of passage ceremonies, often understood as a social obligation by the follower. Similarly, an analytical perspective for the comprehension of ethnic religiosity is given in the identity theory developed by Mol[57]. This approach considers identity as the effort to preserve existence, something that occurs as much in individuals as in groups, which is an important characteristic for biological and social organizations. Religion is therefore studied as the sacralization of identity or a system of meaning and an ethnic religion is cultivated as a preservation of differentiated group unity.

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[56] Cf. Pontignat and Streiff-Fenart 1997: 160-166.
[57] Cf. Mol 1979.

This characteristic limits the possibility of conversion and the popularization of religious doctrine outside the group. Although dynamic and in a constant process of social redefinition in contemporary societies, an ethnic religion therefore can be understood as the sacralization of symbols that resulted in this differentiated identification. These myths and rites are preserved for the next generation in order to remember a common origin. In these analytical perspectives, the history of an immigrant religious group is determined by the boundaries of the ethnic group, depending on the social interaction and socialization of the new generations. For outsiders who try to belong to the religious group, behavior and understanding compatible with the ethnic group are frequently necessary, considering that for the majority of the followers the religious and ethnic elements are not differentiated.

3. Particular Aspects of Japanese Buddhism

In order to describe the ethnic view of religion and its influence in nikkei Buddhism in Brazil, it is important to introduce the general relationship between ethnicity and religion in traditional Japanese Buddhism. Despite the fact that Buddhism is frequently described as one of the universal religions, along with Christianity and Islam, it is possible to point to ethnic particularities in the Japanese case, through its association with Shinto and the ancestor's cult.

The Japanese never incorporated the Buddhist doctrines of reincarnation and suffering that are present in the oldest Buddhist scriptures and that are the starting point for many Buddhists. Instead of Shakyamuni Buddha, the Japanese patriarchs are generally the figures with more reference and devotion in Buddhist schools. With respect to religious practice, Buddhism in Japan is strongly associated with the ancestor's cult. Although traditional Japanese schools relate the Chinese sutra *Urabon* as a scripture justification, in other Asian countries outside Japan ancestors worship is rarely related and practiced with Buddhism, which seems to be a more Confucian emphasis in the Japanese appropriation[58]. As a practical result, the presence of ancestor's cult in Japanese Buddhism is always an element that can be

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[58] The ancestors worship is registered since the beginning of Chinese civilization, having many common characteristics with its practice in Japan (cf. Ching 1993: 17ff). In the case of China it is directly associated with the Confucian filial piety, having declined after the Communist Revolution. In Japan, on the other hand, an institutionalization of the ancestors worship occurred through Buddhism. In Japan it is practiced not only in traditional Buddhism but is also an important characteristic (albeit transformed) of new religious movements as Reyûkai, Risshô Kôseikai, Shinnyo-En and Agonshû.

used as an ethnic identification through the appreciation of origin and family[59]. Combined with the ancestor's cult, it is also possible to identify a popular religiosity within Japanese Buddhism through the influence of Shinto elements. As Michael Pye states, there is a primal religion, which is very difficult to describe, associated with ethnocentric tendencies and constructed with multiple references[60]. As will be further developed, the concept of ethnicity based on this primal religion with folk and mixed patterns can be analytically helpful also for the religiosity of the subsequent generations of nikkei in Brazil.

First, it is useful to describe the general situation of the Japanese context. In the ritual division performed with Shinto, Japanese Buddhism mainly consists of funeral ceremonies, given that death is considered a taboo in the traditional and contemporary Shinto. Consequently, most of the Japanese have Buddhist funerals, which are frequently understood as guides after death. The process is finalized 49 days after death, with the entrance of the deceased spirit into the world of ancestors. A related belief is that the ancestor's spirit stays 49 days in an intermediate state of nirvana, or rebirth in other world, or even the continuity on earth as a ghost without enlightenment. Liberation is improved with the correct rites after the ancestor has died, while negligent religious conduct by the descendants can bring unwanted consequences through the negative influence or even revenge of the ancestor's ghost. Therefore, Buddhist ceremonies are performed until the 35th, 50th or even 100th year after death, depending on the family request. In the home, ancestors are generally worshiped at the Buddhist altar (jap. *butsudan*), which generally is maintained by the first son according to the old tradition of the Japanese hierarchical family system. At the *butsudan* each ancestor is represented through the name inscribed in a piece of wood (jap. *ihai*). Many descendants pray and communicate with the ancestors in the front of the *butsudan*, frequently making offerings in the form of fruits, food or beverage. This is also reinforced by religious festivals (important elements in Japanese culture) associated with particular time periods and seasons. Besides the private ceremonies performed with the death of a relative (realized within the familiar circle) there are festivals as Obon and Ohigan. In Japan the Obon festival occurs in summer, normally in August, when it is popularly believed that ancestors return to this world to live a

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[59] Some authors defend that the Japanese religiosity has its base in the family (cf. Hori(1) 1968: 49-81). Moreover, also Buddhism would be organized through this concept (cf. Earhart 1997: 73-76). A familiar structure would be found in the organization of the temples and priests, practically replacing a more traditional concept of sangha, based on the Vinaya rule.
[60] Cf. Pye 1996: 3, defending an unnamed primal religion based on a mixed pattern (instead of Shinto).

short period with their descendants. Similarly, the Ohigan is commemorated at the equinoxes of spring (March) and fall (September). In this period, the graves of ancestors are visited and cleaned and the corresponding Buddhist rituals are performed.

Despite these ceremonies and practices, ancestors in the spiritual world are not always friendly, which demonstrates again the Shinto influence in the traditional Japanese world view. There is also a popularized religious belief that those that had a violent or a premature death, or ancestors who are neglected by the descendants, can injure someone who lives in this world. Some forms of Japanese Buddhism are thus strongly associated with popular devotions and magical elements, often with a religiosity oriented to worldly results[61]. Japanese religiosity has then a strong ceremonial component associated with purification, as opposed to a more individual and personal conviction. As a result, outside the more traditional ceremonies, there are in some Buddhist groups more specific rituals and practices that search to eliminate these potential causes of evil. This tendency is above all found in the schools of esoteric Japanese Buddhism and in many new religious movements. In some cases, this tendency is described as a karma related to ancestors, particularly in the new religions[62].

4. Phases of Nativization of Japanese Buddhism in Brazil

The importance of Japanese immigration for Buddhism in Brazil is reflected in the size of the nikkei community, even though today the majority of descendants are not Buddhist. In general, it is possible to observe two great Japanese immigration waves (see the table and the chart 3.1), the first before the Second World War (around 190,000 immigrants) and the other from 1952 to 1967 (around 58,000 immigrants). The areas of concentration were the states of São Paulo (70%) and Paraná (12%)[63]. Currently, with around 1.5 million Japanese and their descendants, Brazil has the largest nikkei community outside Japan. Originally brought for the substitution of slave labor on the coffee plantation, the nikkei are today an important

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[61] For a summary of the popular Japanese religiosity, see Reader 1991.

[62] For a general argument about the reinterpretation of the karma concept in Japan and in the Japanese new religious movements, see Kisala 1994. Even if the ancestors' karma influence can be an important motivation for the Buddhist practice in some groups, it does not appear to have a scriptural foundation or a historical justification for these more contemporary ideas of karma found in the Japanese environment.

[63] Cf. Takeuchi 1994.

element in Brazilian agriculture. The same has happened also in the subsequent migration to the urban areas of the country, especially to the city of São Paulo.

Year	Immigrants	Percentual
1908-1917	19,672	7,93%
1918-1927	39,048	15,73%
1928-1937	123,101	49,59%
1938-1947	6,761	2,72%
1948-1957	20,562	8,28%
1958-1967	38,305	15,43%

Table 3.1: Number and Percentage of Japanese Immigrants in Brazil by decade. Source: Computed from the data of Japan Embassy in Brazil.
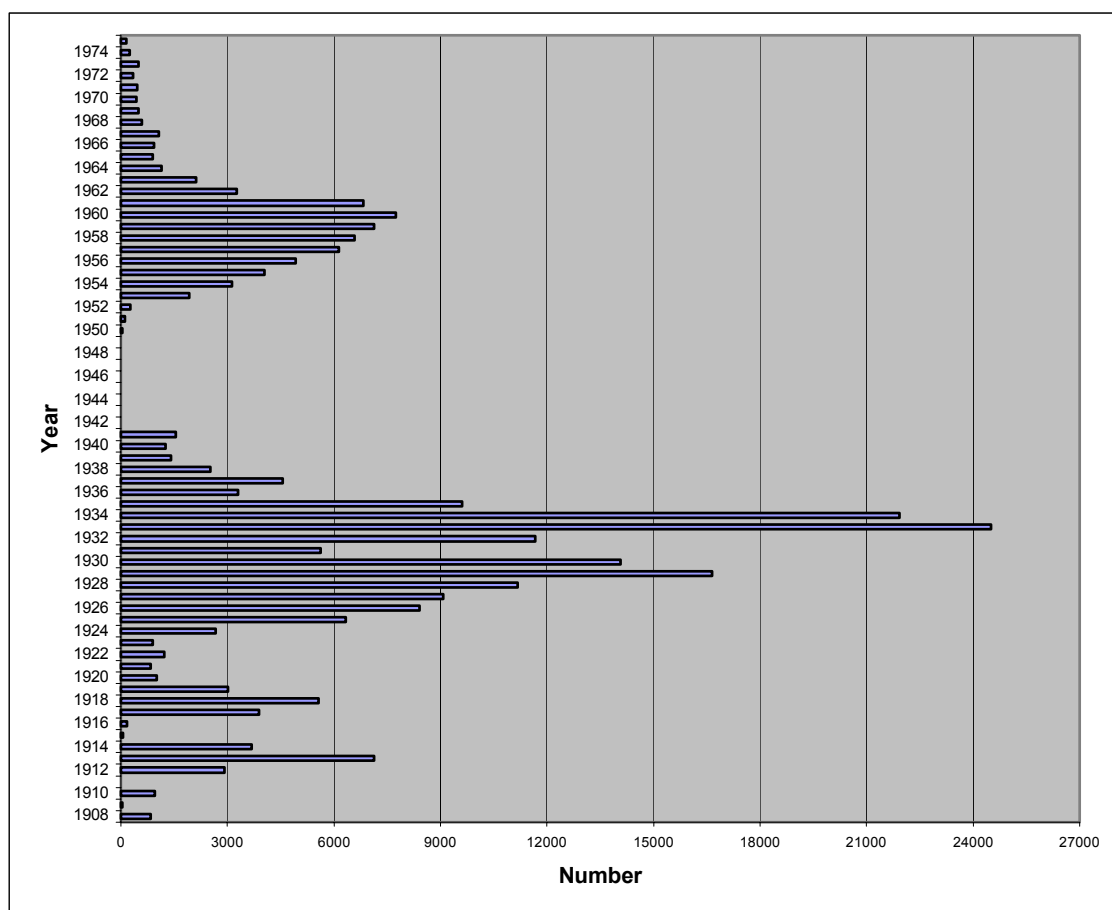
Chart 3.1: Japanese Immigration to Brazil. Source: Japan Embassy in Brazil.

With the beginning of Japanese immigration in 1908, Buddhism entered Brazil, even though a definitive institutionalization occurred only after the Second World War. Presently, Buddhism which originated from immigration, especially the Japanese, has the dilemma of social redefinition or extinction. With the progressive cultural integration of descendants and the disappearance of the first generations of immigrants, a redefinition of the role of ethnicity is in constant development. The fact that a persistence of an ethnic identity has been able to exist through the nikkei generations is essential to the strategy of social survival in many temples, where the adaptations have been implemented mainly for the descendants. This situation is present in almost all the temples, because to this day few of them have developed activities for Brazilians. This strategy, centered in descendants, supposes that an ethnic religiosity can exist simultaneously with linguistic and cultural change. This can be explained utilizing a concept of ethnicity independent from cultural preservation and centered on social interaction, which preserves ethnic identity for the future generations.

In order to show in some detail this change, it is necessary to look at the transformation in ethnic identity through history. This development will permit an analysis of the results of these transformations in present day religious practice, which are influenced by Japanese and Brazilian elements while also maintaining a distance from both.

4.1 In Strange Land: Religion and Temporary Work

Japanese immigration to Brazil was initiated in 1908, having reached its height between the 1920s and 1930s. The main internal factor which motivated immigration was the need for labor in Brazilian agriculture, especially after the interruption of slave traffic in 1850 and the liberation of slaves in 1888.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Brazilian economy was in expansion, mainly due to the relative high price of coffee in the international market. Brazil followed an economy based largely on coffee, extensively cultivated in the state of São Paulo. The necessity of labor for coffee farming stimulated the immigration to Brazil, mainly from Europe, which started with waves of Portuguese starting in 1842 and Germans in 1852. From the 1880s on, the number of Italian immigrants quickly grew. Between 1890 and 1899, Brazil

received around 690,365 Italian immigrants, the majority which had São Paulo as their final destination[64]. In 1900, the Italian government prohibited immigration to Brazil, making accusations of slave treatment with the new immigrants. The accusations occurred due to the conditions of the work contracts and the behavior of the coffee farmers, who had been used to only labor slave until then. Because of this restriction from the Italian government, European immigration to Brazil decreased strongly.

Consequently, even with the oscillations of coffee prices in the international market, at the beginning of the 20th century, Brazilian agriculture needed immigrant labor. In Japan industrialization and transformations from the Meiji Era provoked a stark crisis in agriculture and land scarcity. One of the solutions for the Japanese government was emigration with the intention of starting Japanese agriculture colonies in foreign countries, which could supply Japan with agricultural products[65]. Simultaneously, the USA restricted Japanese immigration in 1907, with the "Gentlemen's Agreement," making difficult the entrance of Japanese in Hawaii and on the main continent[66].

Due to these favorable conditions for Japanese immigration to Brazil, agreements were ratified between the Japanese and Brazilian governments for the regulation and reception of immigrant workers in Brazil. One of the main conditions was that immigration had to be family orientated and each family had to have at least three people able to work[67]. At that time, the family in Japan was strong organized by a traditional household system (jap. *ie*), in which the oldest son was responsible for the administration of family property and ancestors worship. As a result, often only the youngest sons immigrated to Brazil[68]. In accordance with the fact that the agricultural crisis in Japan was one of the main reasons for immigration, the majority of immigrants were farmers. Many of them belonged to the diverse lineages of the Buddhist branch Jôdo Shinshû, the most common Buddhist denomination among Japanese

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[64] For a general view about immigration in Brazil, see Fausto 1998 and about the Asian immigration see Lesser 2000, among others.
[65] Lesser 2000: 155.
[66] Cf. Yanaguida and Alisal 1992: 102, Saito(1) 1980: 82.
[67] This restriction was frequently contoured due to the formation of "fictitious" families, established only for immigration permission. Cf. Yanaguida and Alisal 1992, among others.
[68] For details about the *ie* system and its impact on religious practice, see Maeyama 1973b: 420-425.

farmers. As a rule, these immigrants sought opportunities for quick prosperity through land and favorable conditions for agriculture.

Brazil, however, was also a society with a recent history of slavery, having at that time a cultural and social structure molded by an economic mode of production based on agriculture and work division. Despite its agricultural crisis, Japan emerged at that time as a growing economy and a world power[69]. Consequently, many of the pioneering immigrants had many difficulties adapting themselves in Brazil. They faced precarious working conditions, and an unfamiliarity with Brazilian culture and Portuguese which complicated life on the farms and their interaction with Brazilians. As a result, many immigrants abandoned the coffee plantations and work contracts and tried instead to establish themselves in independent properties or small cities - activities which they quickly abandoned as soon as better opportunities appeared. This strategy gave the nikkei an improved quality of life mainly through the modernization of land cultivation techniques brought from Japan. It was then that the cities formed a large Japanese community presence and the first cooperatives were founded, which stimulated and created room for more continuous Japanese immigration to Brazil. By that time, many periodicals in Japanese existed and in 1927 the Cooperative of Cotia was founded - a pioneer in agricultural community organization.

Other factors also influenced a significant rise in the number of Japanese immigrants entering Brazil. In the 1920s the Japanese agricultural crisis intensified, which contributed to the growth of rural poverty in Japan. A primary causer of this economic crisis was the earthquake in Kanto in 1923, which destroyed a large part of Tokyo and Yokohama. As a result, the Japanese government offered great incentives for immigration beginning in 1924. Simultaneously, the United States, which was the desired destination for many immigrants, definitively approved the prohibition of Japanese immigration. In Brazil, the need for immigrant labor persisted due to the continued migration of Italians to the city. Brazil also had an interest in commerce with Japan, something which was negotiated with the acceptance of new immigration quotas[70]. These favorable factors produced an intense immigration wave

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[69] Cf. Lesser 2000: 159.
[70] Cf. Lesser 2000: 171.

to Brazil[71]. Approximately 56% of all Japanese immigrants arrived in Brazil between 1925 and 1935, establishing themselves mainly in the state of São Paulo with occupations in agriculture.

After a while, many of the Japanese reached higher social levels working in agriculture as small owners. In spite of that, Japanese immigrants never intended to stay definitively in Brazil. Their hopes were still to prosper rapidly and then return to Japan. This general attitude towards a temporary stay explains much of the immigrant's resistance with regard to cultural adaptation. Japanese immigrants generally did not concern themselves with learning Portuguese or integrating into Brazilian society – something that did happen with other nationalities. Communal effort was centered in maintaining cultural customs as they were practiced in Japan. Because immigration to Brazil was family oriented normal community growth was possible[72]. Children were raised Japanese and the community created their own schools[73], which became the main center of the community activities. There the Japanese language and the emperor worship characteristic of Shinto nationalism were taught.

With regard to religion, the Japanese received educational formation, characterized by the nationalism of the Meiji Era, which resulted in a ritualized interpretation of Japanese ethnicity through the emperor cult and their common origin. In Brazil, communal relations based on Shinto nationalism assumed great importance since the traditional Japanese household (jap. *ie*) and local corporate groups based on household alliance (jap. *dôzoku*) stayed in Japan[74]. Without their social and economic support systems, Buddhism and traditional Shinto lived on only in the immigrant's memories, not in social and religious organization[75]. Individuals and nuclear families emigrated, but the full *ie* and the *dôzoku* rarely emigrated. This situation can be theoretically analyzed in a Marxist way as the effects

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[71] See Saito(1) 1980: 81. For more details about international and Brazilian factors that influenced these numbers, as well as more about the established communities, see also Yanaguida 1992.

[72] Cf. Saito(1) 1980: 82, that establishes a contrast with the immigration of Japanese to the USA, without these familiar characteristics.

[73] Cf. Lesser 2000: 167.

[74] Cf. Maeyama 1973a: 244.

[75] Maeyama describes this relation in this way: "Roughly speaking, every village in traditional Japan had a *Shinto* shrine (*jinja*) and virtually all had a Buddhist temple (*tera*); every hamlet had a small shrine as well. The ie held, in addition, a Shinto altar (*kamidana*) and a Buddhist one (*butsu-dan*), while a *dôzoku*, if effective, might have a small shrine" (Maeyama 1983a: 183).

on a religion when base structure is eliminated through immigration[76]. What survived from the religious infrastructure? Roughly speaking, the subsequent *reinterpretation* of former religious behavior and its social significance in the new world resulted in the first stage of ethnic nikkei religious practice. Takashi Maeyama detected the presence of fictitious relationships with a ritualized interpretation of ethnicity in the image of the Japanese emperor as a tutelary kami for all Japanese in Brazil[77].

Consequently, the Japanese were educated to think of themselves as a separate ethnic group, characterized by Japanese nationalism before the Second World War. The relations outside the community were often stimulated only by economic activities. As a result, relations between the Japanese and Brazilians were more restricted to commercial contacts and to that which was strictly necessary for social acquaintance. The Japanese were clearly distinguished through racial characteristics such as their facial features. They were culturally exotic among the Brazilians, who tended to value cultural assimilation. In reaction to the closed nature of the nikkei community, Brazilian politicians criticized what they considered the resistance of nikkei to acculturation. They also feared the growing influence of Japanese imperialism in Asia. The Japanese government, interested in immigration continuity, tried to dissolve these worries by recommending the cultural adaptation of immigrants. Some Japanese intellectuals even suggested conversion to Catholicism[78].

Despite their recognition of the importance and economic contribution of the nikkei community many Brazilian politicians were apprehensive. This was motivated by an eugenic fear, vogue at the time, which promoted through scientific theories a politic based on racial prejudice. Even though Brazil had never been racially homogeneous, many thought that racial heterogeneity was a cause of underdevelopment and that the presence of Asians would further damage the Brazilian situation. As a result, many politicians proposed curtailing the arrival of more Japanese immigrants to where in 1934, based on eugenic arguments, Japanese immigration was limited by the Brazilian Constitution to only 4,000 each year[79].

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[76] Cf. Bastide 1971a in his analyses of African slavery and Afro-Brazilian religions.
[77] Cf. Maeyama 1973b, Maeyama 1983a: 185.
[78] Cf. Lesser 2000: 188.
[79] Cf. Moraes 2001:32.

The continuous discussion about assimilation and the intention of temporary immigration had an important effect on the religious practice of the Japanese immigrants. Buddhist activities were relatively small-scale in this first period, considering that the majority of immigrants were Buddhist. There are three main reasons which explain for this reality[80]. The first is that the immigrants consisted mainly of the youngest sons, who did not have the traditional duty to carry out the ancestral worship. This role was fulfilled by the oldest son, the *ie* leader, who remained in Japan with the relics and domestic altars. A second motive was the explicit recommendation of the Japanese government that Buddhist activities should be avoided because explicit religious practice would not be accepted well by the Brazilians. Since the great majority of population was Catholic, Buddhist activities were seen as incompatible with Brazilian sentiment. Accordingly, the Japanese government rejected the immigration of monks or priests, in order to avoid religious communities. Assistance for agricultural colonies that had religious faith as motivation was also rejected based on the same immigration policies[81]. The third reason for the near absence of open religious activity, maybe even the main factor, was that the Japanese did not intend to remain in Brazil, as previously cited. Every effort was concentrated on prospering and a rapid return to Japan. As a result, the construction of temples or the establishment of religious organizations in Brazil were not important. Consequently, Buddhism assumed a secondary role for the immigrants. Proselytizing that was allowed to exist was only directed to the conversion of nikkei, with Brazilians excluded from this process[82].

Even though Buddhist activities were not intense in this first phase, they were remembered especially when some immigrants died (often called "death in a visiting land"), because traditionally Buddhism is associated with funeral rites. On those occasions, the immigrants lamented the challenge of performing the adequate ceremonies. Those that could remember the rites and recite sutras performed improvised ceremonies. At the same time, they had a special devotion at that time to the bodhisattva Jizô, a traditional protector of travelers and children in Japan. This devotional importance was due to travel difficulties from Japan to Brazil (around 3 months in duration by ship) and the difficult conditions of the first years,

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[80] Cf. Maeyama 1973b and Mori 1992, among others.
[81] This was for example the case of a plan for a colony from Honmon Butsuryûshû, a new religious movement inside Nichiren Buddhism. The project was stopped by Japanese authorities, because a Buddhist community would be problematic in a Catholic country as Brazil (cf. Nakamaki 2002: 82).
[82] For an example of this tendency, see the case of HBS through Nakamaki 2002.

which resulted in many deaths and diseases among children. Moreover, the presence of Buddhist monks in Brazil has been certified, as well as provisional installations that functioned as temples. The first ship of Japanese immigrants that arrived in Brazil carried the Rev. Nissui Ibaragui a Honmon Butsuryûshû (HBS) monk, who subsequently would have an vital role in the growth and establishment of the Honmon Butsuryûshû in Brazil[83]. The Jôdo Shinshû began their activities around the end of 1920s, after the arrival of the Rev. Eijô Okada in 1925. In 1928 a monk named Masumi Ikoma was sent to Brazil from the Hompa Honganji branch[84]. In 1932, Sukeichi Ito, associated with Jôdo Shinshû practice, founded the Kômyôji temple in the city of Cafelândia[85]. The beginning of Shingon activities occurred throughout the 1930s. In 1934 the Rev. Shinba arrived, initiating the activities of the Koyasan branch in São Paulo[86].

4.2 Nationalism and Religion: Between Japan and Brazil at War

4.2.1 Pressure for Immigrant Integration

The Brazilian cultural environment changed rapidly from the 1930s on, contributing to transformations within nikkei identity. Starting in the 1920s, aesthetic and cultural tendencies in Brazil, began to reconsider the importance of African and Indian native cultures for Brazil. This continued the important debate over Brazilian identity initiated in the second half of the 19th century. To summarize, two tendencies were emphasized. The first was to affirm the fast impossible attempt at a Brazilian identity, as well as disparagement of the existing racial mixture in the country. This would be the cause of economic inferiority and development problems. According to this view, Brazilian racial unity should be pursued through a European ideal. This negative characterization of the Brazilian melting pot, influenced by the tendencies of social Darwinism and eugenic thinking predominant in Europe at that time, was the common view until the first few decades of the 20th century. However, a second view appeared in the 1920s, which stated that Brazilian identity is better characterized as a harmonious and creative mixture of races. According to writer Mário de Andrade, an ability

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[83] Cf. Nakamaki 2002: 73-74.
[84] Cf. Mori 1992: 572.
[85] Cf. Gonçalves 1990: 38.
[86] Cf. Koyasan News 11, in reportage about the commemoration of 60 years of the Shingon mission in Brazil. See also Handa 1987 for more details about the existing initiatives.

for the incorporation of foreign elements, moderating and utilizing these elements in concert with the national culture was due to the anthropophagous character of Brazilians. These ideas arose first from Modern Art Week in 1922, but were later intensified through the academic work of anthropologist Gilberto Freyre, who highly valued Brazilian race-mixing. He established a trend and an anthropological school that is still in existence in Brazil.

These two tendencies influenced interpretation of Japanese immigration. Eugenic thinking based on racial prejudice considered immigrants as one more difficulty to a Brazilian unity directed to the European ideal. The mestizo thinking, on the other hand, insisted in a necessary assimilation of nikkei in the Brazilian melting pot. The latter was increasingly important because the new directions in the Brazilian identity debate had many political consequences. The resulting nationalism strongly influenced the cultural and educational program of dictator Getúlio Vargas government. Formally enacted into law in 1938, 30% of the residents in every city had to be Brazilians and any nationality could not represent more than 25% of the inhabitants. Moreover, all the educational books used in schools had to be in Portuguese and school directors had to be Brazilians[87]. These elements had as their aim a new Brazilian identity, defending a growing nationalism based on assimilation. Through the 1950s and 1960s, this view of Brazilian identity was criticized as support for a hidden racism, because the existing social and economic inequality was encouraged through the cultural passivity of mestizo identity and by not promoting real integration. Mestizo thinking could always assimilate differences, preserving the social *status quo* of an elite, while not recognizing the ethnic problems and divisions. Although the nonexistence of a Brazilian identity had been defended by many intellectuals, beginning in the 1930s the idea of Brazil as a melting pot and the positive valuing of racial mixture became part of a popular Brazilian self-understanding, which was extensively diffused and supported. As in similar cases, what was social construction and analysis transformed itself into a real social orientation.

From the perspective of religion, Maria Isaura Queiróz, arues that the issue of Brazilian identity and its tendency to syncretism are related issues, considering that religion, understood as an important element for group cohesion, reflects the changes and challenges in group identity. She states that the events in that period reflect well the fear of immigrant ascension

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[87] Cf. Lesser 2000: 230.

in Brazilian society, which could threaten the existing social order. Therefore what occurred was a union between the dominant class and the poorer class, which became an affirmation of mixed race identity and the affirmation of African and Indian elements in Brazilian culture. Umbanda, a cult based on the syncretism between Candomblé, Catholicism and Spiritism arose right after the defense of racial mixture as the most important characteristic in Brazilian identity in the 1920s and 1930s. Because of these reactions against the new social force represented by immigrants, Brazilian culture began to be defined as synthesis and fusion.

Nationalist politics, which tried to stop the formation of separated ethnic identities, had definitive effects on the nikkei community. The restriction of Japanese schools was especially perceived as hostile and consequently many nikkei would return to Japan in 1939[88]. These conflicts between culturally isolated communities and the pressure of integration exercised by Brazilian society increased strongly with the Second World War. The nikkei community, divided between necessary assimilation into a mixed culture and identity preservation, suffered a strong rupture, caught between two nationalisms during and after the Second World War. Consequently, this time was fundamental for the formation of a new ethnic religiosity through more traditional Japanese Buddhism instead of the emperor's cult. After a painful process of ethnic redefinition and abandonment of the Shinto nationalist worldview, formal contacts with Buddhist temples in Japan were established with the headquarters in Japan during the 1950s.

4.2.2 War of Social Identities in the Nikkei Community

During the Second World War and in subsequent years the nikkei in Brazil lived a traumatic experience of identity redefinition. In 1942, with Brazil's definitive entrance into the Second World War and the rupture of diplomatic relations between Brazil and Japan, many nikkei had the experience of being an ethnic minority living in an enemy country. Due to the ethnic redefinition caused by the war, this period can be described as fundamental for the religious

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[88] At this time, around 90% of the Japanese immigrants in the region of Bauru were favorable to repatriation, according to a study performed in 1939 in the region, Cf. Lesser 2000: 230. Moraes 2001: 48 also quotes research performed by the Brazilian government, indicating that 85% of the Japanese immigrants in São Paulo would return to Japan. The economic importance of the nikkei in the agriculture, however, could not be ignored by the Brazilian government. According to Moraes 2001: 217, in 1936 the Japanese community produced, for example, 46% of the cotton, 57% from the silk and 75% of the tea in Brazil, even if they were less than 3% from the population.

adaptation of the Japanese, as was the case in the United States[89]. The history of this identity redefinition in Brazil, however, not only had restraints from the Brazilian government as an important component, but also a sense of social disorientation and deep conflict inside the community. What happens with a community when its living god is now assumed to be a defeated leader? The nationalistic Shinto world for nikkei in Brazil proved to be false, something that rarely occurs in a religious worldview, because it is normally beyond objective verification.

First, at the time of the Second World War and the following years it is important to reaffirm the relative isolation of the Japanese community in Brazil. Almost all information sources that arrived to the community were in Japanese, since few Japanese and nikkei could understand Portuguese. Moreover, having grown up with nationalistic Shinto, Japanese formation and education was comprised of the concept of Japanese invincibility in war and the promotion of a Japanese spirit and honor (jap. *yamato damashii*). These characteristics reflected an immigration that began 50 years after nikkei immigration to the USA and had its peak in the 1930s. Therefore, in comparison to the Japanese in the USA, the Japanese in Brazil had less adaptation time and a different formation, which was more influenced by the growth of the nationalistic Shinto in Japan throughout the first half of the 20th century.

Despite a long period of indecision and even after having various ships attacked by the German navy, Brazil only entered in the war in 1942. One consequence was that the Brazilian government stipulated restrictions for all citizens from the Axis countries in Brazil. The restrictions for the nikkei consisted mainly in the evacuation to determined localities[90], the retention of banking deposits and the prohibition of transmission, education, periodicals and even public speeches in Japanese. These measures, especially the prohibition of the Japanese language in public, had a disastrous effect on the nikkei community, since Japanese was the immigrants only language. The economic restrictions accumulated bank deposits remained unavailable, and with the prohibition of the Japanese language the children's education and

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[89] Cf. Tanaka 1999.
[90] This occurred especially in the cities of Santos and Rio de Janeiro, Brazilian littoral cities, from the fear of espionage for the enemy navy. Cf. Lesser 2000: 238, Moraes 2001: 57-62.

instruction in the spirit of the Japanese were impossible. Hundreds of Japanese schools were closed and the nikkei were persecuted and put prison if they spoke Japanese in public[91].

Reacting to these measures, the nikkei in Brazil sought to maintain a nationalist formation centered on Japan. Brazil was then understood as an enemy country. The prohibition of Japanese schools was countered with countless secret schools. Despite the lack of possible concrete actions, the production of some products such as mint and silk was drastic diminished[92]. With this principle of resistance the Shindo Renmei (League of the Devotes Way), an organization with nationalistic Shinto and military tendencies, was created in 1942. The organization had to be consecrated in the cultivation of the Japanese spirit, orientating the nikkei community in Brazil.

At the end of the war, a serious division occurred among the nikkei, due to the Japanese nationalism that had been established and the community isolation caused by the language barrier. For the world and for the Brazilians it was clear that Japan had been defeated, but the majority of nikkei did not believe this news about the end of the Second World War. The community in Brazil was then divided between the defeatists (jap. *makegumi*), those that believed that Japan had lost the war and the victorists (jap. *kachegumi*), those that thought that Japan won the war against the USA and the allied countries. The few nikkei that understood Portuguese and who were more adapted to Brazil were convinced that Japan was ruined at the end of the war. However, the great majority of nikkei believed not only that Japan had won the war, but also that a rescue of the Japanese immigrants in Brazil would be eminent with the arrival of Japanese ships to the Brazilian coast. Many nikkei traveled to the Brazilian coastal cities after receiving false news of the arrival of these ships. For the majority, the *makegumi* were traitors to the Japanese spirit.

Many immigrants believed in the victory because of false information promoted by more fanatical *kachegumi*, many of them belonging to the Shindo Renmei organization. At the time, reports, radio transmissions, magazines and even money were falsified in order to give

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[91] This prohibition was valid inclusive for religious ceremonies. Cf. Moraes 2001: 47, a Buddhist monk was imprisoned in 1942, because he performed a Buddhist ceremony in Valparaíso.
[92] It was believed that these products would help the Allies in the production of chemical weapons. Cf. Moraes 2001: 66.

evidence that Japan was in control of the whole world. In this context, Shindo Renmei began to act as a terrorist organization, planning the murder of the *makegumi*, who they considered to be traitors. It is difficult to evaluate if this intention was supported by all the followers and contributors to the sect. Either way, it is believed that the organization had at its peak 100,000 contributors and 60,000 sympathizers[93]. Between 1946 and 1947, Shindo Renmei operated with terrorist methods, murdering 23 *makegumi* and injuring approximately 150 persons, as well as sending innumerable threats and bombs to those believed to be *makegumi*. These attacks, planned and performed with a nationalist ritualism[94], caused chaos and confusion in various cities of São Paulo and the nikkei community emerged in a general state of disorientation. Although these events were restricted to the Japanese colony, some conflicts also existed with Brazilians. The Brazilian government reacted violently and pursued the Shindo Renmei, in order to pacify the community. With the help of the Japanese government, campaigns of elucidation were initiated, but they failed because it was impossible to build a communication channel that could be heard by the nikkei that believed in the victory of Japan. Japanese immigration to Brazil was almost prohibited because it was argued that it would be impossible to assimilate the Japanese in Brazil[95]. The repressive consequences cannot be denied: 31,380 persons were imprisoned and can be found in police files from that time, due to their connections with Shindo Renmei. The situation returned to the normal due to police repression and to a slow process of elucidation within the nikkei community.

With the increasing realization of the real situation in Japan after the war, it became clear for the nikkei that a return was impossible. Important Japanese cities were destroyed and the only alternative was to establish themselves definitively in Brazil. Consequently, the majority of the Japanese (as opposed to other immigrant groups) were in a certain sense obligated to establish themselves permanently in Brazil, which had consequences for the social interaction that defined them as an ethnic group. So in this sense, the adaptation of

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[93] Cf. Moraes 2001: 103, obtained from the analysis of the organization files apprehended by the Brazilian police.
[94] This ritualism was inspired in the military and nationalist ideology from Japan at that time, following frequently the same pattern. Initially a message was sent, communicating the execution by treason. Dressed with the Japanese flag, an opportunity of *harakiri* (ritualistic suicide) was offered for the *makegumi*. If the *makegumi* did not choose this option, the supposed traitor was killed. After the murder, the recommendation was frequently the simple surrender to the Brazilian police.
[95] Cf. Moraes 2001: 298.

Brazilian nikkei in the postwar period was described more as accommodation and *strategies* of integration as opposed to acculturation and assimilation[96].

Following the redefinition of nikkei ethnicity in Brazil, which occurred due to definite permanence and the relaxation of government restrictions after the end of the war, Buddhist missions started. Since the nationalistic Shinto was incompatible with the new ethnic identity, an interface was established with the Buddhist temples in Japan. Nationalistic Shinto didn't make sense in the new context and a new ethnic religiosity would emerge. Besides, the formal contacts with the Japanese Buddhist temples were important because a division between *kachegumi* and *makegumi* still existed in the nikkei community and even independent temples inside the same order assumed different positions regarding the issue. The institutionalization of Japanese Buddhism in Brazil was also an attempt at pacification. The temples of Jôdoshû, Jôdo Shinshû and Honmon Butsuryûshû, for example, presented internal divergences of opinion regarding the issue[97].

In the case of Brazil it is possible to argue that adaptation was only bitterly initiated after the war, whereas in the United States the adaptation of Buddhist temples accelerated due to the experiences in the concentration camps. The US-American nikkei temples maintained an autonomy and independence from the Japanese temples after the war[98], as opposed to the tendency to institutionalize and begin Buddhist missions in Brazil. Contrasted to the Japanese, other patterns of religiosity can be identified among the Brazilian nikkei, where there existed those who remained in the Japanese religions and developed a nikkei religiosity and others who sought structural integration through Catholic conversion.

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[96] Cf. Maeyama 1973a: 251, Cf. Cardoso 1972: 175-177.

[97] According to interviews, this purpose of pacification can be found at the documents and reports from the missions foundation. In his autobiography, Rev. Ibaragui from the Honmon Butsuryûshû writes that he was injured by *kachegumi* and imprisoned by the Brazilian police, when he gave funeral assistance to a murdered *makegumi*. Also in the case of Honmon Butsuryûshû the division between *kachegumi* and *makegumi* continued until 1955 and even in 1965 these resentment could be found. Cf. Nakamaki 2002: 92-94.

[98] Despite of the ethnic identity associated with the Buddhist Churches of America, in 1944 English had already been adopted as the main language and the name North American Buddhist Mission was replaced (cf. Tanaka 1999: 8). Comparatively, the Japanese mission of the Jôdo Shinshû schools in Brazil was initiated officially in 1952, continuing officially as a mission until today.

4.3 Institutionalization of Buddhist Missions

In 1952 the first official mission of Japanese Buddhism in Brazil was founded, through the establishment of Jôdo Shinshû schools. This began an institutionalization phase of ethnic Buddhism in Brazil. With their decision to live permanently in Brazil another social orientation was necessary for them to become more integrated into Brazilian society. This new orientation should not be only characterized as the abandonment of an intention to return to Japan, but also as a mandatory aspect. From the perspective of religious change, the traditional Japanese identity with national Shinto was often substituted by Catholicism, a religion that signified for Brazilians an analogous national belonging. Although, within the family, the adoption of Catholicism as a strategy of accommodation did not always exclude Japanese influence in the nikkei identity. This process of Buddhist institutionalization and the new religious patterns within the nikkei family associated with Buddhism or new religions (cultivated above all by the older sons) were the most important characteristics of this new phase.

The increasing importance of Buddhism versus national Shinto as the ethnic religion for immigrants at that time can be explained through an obvious but important fact: although the immigrants were born in Japan, *they would die in Brazil*. Given that Buddhism rather then Shinto is more associated with funeral rites in Japan, Buddhism assumed an increasing ethnic role inside the nikkei and immigrants after the definite decision to stay in Brazil. Initially the pioneer immigrants began to consider themselves founders of a new *ie* in Brazil, recovering the ancestor's cult[99]. Many of the immigrants who were approaching an advanced age named themselves live ancestors (jap. *senzo*)[100]. In some cases, they had even brought the relics of ancestors that were in Japan, because the permanent establishment in Brazil signified the creation of a Brazilian *ie*. The Japanese family system of *ie*, which was decisive during the immigration period, was also very important in nikkei religious practice after the war. This new genealogical tree gave new meaning to the cult of ancestors and funeral ceremonies, which were the foundation of the Buddhist family[101]. Given that traditional Japanese religions

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[99] For details about this process, see Maeyama 1973b. The emperor's cult in the nationalistic Shinto can be analyzed through this perspective, cf. Maeyama 1973b: 435.
[100] Cf. Maeyama 1973a: 260.
[101] Cf. Mori 1992: 580.

are more social than individually orientated, the pioneer immigrants assumed in this process a decisive role inside the community. As *ie* founders they *recreated* the Japanese family system in Brazil.

Due to these factors, the necessity of institutions and legitimation emerged. Consequently, the period after the Second World War signified a period for the establishment of institutional links with Japan, which lead to the official foundation of several Buddhist missions. These missions united the temples and the existing initiatives that had been scattered and often divided due to the *makegumi* and *kachegumi* issue. In 1952, the Ôtani and Hompa Branch from the Jôdo Shinshû school were institutionally established. The Ôtani branch is also known by the name Nambei Hoganji or Higashi Hoganji. The Hompa branch, which absorbed the majority of the small existing temples before institutionalization[102], is also known in Brazil as Hompa Hoganji or Nishi Hoganji. In 1952, the Kannon temple from Tendaishû in the municipal district of Diadema was founded near the city of São Paulo. In 1953 the Jôdoshû mission was initiated and in 1955 the Sôtô Zenshû and the Nichirenshû mission were started. Also in 1955, the superior priest from Honmon Butsuryûshû in Japan made a helpful visit to Brazil, initiating a more official contact with the existing community. The temples of Honmon Butsuryûshû at that time were mainly developed through the efforts of the already cited Rev. Nissui Ibaragui, since then considered the founder of the Honmon Butsuryûshû in Brazil, with centers in the states of São Paulo and Paraná[103].

Coinciding with the establishment of Buddhist missions there was a new migratory wave from Japan to Brazil from 1953 to 1962, with around 50,000 immigrants[104]. These new immigrants contributed to a revival of Japanese religions in Brazil and brought many new religious movements that had been established in Japan after the war. Starting with a small community of immigrants, the activities of Sôka Gakkai in Brazil began. During the 1950's there already existed some Japanese families in the Sôka Gakkai, forming the core for institutionalization which occured in a later decade. In 1960, the District Brazil was founded

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[102] Cf. Gonçalves 1990: 171.
[103] Cf. Nakamaki 2002.
[104] Cf. Saito(1) 1980: 83. In comparison with the previous immigrant stream, many of these new immigrants had a definitive permanence in mind and many of them came from Japanese colonies that existed before the Second World War. In contrast with the previous immigrants, many of them had the Amazon and the Northeast region of Brazil as their destination.

during a visit by Daisaku Ikeda, and in following years several regional headquarters appeared[105]. From the 1970s on, there existed within the Sôka Gakkai an emphasis on active proselytizing (jap. *shakubaku*). This process, happening simultaneously in many other western countries, was accelerated in Brazil by another visit by Daisaku Ikeda in 1966 and by the leadership of Roberto Saito from that year on. The activities of Risshô Kôseikai in Brazil were initiated in 1971, although only until more recently has the organization been more open to Brazilians, as will be described later. Reyûkai began its activities in Brazil in 1975, from a community that had been formed after the arrival of Toku Suzuki to Brazil in 1969[106]. Lastly, between 1971 and 1976 the Joganji Fudô Myô-ô Temple from Tendaishû was built in Diadema.

For these groups, religion initially continued to have an ethnic character, something particularly present in Buddhism. The main sociological characteristics of Japanese religious life in Brazil at that time were described by Takashi Maeyama. His approach is characterized by a correlation between religion, kinship and social class, through an existing dichotomy between what the immigrant and nikkei called "Japanese religions" and what was labeled as "Brazilian religions." The "Japanese religions" were Shinto, Buddhism and the new Japanese religions. The Japanese religions were characterized by their exclusive use of the Japanese language and their being frequented by nikkei, particularly by the oldest sons. The oldest son was responsible for the *ie* leadership and the administration of the family patrimony, mainly in the rural environment. They also had to speak Japanese and be more submitted to the rules of Japanese culture. The ancestor cult, understood as a family activity and not as an individual choice, was also an obligation for the oldest son. Maeyama related the Japanese religions with the "old middle class", which was identified with the continuity of the pioneer immigrants activities (mainly in agriculture and small family business) that are generally independent from educational formation and structural integration in Brazilian life.

In comparison to the more traditional and oldest sons, the other descendants were often encouraged to identify more definitively with Brazilian culture. They often emigrated to urban

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[105] Cf. Pereira 2001: 254.
[106] Cf. Mori 1992.

areas in search of a better education[107]. Instead of the *ie* patrimony that the oldest sons inherited, the other descendants frequently received the opportunity of a better education. The nikkei family valued education above all and many of these descendants were able to study in a university, something that often demanded great sacrifice and support from the whole family. Through this work division among descendants, the younger sons had more contact with Catholicism, which was seen as an important element in the Brazilian national identity. A Catholic baptism was thus an important strategic factor for a social net of contacts and for the avoidance of social prejudices directed at non-Catholics. To be only a Buddhist was to be classified as a pagan, thus making inclusion into the Brazilian society difficult to attempt. As an example of the importance of Catholic baptism, Maeyama emphasizes the role of the godfather and the mass included in graduation ceremonies[108]. Japanese parents saw baptism as more of an accommodation to the Brazilian society and presented little resistance, and the sons sought it as a means to more participation and cultural integration in Brazil. Regarding the economic activities of these baptized nikkei, Maeyama shows that these younger descendants frequently belonged to a "new middle class." Many of them were able study at Brazilian universities, establishing themselves in the emerging middle class of a Brazilian society increasingly typified by the urban environment. The nikkei in this new middle class were more often associated with liberal professions such as physicians, lawyers and engineers, which opened them to deeper integration into Brazilian social life.

This sociological pattern helps to explain the importance of ethnic identity in ethnic nikkei Buddhism and the conservative tendencies of the associated temples. The nikkei that remained Buddhists were those that already had fewer tendencies toward adaptation in all areas of life, not only due to religious factors, but also because of the related position of the genealogical tree and economic activity. Moreover, this pattern shows the identity transformation in the nikkei community and its relation with religious practice. In a survey taken in 1958, around 44,5% of the nikkei said that they were Buddhists, while 42,8% were Catholics. An even greater trend toward conversion to Catholicism was detected in the urban environment and in the second and third generations, with 58,7% and 70% declaring

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[107] This process of migration to urban regions was motivated by the economic growth of São Paulo city and the best opportunities of education there. Early on around 90% of the Japanese lived in rural areas, but at present 90% of the Japanese and descendants live cities. Cf. Mori 1992: 561.
[108] Cf. Maeyama 1973a: 250.

themselves Catholic respectively [109]. A Catholic baptism, however, did not exclude simultaneous participation in the Japanese religions, especially at funeral ceremonies, which was often due to family influence and pressure. Conversion to Catholicism (while still diluted through Japanese influences and family division) was for many of the descendants more of a social strategy than a real internalization of the Catholic faith.

4.4 Between Ethnicity and Assimilation: The Creation of a Nikkei Identity

The process of making and survival of a nikkei identity, strictly related with ethnic temples until now, was the most important characteristic from this present phase of nikkei ethnic Buddhism, which will be described here and in the next section.

The ascendance of Japan in the world economy and the growing interest in Japanese culture also contributed to a positive image of the Japanese and nikkei (often indistinguishable for Brazilians) [110]. Along with the Brazilian economic boom, the 1970s brought a consolidation of the growing economic importance of the Japanese community, as well as the social ascendance of many nikkei. In Brazil, various statistics reflect the present importance of the nikkei community. According to data available from the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) census of 2000, the nikkei are well positioned in the Brazilian social pyramid, having an income significantly greater than other Brazilians with African or European ancestry. For example, 24.80% of Brazilians with European origin receive more than five reference salary monthly. Among Brazilians of African descent this rate is 8.83% and among Asian descendants (mostly nikkei) the same rate is 55.37%. Similar conclusions can be found in the national production in agriculture. For example, the nikkei community is responsible for around 70% of the national potato production, 45% in the case of soybeans, 10% of the coffee, 94% of the tea production and 50% of the eggs. This occurs even though only 10% of nikkei, less than 0.1% of the Brazilian population, still work in agriculture[111].

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[109] Cf. cited in Maeyama 1973a: 249 and 251.
[110] This positive aspect image seems to have a meaning in the acceptance of Japanese religions in Brazil, cf. Oro: 121. For qualitative research in the area of social psychology about the mutual stereotypes, positive and negative, associated with the Brazilians and the nikkei community, see Saito(2) 1986.
[111] Cf. PINAD Report of IBGE realized in 1988.

The educational level of nikkei is better than the national average, with many frequenting universities and many structurally integrated in the national life[112].

Statistics also show a cultural assimilation at a rapid and progressive rate. Marriages outside the nikkei community represent 46% of the total[113]. With respect to religious behavior, in 1988 almost 60% declared themselves Catholic and only around 25% declared belonging to a Japanese religion[114]. The realization of these facts has concerned some nikkei, because a total assimilation does not leave space for potential contributions that the Japanese culture could have for Brazil[115]. Consequently, many nikkei try to develop a social group identity through nikkei culture (between the Brazilians and Japanese) often emphasizing a Japanese side preserved from immigrants against a total Brazilian assimilation. As a result, there are activities organized that are understood by Brazilians as Japanese, but that are in truth nikkei, reflecting independent ways to understand a separate ethnic identity.

In Buddhism the most ethnic schools are united in the Federation of Buddhist Sects in Brazil (port. *Federação das Seitas Budistas do Brasil*), which since 1958 has been comprised of the schools of Zenshû, Jôdoshû, Koyasan Shingon, Jôdo Shinshû (branches Higashi and Nishi) and Nichirenshû. Besides this Federation, some of the characteristics of an ethnic Buddhism can also be found in groups such as the Buddhist Church Nambei Yugazam Jyomiyoji, with a Shingon orientation, and to a certain degree in some new religions that had not obtained until now a significant participation of Brazilians. Examples are the Shinrankai, Honmon Butsuryûshû and Risshô Kôseikai groups. Regarding Federation activities, there are two main events organized. One is the Hanamatsuri (flower festival), which has its origin in the Japanese festival that simultaneously commemorates the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha and

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[112] According to data computable from the IBGE census of 2000, if 22,47% from Brazilians study more than 11 years, among the Brazilians with Asiatic ascendence (mostly nikkei) this rate is 55,37%.
[113] Cf. Lesser 2000: 296.
[114] Cf. Mori 1992: 594.
[115] If in the European context it is frequently necessary to criticize the idea that religion is against ethnic integration, in Brazil's case, where ethnic integration is part of national ideology, it is necessary first to defend the possibility of a space that is against a *total* cultural integration, a social force that is against a Brazilian common denominator created from this fusion tendency. Takashi Maeyama observed in this sense that "While racial prejudice is, it may be said, relatively weak in Brazil, cultural prejudice is very strong. [...] Those who come to the nation-state of Brazil with different backgrounds have, say, the moral obligation to assimilate themselves into the Portuguese-Brazilian culture, which is commonly supposed to be the only 'legitimate' Brazilian culture." (Maeyama 1983b: 167).

the arrival of spring on the eighth of April (although, the actual season in Brazil is autumn). Another important ceremony happens in June commemorates the pioneer immigrants, preserving the collective memory and honoring the ethnic origin within the community. These organized nikkei Buddhism events mirror nikkei integration but at the same time the special role of ethnic identity appreciation.

Although the progressive integration of the nikkei community into Brazilian society is understood as inevitable, it is also possible to observe a persistent ethnic differentiation despite not always being socially organized. Generally, a socially organized ethnic identity finds a difficult expression in the Brazilian society, which is multicultural but hardly recognizes a simultaneous belonging for multiple cultures. These conditions represent obstacles for the definition of nikkei identity as simultaneously Japanese descendants and Brazilians. However, many nikkei see boundaries between themselves and the Japanese and Brazilians almost unconsciously. In the Brazilian context, physical and facial features are important aspects for a differentiated nikkei identity. The Portuguese, Indian and African descendants are typically associated with Brazilian identity. For the other European descendants a physical differentiation is often not perceived by the majority of Brazilians, consequently it is not as important for ethnic identity. In the case of nikkei and Brazilian Asians however, these racial aspects are easily perceived and ever present. Even in descendants that have no contact with Japanese customs and culture, a physical recognition can produce self-identification as a different group[116]. New generations of descendants have maintained the permanence of an ethnic conscience through aspects such as Japanese food and group friendship, sometimes associated with an attraction to other aspects of Japanese culture[117]. Moreover, there are publications that promote this ethnic identity and a nikkei self-identification. Some of them have had considerable success with youths and Brazilians

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[116] In this sense, racial and physical differences must not be underestimated, since the confrontation between two groups depends also on clear signs of ethnic identification, having also an influence on esthetic values and social acceptance. In Brazil, a trend among Asian descendants has been plastic surgery in the eyes, with the objective of their westernization through the creation of a fold of skin in the eyelids. It is estimated that around 14,000 of these operations are performed yearly (cf. Veja, "Eyes well open", port. *"De olhos bem abertos"*). Although "westernized eyes" through this surgery can be interpreted as a search of Brazilian acceptance (cf. Lesser 2000: 296), this plastic surgery is also popular in Japan and in Korea.
[117] Cf. Saito(3) 1986.

interested in the Japanese culture[118]. Although it is often argued that the relative decadence of nikkei associations (including temples) indicate an ethnicity loss, other important reasons for disinterest also seem to be a difference in generations - something that also occurs in Japan today. A Japanese reference for the descendants can be found in present day Japan and not only through the immigrants. A more detailed historical analysis of the nikkei media, for example, shows the permanence of certain matters, such as the debate about Brazilian and Japanese influence on nikkei identity. However, significant differences in the presentation of these motives exist, reflecting different influences between the generations[119].

The issue of ethnic identity is especially perceptible in the case of Brazilian *dekasseguis* (temporary workers in Japan). In 1990, the Japanese government authorized the residence and employment without restrictions of nikkei and their spouses until the third generation, following a policy of immigration based on the *jus sanguinis*. Many Brazilian nikkei, doing the opposite of their ancestors, emigrate temporarily from Brazil to Japan to generally do manual labor in industries, a necessity for the Japanese labor market. Because of the Brazilian economic crisis in the 1980s and the need of manual labor in Japan, emigration increased until 2000 when around 250,000 Brazilians, mainly nikkei, went to Japan as temporary workers[120]. The number of registered Brazilians in Japan is shown in table 3.2 below:

Year	Number
1990	56,429
1991	119,333

[118] Among others, examples of these publications are the *São Paulo Shimbun*, *O Jornal do Nikkey*, *Jornal Tudo Bem* and the magazine *Made in Japan*.

[119] The publication *Made in Japan*, for example, has had considerable success among youth. This magazine is read by nikkei and others interested in Japanese culture. It presents traditional themes but by popularizing them with a more westernized and youthful view. An ethnic revaluing, in these cases, is given more from a pop and technological culture that reflects present day Japan and its exported culture, with a introduction of customs and traditions in another way. The group JBC, established in Tokyo and São Paulo and publisher from the *Made in Japan* magazine, has introduced to the Brazilian market such diverse publications as Japanese *mangas* (comics) to Japanese culinary magazines. Its newest publication is the *Zen* magazine, utilizing the common use of the word in Brazilian, as something relaxed and peaceful. The magazine is focused on general religious and esoteric matters.

[120] See Carvalho(2) 2000, Carvalho(2) 2003 and Kawamura 1999. According to a former statistic reported by Lesser, from the 190,000 *dekassegui* reported, around 35,000 are mestizo or Brazilians, cf. Lesser 2000: 297.

1992	147,803
1993	154,650
1994	159,619
1995	176,440
1996	201,795
1997	233,254
1998	222,217
1999	224,299

Table 3.2: Number of Brazilians registered in Japan. Source: Ministry of Justice (1990-2000), apud Carvalho(2) 2003.

Even with the stress and hard work reported by the *dekassegui*, this strategy was again successful in preserving the middle class status of the nikkei community. In Brazil, statistics have indicated that the *dekasseguis* are among those who were at the bottom of the social pyramid in the Brazilian nikkei community[121]. But now, according to the Report "Sending Money Home: An International Comparison of Remittance Markets", produced by the Inter-American Development Bank, the approximately 250,000 *dekassegui* send $2.5 billion a year from Japan to Brazil[122]. Remittances from Japan are by far the highest amounts per worker sent to Latin American countries from anywhere in the world.

This migratory reflux made the nikkei conscious of their deep Brazilianess for the first time. Although the nikkei have the same physical characteristics as the Japanese, they do not understand Japanese customs and have serious problems with the Japanese language, mostly in the area of reading and writing. Consequently, it is often cited an identity conflict, since the nikkei immigrants consider themselves Brazilian in Japan, while they are called Japanese in

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[121] According to a research developed at the Center for Information and Assistance to Workers in Foreign Countries (CIATE - *Centro de Informação e Apoio ao Trabalhador no Exterior*), the *dekassegui* received in Brazil from 3 to 7 reference-salaries.
[122] Available at http://www.iadb.org/exr/prensa/images/RoundTablesFEB2003.pdf, accessed on 9.20.2003.

Brazil. The result is the creation of mixed standards of behavior[123], while maintaining a differentiated ethnic identity[124].

Regarding nikkei ethnic Buddhism, despite the possibility of this intense contact with Japanese culture and the potential for reevaluation of their inheritance, the *dekassegui* phenomenon has also been responsible for a marked loss of members in the Japanese religions in Brazil, particularly in the most traditional temples. Moreover, the increasing integration and generational change, along with the death of many immigrants, had already resulted in increased concern with survival in some Buddhist temples. These factors increased the search for adaptation in many traditional temples for their own survival. However, the strategy of adaptation in the more ethnic temples, has more often attracted Japanese descendants. This is an important point of distinction between contemporary ethnic Buddhism and the Japanese new religions. The new religious movements have been more adapted and thus often attract Brazilians, even if the administration board is dominated by nikkei, whereas in the case of ethnic Buddhism this effort has rarely existed. The exceptions to this pattern seems to be only in some scattered and controversial initiatives in the Zen ethnic temples that have attracted Brazilians and were later the seed for new groups, and a reasonable number of sympathizers in the temple of Koyasan Shingon in the city of Suzano. Both will later be described in the subsequent chapters concerning intellectualized Buddhism and karmic Buddhism.

The following section will be explore the general characteristics of the present practice of nikkei ethnic Buddhism, through field research with cited institutions, including interviews and rituals observation. Other information sources were also the analysis of the temple activities program, publications and the presence of groups in the media.

5. Ethnic Nikkei Buddhism: Continuity and Generation Change

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[123] For the mixed cultural patterns of *dekasseguis*, see Kawamura 1999: 211-221.
[124] See Carvalho(2) 2000 and Kawamura 1999 for the description of the mutual difference statements between the *dekassegui* and the Japanese.

In Brazil, traditional Japanese Buddhism was transformed into nikkei Buddhism, through a combination of Japanese and Brazilian patterns based on the nikkei as an ethnic group. nikkei Buddhism developed from religious practice centered on the Japanese festivals and funeral ceremonies, since these aspects were still important to the majority of the groups. Moreover, the Buddhist temple also functions as a nikkei cultural center, emphasizing the Japanese side of the nikkei ethnic identity. On the other hand, confirming the cycle proposed by Mullins, many temples faced a significant reduction in the number of followers and monks. They have had to find new ways and motivation for social existence, given the death of immigrants and the cultural and structural integration of their descendants.

As cultural centers, the temples have held activities that are aligned with Japanese culture. Practically all the temples offer activities that are not directly associated with religion, such as Japanese language courses, karaokê, ikebana, Japanese dance and theater, and even martial arts such as karatê and kendô. For many, including Brazilians, these activities make the religious and doctrinal aspect of the temples seem secondary. The social justification for temple existence and its history are the connections with Japanese culture.

Although these activities attract some converts to nikkei Buddhism, generally the Buddhist aspects are diluted and not distinguishable from nikkei identity. In some cases, small groups of Brazilians exist in the ethnic temples, a majority of them being sympathizers. These congregations are rarely parallel in the sense of an absence of interaction, despite the clear existence of activities that are more directed toward Brazilians or nikkei. These activities vary according to the availability of monks and the absence of conflicts within the nikkei community. Sometimes the activities are financed with a participation tax, which guarantees their continuation. They attract those interested in the Japanese culture or in an alternative religious practice. Often they have an intellectual interest or in they are in search of an esoteric status. In the ethnic temples, the participation of Brazilians occurs through meditation or retreats (in the case of Zen) or with the offering of consultations and ceremonies for the resolution of problems (as is the case of esoteric Buddhism).

As a general rule, however, nikkei effort at adaptation has not been accompanied through an ethnic opening. It has been more motivated by the boundaries that define the nikkei group as a result of the cultural and linguistic change. Often the adaptation and translation of nikkei Buddhism has been aimed only at Japanese descendants and not at

Brazilians. These factors of resistance and organizational limitations often generated a small tendency for doctrinal adaptation in the Brazilian environment. Brazilians interested in Buddhism must appreciate and learn the nikkei behavior pattern in these temples. This sometimes assumes the difficulties of a cultural conversion because ethnic matters and religious aspects are not clearly distinguishable for the majority of nikkei and the nikkei patterns and value judgments remain as the group criteria. This strategy reflects the resistance that still exists to the dominant trend of assimilation.

In this context, the schools of Pure Land offer paradigmatic examples. The interest of Brazilians in the Pure Land Buddhism (Jôdoshû as much as the Jôdo Shinshû ramifications) is less observable, even if Amida practices attracted intellectuals that were key figures for the early spread of Buddhism outside the nikkei community. Inside the Jôdo Shinshû schools in Brazil (Nishi and Higashi), a concern with linguistic and cultural reorientation has appeared only in the last few years. This is because they present the larger structure of temples and the greatest number of followers in the context of traditional Buddhism, but they have lost a great number of followers in the last years. One strategy in some temples is to offer meditation based in contemplation sutras from the Pure Land, but this activity, not orthodox in the Pure Land context, still finds interruptions and resistance in the communities[125]. Another alternative was to create small spaces in which interested Brazilians could learn the Pure Land doctrine through the offering of courses (sometimes paid, as an alternative that established a more continuous financing and find more institutional support). This is what happened with the Jôdo Shinshû in São Paulo city, which is as much the Nishi as the Higashi branch.

The role of these temples rather reflects a separate ethnic valuation, reflecting the difficulty of nikkei inclusion in the Brazilian national identity. In this sense, it is interesting to compare the nikkei ethnic temples in Brazil with the evolution of similar temples in the USA[126], where there was previous Japanese immigration. *Despite* and *due* to tension points within the majority society, which culminated in the experience of concentration camps during the Second World War, the *simultaneous* option for a US-Americanization and the preservation of an ethnic identity was clearer. Brazil has other ethnic relations and with a

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[125] Cf. Matsue 2002.
[126] This is the case of the Buddhist Churches of America, who already have 100 years of adaptation but they are still constituted in their majority by US-American nikkei, cf. Tanaka 1999 and Bloom 1998.

trend toward multiple religious practice, has had other difficulties to maintain an ethnic space associated to nikkei Buddhism. Although ethnic identification and nikkei characterization inside the Brazilian society persists, their social organization through separate institutions is not always stimulated, which characterizes the Brazilian melting pot. Ethnicity is frequently not understood as it is in European and US-American multicultural environments through hyphens or conscious identification with two different cultures. These aspects make the strategies of adaptation more ambiguous with the generational and ethnic change in Brazil.

The reasons for this survival strategy centered on descendants instead of Brazilians, and the differences of Brazil to other contexts, can be found in an analysis of the interaction between the nikkei and Brazilians. In this sense, one basic factor for the adaptation of an immigrant religion to another context is the historical and existing attitude evaluation. Relational asymmetry between the two groups due to a supposed cultural superiority or existing social or economic differences, significantly affects the adaptation effort of the immigrant group. As a result, the cultural contacts between religions are hardly generalized. They vary according to the historical situation and the way the two groups analyze themselves. Adaptations are developed in accordance with this dynamic process of mutual appreciation. In comparison with the USA and Europe, Brazil is a social environment with different ethnic relationships and evaluations, which has a role in the adaptation of Buddhism[127].

A general difference is in the fact that Brazil has a high level of social inequality and serious deficiencies in social services such as health, education and security. The discussion about Buddhism in the context of the Third World or underdeveloped countries in the West still has not been sufficiently described and analyzed, with Brazil being an important example.

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[127] An example of a nikkei view from the ethnic confrontation and its influence in the Buddhist adaptation was the commemoration of 100 years from the Agreement of Friendship between Brazil and Japan, that produced a symposium at the University of São Paulo with the subtle title "The contribution of Buddhism for the Order and Progress in Brazil" (port. "*A Contribuição do Budismo para a Ordem e Progresso do Brasil"*). The symposium was centered on the realization of order and progress, the lemma from the Brazilian flag, through the Japanese Buddhist contribution. Moreover, in the nikkei general community, frequently a ethnic valorization assumes an more explicit character, as in the words of one state representative of São Paulo, Hatiro Shimomoto, in another symposium about the future of the nikkei community, published in book: "The more important thing above all is that we have pride from our face, from our origin. I believe that the Japanese is the best people of the world. We want to improving Brazil with our participation." (Ninomiya 1996: 101).

In the case of ethnic Buddhism these aspects affect religious adaptation through available material resources, the necessity for more security in the temples, the economic sustainability of some activities and in the focus of social assistance in demanding areas. Generally, Buddhist groups find themselves between a *selective* closeness and openness in their relationship with Brazilian society. Because of its ethnic character, a nikkei Buddhism tendency is that the main benefits of social assistance belong to their own ethnic community.

One example of the influence of these social factors is the Jôdoshû order in Brazil. When asked about the differences between the temples in Japan and Brazil, a monk at the temple in São Paulo remarked that in Brazil the temple doors must stay closed and the structure should be modified in order to improve the security. Activities oriented for Brazilians are not developed, because of insufficient time and some resistance from the community. However, all 800 nikkei families are visited each year by the monks and as a result many descendants remain members of the temple. Funeral ceremonies are the most requested services, but many other communitarian activities are presented, such as karaokê festivals and marriages[128]. Two social institutions from the initiatives of the Jôdoshû order, the Kodomo no somo, were initiated in São Paulo, one initially destined to be for children with mental diseases and Wajunkai, an asylum in Maringá in the state of Paraná, whose mission was to old-aged nikkei[129]. Despite the initial Buddhist orientation, these entities have independent management and activities, accepting the participation of groups or individuals. The Kodomo no somo was created to attend nikkei children, but today it is also open to Brazilians. The asylum was created to assist the immigrants that did not establish a family in Brazil. It was expanded in the last few years, after donations from nikkei and a contribution from the city hall of Maringá.

Another issue that arises from the interaction between nikkei and Brazilians is that the majority of the temple leaders affirmed the existence of nikkei who hold resistances against

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[128] An increasing trend verified at the Buddhist temples. In contrast with the popularity of Christian marriages among the Japanese youth, in Brazil a Buddhist marriage is the described as exotic and different.

[129] Since its presence in Brazil, the Jôdoshû mission associated its religious work with social assistance. The order had as its founder the monk Ryoshin Hasegawa in Brazil, who defended an emphasis in social assistance. In his view, the mission in Brazil should be concentrated in tripod education, Buddhism and social assistance.

activities more directed to Brazilians, or even sectors that are clearly against an ethnic opening[130]. One aspect of this restriction, associated often as an ethnic differentiation, refers to the financial support of the temples. Something appointed by almost all leaders and nikkei interviewed about ethnic Buddhism is that the Brazilians do not have the habit of a voluntary contribution to the maintenance of temples. Therefore, in almost all temples the nikkei are the only economic suppliers. This reinforced the argument of those that argue that the temples should be preserved as a nikkei cultural center and must be based in family religious practice and the worship of ancestors. Real Brazilian Buddhists are small in number, and most would have only a scattered religious interest and often do not contribute to the community. Perhaps due to these factors, the ethnic element is still determinate for power relations and for the administration of temples. In practice, due to the fact that the nikkei retain political control, the preservation of the memory and nikkei culture are the emphasized aspects. This diminishes the religious aspects and a more profound impact in Brazilian society. Consequently, despite there being Brazilian sympathizers, until now the strategy of ethnic Buddhism survival has focused on continuity through the nikkei families who already participate in the temples. The role of the temple then is to preserve Japanese influence on the ethnic identity of nikkei, something that at some degree can live on in some of the descendants.

In many ethnic temples, instead of there being truly parallel congregations of immigrants and converts as described by Numrich, there is something similar but made up of descendants. Each is determined by different generations and by the progressive adaptation to Brazil. These congregations of generations can be observed not only through interviews, but also in the program of the main temples, which shows the different group activities. Although special activities for youth are a normal occurrence in all religious communities, in the case of nikkei temples it is possible to observe a more abrupt transition and generation conflict, because the new generations grew up with another mother language and more influence from

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[130] Accusations of some prejudice have already appreared in the somewhat strange use of the Japanese word *gaijin* (foreigner) by many nikkei, which they use in reference to Brazilians. There are moreover more explicit accusations of racism, such as the recent exit of the Brazilian nun Coen from the direction of the Sôtô Zen Busshinji temple in the city of São Paulo, something which was broadly publicized in the media. For more details about the internal tensions and accusations that involved her retirement, see among other sources the interview "Nun without a temple" (port. *"Monja sem Templo"*), Magazine TPM n. 4 and the newspaper report "Community comes together to defend 'dismissed' nun" (port. *"Comunidade se reúne para defender monja 'demitida'"*), in the Jornal Nippo-Brasil n. 91.

the values of Brazilian culture. The generation of pioneers, and many from the second generation (jap. *nissei*), prefer to use the Japanese language for communication, while the majority of the descendants from newer generations understand only Portuguese. In some temple periodicals, such as the Nishi Hoganji, the two languages present different news and trends for their different audiences. Generally, for older nikkei the traditional arts and the history of immigrants in Brazil are important elements, whereas youth activities are directed toward group meetings and the maintenance of a nikkei space through scouts, sporting activities, Japanese courses or even feast days. For the youth, the spiritual aspects of Buddhism are frequently a secondary element. Buddhism is described as a religion for the old-aged, something proven by the fact that funeral and ancestor rites are the most requested ceremonies. Some descendants even develop or are attracted to more contemplative activities, particularly those that develop a more intellectualized interest. However, the majority see the religious practices as a family tradition or an obligation. As a rule, many devotes perform the rites in order to avoid the misfortunes that an absence of the ancestors worship could bring.

In conclusion, even today nikkei Buddhism is practiced as the cultivation of an ethnic identity, through ancestral reverence and the celebration of the achievements of Japanese immigrants. Nowadays, with a few exceptions, the temples provide Brazilians a place to appreciate and understand Japanese and nikkei culture more so than a place for religious practice in the Brazilian environment. With the permanence of a nikkei identity, though transformed through newer generations, the social survival of an ethnic Buddhism seems very likely. Following the dynamic changes that have occurred through ethnic interaction and generation change, it is problable a smaller structure and the loss of devotees in the future.

Chapter 4 - Other Communities of Ethnic Buddhism: Chinese and Korean

1. Introduction

In recent decades, there has been a significant stream of Korean and Chinese immigrants into Brazil, adding new ethnic Buddhist communities to existing ones founded through Japanese immigration. Although one Korean Buddhist temple remains active, most Koreans that were Buddhist now attend Protestant churches, mainly because of the assistance they were offered after their arrival to Brazil. The importance of Chinese Buddhism is more notable. Chinese Buddhist activity was identified as early as 1964, but only from the 1980s on did their presence intensify in Brazil. Accompanying the Chinese Diaspora around the world, immigrants from Taiwan brought groups with a global presence, such as the Fo Guang Shan (eng. Light's Mountain of Buddha), which attracted some Brazilians interested in Chinese Buddhism. There are few studies about the development and adaptation strategies of these temples, despite the fact that Brazil has the largest community of Koreans and Chinese in Latin America. They are concentrated in the southeast and southern region of the country, mainly in São Paulo.

In this chapter, the aim is to introduce the history of Chinese and Korean immigration in Brazil and to describe the existing Buddhist groups. Moreover, we will identify the teaching and doctrinal emphasis of the immigrants and their descendants, observable in the practices of Chinese Buddhism in Brazil. The independent temples or those with weak global relationships are mainly based in the immigrant community, which have more restricted strategies of adaptation and survival. In contrast, a wider adaptation can be found in the groups that have a global presence, particularly the Fo Guang Shan. Even though the number of Brazilians in Korean and Chinese Buddhism is small, Fo Guang Shan has actively promoted activities for Brazilians and has ambitious plans for progressive development. Already attracting Brazilians by its practices, Fo Guang Shan offers an increasing alternative to the Japanese schools. This chapter will also show Fo Guang Shan's appeal to sympathizers of Chinese Buddhism and its organizational structure, which seeks to attract Brazilians and the Chinese simultaneously.

2. Korean and Chinese Immigrants in Brazil

2.1 Chinese in the Brazil Colony and Empire

The Chinese are probably the oldest immigrants from the Far East in Brazil. There is even an hypothesis of the presence of Chinese in America before the European discovery. It is difficult to provide scientific verification of this, but some defend the account that in 458 a ship with Chinese Buddhist monks arrived in what is present day Mexico, establishing a cultural exchange with the Aztecs in that period[131]. In Brazil, there exists some evidence of the presence and influence of Chinese in the colonial period, even though their numbers were surely small and their impact difficult to evaluate. Due to the intense exchange between the colonies of Portugal in Asia, which originated in the maritime routes for merchandise and slave commerce, some Chinese settled in Brazil and diverse Chinese artifacts have been found from the Brazilian colonial period.

Initially brought to begin the plantation of tea, hundreds of Chinese disembarked in Rio de Janeiro in 1810[132]. Subsequently, during the monarchy, the possibility of Chinese immigration appeared as a substitute for slave labor from Africa. As formerly described, in the 19th century, Brazilian society, which was based on slavery and agriculture, experienced external and internal pressures to abolish the slave trade. In 1845, the Aberdeen Law was approved, which permitted the English navy to impound slave ships, many of which were sailing secretly. Due to this prohibition, some farmers and the government began to consider immigration as a solution to this problem. The Chinese were seen as an alternative labor force due to the progressive liberty of the African slaves[133]. It was estimated that European immigration would not provide sufficient numbers for this economic necessity. Consequently, around 1854 hundreds of Chinese were brought in an experiment to replace slaves with

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[131] For a bibliography about this hypothesis and its symbolic importance for the Chinese in the USA, see Chandler 1998: 14-16.
[132] Specifically about the tea culture, see Yang(1) 1995.
[133] Cf. Lesser 2000: 42.

contracted workers[134]. In 1882, the Company of Commerce and Chinese Immigration was founded. It had the support of government and the intention of bringing thousands of Chinese to Brazil. Through this company, around 1,000 Chinese arrived initially to work in a mine in São João Del Rei, in the State of Minas Gerais[135]. The immigration of thousands of Chinese, however, did not occur until the end of the 20th century. The main reason for this was the fear in China that the immigrants would be submitted to similar conditions of the African slaves. As described in the former chapter, there also existed among Brazilians the fear that Chinese immigrants would not assimilate into Brazilian society and thus not contribute to the desired "europeanization" of the Brazilian race, an ideal advanced through racial scientific theories in that period. This mutual negative perspective was confirmed in the journey of businessman Tong King Sing to Brazil in 1883. In 1893, 475 Chinese entered Brazil, recruited in China and sent to Brazil in a German ship called Tetardos, despite Chinese and English protests[136]. At the beginning of the 20th century, according to the Museum of Immigration in São Paulo, the first official entrance of Chinese in São Paulo occurred. In August of 1900, 107 people disembarked in Rio de Janeiro for the city of Matão. In the end, Chinese presence in Brazil in the 19th century had sad results. With few possibilities of a return to China, many of the immigrants ended up on the streets of Rio de Janeiro, victims of racial prejudice and poverty[137].

Although the actual number of Chinese that immigrated to Brazil in the 19th century was limited, its importance should be considered in the context of the developing Brazilian national identity. Chinese immigration in the 19th century and its public debate had a paradigmatic role in the positive and negative arguments of Brazilians regarding Asian immigrants. As stated before, an eugenic politic and ideology emerged in Brazil at this time. According to this view, Brazil would be better off to appropriate European culture. Otherwise, Brazil would be impure and underdeveloped due to the huge presence of Africans. Defenders of this view argued that Brazilian racial impurity would be increased even more with Asian immigration, or that these immigrants would build isolated communities that would work against a desired development of a Brazilian race. The fight against this racial paradigm and

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[134] For more details about Chinese immigration in Brazil in the 19th century, see also Lesser 2000: 37-69 and Leite 1999: 111-124. For a summary, see Hui 1992: 126-131.
[135] Cf. Lesser 2000: 58.
[136] Cf. Lesser 2000: 58-68.
[137] Cf. Leite 1999: 123-124, Lesser 2000: 70

prejudice was one of the great challenges for all non-European immigrants in the future[138], as was described before with the Japanese. Only after the 1930s did the Brazilians develop an alternative paradigm with the creation of a mestizo identity.

Moreover, what was and still is an open question is the religious experience of these Chinese immigrants in the Colony and Empire. They were possibly the first Buddhists in Brazil. Even without institutional help, they were able to bring their culture and religion from China. According to João Teixeira Leite, the Chinese certainly influenced the religious esthetics in the colonial period and in the monarchy, even bringing Buddhist influences into the Catholic churches[139]. However it is very difficult to affirm more than the esthetic influence verifiable through existing images, and very little is known about the two to three thousand Chinese in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo at the end of the 19th century. It is probable that the minor presence of Chinese Buddhism in Brazil would be qualitatively analogous with the joss houses that appeared on a greater scale in the West coast of the USA[140].

2.2 New Migratory Streams since the 1960s

Although some prisoners from the Korea War (1950-1953) disembarked in Brazil as refugees, Korean immigration intensified only after 1963, due to the Korean Civil War[141]. The first immigrants were farmers who settled in São Paulo. In some cases, the immigration was clandestine and the immigrants ultimately wanted to immigrate later to the United States. Living mainly in the great cities, many of the immigrants established themselves in the textile and commercial branches. The best estimates say that around 100,000 Koreans and their descendants are now living in Brazil, a great part of them in the city of São Paulo[142]. The Korean presence in the textile industry and commerce is significant, with more than 70% from the community involved with these markets. According to statistics from the prefecture office of São Paulo, around a third of women's fashions produced in Brazil have their origin in a

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[138] Cf. Lesser 2000: 69-70.
[139] Cf. Leite 1999: 13.
[140] The joss houses, as were called the Chinese shrines, combining Taoist, folk and Buddhist devotions and proliferated at the end of the 19th century. See Yang(2) 2002 and Chandler 2002:48-49.
[141] Cf. Choi 1991: 28.
[142] Cf. Lesser 2000: 295.

business directed by Koreans or their descendants. It is also estimated that they own more than 1,000 textile manufacturing companies in the district of Bom Retiro and approximately 800 more in the neighborhood of Brás[143].

At present, there is also a significant number of Chinese immigrants in Brazil. The beginning of this immigration route began with the emergence of socialism in China and the foundation of the Popular Republic of China (Taiwan) in 1949. In Brazil, the great majority of Chinese are dedicated to commerce or professional careers. The number of Chinese and their descendants in Brazil was estimated by a census of 1987 as 100,000[144]. This census also showed that by this period around 50% of the Chinese immigrants had settled in São Paulo and around 30% in Rio de Janeiro. At present, the number of Chinese and their descendants in Brazil is estimated at around 190,000; 120,000 of which are in the São Paulo State, many of them still being legalized. In the last Brazilian Government amnesty for clandestine foreigners, which occurred in 1998 and 1999, 9,229 Chinese immigrants were regularized making the Chinese the most benefited nationality[145]. In the last few years, however, the economic boom of the Chinese economy slowed Chinese immigration to Brazil. Some immigrants have even been returning to China, given the new economic opportunities of that region.

3. Korean and Chinese Buddhist Temples in Brazil

3.1 General Aspects

In general, a comparison between Japanese immigration and the Chinese and Korean arrival of immigrants shows that there are significant differences between the processes of interaction with Brazilian society, with consequences for Buddhist practice and the adaptation process.

Japanese immigration is associated with a more conflicted history, which resulted from the tensions of World War II and from the nationalist formation of most of the Japanese immigrants. This did not occur with the Koreans or Chinese and their descendants, since their

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[143] Cf. http://milpovos.prefeitura.sp.gov.br, accessed on 8.5.2003.
[144] Census cited in Hui 1992: 144. It was published in English as "Overseas Chinese Economy Year Book", Editorial Committee, Taipei, Taiwan, 1988.
[145] Cf. Folha de São Paulo, Caderno Cotidiano, C4, 7.23.2000.

immigration was due to more recent conflicts and wars in Asia. Being inserted in a more global world, this origin in a Diaspora context produced a social interaction more favorable to integration. Consequently, a different ethnic conscience has arisen. In the Korean case, Korean Protestantism played a decisive role for the new immigrants in Brazil. The churches were the center for ethnic social contact and immigrant support. Regarding the Chinese, Buddhism was certainly one important element in the religious sphere of the Chinese identity. Given that the Chinese Diaspora has occurred since the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949), a new significance of religious concepts is something to be expected in the confrontation with western concepts and with the emersion of new identities[146]. For the Chinese, the first challenge is to find a common base, given the great range of languages and political, economic and ethnic differences that constitute the immigrants, from Taiwan to continental China and Hong Kong[147].

With this identity issue, comes a reevaluation of the Chinese cultural inheritance and its religious concepts. Consequently, diverse reforms were imposed in the practice of Chinese Buddhism, showing the interaction and the effort of adaptation in western and local cultures. The history of Chinese religions shows a combination of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism, along with many folk traditions, in an environment in which multiple and mutual influences are a common phenomenon. Syncretism with other religions seems a common practice in Chinese Buddhism[148]. Another important characteristic is its non-congregational family oriented religious practice, often independent from the presence in ceremonies or regular visits to temples[149]. In comparison to Japanese Buddhism, it is also

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[146] For a description of this process among the Chinese immigrants in the USA, see Yang(2) 2002.

[147] About facts from the political, linguistic and ethnic diversity of the Chinese population in the USA, see Yang(2) 2002: 74-76. In Brazil, there are not quantitative facts about an internal diversity inside the Chinese community, although this fact is qualitative recognizable. According to the place of origin, one can distinguish three geographical groups, associated with two groups of economic occupation: the immigrants from Shangai are dedicated to the industry and to the exterior commerce; the immigrants from Taiwan and Kuangtung are mainly dedicated to restaurants. Cf. Hui 1992: 144.

[148] A combination with Taoist contents is observed specializing in the devotions and in the formation of Ch'an Buddhism. See Jikido 1994 for the formation of the Chinese Buddhist canon and Ching 1993: 205ff for a description of the syncretic tendencies in the Chinese religions. Syncretism and religious combinations will be the theme in the last two chapters, where the syncretism inside the Chinese Buddhism will be explained in more detail.

[149] For remarks about the influence of different levels of organization in the practice of Asian religiosity inside ethnic groups in the USA, particularly the practices outside the institutions until independent centers and transnational organizations, see Min 2002:15-18, 27-29.

possible to notice a tendency toward a higher degree of blending inside the Buddhist temples, throughout history and in present practice as well. Syncretistic practices between the schools of Pure Land, Ch'an and Tien'tai are a common phenomenon. Different ways of Buddhist practice share the same space in the case of Chinese Buddhism, even if meditation is more associated with mystical and monastic practices and the Pure Land and devotional elements are more related to the popular aspect[150].

As in nikkei Buddhism, it is also possible to see the decisive importance of the group reference in the international context. With respect to this point, it is possible to reflect on three levels of international association found in ethnic Buddhist communities in Brazil: independence, mission, or being part of a global structure. In all the cases, strategies of ethnic perspective are of great importance, through globalization or localization. Within nikkei Buddhism in Brazil, a important division occurs between the missions and the new religious movements, who abandoned an audience directed toward an ethnic discourse and had a tendency toward active proselytizing. This promoted an adaptation process with a global orientation. The nikkei ethnic temples are organized mainly as mission, even if some temples have an increasing international exchange and the monks and priests are normally educated in Japan. Some Chinese or Korean ethnic temples, however, have a more independent organization with less financial and political support from foreign resources. Generally they are based and maintained by the ethnic community, existing through the efforts of an independent monk who leads the community spiritually, and an elected board of laymen who handle the administration of activities. From a structural point of view, independent temples are not presented as branches of a mother temple, as in case of the several Japanese missions, neither are they representations of global organizations such as the Fo Guang Shan. For independent groups, it is more difficult for adaptation to occur through generations, mainly with the Brazilian environment having an assimilatory tendency. Without foreign support, there are also more difficulties in the formation of monks and less contact with an organization in an Asian country. In such cases the community's survival can be more difficult, given that the new generations do not understand the social function of the religious group very well, because they are already structurally integrated in the local context. A group more globally established offers not only more financial and doctrinal support, but can also

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[150] See also Ching 1993: 143.

support a more international framework for religious meanings. These factors promote a new significance for the group and even attract local converts.

3.2 The Buddhist Korean Community

In one of the few studies about the Korean community in Brazil, Choi describes the important role of Protestant churches not only for the Korean community as a center for the ethnic community, but also in the psychological and financial assistance to the new immigrants that arrived clandestinely[151]. Therefore, despite the fact that a Catholic Korean group immigrated in 1965, most of the Korean immigrants were Protestants or were converted to Protestantism. As a consequence of divisions and conflicts in the community, many new Korean churches also emerged in Brazil. Due to the great importance of the Protestant churches to a significant number of Korean immigrants, the presence of Korean Buddhism in Brazil is relatively small. Through the support that the Protestant churches offered to the Korean immigrants, many Buddhists were converted to Christianity in the first years of their settlement in Brazil[152]. The church was the main center of the community in a comparable role to that exercised by the Japanese school in the case of Japanese immigration.

Because of the condemnation of simultaneous religious practices inside the Korean Protestant churches in Brazil, Buddhism was often avoided or rejected. In 1983, a branch of the Kwan Um school in Brazil was founded through the efforts of the Korean monk Young Un, who had lived in the USA. However, this temple was closed in 1988. Many of the Korean Buddhists have since then associated with the temple Jin Gak Sa, founded in 1984 and temporarily associated with the Chogye order in Korea for some years. At present, the Jin Gak Sa appears to be the only Korean temple in Brazil, although some meditation centers exist in Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte with Korean influence. These centers periodically receive visits from Heila Downey, a leader from the Dharma Center in South Africa[153].

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[151] Cf. Choi 1991: 158.

[152] Cf. Choi 1991: 175. The same aspects were related in interviews held at the Jin Gak Sa temple.

[153] For more details about the activities of Heila Downey and her Center in Robertson, South Africa, belonging to the Kwan Um School of the Korean Buddhism, see Downey 1999: 53-54.

Despite its intentions to open activities of meditation to Brazilians and Korean descendants, the Jin Gak Sa temple has developed mainly into an ethnic center for Korean culture, religiously centered on weekly ceremonies of chanting and activities for the Korean community in Brazil. Around 150 to 200 persons frequent the temple, the majority being of Korean origin or descendant. After the presence of temporary monks, the Jin Gak Sa temple presently has a permanent monk, named Sung Hwan. The Buddhist Korean community now tries to attract Koreans who were converted to Protestantism and there are also plans for more activities for youth and for Brazilians. Many converts that are attracted again to Buddhism are older immigrants that value the traditional influence of the Korean culture. Some Confucian values, such as the respect for parents and the old-aged immigrants, have been more emphasized among the Korean Buddhists. The number of these old-aged immigrants, however, is quickly being reduced and many members of the new generations are educated in the Korean churches through the great number of schools and activities that they offer.

3.3 The Presence of Chinese Buddhism

3.3.1 Independent Religious Communities

If only a small presence of Korean Buddhism can be verified in Brazil, the same cannot be said about Chinese Buddhism. Already in 1964 the first Chinese temple in Brazil was founded, located in São Paulo. This temple, at present the Mituo Amitabha temple, belongs to the Sukhavati school and has been led by Master Chi Ming in Brazil for more than 30 years. The main ceremonies of this temple are directed to practices of the Pure Land School. After the death of the pioneer monk Chi Ming, the temple remained for a time without spiritual leadership, but this situation changed some years later with the arrival of a new leader. Around 60 to 70 persons frequent the temple, though on festival days and important ceremonies, this number varies from 100 to 200. Every Sunday ceremonies based on sutra chanting are performed and a ceremony of regret and purification is held monthly. Every Saturday the temple has meditation sessions oriented mainly for Brazilians, but few people attend.

Since the mid-1980s, other new Chinese Buddhist temples have been founded in Brazil, often through the institutionalization of existing initiatives. In 1984, the provisional Temple Kwan Yin was inaugurated in the oriental neighborhood of Liberdade in São Paulo.

Additionally, a larger temple and the Center for Chinese Culture were projected and in 1987 the magnificent construction of the traditional Kwan Yin temple was initiated. The construction concluded in 1994, becoming one of the biggest Buddhist temples in Brazil. The temple has two main pavilions for the practice of Taoism and Buddhism, both practiced by Chinese followers. Although around 150 people visit the temples on a normal weekend, the Kwan Yin temple has little interaction with Brazilian society. Ceremonies based on sutra recitation and communitarian Chinese lunches on weekends are the most important activities offered.

In 1993, the Temple Tzong Kwan was opened by the Chinese monk Pu Hsien in São Paulo. Its activities of meditation have already attracted some Brazilians. One of the main points emphasized by Pu Hsien is vegetarianism and the association of health with correct food and time fasting. The temple in Brazil was built with financial resources from the immigrant community and donations from Taiwan, and other existing temples from Master Pu Hsien in Paraguay and Argentina. The main social role is a cultural center for Chinese culture, with meditation on Saturdays and devotion ceremonies on Sundays. The temple also offers corresponding activities such as a community lunch every Sunday and courses in ikebana, cooking and Chinese. Around 60 followers attend each weekend.

3.3.2 Global Organizations

In contrast with the Korean group and the independent Chinese groups, which have resulted from the organization of their respective ethnic communities in Brazil, there are Chinese movements established as representatives of more global organizations. They are more directly subordinate to an order in Taiwan, often managing contact between the associated international representations. Among these, it is possible to mention a Brazilian office of the world movement Tsu Chi, dedicated to the donation of equipment for hospitals and medical and assistance visits. Despite its global presence, the Tsu Chi office in Brazil is relatively small and almost exclusively dedicated to social assistance and fundraising. It is more limited to devotee's meetings in the religious area.

The Chinese Buddhist movement with the most Brazilians and largest presence in the media is the Fo Guang Shan, with its ambitious objectives in Brazil and global presence. Fo Guang Shan is a Buddhist Chinese order that was founded by the Master Hsing Yün. He was

born in 1926 in Chiangtu, province of Chiangsu in China, and entered a monastery at 12 years old. Mentioned in the texts of Fo Guang Shan the 48th patriarch of the school Lin Chi (jap. *Rinzai*) of Ch'an[154], he left continental China in 1949 and arrived in Taiwan, founding the Fo Guang Shan movement in 1967. In a relatively short time Fo Guang Shan reached an important position in the social and religious life of Taiwan through activities that included social assistance, TV and radio programs and the establishment of Buddhist magazines, museums, libraries, colleges and universities. The order has a higher number of nuns and the average age of clerics is low, making it a young monastic order. Beyond Buddhist religious services, the commitment in social assistance, education and the promotion of Chinese culture are important principles of the organization.

Since the end of the 1980s, Fo Guang Shan has expanded to all continents, having developed quickly in the countries that have a Chinese immigrant community already. Today Fo Guang Shan is considered not only one of the biggest and more organized orders of Chinese Buddhism, but also in all of Buddhism, growing from having practically no center in foreign countries to around one hundred[155]. According to the 1997 statistical data of Fo Guang Shan, there are 95 temples outside Taiwan, with 27 in Asia, 13 in Oceania, 19 in Europe, 7 in Africa, 24 in North America (19 in the USA) and 5 in Latin America[156]. The Buddhist initiative in Africa is being pioneered in western countries, but there are still difficulties of adaptation and financial sustenance[157]. Despite a global presence, Chandler shows through the number of followers, geographical location of monks and their fundraising strategies, that the apparent internationalization of Fo Guang Shan is smaller than the number of temples in each continent might represent. Moreover, since it is strongly associated with Chinese global immigration, Fo Guang Shan is still ethnically and culturally Chinese[158].

In 1992, the BLIA organization was founded by Master Hsing Yün. BLIA (Buddha's Light) is a community of lay devotees from the Fo Guang Shan temples, who organize laymen activities associated with the temples and promote the activities associated with

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[154] See for example the biographical notes in the booklets from Fo Guang Shan "When we see clearly", "On becoming a Bodhisattva" and "Living the Dharma", written by Master Hsing Yün.
[155] Cf. Chandler 2002: 51.
[156] Cf. Chandler 2002: 51-52.
[157] Cf. Li 1999.
[158] Cf. Chandler 2002: 54-55.

Chinese culture and social engagement. The centers of BLIA are divided into regional and local chapters, depending on their importance and the number of followers. Also in 1992, their first temple in Brazil was founded in the state of São Paulo near Cotia on a small farm donated by businessman Chang Shen Kai[159]. As a result, Fo Guang Shan was definitively established in Brazil. Three nuns were sent by Master Hsing Yün and the existing facilities were adapted, resulting in a temporary temple called Zu Lai. Among these first three nuns, Chieh Chen assumed the leadership and learned Portuguese. Today she is intensely involved with adapting Buddhism for Brazilians and appears frequently in the Brazilian media by the name Master Sinceridade (a translation of her name to Portuguese, in English: "Sincerity").

At the Zu Lai temple, the activities are concentrated on the weekends. On Saturday, the main activity offered is the Ch'an meditation, attracting symphatizers, the majority of whom are Brazilians. Along with meditation, the temple also offers exercises for relaxation, Tai Chi Chuan and purification ceremonies. On Sunday, when more Chinese and their descendants attend, there are rituals performed that are associated more with chanting and the Pure Land school. The BLIA concentrates itself mainly with activities of social assistance, meditation courses and activities related to Chinese culture. The BLIA's chapter in São Paulo offers courses in the introduction to Buddhism and Chinese culture, which are held during the workdays and frequented mainly by Brazilians.

Under the leadership of nun Sinceridade, Fo Guang Shan is being expanding in Brazil. Temples were inaugurated in Rio de Janeiro (1996), Recife (1999) and in the city of Foz do Iguaçu (2000) in the Paraná State. Some of these temples are small and more intended to support the Chinese community. Associated with the temples and in Londrina there is also a BLIA chapter, organizing lay activities. In 2000, the temple leadership estimated that there were at least 300 followers in São Paulo, 200 in Foz do Iguaçu, 100 in Rio de Janeiro and 100 in Recife, together with many sympathizers. In South America, the number of monks was around eight. At present, Fo Guang Shan has finalized the construction of a magnificent headquarters that will replace the present Zu Lai temple. This newly inaugurated temple is without doubt one of the biggest Buddhist temples in Brazil, containing a monastic college that leaders hope will be an important step for the formation of an independent sangha in

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[159] Cf. Yang(1) 1995b.

Brazil. The cost of the temple was estimated at four million US dollars, 37,5% of which came from a Chinese-Brazilian businessman and the rest from the international Fo Guang Shan organization. With this temple, Fo Guang Shan has achieved in Brazil something comparable to the great, million-dollar structures like the Hsi Lai Temple (Los Angeles), the Nan Tien Temple (Wollongong, Australia), and the Nan Hua Temple (Bronkhorstspruit, South Africa), all of which have become important landmarks and tourist attractions.

With the number of Chinese already present in Brazil, one can expect an increasing Chinese influence in the future through Buddhism. This occurs mainly because the Chinese temples present new possibilities of practice and monastic formation outside the Japanese schools. Additionally, Fo Guang Shan has for the most part worked for both Buddhist ecumenism and expansion, quickly engaging itself in arguments and strategies for a Brazilian Buddhism, something that many ethnic Buddhist temples still have not decided to do.

4. Strategies of Nativization in the Chinese Buddhism

4.1 The Presence of Sympathizers

An important way of establishing contact in Chinese Buddhism is the creation of affinity links, something advanced by Stuart Chandler in Fo Guang Shan[160]. The creation of affinity is frequently related, in Chinese Buddhism, as an important way to obtain merit, depending on three components: the gift, the giver and the recipient. The best gift of all would be one's own Dharma, but if the recipient cannot appreciate Buddhist teaching, benefits that are more basic are offered. The idea is to create conditions for a future Dharma understanding, through a positive view for the reception of Buddhism, which will happen later in the future. The giver should perform the donation without attachments, but with wisdom and compassion; in a higher spiritual meaning, there is no concept of gift, giver or recipient, which requires perfect compassion. Finally, the merit attained is associated with how the recipient makes use of the gift received. The merit will be especially great if the recipient is dedicated to Buddhist practice and expansion.

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[160] Cf. Chandler 2002: 59-61.

There are distinct ways to realize these affinity links, depending on the level of participation. The first refers to general contacts in the society. For instance, a characteristic of the Fo Guang Shan is the establishment of political contacts, which also happens in Brazil [161]. In this aspect, cultural or educational links are also developed, through the organization or participation in events and seminars concerning general societal problems. These contacts in the Brazilian society contribute to each groups ability to reach out to potential Buddhists or to help to obtain an alliance with non-Buddhists, which happens through political and cultural exchanges. Within Chinese Buddhist discourse in Brazil, one Buddhist concept often cited is the Mahayana assertion that everybody has the Buda nature, independent of social class or culture. Consequently, it is sufficient that conditions and appropriate elements occur for a self-recognition as a Buddhist. It is not necessary that it happens through an exaggerated proselytizing. As a result, many temples offer activities related to cultural aspects, attracting many Brazilians through their curiosity and the exotic aspect of the Chinese temples while at the same time preserving the Chinese culture for the immigrants and their descendants. A good example of these types of activities is the temple Tzong Kwan which offers Chinese classes and a Chinese vegetarian meal on Sundays, which also happens with the practice of fasting at all temples. In the case of Fo Guang Shan, there is a constant presence in the media and contact with the Brazilian society.

Another level of participation concerns a more regular presence of sympathizers, interested in Chinese culture and alternative practices. The association of religious practice and health is an important trend in Brazil, frequently found in religious groups. Within Chinese Buddhism, alternative approaches to health are ideas shared by practically everybody who frequents the activities. For many Brazilians, practices such as meditation are associated with an esoteric and exotic atmosphere and are saluted as an alternative to traditional western medicine and urban life. For example, frequently there are references to problems like insomnia and anxiety in their publications and motivations to participate in Fo Guang Shan

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[161] At the international level, master Hsing Yün and Fo Guang Shan have made political contacts with diverse authorities, mainly in the United States, including making financial contributions to political campaigns. For a detailed description of this political exchange, see Chandler 2000, pg. 25ff. In Brazil there have also been contacts established between the Fo Guang Shan and political authorities. For example, a friendship with the governor of the State of São Paulo exists and there is an exchange between the Zu Lai temple and the authorities of Cotia. For some local authorities these interchange are also fruitful because the temples receive many visitors and frequently become tourist attractions, simultaneously attracting sympathizers to the Fo Guang Shan and those with interest in the city.

activities[162]. It should be noted that this characteristic appears also in Japanese Buddhism, especially with Zen. The Zen meditation is frequently associated with the search for a more peaceful life. It is often practiced by those who suffer from stress, insomnia or depression. The same idea also appears in the practice of Chinese Buddhism, but the associations are made with Chinese medicine (acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine), with corporal practices (Tai Chi Chuan) and food concerns (fasting and vegetarianism).

4.2 Towards Ethnic Integration: Aspects from Fo Guang Shan

4.2.1 Splitting Traditional and Lay Aspects through Structure

From an institutional point of view, the global organizations represent a structure less oriented to the ethnic community. In general, the Korean and Chinese independent temples emphasize the ethnic aspect, and only later offer activities for Brazilians. In this sense, these communities developed through a spiritual leadership and a civil board in the same temple. A different approach and coordination for Brazilians exists through more lay activities or strategies incorporated in the organization structure. An important feature for the Fo Guang Shan is the existence of a more active lay Buddhism through BLIA. The separation of the temples and BLIA is an organizational component that helps a general strategy of adaptation in many countries in which Fo Guang Shan is present. Despite the intense exchange between BLIA and the temples of Fo Guang Shan, they represent two autonomous levels of organization, one with a monastic and more traditional Chinese structure and other with more global and lay values[163].

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[162] Among her several activities, nun Sinceridade orientates a meditation group composed of patients in the Brazilian hospitals. Moreover, there are exchanges and joint activities between the Fo Guang Shan, the Traditional Association of Chinese Medicine of Brazil (AMC) and the Institute of Holistic Medicine Research (IBRAPHEMA). For the Chinese alternative health practices inside the IBRAPHEMA clinic.

[163] It is possible to observe that a similar pattern occurs in the organization of other religious groups with a oriental origin, even if many factors affect the evolution of the relationship between these two levels, even resulting in a doctrinal separation. Beyond Fo Guang Shan and BLIA one can remember the relationship between the Ramakrishna Mission and the Vedanta Society. Other examples, in this case with separation, are given by the Nichiren Shôshû and Sôka Gakkai. Understood simultaneously as a structural reorientation and an adaptation strategy, these two levels show the necessity of a religious ways of legitimacy, through monks and priests, and the importance of the laymen activities. In the weberian terminology, the otherworldly and innerworldly asceticism coexist in the same group, but with different organizations and strategies.

These characteristics resulting from internationalization are detailed in the history and information of Fo Guang Shan and BLIA, which is found in the booklets distributed by the organizations[164]. In the biography of Master Hsing Yün from the temple reports, the monastic aspect is emphasized in the lineage of Ch'an, with Master Hsing Yün being 48th in the list of patriarchs from the Lin Chi branch. It is also noted that he is the founder of the Fo Guang Shan Order, having founded several temples all around the world. In the brochures of BLIA, a second phase of the life of Master Hsing Yün began with the achievement and continuation of Fo Guang Shan for the laity and the whole world. This is developed through an effort of adaptation and interface with the society, realizing the ideal of the Pure Land.

Another way to confirm this role division in the adaptation process is to compare some choices made for the temples and BLIA presentation. Already the name BLIA indicates internationalization, since Fo Guang Shan is a Chinese name and BLIA (Buddha' s Light) is an English term. This is also reflected in the important international references of the organizations, since the central temple of Fo Guang Shan is in Taiwan and the headquarters of BLIA is in the United States. The temples are directed by monasteries and organized in departments divided by their interface with the laymen, such as in cultural activities, educational aspects and popularization. The organization of BLIA, however, is more adapted to laymen and western values. There are horizontal and vertical divisions, divided by regional centers and interests. The election of the management board is decided through democratic elections by BLIA members.

In Brazil, a division between the Zu Lai temple and BLIA in São Paulo reflects a division between the Chinese and lay aspects. The temple Zu Lai is near Cotia, a city located around 40 Km from São Paulo, in a peaceful place surrounded by greenery, which makes it more difficult to access. The BLIA chapter in São Paulo, on the contrary, is located near the center, in an urban and tense environment. Despite this, it is much easier to access for the devotees and sympathizers. This organizational division does not eliminate the spiritual aspect of the laymen. This is often especially important for converts that are more interested in Buddhism for intellectualized reasons. To complement the temple activities, the BLIA center

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[164] Cf. "Our Report: what has Fo Guang Shan achieved?" and "Epoch of the Buddha's Light (1): A Letter to Members of the BLIA", beyond booklets and pamphlets distributed by the Fo Guang Shan and BLIA in Brazil.

offers courses such as introduction to meditation, history of Buddhism, vegetarian cooking and Chinese culture. For those that could not remain in the monastic discipline of temples, there is the possibility of being a "dharma teacher", which attracts some advanced followers. With this organizational approach, Fo Guang Shan and BLIA together have a religious eclecticism that connects different styles of religious practice such as meditation, Pure Land chanting and interest in esoteric or alternative health practices. This approach also shows a structural diversity for different audiences, combining aspects from laymen groups and traditional temples and trying to maximize the possibilities of attracting potential followers.

4.2.2 Unifying around Humanistic Buddhism

In Brazil the ethnic community and resources from Taiwan guarantee the financial necessities and the structures of the temples. In this ethnic function, religious practice in Fo Guang Shan represents the known characteristic of group union, and it is difficult to distinguish between cultural and religious aspects. The weekly rites and activities are not only religious events, but also opportunities for cultural reaffirmation and social contact between the Chinese[165]. On the other hand, Fo Guang Shan also works to unify diverse tendencies inside the Chinese Diaspora. As Stuart Chandler analyzes, given the diversity of historical and political origins of the Chinese, a symbolic reconstruction of Buddhist inheritance developed. This was realized through the association of the Chinese Diaspora with Buddhist concepts cited by the Master Hsin Yün[166]. Equally important is the fact that Master Hsin Yün came from continental China and has established his order in Taiwan, which shows a traditional foundation with a simultaneous belonging to several cultures. Consequently, there is a tendency toward substitution of an ethnic belonging to an identity with more global and religious elements. This actively stimulates the adaptation process for the immigrant descendants and provides a way to attract converts.

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[165] This motivation often appears in the pamphlets of BLIA, in the part corresponding to its benefits: "These are some of the benefits that you receive from being a member of BLIA: 1-Make new friends; 2-Obtain an increase in knowledge; 3-Expand your business contacts; 4-Meet members from your locality; 5-Obtain assistance to marriage and funeral services."

[166] Cf. Chandler 2002: 59, 68. The Buddhist concepts cited refer fundamentally to impermanence, reflecting a characteristic from some Buddhist monks, who leave their established residences and live temporarily in various temples in order to realize long pilgrimages. This metaphor represents the Chinese Diaspora.

Among the existing Chinese groups in Brazil, Fo Guang Shan is the community most dedicated to local adaptation, even if other groups are also quickly recognizing this necessity. Representing a reformed Buddhism with a global presence, the transformation of the organization and religious concepts in the Fo Guang Shan will be described here in more detail. We will also explore its symbolic role for the Chinese Buddhist community[167] and how they have already adapted some religious concepts for the Brazilian context. Through the adaptation of global meanings to the Brazilian environment, Fo Guang Shan Buddhism stimulates an integration of the ethnic community in the Brazilian society, which is not observable in the traditional Japanese temples and the Korean and Chinese independent temples. In this sense, the ethnic role of Fo Guang Shan in Brazil is different from the cases of ethnic nikkei religions in Brazil.

Within the Brazilian context, they also emphasize social assistance and a Buddhist ecumenism. Despite the fact that Master Hsing Yün is sometimes described as the 48th patriarch of the *Lin chi* (jap. *Rinzai*) school of the Ch'an and although an emphasis from the Pure Land school exists in the ceremonial practiced by immigrants and their descendants, Fo Guang Shan Buddhism is described as Humanistic Buddhism. Two important features of Humanistic Buddhism are its Pure Land conception, adapted more to the values of Western culture, and its ecumenical attitude.

Indeed, the practice of the Humanistic Buddhism is defended as an association of an interior discipline with the concrete realization of the Pure Land in this world. In the Fo Guang Shan discourse, in order to establish the Pure Land in this world, this emphasis does not exclude western and global ideals such as liberty, peace, equality and human rights, combined with Buddhist ideals of respect for religion and social order. In the texts of Fo Guan Shan, Humanistic Buddhism is opposed to what is called a transcendental Buddhism, an abandonment of the world through austerities and precepts. Instead of renouncing this world, Fo Guang Shan defends Buddhism for all, which has consequences in its teaching[168]. More modern concepts of the Buddhist tradition, such as the objective of realizing the Pure Land on

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[167] Indeed, many Chinese temples, without any material in Portuguese or English, distribute the booklets from Fo Guang Shan or recommend the temple Zu Lai for interested Brazilians.
[168] "Epoch of Buddha's Light (1) - Letter to Members of the BLIA", Booklet from Fo Guang Shan wrote by Master Hsing Yün, pg. 27.

the earth, also have an important and practical aspect in the concept of affinity links, considering the cultural difficulties and the necessary time for the comprehension of Buddhism by a foreign culture. Consequently, Hsing Yün is frequently described in the publications of Fo Guang Shan as "the main architect to build the Pure Land on *this* Earth" (my emphasis)[169]. With this global and worldly concept of Pure Land, an ethnic identification is substituted for a practical work in order to realize this ideal in contact with values and local cultures. Defended as a Buddhism that has adapted and arisen for our time, this approach seeks to adapt a mythical symbol more identified with the Far East to a pattern of action and ideology with the values of western culture, that already has many of these elements, often in a secularized format. This doctrinal adaptation has resulted in a more active presence for Fo Guang Shan in the western countries.

In the case of Brazil, an important point is that this modern conception of Pure Land finds ethnic appeal and support in underdeveloped countries. The new meanings of religious concepts such as bodhisattva and Pure Land can be especially important for the interaction between the ethnic community and the majority in the society. This again indicates an important difference for countries such as Brazil with its social inequality that make the ethnic relations somewhat different from the European and US-American contexts. In Brazil, this concept of Pure Land reflects the necessity of more social engagement, something reflected in Fo Guang Shan activities. This social emphasis and assistance mirrors a country with social difficulties like Brazil, attracting sympathizers and functioning as an adaptation challenge, considering that the majority of devotees are Chinese or converts who are middle class professionals.

One illustration of this dynamic was in the commemoration of Vesak held in 2000. At this event, children of a nearby slum (*Favela do Chiclete*) and elders from an asylum were brought together for the ceremony and communitarian lunch. Many of the infants as well as the elders live near Cotia (SP), having arrived to the Zu Lai temple in a bus rented by BLIA for this annual commemoration, known as the "Christmas of Buda". They were offered various activities and a typical Chinese meal was shared with the community, mainly Chinese.

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[169] "The Essence of Buddhism", Booklet from Fo Guang Shan, with a biographical citation about the Master Hsing Yün, pg. 46.

Before the vegetarian lunch, an important moment of the day was the so-called "bath of Buda", which involves the traditional offering to Buda's child. Instructed by the devotees the children perform it with curiosity and reverence. These activities, beyond their clear social benefit, popularize and give the opportunity of a religious alternative to people who come from another social layer in Brazilian society. A child from a Brazilian slum that experiences a day filled with a party and reverence to Buda is a potential sympathizer. As stated by nun Sinceridade, in these special days, "they [the children] are proudly dressed in their best clothes, while acquiring respect and knowledge of Buddhism". At present, this social outreach has intensified with the new temple. Around 128 children frequent the monastery in order to take lessons ranging from ethics to kung-fu.

Besides this emphasis on social assistance, another feature of Humanistic Buddhism is the intention of a synthesis from different Buddhist ramifications, combining the elements of practice from Ch'an and Pure Land. This is basically a doctrinal tendency of Buddhist ecumenism from a Mahayana origin, what is already a characteristic of Chinese Buddhism. Consequently, ecumenical activities that promote a united approach of the Buddhist groups, with exception of Japanese NRMs as Sôka Gakkai or Reyûkai, has also been a focus for the Fo Guang Shan in Brazil. As previously described, the single association of Buddhist schools that exists in Brazil is the *Federação das Seitas Budistas do Brasil* (Federation of Buddhist Sects in Brazil). This Federation includes only the most traditional schools of Japanese Buddhism and is more dedicated to events inside the nikkei community. Filling in the gap, the ecumenical initiatives of Fo Guang Shan find great receptivity in Brazil.

An example of this catalytic power of Fo Guang Shan happened again in the organization of a great ceremony of Vesak in São Paulo in 2002, widely covered by the Brazilian media. In this ceremony, held in a public arena, around 5,000 people appeared and the representatives of diverse Buddhist groups were present. There was a parade and allegoric presentations of Asian countries, including the traditional offering to the Buda's child, performed by the monks, Buddhist center leaders and by the general audience. The ceremony also included the presence and active participation of the governor of São Paulo at that time, Geraldo Alckmin, a declared follower of acupuncture and Chinese medicine. With the new temple of Fo Guang Shan, that will probably include a Buddhist college and a convention center, this trend will only intensify the growing interaction of Chinese Buddhism with other

Buddhist groups in Brazil, thus increasing its importance and the ethnic integration of Chinese in Brazil.

Chapter 5 - Intellectualized Buddhism

1. Introduction

The main objectives of this chapter are to give a historical description of intellectualized Buddhism in Brazil and to discuss the use of transplantation models. In spite of the fact that Brazil has received a great number of Japanese immigrants, the attraction to Zen Buddhism as a spiritual option is something new and with very little institutionalization outside the nikkei community. Attracted towards Buddhism through readings and individual searches, people who sympathize with and are converted to this pattern of Buddhist practice belong, for the most part, to the educational and social classes at the top of the Brazilian social pyramid.

Initially searching a way of legitimization[170] in ethnic communities, beginning in the 1980s this intellectualized Buddhism has had more independence. In this period, people searched for strategies of adaptation independent from ethnic religiosity, with a major movement towards a globalized Buddhism. The consumption of material, theories and ideas imported mainly from the USA fills the general lack of philological work on Buddhist texts; the importation of globalized tendencies has succeeded after little success in the problematic legitimization through the nikkei community. Quantitatively, each one of these independent centers generally has just a few dozen regular participants. Even adding these independent centers to all the Brazilians (converted and sympathizers) found in the Japanese temples (Sôtô Zen) and Chinese (specially the Fo Guang Shan), the final number of participants of an intellectualized Buddhism is very low. Besides, many strategies of adaptation are provisory and the institutionalization of some independent initiatives is instable.

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[170] The central concept of legitimization in this chapter is derived from Berger and Luckmann. It plays an important role in social construction of reality and brings validity to the institutional order. (cf. Berger and Luckmann, 1999 [1966]).

Nevertheless, one should not underestimate the importance of these converts and sympathizers with regard to the future of Buddhism in Brazil. Although intellectualized Buddhism is quantitatively small, it has a strong influence and presence in Brazilian Buddhism. The image of Buddhism in the media is almost totally influenced by this interpretation [171]. Some converts, frequently coming from the most influential and intellectualized levels of Brazilian society, have the power to pass on Buddhist teachings to the major public, attracting many Brazilians who have their first contact with Buddhism. The importance of intellectualized Buddhism is due to the fact that a great number of these practitioners are important mediators inside the society, very often working in ethnic communities as a stimulus towards the adaptation process.

Meanwhile, the studies on ethnic religiosity have their focus on the differentiated ethnic and cultural identity, which is transmitted through generations. In the case of intellectualized Buddhists, the main focus is not with generations but in different cultural contexts. The process of religion transplantation through cultural and geographical changes has phases more dedicated to adaptation and others more oriented to the original context of the transplanted religion. In this chapter, these two poles will be discussed in the case of intellectualized Buddhism in Brazil as a dialectic between sources of legitimization and attempts at harmonization, which promote a selective transplantation. In the case of an intellectualized Buddhism in Brazil an initial source of legitimization was an association within ethnic Buddhism. A new source of legitimization was provided after the 1970s by independent monks, who have disconnected themselves from the nikkei community. More recently, this process developed from the importation of a more globalized Buddhism (mainly from the USA), propagated through courses and individual readings. Attempts of harmonization, on the other hand, are a important component in the dialectic of religious transplantation in Brazil. The resulting practice is a diluted Buddhism, mainly developed by sympathizers and frequently combined with other religions, which will also be discussed in the next chapters as a way to present a model of religious nativization.

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[171] For a analysis of this global flow using the concept of "scapes" in Appadurai, see Rocha 2003, specially the chapter 4.

2. Attempts of Institutional Legitimization

2.1 The Relative Absence of Theravada

One of the causes of the close association of intellectuals with ethnic Buddhism was the historical absence of a more consistent interest in Theravada Buddhism, which has resulted in a different form of contact, through the immigrant community, or through books published in Europe or in USA. This relative nonexistence of Theravada, in the past and present, can be explained, on the one hand, through the lack of a more significant philological interest on the part of the Brazilians and, on the other hand, by the absence of immigrants from the Asiatic Southeast in Brazil.

In Europe a more public attraction to Buddhism arose mainly through philological studies at the end of the 19th century. The philosophical studies and the translations molded a more rationalized comprehension of Buddhism at that time, producing the first self-converts and sympathizers from the scholarly and intellectualized environment[172]. In the United States, according to the study and typology proposed by Tweed, an interest of converts was also initially associated with Romantism and the theosophical movement[173].

In Brazil, this intellectual panorama is lacking. There are records about how Buddhism was perceived in this period, mainly in quotes of some writers[174]. In these, it is possible to notice clearly the influence of critics from European Christianity, where Buddhism was described several times as a nihilist and even a morbid philosophy[175]. As a general pattern however, there was no sign in this period of a philological, religious or esthetical interest large enough to form a base (as it happened in other countries), as a form of a preoccupation and

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[172] Cf. Baumann 1995a, Baumann 1995b.

[173] Cf. Tweed 1992. To a historical resume from the period, related to Buddhism in USA context, see also Seager 1999: 33ff.

[174] Wrters as Fagundes Varella, Machado de Assis and Raimundo Correa were the main representatives of this tendency, cf. Usarski 2002a: 21. Rocha 2003: 78ff has a detailed description of the works that in some way cited Buddhism in this period. Examples can be found in three poems of Augusto dos Anjos (1884-1914) from the School of Recife (1863-1916) and some philosophical citations from Faria Brito in 1914. About the famous writer Aluísio de Azevedo, who was a Brazilian consul in Yokohama and wrote a manuscript about Japan, see Fukushima 1995.

[175] This can be verified specially in the poem *Modern Buddhism* of Augusto dos Anjos.

creation of a native and adapted Buddhism, which takes into consideration the Western characteristics.

Despite the existence of meetings in Buddhism studies since 1923, promoted by the Theosophical Society founded in 1919 by Raimundo Pinto Seidl, these meetings only came to have institutional consistency after 1955. An interest in Buddhism by Brazilians can be verified in the 1960s, but the only institutional initiative was the formal creation of the Brazilian Buddhist Society (Sociedade Budista Brasileira - SBB). Officially, the SBB was only created in 1967, through the efforts of Murillo Azevedo, a university professor and a civil servant oriented to theosophical ecumenism. He tried to create a Buddhist place in which different forms of Buddhism could be performed. In this period, there was a general interest in oriental religions, which was a result of the hippie movement. With the arrival of the monk Anuruddha, from the old Ceylon, these efforts were strengthened with the construction of a temple for the SBB, with material donation from Ceylon and through the efforts of interested persons. With the abandonment of the votes by monk Anuruddha and due to internal conflicts, which culminated with the departing of Murillo Azevedo from the institution, SBB passed into a period of decline. It was, however, reorganized gradually toward end of the 1970s and in the 1980s after a period of doctrinal uncertainty and lack of monastic leadership. Despite the ecumenical intention and the participation of the Zen monk Ryotan Tokuda in the 1980s, SBB since its beginning has had a Theravada orientation, which has been confirmed by the monastic leadership of the Venerable Puhulwelle Vipassi Thero since 1986[176]. With his arrival as monastic leader, the temple has reunited sympathizers and some converts to the Theravada Buddhism in Rio de Janeiro city. Nowadays, they have 30 persons in attendance on weekends.

Besides the Brazilian Buddhism Society and small groups of meditation in Rio de Janeiro, there currently appears to be only two other circles of Theravada sympathizers in Brazil. Directed by lay people, these centers have interfaces with monks from abroad, who have performed programmed retreats and activities. Besides a small group in Belo Horizonte (Nalanda Center), there is only a small center of Vipassana meditation in São Paulo (House of

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[176] Cf. interview with Venerable Puhulwelle Vipassi Thero and Don Kulatunga Jayanetti, ex-monk Anuruddha, responsible by the construction of the SBB in the beginnings of 1970s and until today an instructor of meditation.

Dharma). Considering the orthodox criteria of the Theravada Buddhism, it is possible to say that there is not a sangha in Brazil, since there is only one monk[177]. According to an interview with Venerable Puhulwelle Vipassi Thero – natural from Sri Lanka and who has taught at English universities – even the adaptation dilemmas of Theravada in West, which are consequences of contrast between the monastic orthodox and the western customs, are lacking in Brazil due to the absence itself, up to this moment, of a established appreciation of orthodoxy and a traditional sangha in the Theravada sense.

To specify this practice of the Theravada in Brazil, it is interesting to contrast Brazil with other nations like the USA and European countries. On one hand, there are practically no immigrants from Theravada countries who have come to Brazil, a country which has not recently been the destination for immigrant routes on the international level. On the other hand, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Birmany, the main Asiatic countries where Theravada has been developed, are among the poorer countries in Asia. Since there are no incentives for a major interface for Brazilians with the sanghas Theravada (due to this financial restriction by these countries as much as by the Brazilians), it seems improbable that there will be an establishment of orthodox Theravada sangha in Brazil; the same may be said about the philological interest, which existed in USA and Europe, but has had little impact in Brazil. In this way, outside SBB, the sympathizers and few followers have lay disciples as leaders or persons oriented by monks coming from outside the country, mainly from the USA.

2.2 Association with Ethnic Buddhism

In the case of Theravada, only an intellectualized interest for Buddhism was not able to convert itself into a widespread institutionalization. The same cannot be said regarding Japanese tradition. A great number of Japanese immigrants in Brazil facilitated a major interface with Buddhist communities in Asia. Simultaneously, in the international context the Zen boom was occurring, characterized by a growing interest in meditation and in the

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[177] In the Theravada orthodoxy a sangha is traditionally composed by at least five monks and a Vinaya periodic recitation.

appearance of independent centers, also motivating Brazilian intellectuals[178]. After Murillo Azevedo left SBB in 1972, he passed through a variety of Japanese schools until settling himself in the True School of the Pure Land, branch Nishi. In the same way, another intellectual Buddhist, Ricardo Gonçalves (professor of history at the University of São Paulo), also went through different Buddhist branches, eventually finding his place at the Otani branch of the True School of the Pure Land. Both have participated in different Japanese Buddhist missions, in a way that they became important pieces in helping the mediation between the ethnic community and Brazilian society. They have disseminated Buddhism through lectures, translations and books and are also responsible for bringing Brazilians to Buddhism; many of whom are their ex-students, and today occupy monastic positions in Pure Land Buddhism[179].

Murillo Azevedo as well as Ricardo Gonçalves are followers of a universalistic approach of religions. Nevertheless, there have been only rare attempts to attract Brazilians to the Schools of Pure Land. The main attempt has only been an introduction through meditation in the 1980s, by the Honpa Honganji school in Brasilia, and in the offering of some doctrinal courses in São Paulo. According to what has been said in the previous chapters, many temples assume the role of representing the Japanese ethnic identity in the Brazilian cultural context, often avoiding the integrating synthesis and cultural pressure present in Brazil. The role of these temples reflects, in general, a tendency to value its ethnic culture, in this tenuous and sometimes paradoxical inclusion of the Japanese descendents in the national identity. Their efforts focus only the descendents and the adaptations have been in the opposite direction: to include them into the Japanese tradition. As a result, until now the association between intellectualized Buddhism with the ethnic community has been promoted with very few practical results in the popularization of real doctrine among the Brazilians.

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[178] On Zen in the 1960s and 1970s in São Paulo as well the activities stimulated by pioneer Master Ryohan Shingu to Brazilians, see Albuquerque 2002. A detailed description of the Sôtô Zen missionaries and groups in Brazil is provided by Rocha 2003: 52ff.

[179] As examples Gustavo Pinto and Roberto Stein can be mentioned, engaged respectively in temples of the True School of Pure Land (Jodo Shinshû), branch Nishi, in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Both are ex-students of Murillo Azevedo. Another example is Pedro Inaba, belonging to the Pure Land (Jodoshû), who had Ricardo Gonçalves as professor at São Paulo University.

In short, the presence of some intellectuals interested in Buddhism in the Japanese communities was not strong enough to break the tendency of the nikkei orientation inside the ethnic temples. However, following the international trend of people interested in meditation, the establishment of independent Zen centers inaugurated a new phase in the attempt to institutionalize Buddhism for Brazilians. This was possible mainly through the desire of Zen missionaries who have disconnected from the ethnic communities because of their more universalistic and mystical orientation, inspired by the Kyôto School and writers as D. T. Suzuki.

2.3 Nativization of Global Flows

2.3.1 Independent Groups in the Japanese Buddhism

From the middle 1970s on, an institutionalization of a new form of Japanese Buddhism in Brazil started, without a direct association to the ethnic identity of the immigrants. Since the 1960s there was an attraction by Brazilians to meditation and to Zen Buddhism, but the interest by Brazilians remained institutionally limited inside the ethnic temples of Japanese immigrants. Many of these Brazilians were associated with the theosophical movement and with the hippie wave or, not having a relation to any particular intellectual circle, the connection with Buddhism came through books and foreign publications. In both cases, this attraction towards Buddhism and Japanese culture reflected an international tendency and the global flow.

In 1974, the Master Ryohan Shingu initiated the construction of a pioneering Zen monastery in Ibiraçu (Espírito Santo). This monastery, the Zen Monastery Morro da Vargem, affiliated with the Sôtô Mission and the Busshinji Temple from São Paulo, offers retreats and trainings in Zen as well as daily sessions of zazen and ecological activities. Many tourists, general sympathizers, and the local community visit the monastery, which has received 10,000 visitors during 2000. Religious activity is more restricted, but is also meaningful: in 2000, around 315 persons took sesshin training. Since 1983 the Brazilian Monk Christiano Daiju (Christiano Bitti) has been the director of the monastery, after five years of Zen training in Japan.

The consolidation of more independent Brazilian communities started in 1976, due to missionaries who left the Busshinji temple to establish the first Zen centers oriented toward Brazilians. In this sense, a great incentive to attract converts and sympathizers was the work of Japanese missionaries such as Ryotan Tokuda and Moryama Roshi, who have identified themselves with a more open vision of Zen Buddhism. This more open vision has been under the influence of similar tendencies originated in USA and Europe. Both worked in the Busshinji temple and dedicated themselves to activities for the Brazilians, especially meditation. They are in favor of a major adaptation of the Zen for Brazilian society and not as a nikkei activity centered on ancestors and family rituals. Both, after having left or been rejected from the Busshinji community, continued orienting Brazilians and founding Zen centers and monasteries.

Nowadays, Master Moryama is responsible for little centers in São Paulo, Campinas and Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul). He himself is in favor of a formation of a Brazilian Buddhism[180]. As Master Moryama, he also maintain groups of practitioners in other countries outside Brazil, mainly in Europe. Master Ryotan Tokuda is responsible for Zen centers and monasteries in Ouro Preto, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Recife and Brasília, these are all united in the Sôtô Zen Society of Brazil, founded in 1984. These independent centers in Brazil are located in donated houses or apartments adjusted to be a Buddhist place. They are based on regular schedules of meditation, and reading and discussion of Buddhist sutras, a system similar to other Western communities.

In these groups some important regional differences cannot be ignored. For instance, while the nikkei community is present and represents an orthodox position in São Paulo through Japanese missions, the practice of Buddhism in Rio de Janeiro has had a stronger connection with alternative religions and with esotericism ever since the 1970s and the hippie movement. While in São Paulo there are tensions between the nikkei community and the Brazilian converts and sympathizers, the same is not true in Rio de Janeiro. There the lack of

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[180] According to his thought, this formation of a Brazilian Buddhism will be accomplished through a monastic formation: "Zen Buddhism now is spreading, and we can think that, from now on, little by little, more Brazilian Zen monks will be graduated. Brazil needs a Brazilian Buddhism. Brazil will create its own Buddhism, a new Zen. If not, it would be an imitation. And imitation is not culture". Cf. interview conceded to Bodigaya magazine, in 02.26.98, available in http://www.shin.com.br, accessed on 09.20.2003.

a large immigrant community contributes to give Zen more esoteric character, which allows a religious scene to be more propitious to combinations and adaptations. An attraction to esotericism and a more open vision to combinations brings many sympathizers, but they rarely become permanent participants; the institutionalization remains somewhat uncertain and diffuse. The Zen Temple in Rio de Janeiro associated with Zen Master Tokuda, for instance, was established at a donated house with a regularization process still going on. Despite the temple be located at the entrance of the Pavãozinho slum, there is no interaction with the local community. The sympathizers come from the middle class and emphasis is placed on the practice of meditation and readings oriented to explain some concepts of Zen, frequently through Jungian psychology, alternative religions and mysticism. Besides this, Tokuda has created centers and spas associated with Chinese medicine, alternative therapies and Buddhism. Through this so-called Buddhist medicine it was possible to obtain financial resources to help in the maintenance of Zen centers, even though these alternative therapies and spas demand a association with a specific elite group. This concept enabled, for example, the establishment of a spa annexed to a hotel in Angra dos Reis. There Chinese medicine and Zen meditation are practiced, a sort of activity that only the upper classes of Brazil society frequent. Although Buddhist spas with activities such as Chinese medicine and shiatsu make financial support possible, this trend confirms that Zen remains restricted to a Brazilian elite.

In São Paulo, a new generation of Brazilians associated with the ethnic temples has also developed activities with Brazilians, frequently associating this concern to a more globalized Buddhism. Inside the Hompa Hoganji brach of Jôdo Shinshû, one important leader is Gustavo Pinto, an intellectual who was ordained around 1980. After confirming the difficulty to propagate Buddhism in Brazil from the nikkei community, Gustavo Pinto is at present more dedicated to international activities and academic congresses. He is also proposing the establishment of Buddhist monasteries and an ecumenical center to be erected in Chapada dos Guimarães. This would be accompanied by the reconstruction of the Buddhist monuments destructed by the taliban in Banmyan. Although the project has been rejected by ecological and evangelical groups, he defends this monument as the most important contribution that Brazil could offer to Buddhism in West: the harmonic relationship of different races and religions. Other recent leader is nun Coen, a Brazilian who came to know Zen in the USA and spent many years educating herself in Japan. She directed the Busshinji temple for six years and left it in 2001. This was due to an exhausting process with the nikkei community, similar to what has happened to Moryama Roshi and Ryotan Tokuda, but

increased because of her popularity among Brazilians and public accusations of gender and ethnic discrimination. After her departure, she has sought to establish centers in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, also offering open sessions of walking meditation in public parks and lectures on peace and spirituality. Frequently present in the media, nun Coen draws a great number of sympathizers. Freed from the nikkei activities and family rituals valued at the Busshinji temple, she now more frequently quotes thoughts from the Vietnamese Master Thich Nhat Hanh and from the Dalai Lama, which shows a great deal of internationalization and ecumenicity.

The conflicts, which caused the departure of missionaries from Sôtô Zen, mainly in the Coen's case, show that there are yet many ethnic tensions inside the Buddhist temples, more than the social integration of the nikkei would indicate. In general, Ryotan Tokuda, Moryama Roshi and Coen decided to create Zen centers independent of the nikkei communities in Brazil, with a different structure and religious practice. In fact, when Master Tokuda temporarily directed the SBB in Rio de Janeiro, after his depart from Busshinji temple in São Paulo, he was recognized as "the most Brazilian (universal) of the Japanese who has ever been there"[181]. Nowadays, Japanese Buddhism means to many descendents a synonymy of something traditional and associated to funeral ceremonies, but to many Brazilians Buddhism represents something modern and based on meditation, potentially combined with the New Age thinking. In this way many Zen concepts and practices are diluted through their contact with a great number of globalized influences, often localized according to ecumenical and Brazilian syncretic references.

2.3.2 Zen or Ch'an? Contextualizing Chinese Elements in Brazil

Most of the Brazilians interested in Ch'an Buddhism are found in the Fo Guang Shan, although there are some followers that frequent other Chinese groups. In contrast with Zen groups, Fo Guang Shan is a global institution presenting a more unified attempt to harmonize ethnic and doctrinal differences. This search of adaptation for Brazilians is also a request from the Chinese themselves, given their definitive permanence in Brazil and because many of

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[181] Informative SBB, year 1981.

their descendents do not speak Chinese any more. Regarding converts, there is already a group of Brazilians who participate in the activities of Fo Guang Shan, mostly from the middle class. There is a clear tendency to value alternative health and relaxation through meditation, Tai Chi Chuan and courses on vegetarian cooking and ikebana. For children Buddhism is transmitted through workshops, scouting, camping and soccer games. Frequently, the "Dharma Kids" is performed, in which children are introduced to the Buddhism concepts through vegetarianism, gratitude for food and the value of interior concentration. Besides that, a search for Brazilian forms has also been attempted through folkloric music with Buddhism lyrics, or even through a Buddhist adaptation of Brazilian commemorations such as New Year, carnival and the feasts of June (port. *festas juninas*).

However, the majority of Brazilians are introduced to Ch'an through the Zen label, an already common Japanese word in Portuguese, which reveals a level of ambiguity and might be understood as a strategy of adaptation. An identification of the Fo Guang Shan with Zen through alternative health practices is frequently emphasized in the media, mainly in the area of the benefits of meditation[182]. Consequently, the majority of Brazilians in Fo Guang Shan described their presence in Fo Guang Shan as a consequence of a spiritual search and a attraction to Zen. As in other groups, they often consider Buddhism as a philosophy of life, which permits them to have a multi-religious life that is easily compatible with Brazilian religiosity based on inclusion. There is a strong attraction to meditation, which is frequently understood as an interior search and normally mixed with different elements from other practices.

In contrast with Japanese Buddhism, there is in the case of the Chinese Buddhism a simultaneous acquaintance between the schools of Ch'an and Pure Land. These two ways to live Buddhism, which are relatively distinct in Japan, share the same space in the Chinese

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[182] This association is easily found at media publications which present Fo Guang Shan and its activities. See for example the newspaper Folha de São Paulo, "Hospitals do not resist 'alternative' therapies" (port. *"Hospitais não resistem a terapias 'alternativas'"*). The publication "Saúde! é vital" from Abril Publisher, in the report "Meditation" from March 2000, states: "Meditation: the calm mind and the relaxed body lowers blood, relieves symptoms from TPM and prevents insomnia". The magazine "Emoção e Inteligência", from October 1999, presents Fo Guang Shan in a similar way, through the report "How are you, everything zen?" (port. *"Como vai, tudo zen?"*). A similar presentation also appeared in the magazine Médicis, in "Meditation: the intelligence of spirit" (port. *"Meditação: a inteligência do espírito"*).

case, even though Ch'an is more associated to monastic practice and Pure Land is more connected to popular aspect. However, the attraction of Brazilians for Ch'an meditation can be considered not as a choice, but considering the limitations inside the religious adaptation. Whereas Ch'an practices are based on silence meditation, seated or walking, and on dharma talks after the practices, the Pure Land rites are more connected with sutras chanting in Chinese and with the worship of Chinese images. Since the language and devotions are Chinese, these practices are naturally more associated with the ethnic aspect.

It is natural to assume that Brazilians have difficulties to worship them in the same way Chinese do, since these images belong to a symbolic world identified with Chinese lines and esthetic, which is quite different from Brazilian devotional imaginary. However, the combination of Ch'an and Pure Land in Fo Guang Shan indicate elements of choice and other possibilities of individual and cultural adaptation for Chinese and Brazilians, and is important, especially if Buddhism will be popularized among the lower social classes. What is certain at present is that Brazilians prefer Shakyamuni instead of Amitabha, which also happens in the Japanese context.

3. Nativization as Selective Transplantation

The term transplantation was suggested by Michael Pye as a substitutive for what Gerardus Van Der Leeuw classified as mission in his phenomenology of religion. Trying to describe the dialectic of religious innovation in a new social context, Pye proposed three major aspects: contact, ambiguity and reorientation[183]. Using the ideas of Pye and complementing them with contributions of John Berry and Steve Kaplan, Martin Bauman offered a model of transplantation, which describes modes and strategies of adaptation in the case of converts to Buddhism in Germany[184]. The general processes of transplantation are divided in five, briefly summarized as follows:

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[183] Cf. Pye 1969.

[184] Cf. Baumann 1994. See also a reaction in Neumeier-Dargyay 1995 and a response in Baumann 1996. Originally the model of Baumann was formulated only for the converts in Germany, but has been used to different groups and environments of reception, as the Diamond Sangha in Australia (Spuler 2003: 119ff), Zen in Brazil (Rocha 2000), and even Sôka Gakkai in Brazil (Pereira 2001: 381ff), sometimes without a theoretical reflection of this extension.

Contact: the arrival of the external religion into a new culture, through individuals or groups. This contact may have a missionary purpose, or be simply caused by translated texts from an esthetical or philosophical interest.

Confrontation and *conflict*: the differences between the external religion and the local culture, which may be predisposed by factors of the new environment, can cause tensions between the group of converts and the majority of the society.

Ambiguity and *adaptation*: as a form to present the external religion it is necessary to communicate it with cultural terms and associations from the local context. In this way, ambiguities appear due to the attempts of adaptation. They can be inevitable, due to the irreducible semantic differences, or intentional, as a conscious strategy to reduce the tension created by the immersion of the transplanted religion into the new environment.

Recoupment or *Reorientation*: as a critical exam of the existent ambiguities, the group may develop a tendency to a traditionalism, a new orientation toward the original context of the transplanted religion.

Innovative development: from this critical tension caused by the transplantation of a new religion into a different culture, more stable transformations inside the religious group may develop. These transformations, once incorporated into the structure of the group and to its teachings, can be considered as an independent development.

To use some of the processes of transplantation as a nativization of the intellectualized Buddhism in Brazil, a necessary reevaluation arises from the different local conditions of Brazil with regard to Germany and Europe. The model described by Pye and Baumann contemplates *two* sides, which interact dialectically in the adaptation of the religious content, the original and receptive environment. In the case of Brazil, however, it seems more appropriate to observe the existence of many poles of interaction, because of the ethnic communities and the importation of an already westernized Buddhism. The metaphor of a foreign and local environment at transplantation can be replaced by another opposition; the transference of *foreign legitimization* against *local harmonization*.

As formerly described, in the case of Brazil there was no philological base or an interest to create independent communities of converts before the 1980s, thus much Brazilian interest in Buddhism and its sympathizers were institutionally introduced since the nikkei community. This appropriation generates some conflicts between the Buddhism practiced by converts and by the ethnic community, and is not a result of the tension between the group and the majority society as described in the transplantation models. In this case, Brazilian converted to Zen and the nikkei community have different associations with the Japanese environment, reflecting different sources of legitimization. Another type of conflict appears because an intellectualized interpretation of Buddhism collides with new religious movements or groups more influenced by Brazilian popular religiosity, showing different strategies of harmonization with the local environment and different types of Buddhist practice[185].

The dichotomy between sources of legitimization and attempts at harmonization has also to take into consideration factors inserted in the globalized character of Buddhism found in western countries. In Brazil the conflicts in the ethnic temples caused the emergence of independent groups with a more globalized orientation, adding a new pole in the transplantation[186], but maintaining the dicothomy between foreign legitimation and local harmonization. Indeed, this new pole reflects that Buddhism imported to Brazil is not necessarily an Asian Buddhism, it is already a Western Buddhism. In comparison with the philological interest, which for example caused an importation of modern Buddhism in Germany at the turning of the century, in Brazil nowadays, many books are read in English, as well as movies and sites in Internet. Intellectualized Buddhism imported by Brazilians is, in this way, mainly a US-American Buddhism. In addition to the consumed media about Buddhism, in groups of Tibetan Buddhism and Theravada, often the visits and teachings are given from converts of USA, who have followed a monastic way and instruct Buddhist groups in Brazil, frequently in English. In this way, not only is Buddhism not imported from Asia, but in many cases, strategies of adaptation used in other Western countries are incorporated and modified again to be suitable to the Brazilian context. The means of intellectual

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[185] In this sense new religious movements such as Sôka Gakkai, Reyûkai and others are not considered Buddhist, according to the view of many practitioners of intellectualized Buddhism. Though critics of new religious movements are rare in Brazil in comparison with other Western countries, there are many sources inside intellectualized Buddhism who express a general rejection of the new religions.
[186] For a proposal of diverse poles in interaction inside a globalized Zen, based on the concept of rhizomatic forms derived from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, see Rocha 2003: 157ff.

legitimization and construction of the Buddhist identity end up being those which were already modified in context in other western countries.

3.1 Foreign Legitimization Sources

Since the first independent Zen centers directed by Brazilian and with the orientation towards the adaptation of Buddhism in Brazil, as in the case of Fo Guang Shan, the natural necessity of new criteria for the formation and legitimization arose aiming to form an independent sangha from the ethnic communities in Brazil. In this formation process of a Brazilian sangha, the first criterion is the same one that belongs to the Zen and to the Ch'an themselves: the existence of masters, who, in general through a monastic formation and according to a lineage of transmission, guide and conduct the activities of meditation and religious instruction.

However, there are few monks in Brazil and they are not the only source of authority and teaching. The monastic formation has been accomplished, normally, for a long period outside of Brazil, which represents difficult requirements for the majority of Brazilian Buddhists. Without orthodox institutions and masters, the motivation and source of legitimization frequently assumed is the knowledge obtained through books, lectures and trips. This represents a feature of intellectualized Buddhism to be found in other Western countries as well. This process of legitimization implies an elitism through the ascendance of a ruling class that defines what is the true Buddhism. Using the concept of symbolic capital from Bourdieu, Cristina Rocha critically points out that "when Brazilian intellectuals translated books and wrote newspaper articles about Zen and Buddhism, when they traveled overseas to visit Buddhist places and to meet either European and North American Zen scholars or Japanese Zen masters, they were creating new, rare, and exotic tastes, which would establish their role as bearers of a symbolic capital. Once this knowledge was translated into Portuguese these intellectuals acquired social and even 'mystic' power in

Brazil, for their knowledge dealt with matters of the sacred and lost wisdom from the Orient."
[187]

According to this pattern, many centers have already used these means of intellectualized legitimization and attraction requested by sympathizers, even incorporating them in the terminology and organization of the group. For example, something important in many convert groups is the existence of courses, a kind of spiritual academia, and teachers of Dharma, as educational and intellectualized versions of the Buddhist priest. The organization of some communities includes a division between different levels of students and teacher, showing the valuing and transmission of spiritual knowledge according to the shape of an intellectual formation at a spiritual school, which seems to be a substitute for the monastic institution in many groups in Western countries[188]. Instead of participating in a ceremony or a rite, many Buddhists or sympathizers attend courses and regularly participate in meditation sessions and retreats, activities which can also be complemented with readings and meditation at home. For the groups it is always possible to charge a fee for these courses and activities, which helps to sustain the group financially.

This form of religious transmission, through practices oriented by little monks but really disseminated by books and courses, often generates a Buddhism without religious commitment, a general tendency already present in Brazilian religions. This characteristic makes difficult the recognition of a Buddhism identity and a systematization of the combinations. What can be described as a clientele for worldly benefits in the karmic Buddhism, in intellectualized Buddhism, is often a audience receiving symbolic capital. It is correct to affirm that the intellectualized component frequently generates a defense of an essence, through an imported Buddhism from other Western contexts and is often based on a reconstruction of Buddhist history and teachings. However, for the majority of converts and sympathizers a self-spiritual teaching is based upon different sources and from different activities in different temples and centers. This hardly verifies the essence of the proposed Buddhism, diluting the presumed essence within a *melting pot* of oriental traditions.

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[187] Cf. Rocha 2003: 90. For another example and for a theoretical approach based on alternative views of reality found in the opposition between a elite and a popular religiosity, see Seiwert 2003: 485ff. As Seiwert shows, in the case of China a religious elitism had as a consequence of a orthodoxy formation, which is simultaneously promoted and controlled by the state.

[188] See for instance the organization description of the Diamond Sangha, cf. Spuler 2003: 55ff.

Buddhism is then modified and its elements are isolated from their original context and are used for other systems.

3.2 Local Harmonization

Baumann systemized strategies of adaptation used in his transplantation model as *translation*, *reduction*, *reinterpretation*, *tolerance*, *assimilation*, *absorption* and *acculturation*[189]. In Brazil, as in Germany, the search of ambiguities is an important characteristic within Buddhism[190]. There are, for instance, reports of adaptation in Zen, which is clearly influenced by Catholic elements, as baptism with water at a Zen center supervised by Master Tokuda in Porto Alegre. A similar baptism in Fo Guang Shan is emerging. Moreover, it is common to find in the speeches and attitudes of Tokuda examples of what Baumann calls acculturation, for instance, defenses of an association between Zen and Christian mysticism (particularly Meister Eckhart and San Juan de la Cruz) through a unity of mystical experiences. In this sense, a search for doctrinal orthodoxy up until now has not constructed a more general phase of reorientation within intellectualized Buddhism.

Besides the institutions and monks, it is important to emphasize an approach centered on devotees and sympathizers as well, especially in contexts of multiple religiosity. Intellectualized Buddhism has been assimilated and blended in different ways due to sympathizers. The principle behind the most important strategies of adaptation found in Brazil is that Buddhism can be utilized in isolated practices or used as a partial truth inside a more universalistic vision. This point will be investigated in more detail in Chapter 7 and 8 but here it will be discussed in the context of the transplantation models. In contraposition to the strategies of assimilation, absorption and acculturation, in which Buddhism receives external content, what has been described here as *instrumentalization* and *relativization* means that Buddhism itself can be interpreted as a component in other systems.

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[189] Cf. Baumann 1994, Baumann 1995c: 340ff.
[190] Baumann 1994: 49.

Instrumentalization as a strategy of adaptation inside to be understood as the isolated use of Buddhist concepts or practices in an independent way and instrumentalized for combinations. Isolated from the original context, these Buddhist elements are used as components for combinations. One of the examples of instrumentalization is meditation. The image of Buddhism in media is frequently associated with meditation and alternatives practices of health, transmitting an image of a peaceful philosophy, open to sympathizers who can practice it without strong conflicts with their original religion. A relationship between Fo Guang Shan to alternative health, and not as a religion, for example is frequently emphasized through meditation. This vision propitiates an instrumentalization and a possible interweaving with other practices, something also verified in the case of Zen in Brazil. Buddhism is described in intellectual terms as a philosophy of life. In practical terms, this attitude frequently empties the doctrinal contents of Buddhism and opens space for a practice more intellectualized and not institutional, and which can be combined with other religions. In so doing, Buddhist elements are instrumentalized by sympathizers through spiritual readings and used according to the spectrum of the sympathizer's interest. With such instrumentalization, the degree of ambiguity grows to the extent that the concurrence between different religious systems is suspended, since Buddhism is not seen anymore as a religion.

In the case of relativization of Buddhism, an harmonization arises in which Buddhism is only seen as an expression of a major truth, which is expressed by other religions as well. The factors specific to Buddhism are dissolved. Buddhism as a religion is then included in a unity of religions, which again enables a major freedom of combination to converts and sympathizers. Though an argument of relativization may be suggested even in the most ancient Buddhist sutras through the idea of *upaya*, in the case of Brazil this frequently produces a diluted Buddhism through attempts at harmonization and combinations with other religions. In this intellectualized Buddhism there are philosophical justifications for a unity of religions through mysticism, Theosophy or the existence of a *sophia perennis*. As a religion in Brazil, Buddhism cannot escape the influence of this worldview, where many identities dilute themselves. Also Fo Guang Shan has already presented Buddhism in an analogous way, in a past phase of major ambiguity in the attempt of popularization of the movement to Brazilians. It is possible to read, for instance, in an editorial from *Jornal da BLIA do Brasil*, number 2, entitled "Question of Principle": "They asked us how a millenary oriental thought, such as Buddhist philosophy and religion, can adjust to a tropical country where samba, soccer, carnival and Candomblé reign? We find it marvelous. (…) When you sing and dance on the

avenue, seeking the rhythm the happiness to live, this is Buddha. When you are at Umbanda immersed in its ritual, you have Buddha. When you are praying to Jesus Christ, or praying to a saint in your devotions, you also have Buddha. (…) The problem can be defined as a question of surrender and passage." Among these Brazilian Buddhists, a universal approach to religions was an important element to Buddhist acceptance, escaping from a tight association with the ethnic communities and from a confrontation with Catholicism. Through this effort, an opening is supported and reachs the Brazilian elite.

Chapter 6 - Karmic Buddhism

1. Introduction

In contrast to an intellectualized Buddhism, there is a much different motivation for conversion within some other Buddhist groups: the search for solutions to financial, health and family discord problems. Within this Buddhism, in search of results, the concept of karma is often justification for evil and an opportunity to transform one's own destiny. In these cases there can be greater influence from popular religions, emphasizing aspects which have not emerged in Europe and the USA however, but that have a better acceptance in the Brazilian context. Initially, we intended to show these points based on a description of particular similarities between the popular Japanese and Brazilian religiosity, even though an asymmetric integration is seen in practice. Later, the activities of these groups will be described in two sections. In the case of esoteric Buddhism in Brazil, greater interaction with Brazilian religions can be seen, whereby there is a search for solutions, within a spiritual world also shared with the Afro-Brazilian religions. The new religions based on Nichiren Buddhism, with a differentiated structure and proselytism regarding the traditional Buddhism, have attracted a great number of converts and sympathizers who represent the vast majority of Buddhists in Brazil.

2. Blending of the Japanese and Brazilian Religiosity

As previously stated, in Buddhism, the association of worship for the ancestors with the obligations for the *ie* shows an ethnic aspect that continues to be essential for the nikkei community in Brazil. In general, the Japanese religiousness is much more associated with actions rather than with beliefs, there existing an adaptation of the religious attitudes that are adequate for certain needs and stages in life, frequently with an acquaintance with different religious practices[191].

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[191] Cf. Reader 1991: 15ff.

Another characteristic of Japanese religions is the search for benefits in this world, that has been supported by an ongoing objective basically in all Japanese religious movements. In contrast to a popular or primal religion[192], Reader and Tanabe argue that the attainment of benefits in this world (jap. *genze ryaku*) shows a *continuum* in several religions in Japan; they label it as common religion, in the sense of being shared by the Japanese population in general. The possibility of an actual proof of a religion means that it is possible to attain benefits by religious practices and intervention of the spiritual world. Protection, health, financial or family problem-solving are understood as being possible to be achieved through a transaction with the spiritual world. This does not necessarily mean a view primarily materialist or magical; it frequently includes a religious practice that searches for the creation of conditions to achieve what is needed by means of ethics and the belief in the possibility of attaining these objectives[193].

In Japanese Buddhism, different problems are frequently associated with specific practices or places. In the context of Buddhist groups in Brazil, it is enough to point out the karma and the influence of spirits as sources of problems to be solved. Although karma was understood, at the beginning, as an individual element governed by an impersonal ruling, in the expansion of Buddhism in the Far East, it was frequently understood as something that could be improved in several ways through merit obtaining. Initially, this merit was associated to a relationship of donation to Buddhist *sangha.* However, with the development of Mahayana Buddhism, new ways of obtaining merit appeared. This merit, being understood as positive karma, could be received by bodhisattvas or be donated to other beings. Usually, in the context of Japanese Buddhism, karma (jap. *innen*) can be modified by a relationship with the spiritual world. Considering the importance of the worship of ancestors and funeral services in Japanese Buddhism, this relationship with the spiritual world frequently occurs through the ancestors who, in this way, continue influencing their descendants. Therefore, an

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[192] Cf. Pye 1996.

[193] Cf. Hardacre 1984, describing the new members of Reyûkai. Mikiko 1995 shows that the ethic and individual aspects are mediated by magical elements in Shinnyo-En and that both do not show up as being different. Reader and Tanabe associate the expectation for benefits in this world with peace of spirit (jap. *anshin*) and faith (jap. *shinkô*): "This recognition that one can operate more efficaciously when one is in a good mental state is simple enough, but it shows how closely *anshin* and *genze ryaku* are related. Peace of mind, in such terms, leads to practical benefits. It also leads to deeper faith [*shinkô*]: making supplications to a buddha, or indeed any deity, one is expressing some form of faith, at the very least in the ability of the deity to 'hear' that prayer and act on it."(Reader and Tanabe 1998: 17-18).

unhappy or violent death or a negligence regarding the obligations towards the ancestors result in negative effects in present life. Offering the results of practices or rites to the spiritual world, is considered to be a reward of these effects in present life. Therefore, by improving the spiritual status of the ancestors, the current status of the active follower is also improved. This standard is frequently pointed out in the new religions as a cause of the problems, whose solution varies according to each group starting from the performance of rites up to a more lay orientation of recitation of sutras or mantras. The right practice brings a relationship with the spiritual world which expresses in real benefits in the active follower's life, who attains the solution to his problems.

The same world vision can be found in the new Japanese religious movements. In a criticized book[194] but still considered to be a classic on new religions in Japan, McFarland points out two characteristics, which are the historical and cultural source of Japanese religions - the possibility of the actual verification of a religion and the union of opposite or diverse creeds. In spite of a different organizational standard and of an active proselytism, the revitalization and reinterpretation of this base of the Japanese popular religiousness have been described as the main characteristic of the new Japanese religious movements. In this sense, these movements would not be as recent as thought, but they would represent new interpretations of the Japanese popular tradition, which are more adequate to the contemporary context or even representing a reaction to the exclusive privileges of the institutionalized religions. The possibility of actual verification is frequently the factor that enables the association of many creeds that are doctrinally contradictory.

Those characteristics that McFarland considers to be "inexistent in Europe and the USA"[195], can be found not only in the history but also in the current practice of religions in Brazil. Indeed, Japanese popular religiosity is not distant, in its main characteristics, from what Brazilians also understand as an important function of the religion. Most Brazilians, when practicing a religion, search and hope to find solutions for existing problems through religion. An actual verification of the attainment of benefits in this world and the union of different creeds, frequently analyzed in a disdainful way as magic and syncretism, are also

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[194] See, for example, Hardacre 1984: 224 ff.
[195] Cf. McFarland 1967: 47.

present in the Brazilian field. Given this similarity, the assimilation of Japanese religiousness or even the combination of these two systems become possible because in the Brazilian case, a vision of a shared spiritual world is also an important characteristic of popular religiousness. If in the Japanese case this unified spiritual world is filled with kamis, Buddhas and other beings[196], in the Brazilian case, saints and African beings live in harmony with illuminated spirits of Spiritism. In the Brazilian case, the absorption of many Japanese ideas on the spiritual world does not present many cultural difficulties nor causes surprise.

In fact, in this blending of Japanese and Brazilian religiousness arises an interpretation of Buddhism which is very different from what occurs in Europe and the USA. Consider, for example, the concept of a karma inherited from the ancestors, which is not easily accepted by westerners in the USA and Europe, but is present in several Japanese religions. When analyzing the history of karma, it can be verified that there is a conceptual migration, in its route, towards the Far East, from Hindu reinterpretations, receiving a Confucian influence before settling in the Japanese popular religiousness and in the new religious movements[197]. However, what must be observed when analyzing the adaptation of Buddhism in Brazil is that the concept of karma also had a migration towards the West through its appropriation by Allan Kardec in the development of Spiritualism in France. The fact that Spiritualism has become a religion that is quantitatively insignificant in Europe while having millions of followers and sympathizers in Brazil, is one of these historical peculiarities that make world religions have different standards of adaptation and evolution.

According to what will be empirically described in subsequent sections, especially in Shingon and in new religions like Reyûkai and Agonshû, this common base from Spiritism enables the acceptance of the worship of ancestors[198]. As a matter of fact, Spiritism already performed this role in the "white" incorporation of the worship of the spirits and of the ancestors by the *banto* African ethnic group, resulting in Umbanda. Given the existence of a concept of karmic evolution in Brazilian religions and the possible influence of the spirits, an

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[196] Cf. Reader 1991: 32.

[197] For a summary of the variations and the evolution of the concept of karma inherited from the ancestors, see Hardacre 1984: 127-140.

[198] As it will be discussed later on, in the case of Sôka Gakkai, this relationship with karma has little to do with the ancestors, even though there is a relationship with the spiritual world that can be improved by spiritual practice - in this case, a recitation of *daimoku* and *gongyô*.

acceptance of the direct influence of the ancestors still shows plausibility and coherence. In this sense, a genetic inheritance also becomes a spiritual inheritance for these followers, this being frequently reinforced by scientific interpretation of the influence of hereditary factors that cause physical illnesses up to depression. Being religiously understood as a karma inherited from the ancestors, entering, in this way, in the solutions offered by Japanese religions, this predestination can be improved by rites performed by priests - in the case of Shingon and Tendai - or by religious practice and proselytism - in the case of the new religions. In this sense, the greatest attraction of these movements is the possibility of changing one's own karma.

However, it is important to notice that this similarity and possibility of assimilation do no imply that this relationship is ethnic symmetrical. One of the differences between Japanese and Brazilian religiousness, that is important for the context of this study, regards to the interaction with other symbolic systems. In this sense, Ian Reader pinpoints the central role of Japan in practically all Japanese religions[199], while in many Brazilian movements, the opposite frequently occurs in regard to the easy incorporation of foreign trends and entities. Furthermore, a different characteristic, between Brazil and Japan that I consider of great importance in the adaptation of Buddhism, is the fact that Brazil still has a high level of inequality and social problems. These factors have, as consequences, differences in the relationship of religious legitimization and authority, in addition to a different self-understanding of the Japanese groups. In this interaction between Japanese and Brazilian popular religiousness, it is possible to notice, as can be observed in ethnic Buddhism, an asymmetrical relationship.

Anyway, this meeting can be historically found in the presence and the settlement of the nikkei community in Brazil, which gave the impulse for this association. With the increasing migration to urban areas, as cited in the first chapter, the Brazilian religious field entered a phase of rapid transformation. In this context, a basic factor for the development of several Japanese religious movements in Brazil is the blending between Japanese and Brazilian popular religiousness through the search for results, that enabled the creation of several Buddhist groups with roots in the nikkei community, but that attracted many sympathizers

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[199] Cf. Reader 1991: 28.

and converts among Brazilians. This presence of Japanese religiousness in the Brazilian religious universe enabled the incorporation and development of a hybrid spiritual world, adding Brazilian and Japanese meanings to a world of entities and practices that frequently get mixed up. In the context of this work this blending in the search for results in this world will be described by analyzing Japanese Buddhist movements in Brazil, centered mainly on karma as the explanation of evil.

3. New Buddhist Movements in Brazil

Most of these Japanese movements, that support explicitly a karmic Buddhism, have been studied under the label of new religious movements[200]. However, in the Brazilian context, even the character of "new" in some groups when compared to traditional Buddhism can be disputed[201]. This occurs because Buddhist groups arrived in similar periods in Brazil; therefore, even traditional schools in Japan are perceived as new spiritual alternatives in the Brazilian context. Conversely, new religious movements in Japan are pioneers in Brazil. As a symbolic example, a Honmon Butsuryûshû missionary was present in the first ship of immigrants that arrived in Brazil in 1908. Thus, even though Honmon Butsuryûshû is considered to be a new religious movement in Japan, it is one of the oldest movements in Brazil, as it brought what is considered, up to now, the first Buddhist priest. Additionally, the opposition between traditional Buddhism and new religions, existent in the media and often presented as a social danger in Japan[202], is rarely pointed out in Brazil. Globally speaking, even the negative perception of the new religious movements in general, noticed in other

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[200] The concept of new religions has a rather different use, depending on the cultural context and the researcher. According to the approach expressed later on by the creator of the term: "The definitions [of the NRMs] are more or less useful, and not, more or less correct" (Barker 1999: 16). The concept has been lately criticized and the resignation of its more theoretical character has been proposed recently (cf. Introvigne 2001).

[201] In Japan, the new religious movements are frequently defined according to the date of their creation. In spite of different theories regarding their rising, terms like new religion (jap. *shinshûkyo*) point out movements that emerged especially by the end of the Bakufu Government (1867-1868). Another more controversial term, is "new, new" religion (jap. *shin-shinshûkyo*), that applies to new movements that grew especially in the 1970s and 1980s, of a more magical and mystical character, in contrast to movements that appeared after the Second World War.

[202] A tension with society and a negative view on these movements, seen as irrational, magical and fanatic, is frequently supported by the media and even by academic works, cf. Inoue et al 1995: 11-17, Hardacre 1984: 225-226.

Western countries, does not seem to happen in Brazil[203]. Although some representatives of more traditional groups attack the new religions as being a false Buddhism, this contraposition in the media and popular understanding is difficult to be perceived.

On account of these reasons, the term "new religious movement" will be used in this study with a restricted meaning, considering that this academic category does not seem to be geographically transported without a previous critique. In the context of this study, the basis of these Japanese groups is being interpreted as having its roots in Japanese popular religiosity, added by an organizational structure and an effort for conversion that are clearly different from more traditional Buddhist groups[204].

Consequently, it is important to point out how the new religious movements organize themselves and create motivation among the followers, considering that this is an important factor for their quantitative evolution and the ethnic limits of the group. In fact, an important factor in the new religious movements, is the emphasis on an *active proselytization*, something inexistent in popular religiousness but important in its institutionalization. Rather, in the new Japanese religious movements there is a much stronger search for converts who do not belong to the ethnic community. In the Japanese movements, strategies for adaptation are developed in accordance with a global orientation, trying to evolve from an ethnocentric vision to a universal approach. Furthermore, most of the history of these groups include, in their lay doctrinal perspective, an independence in regard to the priesthood[205]. The institutionalization of these trends, in the Japanese post-war period, was responsible for the growth of movements such as Sôka Gakkai and Reyûkai, as will be quoted later on. Because of this institutionalization and emphasis on an active proselytism, the organization of these Buddhist groups is very different from the traditional temples. *Horizontal structures* – by geographical region, ages or interests – and *vertical* – hierarchical – have the function of creating a strong association among the members. In this sense, a relationship that frequently unifies these two structures in a fairly close personal relationship, is what occurs between a

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[203] In Brazil, even academically, the general concept of new religious movements is rarely used in cases like Umbanda, Candomblé or even neopentecostal movements. Interestingly, these movements are sometimes accompanied by that label in the descriptions of international bibliography.
[204] Cf. Inoue et al 1995: 89-97.
[205] In general terms, the new religions are understood as a reaction or even rebellion against the traditional religions cf. Inoue et al 1995: 8-9, Hardacre 1984: 227.

convert and the member responsible for the conversion, frequently described as a type of godfather. In many cases, the number of godsons determines a place in the hierarchy and a status in the group. The allurement of new followers is associated with benefits in this world.

As for the role of nationalist elements, although the new religions introduce themselves as a universal religion, they frequently trace a vision centered on the role of Japan and on Japanese qualities[206]. In Brazil, this characteristic appears to be even more reinforced because of the differences, already mentioned, between the Japanese and Brazilian economic development and the positive image of Japan among Brazilians[207]. In fact, it is possible to state the hypothesis that, especially in the Third World, an assymmetrical relationship is developed in Japanese religions in general. In a more practical way, this is frequently reflected in the groups' leadership. The leaderships of the new religions are Japanese or nikkei, although in some cases most converts are Brazilian, such as in Sôka Gakkai and Reyûkai. Besides, a ethnic valorization in the new religions is promoted by the cult of Japanese concepts and personalities, that are more valued as a basis for a renovation of the world and the development of the country. Even in the cases which a Brazilian patriotism developed, it occurs from the positive and central role of Japanese values that are inherent to these groups. This strategy offers a model for an identification with a patriotic view of Brazil and, *simultaneously*, it supports the promotion of local development from the Japanese influence and from that of the group.

These new movements define a different way for adaptation, being placed in the context of a search for a karmic Buddhism. Beyond the new religions, in the context of the analysis of the practice of Buddhism in Brazil, it is interesting to place the traditional schools of Shingon and Tendai as also having characteristics of a karmic Buddhism or the search for results. In the next section the esoteric Buddhism's activities in Brazil will be presented, which have an closer proximity to the Brazilian popular religiosity.

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[206] In the nationalistic aspect, Japan is frequently considered a model of peace or the roots of a new civilization, to be established by the efforts and by the proselytization of the group, cf. Cornille 2000: 24-28. In Japan, new religious movements are frequently studied by taking into consideration a renovation of the world and a world utopia, Cf. Inoue et al 1995: 93ff. Regarding nationalism in the 'new' new religions in Japan, see Reader 2002.
[207] According to a research carried out by Oro, in the case of the Messianic Church (Sekai Kyuseikyô), the followers usually have an understanding of Japan as a chosen land, a strong economic power and a high level of development and evolution (cf. Oro 2000: 121-122).

3. The case of Esoteric Buddhism

3.1 Esoteric Buddhism in Brazil

The development of Tantric Buddhism, also called Vajrayana, began mainly in the sixth century in India, in the period after the development of Mahayana Buddhism. Due to the influence of Tantrism, ceremonies and Hindu gods were incorporated into Buddhism through a reinterpretation of the ways and conditions of enlightenment. The term Esoteric Buddhism (jap. *mikkyô*) has been utilized to describe the Tantric Buddhist stream that arrived in Japan during the ninth century and that since then has developed itself in contact with the local influences of other, subsequently established Shinto and Buddhist sects. Tibetan Buddhism is normally described as a result of the syncretism between the Tantric Buddhist stream and the local Tibetan religion (*Bon*). Aside from the differences due to different interactions with local religions and cultures, the Tibetan stream of Tantric Buddhism is distinguished from the Japanese one because in the Tibetan case, Tantric texts of a later period were also incorporated. Through a more intense contact with the Indian culture, owing to geographical proximity, the influence of Indian religiosity was also comparatively higher. In China, Esoteric Buddhism developed during the Tang dynasty, in the eighth century. In the case of Japan, Esoteric Buddhism was established through Kûkai, posthumously honored as Kôbô Daishi, and Saichô, founder from the Tendai School and known by the title Dengyô Daishi. They had embarked for China in the first years of the ninth century and brought the esoteric teachings established in China to Japan. Beyond the presence of esoteric Buddhism in the traditional schools of Shingon and Tendai, an esoteric influence has contemporarily reappeared in diverse new religious movements in Japan. Kûkai established his school mainly in Mount Kôya, and after his death a series of divisions and disputes occurred. At present Koyasan is only one of the many branches of Shingon[208].

In Brazil, the activities of Shingon were initiated by Reverend Shinba, who arrived in São Paulo via the ship Kawamachi-maru in 1934. He initially established himself in an independent way, but his temple subsequently joined with the Koyasan branch. Another temple from Koyasan, called Koyasan Koyaji, was founded later, in the district of Cidade

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[208] Cf. Yamasaki 1988: 37.

Antonieta, in the eastern zone of the city of São Paulo, the present headquarters of Koyasan Shingon in Brazil. At present, Koyasan has six temples in its mission in Brazil, and the risk of extinction exists in the majority of these temples, because the immigrants and priests are very old and many descendants are not interested in the continuity of temple activities. There are now around nine priests in Koyasan, the majority of them being immigrants who dedicate themselves to a monastic career only once they have reached pension age.

There is, however, one more dynamic temple from Koyasan with a higher presence of Brazilians, located in Suzano, a town near São Paulo. With the old name of Shingonshu Daijo-ha, this temple was only later incorporated into Koyasan under the name "Church Shingonshu Kongoji." The founders were Japanese immigrants called Oda, Nishioka, and Anzai, who donated the space where the temple was built. This temple in Suzano receives many sympathizers from the city of São Paulo, with around fifty visitors daily, mainly Brazilians. On the weekends, especially during the ritual of fire, there are approximately 300 people, more than half of which are Brazilians without Japanese heritage. Despite this there are only some Brazilians and descendants aspiring toward sacerdotal roles. At present there is only one Brazilian priest, who stays in Suzano. There were some Brazilians who were Shingon monks, but they did not remain so[209].

In the city of Suzano there exists a Shingon temple other than the Church Shingonshu Kongoji. Due to a division in the temple that belongs to Koyasan, another Shingon temple was built in the city, called Buddhist Church Nambei Yugazam Jyomiyoji. This temple belongs to Shuguendô, a movement founded in Japan in the thirteenth century, and important in the syncretism of Shingon and Shinto practices that occurred at that time. Presenting a magnificent and traditional construction, the temple in Brazil is frequented only by immigrants and descendants. Although near it physically, this temple is a clear contrast to the Church Shingonshu Kongoji. The monks speak little Portuguese and the Buddhist Church Nambei Yugazam Jyomiyoji is very traditional, and associated with the Japanese ethnicity, even though the numbers of the devotees has rapidly decreased in the last years.

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[209] Among them are the pioneers Rev. Gonçalves and Rev. Murillo Azevedo, who subsequently converted, respectively, to the Higashi and Nishi branches from the Jôdô Shinshû School. According to interviews, the motives were, in both cases, the tendency of syncretism with Afro-Brazilian religions.

Beyond the temples associated with Koyasan and the Buddhist Church Nambei Yugazam Jyomiyoji, there are also some small independent temples, thought to be derived from Shingon[210]. Regarding Japanese Esoteric Buddhism, there still exists two Tendai temples in the city of Diadema, following a syncretic pattern similar to what occurs in Shingon. One of these temples is called Jogan-Ji Fudô Myô-ô and was built in the 1970s, being considered a tourist destination of the region. According to my fieldwork, the temple is directed by two priestesses and is associated with the temple Tyoujiu-ji Kihara Fudô-Son in Japan. Fudô Myô-ô is the main deity in this temple and there is also an emphasis on consultations, and the ritual of fire (jap. *goma*) is still performed. The other temple from the Tendai branch in Diadema is the Kannon Community, which has become somewhat decadent after the death of the founder. Until some years ago a ceremony with a walk on fire was performed annually, a special practice of Tendai, which attracted popular attention and the media. In the practices, there are consultations and blessings for curing illness or solving problems. The syncretism with Buddhist deities of the Catholic devotion of Maria and the Afro-Brazilian deity Iemanjá are some other popular local features[211].

Besides this, there are some new religious movements influenced by Shingon based in São Paulo[212]. One example is Shinnyo-En, an independent group associated with the temple Daigoji and strongly influenced by Shingon practices. Recently inaugurating its first temple in South America, at present Shinnyo-En seems restricted to the nikkei community. Agonshû is another example of the so-called 'new, new' religious movement, in this case with a level of interaction with Brazilian religions. Established in São Paulo, Agonshû has many Brazilian adepts, mainly attracted for the solution of worldly problems. Although Agonshû does not belong to esoteric Buddhism, it is strongly influenced by the Shingon format[213].

One of the strongest emphasis of Agonshû in Brazil is the cult for the karmic liberation of the ancestors (jap. *guedatsu kuyô*) that would be a "process of elimination of the repetition of the unhappy fate of the ancestors", which occurs through their rites. According to an interview with one of the leaders, many Brazilians frequent Agonshû coming from Umbanda

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[210] Cf. Osaki 1990: 95-96.

[211] See Maeyama 1983a for more details about this temple.

[212] For an overview of the Japanese new religious movements in Brazil, see Clarke 1999.

[213] About the history and evolution of the Agonshû in Japan, specially centered on the combination of Japanese popular religiosity with modern aspects, consult Reader 1988.

and Spiritism and because of the most different problems. The origin of the problems is frequently understood as being a karma because of the ancestors or the negative influence of spirits (jap. *reishô*). As an example of this point of view, a brochure from Agonshû in Portuguese states that the "karma that causes harm to the fate of its own son" can explained by "*reishô* issued by the aborted foetus ...[or] spirit that died with profound hatred for this family"[214]. Just as personal problems, violence in Brazil is justified by the lack of a cult to liberate the souls. The Christian justification that "the soul is saved by the grace of God" is not enough and only the Agonshû rites could liberate the country from its the compulsive fate. According to Agonshû terminology, that associates a psychological vocabulary with its religious view, only the Agonshû can change the compulsive fate that is present in the profound unconsciousness[215].

In the following item, I will describe with more details the Koyasan temple in Suzano. Despite its representation of a fairly traditional school in Japan, it is possible to notice how esoteric Buddhism for results is developed in this temple, being a paradigmatic example of a frequent interpretation of the interaction with Brazilian religions.

3.2 Popular Practices of Shingon in Brazil

The majority of sympathizers and adepts from the Church Shingonshu Kongoji come from the city of São Paulo and their first contacts are made orally. Many Brazilians without Japanese heritage visit the temple, many of whom are middle class or below. The presence of many Japanese descendants often occurs during funeral rites. The so-called consultations and blessings are an important element for visitors to the temple, being performed daily in two small rooms, separated from the monks' residence and from the main building. The participants call the monks *padres*, a Portuguese word normally used in the Catholic Church. The main motivations of these visitors are health, financial, or familial problems. The great majority of Brazilians do not have a formal association with the temple, or a more doctrinal or intellectual understanding of Buddhism, although some of these sympathizers have visited these consultations and weekend ceremonies for many years. Beyond the Shingon temple, many also practice other traditions simultaneously, such as Catholicism, Spiritism, or Seicho

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[214] In accordance with one booklet distributed by Agonshû, "Gedatsu Kuyô", pg. 13.
[215] Cf. "Gedatsu Kuyô", pg. 16-18.

no Ie, a new Japanese religion very popular in Brazil. Despite this, some do consider themselves Buddhist and have done so for decades, visiting the temple regularly, but participating in other religious practices as well.

For ethnographic reasons, and as the empirical data of participant observation, it is important to relate one of these typical consultations, to illustrate the presence of syncretism through the suspension of barriers between Shingon and Afro-Brazilian traditions. Each visitor pays a small amount, receives a password, and stands in an informal queue, awaiting a free room for the next session. Meanwhile each visitor writes out his problem or request. During the ceremony in which my participation was permitted, there were twelve people, of them only one was male and only one had Japanese heritage. The majority of the women were housewives and the only man was unemployed. The participants belonged to diverse age groups and social classes, although they were predominantly middle class. All participants sit down in chairs against the lateral walls. The priest had a Shingon oracle in front of an altar with an image of Kôbô Daishi. Initially, the priest reads the paper with the visitor's problem, clarifying all possible confusion with a conversation in the front of the group. The most frequent problems were related to health, followed by financial difficulties. At first, while still in a group, the priest speaks with each participant, investigating possible causes and solutions of the problem. As I understood it, in this first phase the solutions are not spiritual. Sometimes the monk gave practical advice, for example, the appropriate kind of lawyer for a specific case, or what might be a better orientation for an unprofitable business. Regarding health problems, he gave medical advice, which was affirmed by the priest's specialization in Chinese medicine and his knowledge of homeopathy.

In a second phase, a more spiritual consultation with each participant occurs, as a form of investigation into the spiritual cause of the problem. The spiritual causes are mainly divided into two categories. The first great reason was ancestor karma, which would have important consequences in the descendant's life. According to the priest, for example, the problem of divorce faced by one participant was caused by an abortion sustained by an ancestor. This causal relation with the ancestor's karma was also common in the case of

participants' illnesses. A second general cause of problems was *macumba* (black magic)[216], expedited from someone in order to make evil for a participant, or as a more direct influence from some deceased spirit. This spiritual explanation was expected by some participants as a possible justification for evil and for the problem. The only man present, who was unemployed, asked: "nothing works, is everything for me closed, will it not be *macumba*?" This association is confirmed by the priest's vocabulary, which employed the term "*macumba*," "bad spirit," or "bad influence from deceased spirits" (port. *encosto*), when he tried to make intelligible the spiritual causes of these problems. In Brazil, these words are closely associated with Spiritism or Afro-Brazilian religions. After the spiritual explanation of the reasons for each individual problem, the priest solicited concentration from all participants, and a specific mudra was made, showed by the priest. Then a purification ceremony was performed, with the recitation of a specific mantra. Then each participant was individually purified again, through a new mantra. After that the priest performed another individual consultation to verify whether or not there were still some spiritual obstacles or if the spiritual problems were resolved. At this time, the priest explained some concepts of Buddhism, such as the importance of reverences, the meaning of mudras, or the role of Kôbô Daishi for Shingon. For a participant identified as suffering from strong *macumba*, a specific ritual was performed, with a specific sequence of mudras and mantras. For some visitors there was nothing more to be done, for others it was necessary that a determined number of masses (port. *missa*) be performed, a ritual performed daily, only by monks, for the spiritual pacification of the laypeople's ancestors. During these ceremonies, through the adept's solicitation, the ancestors' karma is purified as a way to avoid negative consequences in a descendant's life.

Many participants understand the ceremony as a blessing or, to take the spiritualistic ceremony of "passes hands" (port. *tomar um passe*), a kind of blessing. Often, they refer to Shingon as a good means to undo black magic (port. *desfazer trabalhos de macumba*), normally ignoring the more traditional or intellectual concepts of Buddhism. The practice is directed toward solutions for worldly problems, based especially in the concept of karma and in magical elements syncretized from Brazilian religions. A level of syncretism is also shown

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[216] In this context, the black magic originated from Afro-Brazilian religions that has the objective of injuring someone, is frequently associated with the so-called lower spirits. The popular term "*macumba*" is normally used by *quimbanda*.

in the reappropriation of words and expressions from Roman Catholicism. In a stricter sense, the suspension of limits between religious systems, in the case of this Koyasan temple, occurs especially in this magical context. The cause of a visitor's problem is often understood to be a result of the karma associated with ancestors or of some black magic realized in Afro-Brazilian religions. The desired result, the elimination of the problem, is obtained through consultation with the priests or in rituals for the ancestors. These elements are understood simultaneously in the context of Brazilian religions, and with the information they have about Buddhism. In contrast with others Buddhist groups, especially Zen groups, one adept states that in Shingon there is a liberty and a more popular tendency because in Zen groups, for example, "the doors are not open for all and always, they are for people that want to sit and meditate."

Magical and popular elements also exist in the weekend ceremonies, but in this case they appear to be associated more with the Shingon ritual orthodoxy. These ceremonies are attended by more immigrants and Japanese descendants, but approximately half are Brazilians without Japanese heritage. The most popular ceremonies are the ritual of fire (jap. *goma*) and the ritual in memory of ancestors. The *goma* ceremony, undertaken normally for Fudô Myô-ô, and featuring complex symbolism, receives a peculiar interpretation as consequence of its location in Brazil. For many, the ritual objective is the "cut of spiritual obstacles." According to interviews, the ash left after the ritual is used with water in diverse ways, against bad spirit influences for example. Besides this there are annual ceremonies like the "happiness cult," the "astrological cult," the "abort cult," performed to pacify the spirits of aborted children, and also the "lantern cult." The lantern cult is performed in memory of the ancestors, as it is in Japan, with the objective that through this ceremony they can live in peace and happiness[217]. Another annual ceremony is the commemoration of the birth of Buddha. As in Buddhist temples in Japan, in Brazil there is a traditional offering of sweet tea before a small image of Buddha as a child, although in Japan the occasion is also marks the arrival of spring (jap. *hanamatsuri*). After this ceremony, the sweet tea is distributed between the adepts who bring bottles to collect it, because the tea is considered good for warding off general health problems.

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[217] In an informational paper distributed by Koyasan: "This mass arose through a legend that says that offering it, we are able to live in peace and to have happiness, protected by the spirit of our ancestors."

Indeed, an important influence in the adaptation of this temple is the significance of certain social problems, often found in the Third World. The absence of a health care infrastructure or of insurance, for example, or a high rate of unemployment and persons with financial difficulties, are reflected in motives for a temple visit. Some aspects of life in the city of São Paulo have already been described as important social influences on religious practice[218] and the same phenomenon occurs in this temple. For example, one such factor is the feeling of insecurity felt by many of the inhabitants of São Paulo, due to the high rate of criminality. This gives a special relevance to some of the ceremonies performed, such as the "*goma* cult against car theft" and the "*goma* cult against house theft". Another tendency that appears more increased in the case of Shingon, is the presence of more devotional elements in the practice of Brazilian converts, often associated with benefits and graces. Beside the main temple, for example, there is a small sanctuary dedicated to Jizô bodhisattva. Devotion directed toward Jizô was popular with immigrants because he protects travellers and children, which was very important during the trip to Brazil and during the difficult beginning. Now this devotion has attracted some Brazilians as well, and there are Brazilian adepts that pray and leave offerings of fruits and food for Jizô[219]. In a big marble plate below, it is possible to read in Portuguese: "With the pilgrim stick symbolizing the domain about the nature elements and the sphere meaning the divine sapience, this saint presides the worldly things. Besides other innumerable graces this venerable saint from earth provides us the salvation of the despaired, the protection of children, of farming and distance from the evils that afflict man. Here we record the gratitude to Mr. Kiyoshi Senzaki who donated the image for us. Erected in 3.26.1967."

4. The case of Nichiren Buddhism

4.1 Openness through Active Proselytization

Contrary to ethnic Buddhism, the so-called new Japanese religions tried to adapt themselves and attract Brazilians, although, even today, the control still remains predominantly in the hands of Japanese descendants. This effort of active proselytization was made possible in a

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[218] See for example Jensen 1998: 84-85, in her description of the clientele of Umbanda in São Paulo.
[219] A devotional aspect of Shingon in Brazil is briefly described by Clarke 1999: 204-205.

structural organization of the new Japanese religious movements in Brazil and also because of the presence of many religious movements in Brazil based on conversion, notably the Protestant and neopentecostal movements. This effort for openness rarely existed in the case of nikkei Buddhism. The traditional Japanese Buddhism was still based, and in many groups this characteristic is still a reality, on the ethnic identity and the family religiousness of the descendants, who became interested in Buddhism mainly because of the worship services for the dead. As a contraposition to the traditional Buddhist temples that represent an ethnic Buddhism, some of the new religions, based on Nichiren Buddhism, reached a relative expansion among Brazilians. Associated with a particular concept of karma, these religions met the expectations of some characteristics of Brazilian religiousness and, presently, they have a great majority of followers with no Japanese ancestry. However, it is important to notice that these groups historically started as an ethnic Buddhism, and later acquired other standards of adaptation and integration, closer to the Brazilian religiousness and culture.

In quantitative terms, there seems to be no doubt that most Brazilian Buddhists belong to the line developed by Nichiren, according to the numbers of followers given by the institutions, as shown in Chapter two. This is confirmed by interviews - in an international comparison, leaders of Honmon Butsuryûshû, Sôka Gakkai, Reyûkai and Risshô Kôseikai, affirmed that Brazil is the Western country with the largest and most organized structure, in addition to the largest number of Western followers and sympathizers. In this item, some basic data on these organizations will be described, followed by a depiction of the main strategies for adaptation in Brazil, especially in regard to the reasons for conversion of the Brazilians.

As most of the conversions occur because of health, financial or family conflict problems, this karmic Buddhism blends with a popular religiousness and a social action that can be rarely found in intellectualized Buddhism oriented towards a spiritual search, which usually possesses a more individual character. Through the main practice of Nichiren Buddhism (*daimoku*), basically characterized by the recitation of the invocation *Nam-myo-rengue-kyo* (Supreme Devotion to the Mystical Law of the Lotus Sutra), it is believed that the union with the Universal Law and the overcoming of sufferings is possible. This characteristic is in line with a karmic Buddhism and that is oriented towards results, often resulting from transmission patterns that are characteristic of the New Religions and the lay movements. In some groups, the worship of ancestors becomes a central role, starting from the family

Buddhism and because of its association with the individual karma. The worship of ancestors also seems to attract part of the Brazilian converts as can be seen with the Shingon sympathizers and that will be shown here by the relative success of Reyûkai[220].

Among the Nichiren oriented new religions in Brazil, Honmon Butsuryûshû (HBS) is the oldest. In Japan it was founded by Master Nissen in 1857, as a dissidence of the Honmon Hokke Buddhist group. In the first ship of Japanese immigrants that arrived in Brazil in 1908, a Honmon Butsuryûshû monk - Reverend Nissui Ibaragui - was already aboard. Later on he would have an essential role in propagating and establishing HBS in Brazil[221]. In spite of these facts, it can be said that the degree of institutionalization was rather low and Buddhism adopted a secondary role for the immigrants and for Brazil during this period. As already described, no formal contacts with the headquarters in Japan were made before the Second World War. The low degree of proselytism that could exist, was related only to the conversion of the nikkei. In 1955, the HBS Supreme Pontifice from Japan paid a visit to Brazil, starting a more official contact with the existing community directed by the mentioned Reverend Nissui Ibaragui, who was already considered the founder of HBS in Brazil. During this time, there were already centers in São Paulo and Paraná. From then on, a official HBS mission finally settles in Brazil, even though it was more focused on the attendance of the immigrants, starting by the dispatch of missionaries. Especially in the 1980s, with greater independence, which was also made possible by the education of priests who are fully fluent in Portuguese, HBS is devoting more intensely to the conversion of Brazilians, even though it still has a strong ethnic identity. Although the intention of the leaders to open, there is still fear in the HBS of loss of the Japanese culture and an opposition movement who is against this openness, especially in the communities in the State of São Paulo. Nowadays there are approximately 10,000 followers, half of them in the city of São Paulo, of which around ten percent are Brazilians with no Japanese ancestry. The effort for openness towards non-descendents is one of HBS's priorities, which can be perceived by the proportion of Brazilian

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[220] Considering the significance of the worship of ancestors in Shingon and Reyûkai, it is necessary to contextualize the information found in Gonçalves 1990 and Usarski 2002b: 165-166, who point out this factor as a barrier against the participation of Brazilians. In fact, it is possible to state that worship of ancestors has no penetration in the intellectualized Buddhism and it frequently, has a function of emphasizing the differences and barriers of the community of immigrants and descendants, in what was defined as ethnic Buddhism. However, in karmic Buddhism, it can assume a double role of evil justification and possibility of change.
[221] Cf. Nakamaki 2002.

priests - of the existing 20 priests, 10 of them are Brazilians with no Japanese ancestry. Nowadays, there are 12 temples, of which six are located in São Paulo, four in Paraná, one in Rio de Janeiro and one in Mato Grosso.

While HBS suffers internally some degree of resistance against the expansion among Brazilians, since it has a large number of followers in the ethnic community, Sôka Gakkai in Brazil has been expanding among non-descendents for many years. Founded in 1930 by Tsunessaburo Makiguti, since the post-war period Sôka Gakkai has expanded rapidly out of Japan, especially in Southeast Asia, in the USA and in Brazil, largely because of the international leadership of Daisaku Ikeda. In Brazil, Sôka Gakkai of Brazil (BSGI) had its first chapter founded in 1960, the first of Sôka Gakkai out of Japan[222]. Initially, this chapter was comprised only of some families of immigrants. From the 1970s, there was an emphasis on proselytization, which was stimulated especially by the visit of Daisaku Ikeda from 1960 and 1966 and by the leadership of Roberto Saito from 1966. As intrinsic factors of the growth of BSGI, aggressive proselytism can be pointed out, especially in the 1970s, and a strong organizational structure that has been able to modernize itself rapidly, as can be shown by its involvement as an NGO in social activities around the world.

Other factors for expansion are the orientation to use the Portuguese language and the presence of the nikkei community in Brazil. In doctrinal terms, during pioneer times, Ikeda's lectures presented the Japanese immigrants as "bodhisattvas of the land" in reference to the sufferings of the first years of immigration and to SGI's missionary task. Nowadays, a strong devotion to the leaders can be perceived within the Brazilian converts, particularly to Daisaku Ikeda, in addition to an environmental and developmental discourse for Brazil, in contrast to the defense for peace in other countries. From those elements, the anthropologist Ronan Alves Pereira has proposed the concept of "complex of world renovation", by using theoretical terms such as messianism, millenniarism and utopia[223].

The search of world renovation would be an important component of the new Japanese religions, particularly BSGI, which was also incorporated by the Brazilian converts.

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[222] Cf. Pereira 2001: 311.
[223] Cf. Pereira 2001: 30.

Currently, BSGI has 120,000 members and innumerable sympathizers, of which approximately half are located in the State of São Paulo. According to a previous research made by Ronan Alves de Oliveira, 90 percent of the members were identified as Brazilians with no Japanese descent, who are distributed in 63 regional communities all over the country[224]. The same research pointed out that most followers belong to the urban lower middle class, of which one third are youngsters and 60 to 65 percent belong to the female sex. In spite of the large number of Brazilians, the leadership and the organization at Sôka Gakkai still have a strong ethnic character[225].

Two other new religious movements, that are influenced by Nichiren Buddhism, but are more devoted to the Lotus Sutra and especially oriented to family and a worship of ancestors, are Reyûkai and Risshô Kôseikai. Reiyukai was founded by Kakutaro Kubo in 1920 and its first president was Kimi Kotani in 1930, who was also fairly important for the establishment of the Reyûkai doctrine. In 1944, after the death of Kakutaro Kubo, she devoted herself more intensely to social activities and created many programs for the young. Reyûkai was registered in Brazil in 1975, starting as a nucleus that was formed after the arrival of the immigrant Toku Suzuki in Brazil, in 1969[226]. Contrary to other Japanese religious movements that initially concentrate in the State of São Paulo, Reyûkai began and still has a strong presence in Paraná, with four offices, and in Mato Grosso do Sul, with two affiliates. The headquarters in the city of São Paulo was inaugurated only in 1986 and there is another office in Presidente Prudente. As many of the meetings and activities of the followers are held at homes, there is no need for a very large physical structure. Reyûkai estimates having 112,000 followers in Brazil. Most of them are Brazilians with no Japanese ancestry and a strong growth was registered only in the 1990s[227]. Considering its relatively recent foundation and the target of having 200,000 followers in 1995, these numbers of Reyûkai represent a quick widespread. In spite of a fast adaptation to Brazil, the leadership and the organization of

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[224] Cf. Pereira 2001: 265. For similar statistical data about Sôka Gakkai in Brazil, consult also Watanabe 2001: 369ff.

[225] Cf. Pereira 2001: 272.

[226] Cf. Mori 1992.

[227] According to a interview with Reyûkai leaders. For detailed quantitative data up to 1998, consult Watanabe 2001: 411ff. In 1986 occured the graduation of the first Brazilian *chibuchô* – group chief in the Reyûkai hierarchy, a title granted only after obtaining at least 50 converts. Since then the propagation of Reyûkai intensifies among the non-nikkei, especially in Mato Grosso do Sul. From the field study quoted by Watanabe 2001: 414, 84 percent of the 32 *chibuchô* in Mato Grosso do Sul are Brazilians with no Japanese ancestry.

Reyûkai still follow Japanese standards, being the entity maintained by monthly donations from the followers and by funding from Japan. Risshô Kôseikai is also an organization of lay Buddhists with Nichiren orientation, established in Tokyo in 1938. It was founded by Nikkyo Niwano, starting from a dissidence from Reyûkai. Risshô Kôseikai worships the image of Buddha Shakyamuni and the basic scripture is the Lotus Sutra. The activities in Brazil started in 1971, but only recently Risshô Kôseikai opened itself to the Brazilians, with the graduation of a missionary who speaks Portuguese and Japanese fluently. Nowadays, there are approximately 700 members, of which around 50 to 100 are Brazilians.

Both Sôka Gakkai and Reyûkai have devoted themselves to the conversion of Brazilians, having achieved a relative success. HBS, in spite of still having a low percentage of converts, has also devoted to making their doctrines better known, by means of a more effective propaganda. That is also the case of Risshô Kôseikai. The adaptation strategies and the allurement of the Brazilians will be discussed as followed, by activities and interviews at the institutions, that show that a karmic Buddhism has evolved towards a popularization from functions and concepts already expected in Brazilian religions.

4.2 Towards a Popular Buddhism

In contrast to the intellectualized Buddhism, karmic Buddhism indicates a different pattern of adaptation, closer to the reward, which meets the expectations of a popular search of wordly benefits. Historically, the solution of problems starting from religions is already central in the history of Brazil, mainly from magical Catholicism and, more recently, from the success of Protestantism for conversion. In fact, as discussed, there are beliefs strongly rooted in Brazilians, that allow a better acceptance of some Buddhist concepts because of the analogy with ideas already generally known. In interviews carried out, the representatives belonging to Buddhist groups influenced by the Nichiren branch, stated that the conversion of Brazilians to Buddhism took place mainly because of health, financial or family conflict problems. This information is corroborated by interviews with the followers, through bulletins and existing activities.

The motivation for conversion resulting from several problems can be already noticed from the beginning of Nichiren Buddhism in Brazil. According to what was stated, in the writings of the HBS founder in Brazil, Ibaragui Nissui: "What was expected from Honmon Butsuryûshû was receiving divine benefits [...] by the healing of illnesses in general, by raining during times of drought, etc. Summing up, requests that satisfy their needs in this actual existence, a practice that was very stimulated since the times of Master Nissen [founder of HBS in Japan]"[228]. Even in 1929, Brazilians looked for Reverend Ibaragui asking for prayers and bringing children[229]. The motivation for conversion, starting from a search for solutions for several problems, is still today a characteristic of Brazilians converted to Buddhism in HBS, by recitation of *daimoku* in front of *gohonzon* (shrine comprised of the mandala revealed to Nichiren), according to interviews with leaders. The association of the *daimoku* practice to benefits in this world is also confirmed by HBS newspapers and publications. In the Butsumaru brochure, focused on clarifying the basic principles of HBS, an explanation on the meaning of the word grace can be read, remembering an analogous meaning in the Brazilian popular Catholicism: " In fact, this word refers to the works done by Buddha viewing the salvation of human beings who are suffering. What would you do, for example, if you received news about a member of your family who is sick with cancer? [...]. In this case, the normal state of spirit is the hope for a miracle speaking louder than the feeling of resignation [...]. In Butsuryû Shû religion, this is the starting point that links the human being to Buddha"[230]. In the quoted book, it is recommended to take medicine from the household shrine with the *gohonzon*, a mandalalike scroll first inscribed by Nichiren in the thirteenth century. The candle stubs, water and ashes would be useful for several health problems[231].

In Sôka Gakkai, one of the great impetuses for conversion is also problems of several types, that can be overcome by recitation of *daimoku* in front of *gohonzon*: "Even if one finds himself in the darkness of suffering, the person who recites *Nam-myoho-rengue-kyo* has the ability to change completely this condition towards the highest happiness"[232]. This pattern was confirmed in interviews carried out with followers and leaders of Sôka Gakkai and it was

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[228] Nakamaki 2002: 84.
[229] Cf. Nakamaki 2002: 83.
[230] Cf. booklet distributed by HBS, "Butsumaru", pg. 49.
[231] "Butsumaru", pg. 74.
[232] Cf. booklet distributed by Sôka Gakkai, "BSGI: Por uma Sociedade de Paz", pg. 21.

already pointed out in previous studies[233]. In this sense, one of the concepts highlighted by Sôka Gakkai is the karma, to motivate the creation of a positive environment that brings happiness as well as to justify negative events: "Along the way of the practice of the faith in the True Law, when several difficulties arise, while we understand that they are slanders released by ourselves in the past, we must be sure that we should in truth receive greater effects and for a longer period of time. In fact, we have the power to alleviate the karmic negative effects and to receive them much lighter and even to suppress the suffering mainly because there is the beneficial effect of positive causes done in believing in the True Law and to protect it"[234]. The practice of *daimoku* is complemented by recitation of chapters of the Lotus Sutra (*gongyô*), done in front of *gohonzon*, usually twice a day.

Reyûkai also presents a similar pattern of motivation for conversion. However, in spite of having practices and concepts fairly close to those of Sôka Gakkai, in Reyûkai the central point is the creation of a worship of ancestors with lay bases. The figure of Nichiren does not have a very important role in the religious view of the group, being remembered only on special occasions and in a secondary way. The Brazilian converts also have, as their main motivation, the obtaining of wordly benefits. In Reyûkai, the cause of the problems is understood as having a direct relationship with the ancestors, starting from a karmic reasoning fairly common in the Japanese religions, particularly those that had more influence from popular religiousness. The problems are caused not only by a personal karma or by past lives, but also by the acts of the ancestors. In Reyûkai of Brazil several examples of this reasoning are found not only in books published by Reyûkai of Brazil, but also in their propaganda newspapers.

The logic of the worship of ancestors in Reyûkai, present in Japanese religiousness but without the strong sense and systematization that Reyûkai promotes, is that the worship implies in a merit in the spiritual world, which reverts to benefits to the follower. The opposite, resulting from the descendants' negligence in regard to recitation and proselytization, is the cause of several misfortunes for the descendants and unhappiness for the ancestor in the spiritual world, which can even become a roaming spirit. Ancestors and

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[233] Cf. Pereira 2001: 340.
[234] Cf. "BSGI: Por uma Sociedade de Paz", pg. 35.

descendants are associated in their fate by the concept of karma, that can be improved in accordance with the merit attained in the practice of the worshipper. As previously mentioned, the transformation of karma, that unites descendants and ancestors, evolves from a Hindu influence, passing by Theravada (where the transfer of merit passes by sangha), by traditional Japanese Buddhism (where it received the influence of Confucianism and the relationship with ancestors is formalized, along with the *ie* household system), up to Reyûkai, that as a lay movement that rejects the exclusivity of transfer of merit through the priests.

In the Japanese popular context, the ancestors must have traditionally a posthumous name in order to reach the Buddha status. In the Reyûkai context, the ancestors must have a name so they can be identified in the spiritual world and so that a spiritual practice can be oriented towards them. In Japan, this posthumous name is traditionally given by Buddhist priests, which is rejected by Reyûkai as a lay movement. As observed by Hardacre, an objection arises because most Japanese Buddhist monks are married and have a family. Considering their non-distinctive character in relation to common people, Reyûkai followers argue that the high fees associated to funeral services and the privilege in writing the posthumous names are unjustifiable[235].

Following these principles, the daily practice in Reyûkai is centered on the worship of ancestors through the lay recitation of selected excerpts of Lotus Sutra. The repetition of the Sutra, at least twice a day, brings the merit that overlaps a bad karma and feeds a good karma which the ancestors have in the spiritual world. As a lay movement, the shrine is kept at home, and is basically made up of butsudan with worshipping images, a small board representing all of the ancestors (jap. *sokaimyô*) and a register of posthumous names of known ancestors. This register on the dead has 31 pages, where the names of the dead ancestors are written for each day of the month, including abortions and unsuccessful births. The names are composed by a system developed by Reyûkai (jap. *hômyô*) given to the ancestors by the same followers, choosing japanese names from parameters such as virtues or type of death. In order to write the posthumous name of the ancestors, it is necessary to have at least 50 affiliated members.

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[235] Cf. Hardacre 1984: 131-132, 145.

In addition to the recitation of Sutra for the worship of ancestors and for personal improvement, another main practice of Reyûkai is *mitibiki*, that is, the orientation of other people to the teaching. While the recitation of sutras is understood as a vertical practice that links the followers to the ancestors, the proselytization is understood as a horizontal practice that links friends and society in general, producing merit to be offered to the spiritual world. The activity of looking after the affiliates is also one of the main forms to create merit in the spiritual world. Meetings of followers (jap. *hôza*) and testimonies of results through practice (jap. *taiken*) are also included in the schedule of activities, and specific activities for different age groups and interests are also organized. According to interviews with Reyûkai members in Brazil, a karmic affinity is frequently supported, which makes members have similar problems and attract each other mutually.

The worship of ancestors does not seem to present a problem for Brazilian followers. The frequently presented justification of the leaders for the worship of ancestors is that problems are caused by lack of equilibrium which occurred in the past, either through something inherited, or through reincarnation. In this sense, the interpretation of the Reyûkai spiritual world is strongly influenced in Brazil by concepts of Spiritism. In fact, the scheme of religious plausibility is already furnished by the concepts of spiritual evolution through karma, and by the influence of spirits in this world, something already present in Spiritism. This spiritual world, common to Spiritism and to Reyûkai, is then associated to the follower's ancestors in the following way: a problem suffered nowadays is also something that was faced by other generations of ancestors, either through a genetic predisposition for diseases like cancer and others, or through an inheritance of destructive psychological tendencies. Reyûkai offers a method for the enlightenment of those spirits who in their turn, help their descendents with their problems. An analogy frequently quoted is the one that compares the worshipper with a tree branch and his ancestors with a root. The practice of Reyûkai is described as a nutrient necessary for the tree to grow fully from the root. There are few followers who do not accept this premise related to the worship of ancestors, even if it reaches, in its final stage, a meaning mainly influenced by the spiritist concepts already present in Brazil.

Risshô Kôseikai, in spite of having very few Brazilian followers and just recently devoting to missionary activities in Portuguese, also offers a good example of Buddhism oriented towards results, in relation to Brazilians. On account of having been formed from a Reyûkai dissidence, the worshipping of Lotus Sutra and of the ancestors are part of the Risshô

Kôseikai practices. In contrast to Reyûkai, there is a smaller emphasis on proselytism and a more ecumenical orientation. One of the main practices is *hôza*[236] (orientation in group), a meeting in which the more experienced members help the others to understand the teachings and to put them into practice. In Brazil, another important activity of Risshô Kôseikai, that is also the best link with Brazilian society, occurs with a campaign against bronchitis. Originally idealized by Yukio Shida in 1991, a fast treatment for bronchitis was offered only by massage and stimulation of energy points. The campaign proved to be a success, attracting a great number of interested people. According to interviews with followers, the campaign, which occurred four days a year, with the involvement of a large number of volunteers, has already attended 1,000 children in just one day. Nowadays, the participants have a set of religious activities before the bronchitis treatment as the disease is understood to be karmic, and could be reverted through the worship of ancestors: "In order to eliminate this disease, we must use religious resources, through prayers for the ancestors and self-knowledge; with this practice and with the unselfish devotion of the followers to Buddhist teachings, we will certainly reach our objectives successfully"[237]. The activities already benefited 25,000 children and Risshô Kôseikai affirms that 80 percent of these children were cured from bronchitis[238]. Although initially conceived as one activity of social assistance, nowadays many Brazilians are introduced to Risshô Kôseikai in their search for bronchitis' cure. From the institution's point of view, the introduction of religious practices, in spite of diminishing their attendance capacity, serves to propagate Buddhism more effectively, associating it to concrete results.

In general, because these institutions emphasize problem solutions, there is a different pattern of conversion in relation to the intellectualized Buddhism. In addition to this motivation for conversion, in search for results from Buddhism, other general characteristics can be noted, which will be quoted briefly. At a higher social level, many social actions have been proposed, in close association to Brazil's social reality as a developing country. Thus, as

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[236] In Japan some of its principles and practices from Risshô Kôsekai are also found in Reyûkai, considering that Risshô Kôsekai is a movement derived. Meanwhile the organizational principle of the practice of *hôza* in the Risshô Kôsekai and the Reyûkai shows an organizational difference as the first one is associated with a geographical location and the second one to the godparents, cf. Hardacre 1984: 56.
[237] Cf. journal distributed by the Risshô Kôseikai, "Círculo 'Hooza'", issue 29, "Tratamento Gratuito: 2 mil crianças in 2001", ("Free of Charge Treatment: 2,000 Children in 2001") by Reverend Mori, President of the Risshô Kôseikai of Brazil.
[238] Cf. "Círculo 'Hooza'", issue 30, "Budistas fazem tratamento de bronquite" ("Buddhist do treatment for bronquitis").

from 1984, HBS maintains the "Volunteers of Bosatsu" group, who raises funds and dedicates itself to social assistance activities, similar to what occurs in Reyûkai. Sôka Gakkai, in its turn, maintains an intense program of social and cultural activities, from an educational project to the improvement of public education in Brazil, following the ideas of the educator and founder Tsunessaburo Makiguti, already applied in more than 100 schools. With a ecological discourse, Sôka Gakkai also maintains an environmental research station in the Amazon florest. These resources are generally well accepted and received by the Brazilian society. In fact, in the case of Sôka Gakkai of Brazil, Ronan Alves Pereira identified a significant increase in the number of honors and honorary titles granted to Daisaku Ikeda by several spheres of the Brazilian government since 1992[239]. These public ceremonies of recognition to him help reinforce a non-proselytist and modern image of Sôka Gakkai, in line with Brazilian society, linking it more to a humanitarian work rather than to a Buddhist group.

These activities also combine with the idea that Buddhism is a religion that must generate personal and practical results which are fairly practical and easy to be observed, to be offered to the largest possible number of people. In this sense the effort for proselytization becomes frequently associated to the concept of boddhisatva and the accumulation of merits. This also becomes a supporting point for the transmission of Buddhism, starting from an emphasis on conversion that generates a typical pattern of transmission, which is frequently associated to new religions. In HBS, this effort for conversion is stimulated by wishing the well being and the protection of the *gohonzon* shrine to others, incorporating the spirit of bodhisattva (jap. *bosatsu*)[240]. In Sôka Gakkai, the analogous concept is *shakubuku*, a method of propagation and conversion that literally means "to break and subjugate", which was rather controversial and criticized in the 1970s. Nowadays, even if Sôka Gakkai still uses this word, the term *kôsen-rufu* (universal propagation of Buddhism) has been more frequently used, which is more in line with the new public image of a NGO oriented towards world peace and social progress. After a period of reorganization, upon the controversial global separation of the Nichiren Shôshû clergy in 1991[241], Sôka Gakkai has emphasized this term, that means the

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[239] Cf. Pereira 2002: 270.
[240] "Butsumaru", pg. 68.
[241] In the separation of Sôka Gakkai and Nichiren Shôshû in 1991, in Brazil the largest number of followers stayed at the Sôka Gakkai, as it happened in other locations of the world. Cf. Pereira 2001: 262, it is being estimated that just around five thousand members had stayed as being loyal to the clergy of Nichiren Shôshû. The Hokkekô Religious Association of Brazil, new name for the Nichiren Shôshû in

teaching of Buddhism to everyone but which is also ambiguously associated to "world peace"[242]. According to what was mentioned before, in Reyûkai, one of the main practices is also the former mentioned *mitibiki*, through the propagation of teachings and proselytization. Each proselyte is called godfather, who has a determined number of godsons, which is associated to a degree in the Reyûkai organization. The role of each godfather is to teach the practice to each one of his godsons, consolidating a relationship of absolute trust[243], being interpreted as a karmic relationship.

Because of this effort for adaptation, but mainly on account of organizational aspects and strategies that are in line with the popular expectatives, which generate a motivation for conversion, karmic Buddhism appears to have characteristics rather different from the more individual character of the spiritual search of the intellectualized Buddhism. In general, not frequently pointed out by the media, perhaps because it is less exotic and less syntonized with the stereotype of peace and tranquility, karmic Buddhism appears to be more open to Brazilian influences, especially in regards to the motive for conversion and the justification of problems. In this sense this karmic Buddhism appears to have characteristics that can create a popular Brazilian Buddhism.

Brazil, has temples in São Paulo and in Rio de Janeiro. As it happened in most of the world, in Brazil there exists a rivalry and a tense climate in the relationship between the two groups.
[242] Cf. "BSGI: Por uma Sociedade de Paz", pg. 20.
[243] Cf. *Seigyo*, "The practice of the right behavior", general rules published in the journal of the Reyûkai of Brazil and formalized on 11.18.1992.

Chapter 7 - Social Patterns in Religious Nativization

1. Introduction

The tendency to combination and fusion, already existent in religious doctrines that relativize their own character of absolute truth, is even more pronounced by its presence in societies already permeated by the historical acceptance of a simultaneous practice of different religions (such as Latin American countries in general). In fact, sociological categories that work with ideas such as "religious belonging" and "conversion" can be very inadequate, for having its origin mainly in the European and North American environment in the beginning of the last century[244]. In fact, an increasing number of cases in these multicultural environments have shown the relevance of analyzing the practice of a "family of religions" and of substituting the convert category with other proposals as well. Rather, immigrants' communities become multi-religious because of their process of social integration and the new generations of descendants, esoteric groups and New Era choose consciously an open approach and the inclusion of different trends. Closed systems are hard to maintain and, in general, all religions had to elaborate legitimate and harmonizing criteria that were unnecessary decades ago. As a consequence of these doctrinal reformulations in the institutions and because of the migrations of people and ideas, harmony attempts among religions are frequently found both in institutions and in individuals.

In this chapter, functional patterns in the religious combinations will be proposed, being these concepts concretely applied in the analysis and systematization of existent combinations in Buddhism in Brazil, mainly the Japanese case. Before this, models elaborated from syncretism and bricolage will be described. It will be indicated that this approach suggests new directions in the study of Buddhism in Western countries, that in a more general way also presents the problem of Buddhism combinations with other religions.

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[244] Starting from the question on the applicability of the concept of religion in Asia, many make a similar criticism, see for example Staal 1989: 393ff.

2. Functional Aspects of the Religious Combinations

2.1 Diluting Religious Identities

Religious combinations have been frequently described as bricolage and syncretism. Bricolage was a concept proposed by Lévi-Strauss to describe originally a way of thinking that, although it has an abstract element that is common to science, it already had as a basic principle a recombination or reorganization of existent materials. In contrast with the engineer or physicist, who plans and acts with concepts and methods, obeying a structural planning, the bricoleur combines second-hand elements with a concrete and ungeneralized objetive, redefining something already used in another context[245]. Applied to the mythical thought, the technical distinction is substituted by an intellectual: the bricoleur is the one who combines mythical elements, creating new forms through the exchange of these elements. As Lévi-Strauss's bricoleur, the appropriation of religious elements occurs many times starting from isolated elements of the original structure.

Another concept used for the religious combinations is syncretism. One of the main difficulties of the research on syncretism is the ideological and historical connotation that the term contains, which causes some authors even to reject the concept. Despite its neutral use before the sixteenth century, its use in theological discourse frequently produced a pejorative connotation for the term[246]. Despite the historical presence of a pejorative use, the elimination of any negative connotation in the scientific use of the term has been pursued, because as a neutral term it can be used as an important category in Religious Studies[247]. In contrast to the tendency toward negative interpretation, syncretism was sometimes positively valued, as for example in Latin America, because it presented cultural elements of resistance against the official Catholic hegemony historically associated with European colonization.

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[245] Cf. Lévi-Strauss 1968[1962]: 29ff.

[246] See Colpe 1995. Plutarch first used the term "syncretism" for the behaviour of the Cretans, because they would minimize internal disputes in order to combat external enemies. Centuries later, Erasmus used the term in a similar sense. The term was first used with a pejorative meaning during the reconciliation efforts between Molinists and Thomists in the sixteenth century and between Lutherans and Calvinists in the seventeenth century.

[247] Cf. Rudolph 1979.

In fact, in the difficult task of systematization of religious combinations, some authors have tried to create models based on the exchange of elements between different religious systems through syncretism[248]. In these definitions and general models, however, factors of a specific context can be quite important. For instance, it is difficult to think about the African religions in Brazil (for example, Candomblé and Umbanda) without referring to the slavery system and colonization, that also occurred in the religious level. Official Catholicism in the Brazilian colonization had a quite different relationship of power, when one compares other contexts in which religions are chosen in a more individual way. In the slavery context, African ethnic groups and languages were systematically separated and placed in different occupations. The slaves worked in an urban environment (with servile functions and a greater possibility of instruction and contacts) and rural (isolated communities in slave quarters). In this context, the religious combinations had a direct relationship with the means of production, that made possible or not a communication and the establishment of communities better guided for a reconstruction of the African religious memory[249].

Maybe these local particuliarities can explain the relatively free use of the term syncretism, which hinders the formation of a more precise concept. Although sometimes a more instrumental and formal definition is proposed, the term is generally used in vague, inexact, and often contradictory ways[250]. The source of these contradictions and variations is the difficulty in systematizing the contributions of different geographical regions or different religions, given the specificity that influence the occurrence of syncretism. Although some proposals about syncretism were developed in Europe, these studies rarely include the research developed in Latin America, where syncretism is more of a cultural characteristic than a process[251]. On the other hand, it is rare that reference, in the studies about syncretism in

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[248] Cf. Berner 1982, Stolz 1996.

[249] Cf. Bastide 1971b: 393ff. For a bibliographical summary on the Afro-Brazilian religions see Ferretti 1995: 41-113 and Reuter 2002: 171-282. Even in the African religions in Brazil, there are other variables such as ethnic and social evolution that determine different forms of African religions starting from the Candomblé to the Umbanda, that present different models and theoretical explanations for syncretism.

[250] Some of these contradictory uses associated with History of Religions practiced in Europe are documented in detail in Berner 1982: 5-79.

[251] Ulrich Berner, for example, wrote a detailed study about the use of the term syncretism in the academic literature, intending to elaborate a complete typology for the uses of the term (cf. Berner 1982: 83-116). However, he practically excludes the history and contemporary practice of religions in Latin America, which are traditionally associated with syncretism. Michael Pye has directly recognized this deficiency, but he could not incorporate the contributions from this region either (cf. Pye 1994: 218).

Brazilian religions, is given to works about syncretism in other historical epochs and geographical regions. This difficulty is probably due to the diversity of local studies that can serve as a model for research about syncretism. In Europe the main models for the concept of syncretism are based on the history of Hellenic religions[252]. In Brazil, and perhaps in all of America, the main model seems to be the anthropological works on African religions. These studies had important contributions from social scientists such as Herkovits and Roger Bastide, who developed lines of analysis that still today influence the interpretation of the phenomenon[253]. In the USA, the use of syncretism in Anthropology, independent of its older use in the History of Religions, appears throughout the works of Boas, in work about integration and race, and was established as an instrumental concept within the work of Herkovits on Afro-American religions [254]. In accordance with the culturalist theory, syncretism was often used as a reinterpretation, the result of contact between two cultures. More recently, with the tendency of the USA and many countries, for the substitution of assimilationist politics with the concept of a multicultural society, syncretic phenomena has often been rejected in favour of the valorization of an ethnic identity, and the concept of syncretism in the academic community has varied due to these political changes[255]. Because religious combinations have been utilized ideologically and politically for different uses in particular cultures, many researchers proposed the study of the political discourse about its local validity through syncretism *and* anti-syncretism.

Despite these difficulties, syncretism remains a central concept for the study of religious combinations. The more general and heuristic concept of syncretism is the "suspension of barriers between two systems," as proposed by Ulrich Berner[256]. This suspension of limits generates a social process of religious combination and the suspension of the concurrency between these systems, through the appropriation, reinterpretation, and juxtaposition of external elements. In 1978, Heinz Bechert proposed different levels of syncretism, which contemplate the necessary limits to the use of the term and could be specially useful in the

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[252] Cf. Stolz 1996:18.
[253] See Ferretti 1995: 41-113 and Reuter 2002: 171-282.
[254] Cf. Greenfield 1998.
[255] Cf. Stewart 1994: 6-23.
[256] This is the definition of syncretism found in Berner 1982: 85, from the definition of religion as system in Luhmann. Berner also develops a complex typology of syncretism, which will not be utilized here and was criticized by Pye 1994: 221-222.

study of syncretic patterns in Buddhism outside Asia[257]. At the first level can be identified a reappropriation of elements, which represents syncretism in a more free use of the term. This occurs when elements are incorporated and reinterpreted inside another religion, but tend to occupy a marginal character for adepts and for the institution. A paradigmatic example for this situation, mentioned by Bechert, is the appropriation of Krishna in Jainism. In this sense, more recent uses of syncretism could be mentioned, gleaned from attempts to understand combination in so-called postmodern religiosity[258]. In a stricter sense of the term, syncretism is a process in which the incorporated elements possess a comparable weight to that of the existing elements. In this more restricted use, a real suspension of limits occurs, the juxtaposition and identification of elements belonging originally to different systems being common. In this use of the term, through diverse factors, the result of a syncretic combination can be represented as a creation of different truth levels, or syncretism can be better described by concepts such as integration and assimilation. Diverse examples for this second meaning can be found in Asian religions, like the relationship between Hinduism and Buddhism in Nepal or in Java, or even the adaptation of Buddhism to peculiar local religions in the Far East through the *bodhisattva* concept. A third level of religious combination is synthesis, which is associated with syncretism but can be differentiated through the formation of a new movement. In synthesis, two religious systems contribute to the formation of a distinct third system[259]. While syncretism is a process, synthesis has a result different from the original elements. Often forming new religions, a classic example of synthesis is the Sikh religion, a combination of Hindu and Islamic elements.

The discussion of different levels of religious combinations reveals the important question of the differentiation of the concepts of bricolage and syncretism. An approach that

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[257] Bechert 1978:21. Berner described similar levels in his classification, with concepts of relationship (a system with limits), syncretism (suspended limits), and synthesis (new system), see Berner 1982: 83-87. A similar proposal appears in the study of syncretism in the Afro-Brazilian religions, independently developed in Ferretti 1995: 91.

[258] See Lipp 1996 and Sanchis 1997. In this context Amaral has proposed the concept of "syncretism in movement," in which religious identities are not solidly established, but always alter themselves due to the appropriation of new elements and the abandonment of others, according to Amaral 1998.

[259] Besides Bechert, other authors have defended this differentiation, such as Berner 1982:92 and Pye 1994. In some studies this difference is not very sharp, syncretism being not only a process but also a possible state, as described in Colpe 1995: 219. The Afro-Brazilian Umbanda religion in Brazil, for example, is frequently described as a syncretic religion, because syncretism appears not only in its formation but also in its theology, potentially open to external influences. For more details, see Negrão 1996.

tries to propose a bricolage sociology and relate it to syncretism was proposed by Roger Bastide[260], although the concept has not been developed in all his potential for concrete cases[261]. An advantage of a structural differentiation between bricolage and syncretism, however, is that while syncretism has been described as a *process* in the contact among different religions, bricolage is characterized as a *way of thinking*. That is an important distinction in the Latin American case, where the religious combination is more a cultural fact than a process, a constant reinterpretation and association of different religious contents, not with the objective of forming a final system, but as a way of understanding and practicing any religion. Used as different terms, the term bricolage can be reserved for the cases which use isolated elements, originated from a more traditional use in other cultures[262], while syncretism aims at combining different doctrines or practices through a hybrid grammar.

2.2 Religious and Magical Combinations

In addition to the formal description of different levels of syncretism, the form of syncretism is often influenced by the combination of religious content, which is sometimes ignored in many theories. In this sense it is possible to propose two patterns of different combination in the religions, a doctrinal religious combination and a religious combination to obtain benefits in this world[263]. In general, a doctrinal religious combination is conscious in the sense of

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[260] Cf. Bastide 1970. For some, syncretism is near to the concept of *bricolage* proposed by Lévi-Strauss, but other authors distinguish more sharply between these two terms, reserving the term *bricolage* for the cases in which the creation of new cultural forms is the result of ready and isolated elements with a more traditional use in other cultures. One example is Werbner 1994: 215.

[261] Cf. Reuter 2002: 232-250. However, besides not having used it in concrete cases, it is an open subject to the extent that Bastide was ready to adopt Lévi-Strauss's concepts. In the context of bricolage and through the inspiration with linguistics, Lévi-Strauss developed two association forms, the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic. In the paradigmatic, the association between two elements occurs through similarities as a whole, in the syntagmatic the association among the elements occurs through one of the parts (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1968 [1962]: 175(notes), 239ff). In Afro-Brazilian religions' case, an example would be the paradigmatic identification of *Iemanjá*, the mother of the orixá, with Mary, Jesus's mother, and the syntagmatic identification of *Ogun*, orixá associated to war, with St George, only because of the presence of the spear as symbol of war in its iconography (Reuter 2002: 235). However, although Reuter emphasizes the associations of this division with two syncretism types in Bastide, she herself indicates that Bastide considered the incorporation of Lévi-Strauss's distinction as a return of the distinction of magic for the imitation and contagion in Frazer. In general, Bastide affirmed that, in spite of the fact that the associations are coherent permitting the identification of reasons for the combination, its content is relatively arbitrary and varies according to the period or area (Bastide 1971a:156-157).

[262] Cf. Werbner 1994: 215.

[263] Roger Bastide described similar points in the syncretism of Catholicism and Candomblé, cf. Bastide 1971a: 154, Reuter 2002: 223-272. Also related, Rudolph made a similar differentiation between a

proposing the intellectual problem of combining different religious doctrines, through the establishment of parallels and associations. New religious doctrines such as Theosophy appeared from the establishment of these parallels and, in general, the supposition of a union of religions or mystic experience has the role of enabling combinations of this nature. In opposition to the doctrinal religious combination, a combination of practices or rituals to obtain benefits happens in a quite different way. It is common that in these cases the simple addition of new practices occurs, without any associated doctrinal reflection. The practices and rituals are not understood as being inside a structure, but isolated according to the benefit desired. In this case, the combination occurs not from similarities or analogies, but through its common result observed in this world. Practices are combined because its common objective in the achievement of wordly benefits.

In these cases the accumulation of practices rarely forms a doctrine or system, but a potential state of combination is always present. The elimination of ambiguity implies in knowing with certainty the spiritual means for the desired results, which is ignored initially. An example of this is what could be thought of with the spectrum of different practices to take care of one's health or to cure diseases in the contemporary societies. This is a theme that can be understood in several levels, from the practice of alternative health methods along with the traditional medicine, something common in higher social levels or developed countries, to the simultaneous practice of several practices of spiritual healing, found more often in the most popular environments in contexts such as in Latin America. In these cases, the practices are frequently accumulated in a simple way, even if its foundation presents irreconcilable discrepancies in the doctrinal point of view, but irrelevant for those who have in mind the final practical result.

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reflected or conscious, and a folk or unconscious syncretism, cf. Rudolph 1979: 207-208. Hubert Seiwert also emphasizes in the Chinese religious movements a religious combination that does not go through an intellectual understanding. In regard to the combination of Buddhist and Taoist elements in medieval China, he points out that "[...] intelectual sofistication and political orthodoxy were not the primary demands of the common people. They hoped for redemption from concrete miseres, from phisical illness, material suffering, and social injustice. To these needs responded the many healing cults, fortune-tellers, and shamans on the one hand, and the promises of a new dispensation offered by charismatic leaders on the other. On the popular level, religion was not an intellectual affair. Elements from different traditions were easily combined. On the grassroots, religious beliefs and symbols were not neatly classified as Buddhist or Daoist or according to any other scholarly orthodoxy, but rearranged according to the needs and understandings of the religious clientele." (Seiwert 2003: 161).

Regarding the popular religiosity in Japan and Brazil, this additive principle is frequently related to the assumption of an unified spiritual world. In the case of practical benefits, it can be considered the existence of a "noise" in the communication between the adept and the spiritual world[264]. A trivial result of the mathematical theory of information is that a simple way of fighting a noise in the communication is the repetition of transmission, a point that has an important space in the structuralist theory of the myth in Lévi-Strauss, who presupposes a spiral revelation[265]. Repetitions may be necessary or at least considered not harmful. Because of this logic, rituals and magical practices are added to execute the communication and to increase the possibility of success of an understanding with the spiritual world.

In this case, religions are sponsored and combined, having as a meeting point the transmission of the message for the desired result, not the understanding of the transmissions' means. Some institutions reject the combinations, even the ones that explicitly offer a magical practice. The justification of this rejection does not come only from the doctrinal context, as in the case of monotheist religions, but also in the affirmation that a simultaneous practice harms the own attainment of the desired result, that indicates that repetition always increases the possibility of inconsistent information in communication.

The popular reaction against a combination is not, however, always accompanied by rejection. As in the cases of religious combination for benefits in this world the doctrinal differences are not considered relevant, the believer can be faced or even be defined explicitly as a customer and not a follower. In Brazil's case, for instance, this is a point that unites

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[264] This communication occurs from one of the sides of the channel. Rather, the answer from the spiritual world is frequently uncertain in the case of contemporary religion. Although a response can be interpreted, as for instance a believer that recognizes the grace of God and the effort of his promise in the cure of a disease, or through a more subjective sensation, as in the introspection of an inner or mystic experience, in the social sphere a uncertainity remain; God doesn't speak in public. Wittgenstein summarized this point well when he observed that in the grammar of religious expressions, "you cannot hear God speak to somebody, you can only hear Him if you are the person to whom the word is addressed to" (*Zettel* §717). Concerning a similar point, Luhmann observed that one of the consequences of secularization and one of the tendencies of several Western societies is the exhaustion of the media with a spiritual world, presenting theological problems in the renewal of a communication channel.
[265] Similar points were also developed by other anthropologists. For a summary of Edmund Leach's proposals on the study of religions as communication systems, mainly in rituals, see Lawson and McCauley 1990: 54ff. Stanley Tambiah also discussed rituals through the information theory, for reference and a critical position on this aspect see Staal 1989: 162.

therapists of an alternative medicine, Umbanda or spiritualist centers and even some environments of meditation practice, yoga or spas with oriental and Buddhist practices.

2.3 Syncretism and the Nativization of Buddhism

The history of Buddhism in Asia presents a wide aspect of syncretic tendencies and possibilities. In studies about Theravada Buddhism in Asia the distinction between Protestant Buddhism and syncretic and popular influences is often emphasized. In Sri Lanka, for which the concept of Protestant Buddhism was initially created, the influence of spirit cults and syncretic tendencies with Hindu elements in Buddhism was justified as a consequence of the distinction between the worldly (*laukika*) and the supramundane (*lokottara*)[266]. In his study on Buddhism in Myanmar (former Burma), Spiro describes the differences of interpretation between the Buddhist soteriology of monks and the laypeople, influenced more by a worldly karma and by the worship of spirits (*nats*). The latter introduced magical and more popular elements into Buddhist practice, which live together with a more intellectualized worldview [267]. Besides Theravada, syncretic influences were always present in Asian countries, mixing Buddhism with popular and magical practices or with other religions, sometimes in a more intellectualized way[268].

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[266] Cf. Bechert 1978: 219, Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988: 16. Historically syncretism is also present in Protestant Buddhism, since it presents the influence not only of Protestant concepts but also from Theosophy. The main point is that Protestant Buddhism represents a tradition, essentially invented, that affirmed that the more syncretic, magic, and popular aspects would be deviations from the essence of Buddhism, cf. Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988: 241. In confrontation with the rationality of Protestant Buddhist soteriology, the appropriation and reinterpretation of Hindu and popular elements resulted in new Buddhist practices, mainly devotional and directed toward this world, incorporated into the process of social class formation in Sri Lanka. Today these two basic forms of Buddhist practice have the tendency to form a new synthesis, see Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988: 449-456 for more details.

[267] Cf. Spiro 1982: 187 and throughout the descriptions in Chapter Seven.

[268] See, among others, the contributions about syncretism and Buddhism by Bechert 1978, for a comparative view and case studies about religious syncretism in Nepal, Java and Bali, Indian and Japan. For a historical approach on syncretism in the religions of central Asian, including syncretic influences on Buddhism in Mongolia and Tibet, see Heissig and Klimkeit 1987. A probable hypothesis is the positive correlation between syncretism and Vajrayana or esoteric Buddhism, also in the western countries. The esoterism tends toward the teaching of masters based on initiations, which would generate a potential for fragmentation and independence of teachings throughout generations, thereby becoming a Buddhism more open to individual influences and other religious ideas, frequently associated with magic contents. This has already been indicated by Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988: 462, for Sri Lanka, and Spiro 1982: 162-163, for Myanmar. In the case of Shingon in Japan, see Yamasaki 1988: 37.

Chinese Buddhism, which is the base of Far East Buddhism, is also a result of syncretism. The nativization process of Buddhism in China was followed initially by the translation of the Indian scriptures, in a process that is divided in two main phases and that extended for several centuries[269]. In this context the appearance of Ch'an occurs as a Buddhist school typically Chinese starting from a syncretism of Buddhism with Taoism. The school of the Pure Land, emphasizing the recitation of the Amitofo name (chin. *nianfo*), was based on the salvation through faith in an external force. In the Chinese case, the practices of Ch'an and Pure Land did not remain separated as in the case of Japan, but in fact are combined and practiced together[270]. Syncretism is still more perceptible in the search of a harmonization of the three main Chinese religions and in the popular religiosity[271]. As formely described, in Japan a syncretic Buddhism developed from the juxtaposition of bodhisattvas and kamis. Another aspect of syncretism in Japanese Buddhism is also the presence of diverse magical elements, ever since its origin.

It is natural to suppose that this nativization process can also arise in Buddhism in western countries, in a different pattern of anti-syncretism and syncretism that should be better described. In a broader sense, potential motives for religious combination is the new situation of simultaneous presence of diverse Buddhist schools in western countries, as well as the potential interaction with other religions. The peculiarities of different Buddhist schools are not important for some adepts, which can also stimulate combinations. Many differences between schools and even religions, which make sense in Asia due to local contexts or

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[269] Cf. Jikido 1994: 6ff. In the first phase translations were accomplished that emphasize a correspondence (chin. *ko-yi*) of meaning with the Chinese native religions, mainly Taoism. In the second phase, through teams of translators officially sponsored and led by famous academics like Kumarajiva (344-c. 413), a more precise and faithful meaning was obtained. In this phase several Buddhist schools emerge that reach a greater popular penetration because of an emphasis on a faster way to enlightenment, that did not go through an intellectualized interpretation or through the study of Buddhist Scriptures.
[270] Cf. Ching 1993: 143ff.
[271] In a popular context, this tendency is verified even today in heterodox religious movements as the one initiated by Lin Chao-en (1517-1598) and in the I-kuan tao sect, cf. Ching 1993: 217ff. For a detailed description of the heterodox religious movements in China, great part of which is composed of syncretic combinations, see Seiwert 2003. Specifically on Lin Chao-en, who tried to harmonize Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism ("Three-in-One Teaching"), see Seiwert 2003: 343ff. A nativization through syncretism can be observed in the development of the Chinese Buddhist devotions Kuan-yin and Maitreya and in practices observed in temples such as divination and mediums' performance, cf. Ching 1993: 142-143, 213-215. For an analysis of the transformations related to the Maitreya cult in the Chinese context, where a millenary meaning was developed and became an important component in the heterodox religious movements, see Seiwert 2003: 124ff.

geographical distances, can have less meaning in western countries[272]. Religious differences present in the Asian context can be viewed for immigrants and descendants as resemblances between minority groups in western countries. All these factors can generate new religious combinations, many of them temporary and tentative, as much for adepts as for institutions[273]. The association of many Buddhists with New Age groups or even with other forms of knowledge, such as psychology and science, also demonstrate influences that can be considered through the concept of *bricolage* or syncretism. These elements are the mirror of a diluted Buddhist identity, adding to the fact that the adaptation of Buddhism in western countries is still in process.

This configures a syncretic behaviour that is often difficult to define, but there are tendencies and some patterns of combination, based on the reasons for and directions of Buddhist practice. Aside ethnic integration, that brings local contents in the nativization of immigrant religions, it can be noted the presence of the distinction between the religious and magical religious combinations, as before proposed. In the following section, three *functional patterns* of Buddhist combinations are proposed and described with examples of East Asian Buddhism in Brazil.

3. Nativization of Buddhism in the West: Insights from Brazil

3.1 Religious Combination for Ethnic Integration

3.1.1 The Filling of Gaps in the Collective Memory

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[272] An approach orientated to the integration of different strands is discussed by Baumann 1995c: 299-309, through the examples of the FWBO and Arya Maitreya Mandala in Germany. Rawlinson also describes the FWBO as an ecumenical sangha in his typology of Theravada Buddhism in West (cf. Rawlinson 1994). Freiberger 2001 also offers some case studies in his view of the contacts between Buddhism and other religious traditions.

[273] For a description about the eclecticism of Buddhist groups in the USA, see Seager 1999: 216-231. This eclecticism mixed practices, and had the difficult task of defining a Buddhist identity (cf. Nattier 1998, Prebish 1999: 53). Another description of this tendency, labelled "diffuse" affiliation, can be read in Tanaka 1998: 296-297. One important contributor to this theme is Tweed 1999. About a possible criterion for religious identity, Tweed defends only self-identification and asserts that it is necessary to abandon normative and essentialist criteria for the classification of Buddhists, such as, for example, the taking of the three refuges or the practice of the five lay vows (cf. Tweed 1999: 80). Moreover, he points out the hybrid character of contemporary religious identity, creating the category of "sympathizer." A "sympathizer" would be one that shows empathy for, and even adopts practices and readings of, a determined religious tradition.

In his theory on the presence of combinations of African religions with Catholicism and Spiritism in Brazil, a phenomenon that Bastide in general treated as syncretism, one of the central theoretical concepts is *collective memory*, appropriated from Maurice Halbwachs who defines the memory in social terms. Because of the contact between two groups and the passing of generations, Bastide proposes that gaps appear in the collective memory of the community, with greater intensity through the generations and on the account of contextual factors[274]. Afro-Brazilian syncretism would be consequence of the loss of collective memory and of its complementation from elements of the local society. In this way, it is possible to differentiate the Umbanda and Candomble evolution, according to the different African ethnic groups and with different social environments in which slavery was processed.

Some of the theoretical concepts proposed by Bastide for this "sociology of interpenetration of the civilizations" may also be reanalyzed so as to shelter the Japanese immigration. In fact, Bastide's studies on African religions also present a possible theoretical model for the case of Japanese religions in Brazil. In spite of characteristics which are quite different from those presented by African religions, since the interaction among ethnic groups established in a totally different way and the presence of Buddhist missions from Japan changes the adaptation form, the supposition of a collective memory that is lost through generations and complemented with the presence of elements from local religions is something that can also be verified in nikkei Buddhism. Although the Japanese immigration has not gone through the process of cultural destruction and ethnic identity that slavery promoted, the coming of generations and the language change do not refrain from having the effects of gaps in the original collective memory, helping to explain the accomplished appropriations. In the context of this study, this point will be developed regarding nikkei Buddhism.

Initially the Japanese immigrants themselves interpreted that they had left their ancestors and *kamis* in Japan. The interaction with Brazilians was practically null and the descendants' education was searched from the most similar way possible to what would be offered in Japan. When immigrants died, it was considered that "when a Japanese dies, his

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[274] Cf. Bastide 1971b: 333ff.

soul returns flying to Japan."[275] To be in Brazil was only a circumstantial and temporary matter. The burial ceremonies associated to Buddhism were accomplished by those who knew the sutras better and could improvise ceremonies. Temporary *ihais* of rough wood were made for what was described as "death as visitant" (jap. *kyaku shi*)[276]. Japanese religiousness was associated with a geographical place and even had no validity in Brazil[277]. This geographical change and a new calendar bring a rupture. Many seasonal festivals associated to Shintoism lost their meaning in Brazil, that have another cycle of seasons and a tropical nature.

With the immigrants' definite establishment in Brazil and the consequent institutionalization of the Japanese religions, the spiritual world of ancestors and some Japanese gods *also* emigrated. The religious collective memory was dissociated from Japan as geographical location and the traditional Japanese festival calendar. Some festivals were maintained and are practiced even today, but with a differentiated meaning. An example is the *hanamatsuri* (flower festival), that in Japan is celebrated as the beginning of spring and the birth of Buddha, in Brazil it occurs in the beginning of autumn in spite of having the same name.

Through the years the gaps in the collective memory appear and are filled with local religious elements. Eventually the calendar adaptations presented combinations with the local religions: the All Souls' Day in Brazil, that occurs on the second day of November, following a Catholic tradition, was traditionally interpreted as a Brazilian Obon by the nikkei[278]. Another level of combination is the Buddhist incorporation of elements from other religions. The use of a religious vocabulary from Catholicism can be verified in the temples, such as

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[275] Cited in Maeyama 1973b: 429.

[276] Cf. Maeyama 1973b: 431.

[277] Even though Roger Bastide did not research Japanese religions in Brazil, in one of his writings he exemplifies a case that well illustrates this principle: "Obligés qu'ils étaient de vivre au Brésil, ils se sentaient désormais tenus à n'adorer que les Esprits de leur nouvelle patrie. Le phénomène n'est pas particulier aux nègres, nous le retrouvons dans la population japonaise. Un fonctionnaire de l'enseignement étant venu inspecter une école des environs de Santos où se trouvait un petit Japonais, avait posé aux enfants la question suivante: ' Existe-t-il des fantômes ? '. Tous les Brésiliens répondirent oui à l'unisson, sauf le petit Japonais. L'inspecteur en profita pour faire une réprimande à ses petits compatriotes et leur dire qu'ils devaient avoir honte de laisser au seul Japonais - un étranger - le soin de donner la réponse correcte à la question posée. Mais le petit Japonais n'avait pas fini son discours, et lorsque l'inspecteur s'interrompit, il continua : ' Non, Monsieur, il n'y a pas de fantômes ici ; mais au Japon, il y en a beaucoup.' ", cf. Bastide 1970.

[278] Cf. Maeyama 1973b: 430.

"mass", "father", "bishop" and "archbishop"[279]. In Honmon Butsuryûshû in Brazil, for example, the term catechism (port. *catequese*) is also used in reference to doctrinal meetings for religious instruction[280]. In the schools of Pure Land Buddhism in Brazil, in another example, it is possible to observe occasionally a Catholic gesture as the sign of the cross, frequent in the adept that comes to the temple only in the so called "family masses", dedicated to the ancestors.

Consequently, as a result of this encounter between Brazilian and Japanese religiousness, it is possible for nikkei to recognize a pattern that blends Brazilian and Japanese religious features, intensified with the arrival of the new generations. At the institutional level, Catholic aspects were often incorporated as elements of social integration. In Risshô Kôseikai newspapers, for instance, quotes on God and even on the Final Judgement are frequent[281].At the individual level, it is common the practice of other religions in Buddhist rituals, in which different religious practices represent poles between ethnicity and integration. In Brazil it is not rare to find the *butsudan*, the Japanese Buddhist altar for the ancestors, in families long since "converted" to Catholicism, Umbanda, or Spiritism. It is also common for Catholic figures to be placed with Buddhist images and the names of ancestors in these domestic altars. The participation in Buddhist ceremonies is often understood as a familiar obligation, a manifestation of respect or a way to stop misfortunes. In some funeral ceremonies, Catholic and Buddhist rites occur. Therefore, a continuity of ethnic religions occurs not only in temples, but also through a sense of obligation that goes simultaneously with other religions in Brazilian society, something difficult to evaluate and quantify. This pattern is, however, related in almost all ethnic temples in Brazil.

In a similar process, Chinese Buddhism also started the incorporation of Brazilian religion and culture. Indeed, a frequent association in Chinese Buddhism is the identification between the Virgin Mary and the bodhisattva Kwan Inn. Master Pu Hsien, founder of the

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[279] Comparatively, see Seager 1999: 53-59 for this and other clear influences of Protestantism in the vocabulary and structure of the Jôdo Shinshû temples in the USA.

[280] In his proposal on syncretism Alba Zaluar considered a similar phenomenon, that was labeled as "imitative syncretism." In fact, in Brazil many religious adaptations start from a Catholic reinterpretation, although in the last years a neopentecostal influence is being more perceptive in the evolution of religions in Brazil.

[281] See, for example, the editorial "Looking for peace through the faith", issue 29 and "Prayer for the Peace", issue 30, of the "Círculo 'Hooza'", informative bulletin of the Risshô Kôseikai of Brazil.

Tzong Kwan temple, recognized the Catholic devotion of Our Lady Aparecida as the bodhisattva Kwan Inn[282]. A similar association was also defended in a short article written by Ho Yeh Chia, Chinese literature and language professor at the University of São Paulo[283].

3.1.2 Identity Levels in Ethnic Communities

At present, in the general case of immigrants and their descendants, different practices often reflect different levels of social belonging. In the case of institutions, the incorporation of elements from the mainstream society is something normal and reduces the ethnic strangeness, attracting possible converts and the new generation. In adepts, the simultaneous acceptance of Buddhist rituals and ceremonies of other religions is possible, since often participation in Buddhist rituals is understood as a family obligation or tradition. In these contexts of multiply religiosity, a theoretical perspective that analyzes ethnic religiosity only from a "monoreligious" point of view is often inadequate. Religious combinations can express a more differentiated reality, which can be analyzed through different levels of identity. Regarding religious identity, Hans Mol proposed that there are different identities in the personal, group, and social levels[284]. These identities can converge or diverge, which can be reflected in religious practices. In the case of Japan, he quotes a correlation between community identity and Shinto, the family identity and Buddhism, and personal identity and Christianity.

In the case of Buddhist nikkei in Brazil, religious combinations often perform an integrative function, incorporating elements from the majority, and from Catholic society, and simultaneously reducing and preserving ethnic difference. Although a heresy in the Christian thought, oriented to monotheism, there is frequently no idea of mutual exclusion or conflict because religiosity is sensitive to social context and can be changed accordingly. Indeed, the identification of different levels of identity in religious practices is very probable in societies that featured syncretism and multiple religious practices already. In contrast with the environment of reception of most western countries, religions frequently assume functional and contextual aspects in Japan and Brazil. As a result of this encounter between the Brazilian

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[282] See Jornal da Tarde, "Buddhism's Paths" (port. *"Os Caminhos do Budismo"*).
[283] Cf. http://www.hottopos.com/mp2/bodhisattva.htm, accessed on 4.11.2003.
[284] Cf. Mol 1978: 10-14.

and Japanese religiosity, for nikkei it is possible to recognize a pattern that mixes Brazilian and Japanese religious features. An approach based on the identity of Brazilian nikkei can indicate the characteristics of this nikkei folk religion[285]. Doctrinal contradictions and ambiguities, something difficult to understand in a syncretic religious practice, can be better analyzed through the role of different practices in the life of an individual or a group.

In this sense, different and even contradictory religious practices reveal the paradoxes of the different social roles that the same person must often exercise in modern and multicultural societies. In the case of nikkei in Brazil, if Shinto was the Japanese religion that traditionally represented ethnic belonging, and was chosen at birth ceremonies, then in the case of Brazil a national belonging occurred symbolically through a Catholic baptism. Traditional Buddhism in Japan, as much as in Brazil is reserved for funeral ceremonies and for the worship of ancestors inside a family religiosity. Historical elements accompany a change in the ethnic identity of nikkei and its consequence for religious practice, interpreted as a strategy of acquaintance and social interaction. From this historical point of view, Catholicism progressively came to replace the state Shinto that had reflected the ethnic identity before the Second World War, through the decision of a definitive permanence in Brazil. The Japanese influence on the nikkei identity, however, is often preserved at the ethnic and family level.

The influences of Brazilian religions in nikkei Buddhism, however, do not always imply in an ethnic opening or even an active adaptation, being often only the result of border transformations inside the own ethnic group. This seems to be true above all with the nikkei community. In this case, a concrete example is the cited Buddhist Church Nambei Yugazam Jyomiyoji in Suzano. As previously described, Shingon practices found Brazilian sympathizers in search of a solution for their worldly problems, many times blending Shingon practices with Afro-Brazilian meanings, but this is not the case of this temple. The temple is attended only by nikkei and the monks speak little Portuguese. One interesting aspect of this

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[285] As Michael Pye writes regarding the Japanese religion, "the contemporary primal religion in Japan is [in comparison with Shinto] a more general and more neutral religious complex with its own vitality and its own persistence. Buddhism and the various, in many cases locally influential new religions also stand in a complex relationship with this unnamed primal religion" (Pye 1996: 3) and "Japan's new primal religion however has no institutions, no spokesmen, and no thinkers" (Pye 1996: 5). Similar arguments could be used for Brazilian *nikkei* religiosity, but with a pattern including Brazilian religions such as Catholicism and Spiritism. These characteristics can be also labeled as a common religion instead a primal religion (cf. Reader and Tanabe 1998: 27).

temple, however, is its incorporation of some devotional and popular elements of Brazilian Catholicism. In this sense, one important characteristic of the altar is the presence of a lateral image of Our Lady of Aparecida (port. *Nossa Senhora Aparecida*). She is venerated as the manifestation of the Virgin Mary in Brazil and is a traditional object of devotion in popular Catholicism. Being the Patroness and symbol of Brazil, devotion to her was very popular with Japanese immigrants in rural zones. The image appears beside the mandalas of Shingon, in the center is a great image of Fudô Myô-ô, the central object of Shingon devotion at this temple. According to interviews, the presence of Our Lady Aparecida represents the establishment and integration of the Japanese in Brazil. Even if this temple is one of the most traditional Buddhist temples in Brazil, these Catholic elements show the hybrid character of the Brazilian nikkei religious culture. Ethnic Shingon in Brazil has a very different pattern of adaptation in comparison, for example, with tendencies found in the practices of Shingon in the USA[286]. The influence of Brazilian religions in these adaptations, however, do not always imply an ethnic reception or even an active adaptation, being only the result of border transformations inside the nikkei group, transformed through the new generations and through interaction with Brazilian society. If in the nikkei temples the ethnic gap is reduced through similar incorporations, often this approximation occurs only at the symbolic or religious level, but not always with the real participation of Brazilians. Our Lady Aparecida can stay with the Shingon mandalas and Fudô Myô-ô, but Brazilians are not always encouraged to do the same.

3.2 Conceptual Religious Combination

In the *conceptual religious combination*, some parallels between different doctrines or myths are established, and a syncretic view depends on concepts that provide for the addition of different elements or practices from other systems, through a relativization of truth content and a subsequent integration. Indeed, the perception of doctrinal gaps is normal for the majority of Buddhists in western countries. For some, Buddhism is still intellectually difficult and the orthodoxy is often cultural distant, frequently existing only in the insufficient or inaccurate translations available. The practice of Buddhism mirrors a more diffuse sympathy

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[286] Cf. Prebish 1999: 26.

toward Asian religions, understood through a holistic philosophy or in an individual and mystical way. Through interaction with a new social environment and with local religions, new Buddhist contents can arise. Even a translation of a religious text can potentially be read as a religious combination, since the translated elements are often used by other religions already established. For other Buddhists, the doctrinal gap is not produced by a lack of knowledge, rather the necessity of combinations is perceived as an attempt toward a necessary integration. The perception is that many doctrinal differences between schools or even religions can have less meaning in some western contexts, and that a conscious combination toward synthesis is something valuable.

Among the Brazilian Buddhists, for instance, there are several ways of defending a unity of religions. Historically the association with Theosophy already brought this union of religions to many of the first Brazilian Buddhists. In this case one of the main examples is Reverend Murillo Azevedo, one of the pioneers of Buddhism in Brazil, who incorporated a union of religions in his religious vision. Starting from a *sophia perennis*, Reverend Gonçalves also defends a vision of unity of religions[287]. Other example is Reverend Gustavo Pinto. In Reverend Gustavo Pinto's case, ecumenism and peaceful coexistence of the religions in Brazil are points that would be a differential in a Brazilian Buddhism.

Another concept frequently used as an entrance point for a conceptual religious combination is the mysticism. In Brazil, the Japanese monk Zen Tokuda, who was Catholic, usually indicates a mystical unity, that makes possible, for instance, to approach themes such as God in his lectures on Buddhism. In his expositions there are frequent associations with mystics like San Juan de la Cruz and Meister Eckhart.[288] Additionally, Zen is understood as a religion that provokes this experience: "There are two types of religions, the mystic religions - of searching and direct contact - and the other ones, the religions of prophets, with many rules, and others, that everyone should follow. Zen is probably closely linked to the experience of union with God. In this case silence is necessary; meditation is silence, and with

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[287] Cf. Gonçalves 2002: 178-179, 191.
[288] Cf. Rocha 2003: 27.

this the mystic experience occurs. When there is that silence internally, that peacefulness, that calmness, at that moment you will hear God's voice."[289]

Another entry point for frequent conceptual religious combinations is the one supplied by the psychological vocabulary[290]. In fact, from the 1960s several attempts were made in the sense of incorporating religious contents in therapeutic practices and levels of conscience, starting from the works of Jung, Maslow, Stanislav Grof, Assagioli and others[291]. A view based on the conscience transformation provided a therapeutic acceptance of the oriental religions, in association to the experimentalist tendency of the hippie movement. The resulted eclecticism is frequently justified by a psychological acceptance of religion, with little importance for social criteria and external institutions, but being justified by the individual development and the arising of a new conscience. This phenomenon still increases in the reappropriation of the oriental religions under the New Age point of view, presenting religious combinations of a pattern characterized by the experimentation[292]. This religiosity, frequently labeled as postmodern, exhibits a foundation that favors the easy incorporation of any religion in the paradigm of meeting with one's self and of different means for the same finality of conscience transformation.

3.3 Combination for Wordly Benefits

Combinations of practices or rituals appear more frequently in a simple accumulative way, often without so much reflection. Specifically the *combinations for worldly benefits* are frequently unstructured and the result of an individual choice. The logic of this type of religious combination is that different practices, separated from their original doctrinal context, are united according to the worldly and practical benefit being pursued. Because they

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[289] Cf. text of lecture available in http://www.geocities.com/~bodhisattva/tokuda1.htm, accessed in 09.20.2003.

[290] For a description of the encounter of Buddhism with psychology in the context of the USA, that promoted not only a Buddhism psychologization but also a psychology "buddhicization", see Metcalf 2002.

[291] In Gonçalves 1975 [1967], a classic introduction book to Buddhism and Buddhist texts for Brazilians, an association already exists between the psychological model of Assagioli and the oriental religions (pp 29-33). For the influence of these psychological tendencies in a historical presentation of New Age, see Amaral 2000: 23-25.

[292] For a general description of this process, centered on the Easternization of the West, see Campbell 1999.

are isolated from an associated doctrinal meaning, they are combined with practices through *bricolage* or syncretism, without a sense of contradiction or exclusion. In a particular case, this pattern of combination for worldly benefits seems to be especially valid in a magical understanding of Buddhism.

Given that the basic rule of magic is often effectiveness, real or perceived, it is natural to think that a simple addition is possible, if a multiple religiosity is possible. As Bastide writes about practices for magic protection, "in case of doubt, two precautions were better than one"[293]. In the case of a magical pattern, consequently, a formal synthesis in the form of a doctrine or new synthesis rarely occurs. Being a more magic conception of the world, without borders and even independent from religious systems, there is a place for the fusion of elements belonging to different practices through the desired benefit. A *potential state of syncretism* always remains in this case; the decisive impulse for the combination is not given by the religious concepts, but by the religious results. Being more oriented to a wordly result, the practices are often accumulative, existing often in the suspension of barriers between two or more systems and configuring the syncretism in a more strict sense. In this folk context, often associated with a karmic Buddhism in Brazil, the existence of syncretic conceptions in adepts and sympathizers is also stimulated by a lack of access to or the inexistence of more formal and specialized sources, as books or specialized reviews.

One of the main factors that enables a Buddhism of results is the possibility to accomplish the religious practices without a doctrinal knowledge. An emphasis for results still exists in the meditation practice, that is seen more frequently as a form of relaxation than as a path for enlightenment. In these cases, the meditation practice is frequently isolated from its doctrinal context and practiced with the objective of relieving the stress and of obtaining peacefulness, without the original Buddhist intention of liberation. Meditation is instrumentalized and, without its religious context, it does not present incompatibility with other religions.

This pattern is still more recognizable in the case of a Buddhist practice directly associated to a transformation of one's own karma, as a way to obtain more direct benefits in

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[293] Bastide 1971a: 160.

this world and in the search of solution to health, financial or family relationship problems. In these cases the doctrinal context is frequently less important than the ritual practice. This aspect seems to apply even in groups such as Sôka Gakkai and Honmon Butsuryûshû, who disapprove the coexistence with other religions. In Sôka Gakkai the *gongyô*, practiced daily by the followers, was also described by Josei Toda as a recitation practice in which the possibility of benefits do not demand the knowledge of what is pronounced or of the doctrinal principles that sustain the activity[294]. In another example, according to interviews with Honmon Butsuryûshû leaders in Brazil, the function of religion is to "provide relief to suffering [...] after the received grace, doctrination appears."

The search for results does not mean that it exists, as some new religious movements' critics defend, only a magical search and an absence of a religious doctrine or an ethical void. Actually, in these Buddhist groups this attraction for results is described as an initial stage of a deeper learning. Practically, in every new religion several courses and levels of doctrinal depth are offered, that are also justified for the performance in the active proselytization. It is also incorrect to say that this search for results is not linked to an ethics. In fact, the studies have shown that an ethical behavior has a role to the expected magical results in the new Japanese religious movements[295]. A disassociation between ethics and magic does not seem to be justifiable for the Japanese religions[296].

This is not incompatible with the fact that the search for results causes a doctrinal simplification. Regarding Buddhism in Brazil, this feature is clear when some Brazilians

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[294] Wilson e Dobbelaere 1994: 22.

[295] Among others, Wilson and Dobbelaere 1994: 23 on Sôka Gakkai, Hardacre 1984: 227-229 on Reyûkai and Mikiko 1995 on Shinnyo-En.

[296] Reader and Tanabe, writing on Japanese religions in general, including new religions, describe this point in the following way: "There is a basically ethical nature to the practice and an affirmation, too, that the fullfillment of desires is not a matter of deserving condemnation. The stories, tales, and histories told to promote the efficacy of specific religious centers, statues, deities, and saints contain an intrinsically moral dimension that asserts correct and incorrect modes of behavior and, frequently, demonstrates the negative side of benefits lost or punishments suffered through failing to pursue the correct pattern of behavior. At this point it becomes apparent that the Weberian assessment of the relationship between ethical and magical aspects of religion - which suggests that as ethical considerations increase within a religious culture its magical orientations diminish - is inaccurate. Rather, magical and ethical means work together to form a whole, which illustrates the morality implicit in magical performance. Morality and magic, futhermore, join forces in this common religion to control the anarchy of their common foe called chance or luck" (Reader and Tanabe 1998: 32-33).

frequent practices that seems justifiable only in the Japanese context. An example like this can be verified in the writing of posthumous names in Reyûkai. As described previously, the cult of Japanese ancestors begins with a posthumous name given to the ancestors, a practice that gave a sense to the foundation of Reyûkai, by allowing the laymen this writing of posthumous names through a proper system. The posthumous name identifies the ancestor and allows the course of the practices that relieves the descendant's karma. Given that the cult of ancestors is the fundamental practice of Reyûkai and the existence of thousands of Brazilian followers, a fundamental question is how this practice is performed and what it means to write the ancestors' name with the Japanese characters for the Brazilian followers.

In Reyûkai of Brazil, the posthumous names in Japanese are only given to the ancestors whose names are known in Portuguese. The permission for writing posthumous names is given depending on the number of godsons. While the member does not have the capacity to write posthumous names, the godfathers accomplish this activity. When there are fifty godsons or more, most of the godfathers are considered prepared for this activity. Firstly a thousand posthumous names are written as practice, offered to the spiritual world as penitence. Only after this point, it is possible to write posthumous names for one's own ancestors and the godsons' ancestors. The writing of posthumous names, as well as an activity that consists of offering names to the spiritual world, is accomplished from a manual in which there are some *kanji* (Chinese ideograms) so that the name can be combined, in a simplification of the system used in Reyûkai of Japan[297]. According to interviews, this act of writing in Japanese (to write the posthumous names with *kanji*) is "like drawing." In fact, according to interviews, even some people have difficulties with the practices in general, for not being fluently in reading or writing in Portuguese.

What one can observe is that the writing of posthumous names in Japanese, given the absence of a social meaning like that associated in Japan, only makes sense considering the motivation for a search for benefits in this world, which in this case means the possibility of changing one's own karma. In this way, the practices are easily embraced or abandoned, in a

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[297] For a description of the system in Japan, see Hardacre 1984: 145ff.

religious empiricism[298] that has nothing to do with passivity, but frequently ignores what is out of the immediate sphere of solution. The religiousness is guided to a practical action and not to a deep doctrinal understanding. In this sense, in many cases the search for results also ends up stimulating the simultaneous practice or attempts of harmonization with other religions. Even in Sôka Gakkai this is a common behavior, in spite of an exclusivist posture[299].

This still happens more frequently in groups that are not contrary to a multiple coexistence, like Reyûkai. In fact, Reyûkai members also belong to other religions. In the meetings, according to interviews with leaders, it is avoided to mention points that can divide the members, as a competition of doctrines. Reyûkai is defined as a practice, and a discussion on the well established concepts in Brazilian religions does not exist. As declared by an interviewed leader: "We do not mention basic subjects like for instance God. 'God' is God above all things. We do not question the meaning of God in any circumstance. And we also believe that Buddha was a man who personified in flesh and who got the enlightenment as a spirit, as well as we believe that it was also Jesus's meaning for the West."

Rather, the problems and the practices are individual, since the problems and ancestors are too. Nothing hinders the members from attending other religious movements, but a deep blend of religious contents is avoided. Actually, in Brazil some practices associated to the direct contact with the spirits and exorcism have been even forbidden by Reyûkai of Japan. According to leaders' declarations, these practices became controversial in the Brazilian context, because many associations occur with Spiritism, Candomblé and Umbanda. The devotees ended up preferring this practice to the cult of ancestors, in this way moving away from the main aspect of Reyûkai. Therefore, only advanced followers (that is, with a great number of godsons) have access to the knowledge of their existence.

These different ways of religious combination in sympathizers and converts can be seen at the Church Shingonshu Kongoji, with the clear predominance of a syncretism originating

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[298] On religious experimentalism in the case of the new Japanese religions, especially in the case of Reyûkai, see Shizamono 1998.
[299] Cf. Pereira 2001: 376, even for the followers of the Sôka Gakkai, Jesus Christ is incorporated as a bodhisattva.

from practices aimed at worldly benefits. Again, this is the result of the encounter between a Japanese and Brazilian religiosity oriented toward the religious pursuit of practical benefits in this world. According to interviews with priests at the Church Shingonshu Kongoji, the magical aspect of practice is confirmed and emphasized. The first motivation is the miraculous, and the solution of problems, especially health problems. Over time, not rejecting these miraculous aspects, the priests try to make the adept better understand the other meanings of Shingon and therefore make visitors adhere more consistently to Buddhism. Multiple religious affiliation is permitted, but it is affirmed that this is not necessarily convenient or fruitful for spiritual development. However, as a distinctive aspect of Shingon, a interviewed priest points out the importance of ancestors' karma as a cause and a possible source of evil remediation for the adepts, aside from the contemplative practices. Personally, this priest wants to emphasize the contemplative aspect particular to Shingon, through the introduction of meditation on the Sanskrit A-Syllable. Instruction in meditation is a request from some adepts. Despite this intention, he says that for this to occur more commitment is necessary, and that the priests have little time to introduce meditation, because a Shingon priest must perform many rituals, aside from parallel activities for their own financial survival.

At present, the majority of adepts and sympathizers do not have contact with this more contemplative aspect of Shingon. For one adept who has frequented the temple in Suzano since the 1980s and considers herself Buddhist, the temple is a place people can go to find solutions to problems of health, to protect their businesses against robberies or to clear negative influences. She recites a Shingon ritual at home, in her words, because where she lives there would be many *macumba* activities. She also frequents Seicho no Ie, a Japanese new religion that has had considerable success in Brazil. Due to this magical tendency, the syncretism has an accumulative character, with a union of practices and concepts, seeking similarities instead differences, and therefore justifying a multiple acquaintance with diverse religions. As she described, many sympathizers see something similar to an Umbanda center in this temple from Koyasan, institutionally and ceremonially. Consequently, while in some western contexts Buddhism is understood as a philosophy and the knowledge obtained through textual sources is very important, practically the contrary occurs in syncretic Buddhism. In this case, the verification of results and the validation of Buddhism through similar practices from other religions is a substitute for a way characterized by a knowledge and purity of tradition through texts. Actually, this difference could explain the relative

doctrinal unfamiliarity of adepts and sympathizers. The indifference toward a more formal and intellectual aspect is related to the preoccupation with the immediate and practical results that Buddhism can bring. This is reinforced by the ritualistic tendency of Shingon, increased by the difference between priests and laypeople. Moreover, there are virtually no publications that exist and can be acquired in the temple, or doctrinal courses about Buddhism. Only some old brochures with descriptions of practices exist, which only some older adepts possess. It is therefore very difficult to find any information about Shingon in Portuguese. As a result, the practice of Shingon with other Brazilian or New Age religions, through resemblance and juxtaposition, is not understood as mutually exclusive. On the contrary, a magical worldview is the common ground of these practices, illustrating a combination that characterizes syncretism in its more strict sense.

Chapter 8 - Structural Processes of Religious Nativization

1. Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to discuss general ways of structural appropriation of religious symbols, proposing to give elements to describe the logic of the religious combination. A combined approach of religions will be adopted through the comparison between religions and languages. The relationship between language and religion has been developed not only in a philosophical sense but also in the social sciences. Besides structuralism, a cognitive approach of religion and even a formal approach for rituals have been proposed using theoretical elements of linguistics and the formal study of grammar. In this chapter, these analogies will be worked systematically in way to be able to describe a *structural model* of religious combinations, that comprise the nativization process through the use of local elements. To refer or to practice another religion simultaneously can be understood analogically as the incorporation of a foreign language. The main hypothesis is that the religious combinations are defined structurally by the language properties, something fundamental in Lévi-Strauss's approach, in the analytical philosophy and cognitive studies, which can inspire a more formal status to the study of religion[300].

2. Second *Religion* Acquisition and Proficiency

An increasing number of religion researchers has been interested in the correlations between cognition and culture as a means to explain the religious experience or even to describe rituals formally[301]. In this item I intend to give some indications of the consequences of this

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[300] See Staal 1989: 258ff, who widely developed the theme of the relationship between ritual and language. Given the scope of this study, these arguments will not be full developed in this dissertation. Chomsky 1965 has a certain influence in some theoretical ideas as follows, starting from its formal theory of generative grammars. Although, no reference will be made here of his theory of a universal grammar and its concepts will be used more as a theoretical model than an intrinsic cognitive property. For a description of the status of the chomskyan theory in a cognitive approach of religion, consult Lawson and McCauley 1990 and Staal 1989.

[301] The several disputes involving religion and cognitive studies have been developing quickly to the opposition between culture and nature. In the study of mysticism, contextualism is defended since 1978 by Steven Katz with the statement that "there are NO pure (i.e. unmediated) experiences" (cf. Katz 1978: 26). In response, Robert Forman defends the possibility of a event of pure conscience, in other words, a state of conscience without mediation (cf. Forman 1990: 3ff, 1999: 11ff). Results starting from

correlation for the case of an ethnic religiosity and syncretism[302]. In cases of practices of multiple religions or frequent combinations, instead of conversion, it can be more useful to speak of *acquisition* of a religion, not as in the supermarket metaphor, but as a cognitive process as long as the acquisition of a second language, and that also extends for generations when the group is analyzed as a whole. This acquisition occurs from a process that can be described as a progressive *proficiency* gain, from the knowledge of isolated elements to its use in structures coordinated by a doctrine, with knowledge of the context and the correct semantic use of the expressions. The combinations that appear in this process can be the result of intentional analogies or of inherent ambiguities present in any learning process.

In fact, to acquire a new language is a complex and slow process for the ones that grew without any contact with it. Those who want to learn a language in the adult age need a proper educational method for those who are not native. In learning it is frequent a clear distinction between lexical elements and grammar. These elements are clearly *separated.* The learning of grammar usually includes previous learning of words and a semantic understanding includes both lexical elements and grammar. When the learner studies a new language, it is possible to make analogies with his own native language through this division, verifying levels of difference and similarity. The differences and similarities, however, not only help him learn the new language, but also brings potential sources of errors in the use of the new language. Indeed, for a speaker of a foreign language, it is not rare that the native language is present even when he is not using it. This happens not only in his phonetic expression, but also in the grammatical lapses and in the use of words that acquire a strange semantic meaning in the new language, when it has a use projected from his native language. In this context, when one considers the difficulty of being a native speaker through learning, it is reasonable to think that the great majority who want learn or who learned another language, speak in fact a mixed language, in a progression of distinct stages of proficiency. Some models for the appearance of Pidgin and Creole languages, to be described and understood in the next item as a possible

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laboratory experiences with religious persons, as d'Aquili and Newberg 1999, have been developing towards a theological revaluation of the conscience and of the divine action (cf. Watts 1999). Lawson and McCauley 1990, on the other hand, defend the cognitive approach to symbolic-cultural systems, developed in their ritual theory. Without adopting an explicit cognitive position, a similar approach is defended in Antes 2002, as a model for the religious experience (*Erfahrung*) based on the identification of primary experiences or existences (*Erlebtes*) with a pattern of meaning (*Bedeutungsmuster*).

[302] Although mentioned in another direction, the contribution of cognitive theorizing for the study of syncretism is indicated in Martin 1996: 219, as a response to Pye 1994.

formal model also for the religious combinations, suggest the insufficient learning of the second language and subsequent mixtures as main causes for the appearance of these hybrid languages[303].

These aspects based on *cognitive limitations* can be analogically transposed to the presence of a religion in a context which is different from its cultural and doctrinal reference. In fact, in linguistic terms an important aspect is that the native speaker of a foreign language recognizes and uses grammatical rules without being aware of them. For the immigrants and at least partly for their descendants, a religious vision different from the local environment is something natural and received through first socialization, although an integration or assimilation can exert a pressure for the renunciation of these concepts. These limitations result in inevitable religious combinations, mainly in the new generations, but in an opposing sense from those observed in the converts.

In order to analyse the structural levels of these combinations, it is important to specify with more details what is understood here as lexicon and grammar in the case of religions. The lexicon, studied as a group of lexical items, is interpreted traditionally in structural linguistics as being given by the vocabulary. In a study more directed to semantics, in spite of having an associated morphological variation, words like "to walk", "walked" and "walks" are classified as being the same lexical item, because they indicate the same meaning. The same lexical item is also associated with a combination of words that indicate a similar activity or different forms of transmission as the spoken word, the written representation or a icon[304]. In the context of religions, this definition of form can be used to specify the lexicon of a religion as the group of different religious elements that appear in beliefs, doctrines and rituals.

The lexical items of a religion only acquire total meaning when they are structured, something already quite explored in philosophy and in linguistics, but still little developed in Religious Studies. In fact, like in linguistic the study of the structuration of vocabulary in phrases is formalized by the rules of syntax or grammar, in a similar way it is possible to observe that religion is also guided by rules, that can be described in a general way as the

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[303] Cf. Lefebvre 1998: 10. See also Schumann 1978.
[304] Cf. Crystal 1987: 104.

conceptual *grammar of a religion*. In this sense, the grammar of a religion consists of the ruled organization of the religious lexicon in the form of dogmas, rituals, relationship among divinities and even in its relationship with other religions. The organization of a religious altar, for example, usually follows a spatial grammar, which rules the placement rules of the religious elements as images and sacred writings. Myths are institutionalized through dogmas or doctrinal rules, the ritual or the religious ethics are also often practiced obeying rules[305]. In the use of the religious language, in a conceptual orientation of the term grammar, as proposed in the context of Wittgenstein's philosophy, a religious doctrine describes patterns of correctness and valid speech[306]. Described as a type of grammar, even theology can be understood as the group of semantic rules to describe the use of religious words (for the analogy between theology and grammar in Wittgenstein, see especially *Zettel* §144 and *Investigations* §373).

Not always the grammatical rules of religion can be univocal to the point of being defined formally. Until the present days a theoretical tool has not been found that could generalize them for a formal treatment, like in Chomsky's structural linguistics. On the other hand, even in this sense there have been attempts, mainly in ritual cases. In 1979, Frits Staal proposed a formalization of rituals from generative and transformative grammar (sketched by Hindu linguists but developed mathematically only in this century by Chomsky). Staal associated his proposal to his controversial defense that the rituals are meaningless, from his analyses and field observations of Agnacayana's ritual[307]. The depth of Staals's proposal is found in the fact that if the rituals have no meaning, an analysis in terms of rules becomes the most appropriate resource of theory. In this sense, a formal analysis that does not consider the meaning can be associated with the religious criticism developed by the positivism and the

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[305] In terms of religious speech, rules can also be understood as forms of control of an elitist culture. Through rules of speech a definition of reality is transmitted by an elite, being eliminated or controlled alternative visions transmitted by heterodox religious movements, cf. Seiwert 2003: 494ff.

[306] For this vision in the context of the wittgensteinian philosophy, see Shoji 2000, mainly chapters 2 and 4.

[307] Cf. Staal 1979. A description of Staal's rules for the Agnacayana's ritual is found in Staal 1989: 101ff with a subsequent discussion of the absence of semantics in rituals and the possibility of analysis of the rituals only in a syntactic and formal treatment. Associated to this proposal is his hypothesis that rituals would be previous to language and that grammar would have its origin in the formalization of the ritual. One of the arguments, associated to some theoretical speculation, is that animals would have ritualization but not language. In a quite different sense, originating from a structuralist approach but arriving in a cognitive proposal that defends the absence of "meaning" in symbols, see Sperber 1975.

analytical philosophy[308]. Using a cognitive approach in a inspiration similar to Staal's formalization, but not supporting his thesis of the meaninglessness of rituals, Lawson and McCauley tried to specify a grammar and a modular systematization for the ritual. This model was accomplished defining a complex of actions and subjects in rituals, inserted through more general variables and parameters of specification[309].

In general, this approach is still rare in the academic study of religion, but in spite of this, a separation between a religious lexicon and a grammar as structuring rules seems essential in the case of bricolage, syncretism and multiple religious practices in general. Even those who have a firm conversion intention do not eventually forsake falling in a combination of the original religion with the new one[310]. This is a social reality even more present in the sympathizers' cases and of those who, even practicing another religion, do not feel contradictions in continuing with old beliefs. These paradoxes or logic inconsistencies can be explained by a grammatical ambiguity; the same lexical element can be understood within different rules, often contextualized to a necessity or social environment.

Structurally, the distinction between lexical elements and grammar creates the possibility of a differentiation in the levels of religious combinations. As in the case of languages, the religious lexicon is the first to be incorporated and bricolage can be defined as an incorporation of religious elements isolated from their grammar. An essential point is given by the determining structure (religious grammar), if the one of the local religion or foreign religion. A grammar incorporation is more present in an intellectualized transplantation of religion or in the attempt of syntheses of religious doctrines. In the other extreme there is the assymetrical incorporation of the majority of religious rules of an foreign religion, more present in the cases of oppression because of situations like slavery and domination.

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[308] In spite of the originality of Staal's proposal, it still meets empirically restricted to the vedic context, specifically the Agnacayana ritual complex. Critics of Staal's proposals can be found in Penner 1985 and Lawson and McCauley 1990: 56ff, 166ff. On the critics of Penner 1985, see the reply in Staal 1989: 102, 258-259.

[309] Cf. Lawson and McCauley 1990: 87ff.

[310] In psychological terms, the unconscious and dreams are often permeated with syncretic content, in spite of the consequences of this fact be hardly considered.

3. Structural Levels of Religious Combinations

3.1 Religious Relexification

A fairly common phenomenon in the contemporary age is the popular presence of a language in a different context from its origin. Terms in English, for instance, invaded the popular culture of most countries, or have become words that are rarely substituted by local terms. Some words were incorporated like technical and specialized vocabulary while others through marketing, movies and local fashion. Even though English is the most obvious case in this sense, other languages are also present in daily terms such as sushi and judô, to mention the Japanese. In linguistic terms, this lexical borrowing is a common phenomenon in the evolution of the languages. The use of foreign languages, in this case, can even linguistically surpass the sphere of words: T-shirts and even tattoos with *kanji* (Chinese ideograms) are frequently found. Moreover, an initial incorporation of a foreign language can occur not only through words, but also through simple phrases and structures. Considering the general presence of foreign languages in contemporary societies, it is possible to think that many people do not really understand them, although a partial understanding is frequently observed. Tattoos with *kanji* are made from an iconic aesthetic meaning. A foreign music, for instance, is also admired and captured by characteristics such as its melody and rhythm, as religions are often apprehended through images and rites but without an associated meaning.

Elements and concepts of other religions, simplified and eventually iconic, are also frequent in different contexts from those in which they reach a more complete sense, considering its doctrinal and cultural context of origin. Elements of the religious lexicon are then isolated from its foreign grammar and used in other sense, sometimes from a local religious grammar. In this case, *religious relexification* can be defined as the different structural use of a religious concept, provoked by the ambiguity of its incorporation or translation in a grammar different from that in which it is originally associated. In general, the religious relexification discussed here can be based on the *addition* and a possible subsequent

substitution[311]. This religious relexification is always followed by a reinterpretation and a semantic change, given that the concept is used in a new grammar.

In the case of Buddhism, it can be observed that concepts such as Zen, Dalai Lama and meditation were added to the Western religious lexicon, in spite of having gone through a simplification that transforms them frequently from culturally contextualized symbols to signs of simple reference[312]. Specifically in Buddhism in Brazil, this happens in the incorporation of Hotei like Buddha in Umbandist circles and in popular religion.

Regarding Umbanda, there are cases of Buddhist elements that are submitted to an clear incorporation. In the case of religions in Brazil, a *continuum* of karmic religions[313] propitiate the incorporation of external elements of Buddhism, frequently through a positive evaluation of the incorporated element, given the positive image of Buddhism in Brazil. In Umbanda's case, the principles given by the hypothesis of a religious relexification based on the addition and substitution seem to be a theoretical model fairly appropriate for bricolage and syncretism. An example is the Aumbhandan movement, whose name is already a strict linguistic relexification of the Sanskrit mantra "Om" or "Aum" in the term "Umbanda" and with a stylized ending[314]. The movement established through the name "Ordem Iniciática do Cruzeiro Divino" (eng. "The Initiatic Order of the Divine Cross"), that began in 1970 and has

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[311] In linguistics, the term relexification has been used in the study of creolization of languages, being sometimes used in the additive sense and others in the strict sense of substitution, cf. Mous 2002. The religious relexification here defined will use two uses of this linguistic concept as two types of relexification that can happen in subsequent phases or be independent processes. From the linguistic point of view, the use of a vocabulary of a foreign religion can contribute significantly in the evolution of a language. For an example of the role of linguistic relexification provoked by the translation of the Bible to Taiwanese, where the church register has the largest number of relexified lexical items among external sources, see Chin-An 2000.

[312] In the case where several ethnic groups are interacting and communication is necessary, one common linguistic phenomenon is the appearance of a *lingua franca*, grammatically simpler and used for a general communication. An example of this search of a *lingua franca* in western countries are the initiatives of different Buddhist groups of several doctrines and distinct geographical references in Asia. Once they become in contact in Western countries, they make an effort of finding common principles and even ceremonies and united rituals. In Brazil, words like Zen and meditation are present in many therapeutic and oriental practices, often expanding and reinterpretating the meaning of "Buddhism".

[313] Researching Brazilian religions, the sociologist Cândido Procópio developed a similar terminology by describing a *continuum* of religions in Brazil based on possession, including Spiritism and Umbanda groups. The existence of this continuity among different religions means a frequent exchange of contents.

[314] Cf. Ortiz 1978: 151ff. this interpretation can already be found in 1941 as a legitimating mechanism for the antiquity of Umbanda.

many affiliated temples in activity. The Order has an Umbanda college that is already in operation and recognized by the Ministry of Education in Brazil[315]. The movement's activities are permeated by an oriental content and the center is led by Master Arhapiagha, considered to be "master of the tantric, mantric and yantric sciences." For the theoretical interests of this study, consider in the following illustration the divulgation of one of his mantras:

Figure 8.1: Mantra used by the Aumbhandan movement, as an example of linguistic and religious relexification, published in the Internet at http://www.umbanda.org (accessed on 10.7.2003).

In the case above, it can be noticed that "Om Bhan da" (underlined in the illustration) appears as a variation of the Tibetan mantra "Om Padme Hum Mana", so that the mantra can be characterized as an *umbandist mantra[316]*. A strictly linguistic relexification enabled the reinterpretation of an external religious element that is understood in the practices and rules supplied by Umbanda[317], forming also a religious relexification[318].

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[315] For greater details, consult the site http://www.umbanda.org. Even though most of the information is only available in Portuguese, the site also has available parts in English, Italian, French and Spanish.

[316] For a discussion on Hindu and Tantric mantras and a discussion on its performative aspect, from the hypothesis of mantras being previous to language, consult Staal 1989: 224ff.

[317] On the other side the reapropriation of Umbanda elements in Buddhism also seems to be a hypothesis in some Tibetan Buddhism centers. Usarski 2002a: 30 calls the attention to the case of Segyu Rinpoche, who is Brazilian and was a spiritual medium of Umbanda in Rio de Janeiro before being recognized officially as the reincarnation of a great Tibetan lama of the 16th century, in a lineage of tantric secret practices. Nowadays, Lama Segyu is the abbot of a Tibetan temple in Nepal and leads a Tibetan center in Sebastopol, California, also having a center in Porto Alegre in Brazil. In recent interview to the magazine Isto É, Lama Segyu stated: "I am totally favorable to the adaptation of the teachings of Buddhism to our culture, without altering its essence. I work a lot in this direction. " Cf. Isto É, "Beyond the Temple" (port. *"Além do Templo"*).

[318] In the meaning that I propose, not always a linguistic relexification of a religious term is a syncretic relexification, once this only occurs if another religious grammar is used. On the other side, a religious

The religious relexification can also be observed in the Hanamatsuri and Tanabata festivals celebrated in the Japanese neighborhood of São Paulo. A great majority of Brazilians participate in these occasions, mainly on account of the fact that they can make a wish when bathing a small Buddha in the Hanamatsuri festival or write their wish and hang it on a bamboo arrangement in the case of the Tanabata Shinto Festival[319]. Sometimes Buddhist and Shinto amulets are acquired and used together with Catholic and Afro-Brazilian equivalents, as a protection against a evil influence[320]. An addition of Buddhist lexical elements in the Brazilian religious grammar is also propitiated by the use of concepts that are similar. For instance, terms such as "spirit" or "possession" are sufficiently generic to enable the incorporation of elements of a foreign religion in a structuring pattern supplied by local religion, or vice versa.

In the ethnic case, often a religious relexification based on the addition is the first step for a religious relexification based on substitution. In this context, linguistic studies also present theoretical indications given by the contact among different languages, in what is referred to the process of formation of the pidgin and creole languages[321]. One of the hypotheses most discussed in the case of the creole languages is that the *relexification* is the

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relexification does not also necessarily need to be linguistic, because of the incorporation of non-linguistic elements like images or rituals.

[319] The traditional Japanese Tanabata festival is also realized in the nikkei neighborhood of Liberdade in São Paulo, generally in the month of August. On this occasion, the streets of the Japanese neighborhood are decorated with colored strips and it is possible to write personal desires to be hung in the Bamboo decoration, which many Brazilians do. Besides this, Japanese protection amulets (*omamori*) are sold by the Shinto shrine Nambei Jingu of Brazil. Stalls of food and Japanese culture, that are installed in the festival but that are also present in the weekends, show that a relexification is not restricted to religion, but in fact to a more general tendency of nativization; for instance, the Japanese plate *okonomiaki* is described at the stalls as "Japanese pizza."

[320] As former remarked, the maximization of the results in practices for wordly results frequently occur from the additive principle and with loss of contextual reference.

[321] Cf. Crystal 1987: 334-336, Pidgin are languages born from practical needs (in general, the commercial interaction), created by speakers of two different native languages. In general, they have a short life span and a more simplified vocabulary and grammar and used in more restricted situations. Creole languages, in their turn, are Pidgin language that became native languages of a generation, in this way incorporating more complete semantic elements. Some linguists such as Claire Lefebvre, however, do not distinguish two types of mixed languages, preferring to use only the term Creole languages, Cf. Lefebvre 1998: 4.

cause of the appearance of these languages, in other words, that these languages are the incorporation of a foreign vocabulary in a local grammar[322].

In fact, as already pointed out, the presence of religious elements of the majoritarian society is not uncommon in Japanese Buddhism in Brazil, that uses terms such as "mass", "priest", "catechism" and "bishop" in substitution of the Japanese words. In the same way that Japanese in the nikkei community has the frequent presence of Portuguese words[323], the same happens with its religion. Reminding the loss of the collective memory in the ethnic communities abroad, as proposed by Roger Bastide, with the passing of generations, gaps appear in the original religious practices, because of the loss of knowledge of the foreign religion and the death of the original immigrants. The filling of these gaps from the ethnic integration can be understood as a religious relexification based on substitution, in this way incorporating religious elements from the society in the foreign religious grammar, in this case Catholic elements into ethnic Buddhism. This process occurs not only with words, but also with the religious calendar, as the interpretation of the All Day Saints as a Brazilian Obon shows. Besides, a replacive relexification occurs in the incorporation of images like Our Lady of Aparecida, that initially were added like Kannon (in the Japanese case) and Kwan Inn (in the Chinese case), but sometimes substituting these devotions later.

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[322] The more detailed current study of relexification as the main hypothesis for the appearance of a Creole language was developed by Claire Lefebvre in her study on Haitian Creole as a relexified Fongbe, i.e. structurally based on Fongbe (West Africa) but with lexical words replaced by French. The process is described by Lefebvre as a cognitive process which occurred in the acquisition of the second language (cf. Lefebvre 1998: 12, 34-35), relexification is defined as the substitution of vocabulary, being the phonological information the representation inherited by the lexical item. Contrary to the position of Lefebvre, consult Mufwene 2001, who defends the social context as determinant in opposition to structural factors and Bickerton 1981, 1984, who defends an incomplete acquisition of the first language by children, who would have a decisive role in the formation of Creole languages. A critical discussion of relexification as a component of the Haitian Creole language is also given in DeGraff 2002.

[323] There are already some linguistic studies on the mixed language spoken by Japanese immigrants and nikkei in Brazil (koronia-go, *colony language*), like Kuyama 2000. More important for the theoretical approach of this study, the koronia-go was also studied as a pidgin language (Kuyama 2001), born from the interaction between two communities and consisting of grammatical simplification and in the lexical loan. Jo 1994: 40 indicates the incorporation of Portuguese words in products of essential need as "Meesa" port. *mesa*, eng. table), "garufu" (port. *garfo*, eng. fork) and "Leechi" (port. *leite*, eng. milk). Unlike Japanese in Japan, that incorporated many English words, in the case of the nikkei in Brazil, it was Portuguese equivalencies that were incorporated. For instance, while Japanese use the word "basu" (of the English word "bus"), many first generation immigrants in Brazil use the term "onibusu" (of the Portuguese "*ônibus*").

The case of converts is generally different. Although the process of nativization is structurally equivalent, the direction of incorporation is inverse since converts have the local religious grammar. A decision to a conversion to Buddhism, using conversion in the strict sense to the word, does not stop from demanding a complex and slow change of attitudes and the learning of another symbolic universe. The convert does not have the experiences of a Buddhist education during childhood (for the convert there is always the first and the second understanding of religion). Besides, a religion can be hardly circumscribed in an individual decision: it permeates an entire culture, festival calendar, ethics and social behavior. Consequently, it is necessary differentiated methods of transmission and other religious pedagogy for those who decided to convert to Buddhism, as in the cases of learning a second language. In doctrinal terms, as native speakers are often not aware of the grammar of their language, it is also common that followers do not have knowledge of the formalization of their religion. For the converts, on the other side, the religious elements and the doctrine that governs them are normally separated. This separation permits a partial conversion, as is the case when Buddhist lexical elements are added in a grammar that is supplied by Brazilian religions.

This differentiation generates two reinterpretation types in the case of interaction between the ethnic religions and religions of the majoritarian society, as Bastide pointed out in the case of African religions in Brazil. In the first case, a reinterpretation of elements occurs of the majoritarian society in the ethnic community's terms, in the second case converts or advanced generations of descendants interpret the ethnic religiousness in terms of the majoritarian society to which they belong[324]. These two types of reinterpretation implicates two different patterns of interaction in the case of Buddhism in Brazil, one that starts from the incorporation of Brazilian elements of integration in ethnic Buddhism and another one that occurs through the selective adoption of Buddhist elements, reinterpreted from a Brazilian vision.

3.2 Grammatical Transference

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[324] Cf. Bastide 1971b: 531. These two reinterpretation types will be responsible for what Bastide will specify as material and formal acculturation.

While the term religious relexification can be used to describe the phenomenon of incorporation of elements from other religions, the term grammatical transference can be used for the deepest levels of religious combination and syncretism, based on the combination or simultaneous use of different religious grammars. Generally the gramamatical transference pressuposes a former relexification based on addition or substitution. However, in the case of transference or grammatical borrowing, there is not only the incorporation of lexical elements from other religions, but also the incorporation of rules that define the use and relationship between these elements. These rules are many times placed in analogy with the grammar religion that incorporates them, allowing the incorporation of an external religious grammar.

An example of this possibility of structural incorporation can be seen in the illustration below, again in Umbanda, which tries to represent the relationship between African orixás and kaballah. Even if this proposal is defended only by a leader of one Umbanda temple in São Paulo, the illustration presents another structural level in comparison to the appropriation of isolated elements:
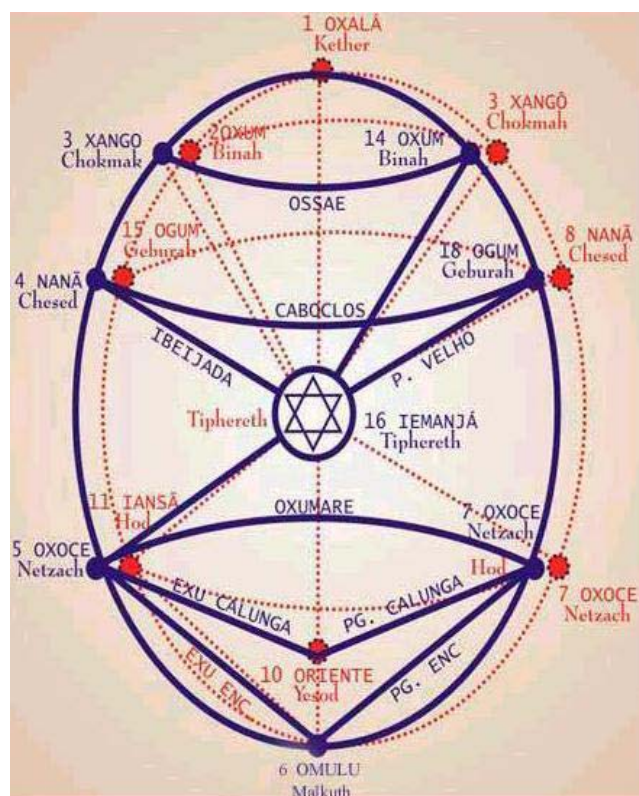

Figure 8.2: Proposal of the leader of the Esoteric and Umbandist Circle House of Adonai, also available at http://www.sophiaumbanda.com.br/kaballah.htm (accessed on 10.7.2003).

In this case, not only lexical elements from kaballah are incorporated. The relationship and established rules for these elements are also transferred for the African orixás through analogy. The transference of rules is constituent of the incorporation. In the context of the African religions in Brazil, this grammatical transference is not something new: Candomblé was already a case of incorporation study not only of Catholic elements but also of ceremonial cycle and structuring rules[325]. In linguistics, this structural borrowing is frequent and intense in cases in which the cultural pressure for integration is more intense or if the suppression of a minority is pursued through the persecution of its language use and teaching[326].

Although in Buddhism's case in Brazil the incorporation of isolated elements is the most common case, there are already existing cases that developed to deeper structural incorporation. One sphere of clear influence can be verified at the rituals. The majority of Buddhist temples incorporate ceremonies like baptism in a ritual influenced by a Catholic structure, but giving a Buddhist meaning to the ceremonies. Generally baptism is a term normally used as an initiation to Buddhism or as the presentation of a child to the temple. In some Zen centers and also at Fo Guang Shan tentative ceremonies of baptism combining a Buddhist lexicon and a Catholic grammar developed, but the general scenario is unstable and the ceremonies are not regularly performed[327]. In other cases a more deeper transference can be verified. Since 1980, attending multiple followers requests, a "Buddhist baptism" was incorporated in Honmon Butsuryûshû in Brazil. According to an interview with Archbishop Saito, a discrimination existed against children without baptism and a Catholic godfather, causing this ritual introduction with Buddhist godfathers. In this case, not only an isolated religious item was borrowed, but also the Catholic ritual structure. In this case, it is interesting to remark that this incorporation of Catholic grammar occurred *because* Honmon Butsuryûshû does not encourage multiple religious practice.

The same grammatical incorporation can be verified at Shingon temples, but in this case with a clear simulataneous practice with Catholicism. Besides the incorporation of Our Lady

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[325] Cf. Bastide 1971: 378ff. For a summary of this aspect of incorporation of the Catholic structure in the traditional *Casa de Minas* in São Luís in Maranhão, see Ferretti 1995: 217ff.

[326] Cf. Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 74-6.

[327] In Zen's case, see Rocha 2003: 189ff for a more detailed description. For experimental ceremonies and practices in another cultural environment, but mostly with a temporary status, see Spuler 2003: 35-50.

Aparecida as a bodhisattva and devotional image, there are in the Buddhist Church Nambei Yugazam Jyomiyoji around three pilgrimages each year to the city of Aparecida do Norte, an important and traditional point for this Catholic devotion. In the photos on lateral walls, the group often appears to be accompanied by Catholic priests during these visits to Aparecida do Norte. In this temple it is possible to affirm the presence of the incorporation of a Catholic grammar as verified in similar ethnic temples.

In Koyasan Shingon temple, since Brazilians without Asian descendancy are the majority, the direction of grammar transference is inverted; i.e., the grammar combinations occur inserting Buddhist contents in the Brazilian religious grammar. In an interview, a monk affirmed that he tries to avoid the Christian vocabulary. For example, when the visitors utilize the expression "graces to God" as religious gratitude during consultations, he tries to correct them and suggest the use of the expression "graces to our ancestors." The substitution of this expression indicates on one hand the relexification described in the last item, but it is more than that, since the expression of *grace* is rooted in Brazilian Catholic culture and the ancestors' welfare are the religious justification for the practice in this Shingon temple. There is a grammar transference from Catholicism to Shingon and not only an exchange of lexical elements. This monk also affirms the use of concepts from Spiritism and Afro-Brazilian religions because there would then be a basis for a common spiritual reality, and the adepts understand these concepts easily. For example, the term *macumba* is utilized because "*macumba* is the African tantra." For a similar reason this priest often uses the words *encosto* (influence of deceased spirits) and *passe* (spiritual blessing), concepts often used in Spiritism, instead of the similar Japanese and Shingon words, *reishô* and *kaji*. He also emphasizes that the concept of karma, incorporated into Spiritism, is derived from Asian religions and is a normal word for Brazilians. Through the influence of Spiritism, therefore it would be easier to understand the Shingon methods. The grammar transference of Brazilian religions, consequently, is provided by the karmic *continuum* in the Brazilian religions, something that Buddhism and other nikkei religions are already part[328].

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[328] Related to this karmic milieu, Mori studied the case of Okinawa immigrants in Brazil, describing the possessions verified as a hybridization of the Brazilian and Japanese religions through the reinterpretation of the nikkei ethnicity cf. Mori 1998. A more general approach of syncretism in the nikkei religions is provided by Maeyama 1983a.

Other example can be observed in the grammatical combinations of the intelectualized Buddhism, in which a *continuum* of worldviews defending the unity of religions allows an analogy between religious structures. These worldviews provide entry points given through mysticism, the assumption of a *sophia perennis,* the elements of the New Age or based on psychology. In the case of Buddhism, the Mahayana concepts of skilful means or bodhisattva are examples of possible bridges with other religions. Sometimes, the idea of an "essence of Buddhism" is also a good example of an entry point for a syncretism between different Buddhist strands. The entry points make possible the filling of *doctrinal gaps*, independent of whether they appear through a lack of knowledge or really do exist. Due to a perceived necessity for doctrinal complementation, these gaps are filled with elements from other systems, as is the case for many religious combinations. Not all of these transferences are grammatical in the sense of an incorporation not only of elements but also of rules in its original context, but this tendency becomes more visible the greater the level of concern with intellectual coherence.

For the scholars of religion, the important aspect of these grammatical combinations is to describe them in a way to to create a generic outline of representation for other similar analyses. A continuous abstraction should be one of the theoretical requirements of the science of religion in regard to creating an independent language that can describe different religions. In this dissertation the term grammar does not necessarily mean a formal approach, but in some points the analogy between religion and grammar can be extended to a more restricted and formal use, from the mathematization of grammatical productions. In a mathematical sense, grammar can be defined as a finite group of substitution rules applied to syntactic categories (non-terminals) in order to give a tree structure for lexical elements (terminal symbols)[329]. Given the scope of this study, such a formal method will be given in the next item considering only a very local and restricted use from a spatial organization of a religious altar.

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[329] The mathematical formalization of grammar referred here was initially developed by Chomsky 1959 and responsible in the sixties for several progresses in the structural linguistics and in the compilation of artificial languages. The concept belongs to the principles of Computer Science. A grammar is defined starting from an alphabet of symbols and given by 1) an initial symbol, 2) a set of non-terminals, 3) a set of terminals and 4) productions or substitution rules in the form $A\underline{B}$, where A and B are chains of terminals and not terminals, and A is not an empty chain. For more details, see Hopcroft and Ullman 2000[1979]: 85ff, 240ff. This general grammar definition, formally equivalent to a Turing machine, in practice is hardly used, being usually established restrictions in relation to the left side of the production.

4. The Formal Analysis of a Shingon Household Altar

The final section of this chapter has as objective the attempt of a formal analysis of the religious nativization using the concept of grammar. Although a grammar regarding religious elements is difficult to be formally described in cases like doctrines and beliefs, there are already proposals regarding rituals[330]. In the following example, I will be formalizing an approach of the *religious space*. The general procedure consists of three steps: 1. formalize the elements and an standard grammar regarding the rules of spatial organization, that indicate a religious hierarchy in the altar supported by the institution, 2. try to identify the abstract grammar in a concrete data, 3. identify which differences are caused by relexification by addition, substitution or grammatical transference and which are the possible justifications for them. The described procedure is considered sufficiently generic to be applicated in the study of the incorporation of religious elements of any religious altar, or even in the case of spatial organization of a complex of temples or shrines, that with time combined elements of different origins.

The datum to be concretely analyzed is a household altar of a devotee from Koyasan Shingon in Suzano, photographed in the field research. In spite of the altar having been initially considered by me as something that would be totally distant from Shingon's orthodox norms, the supplied descriptions and a subsequent consultation convinced me that it had surprisingly several equivalences with the orthodox rules, although having substitutions and including incorporations from other religions. By obtaining permission for divulgation of the altar, this is an example that seems possible to be analyzed in a more formal sense like the combination of different elements and religious grammars.

The first procedure consists of proposing a formal grammar to a traditional Shingon household altar, which will be done starting from the following illustration of Koyasan Shingon Institute, whose page in the internet considers the following traditional disposition:

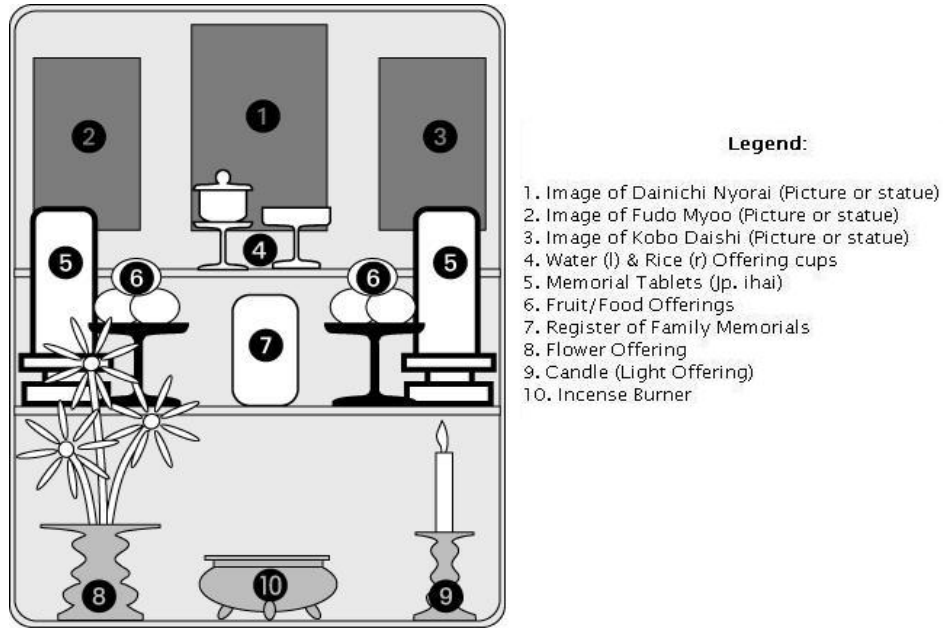[330] Cf. Staal 1979, Lawson and McCauley 1990.

Figure 8.3: Traditional Household Altar from Koyasan Shingon avaliable at www.shingon.org.

The elements considered important in this formalization include what can be denominated as levels of the altar. The basic principle evident is that which is spatially higher has more doctrinal importance and similar spiritual beings or offerings are located at the same level. In the first level are the images of the divinities of Shingon, being Dainichi Nyorai the main divinity and in a prominent place in the altar, something that mirrors its importance in Shingon. In a second level is the main offering of rice and water for the deities. In the third level are the ancestors' representations through memorial tables (jap. *ihais*), together with the associated offerings. In the fourth level are other offerings in form of flowers and light besides an appropriate location for the incense to be placed. Given these general parameters, the following grammar is proposed for this altar:

(1) S → L1 L2 L3 L4
(2) L1 → [1] L1-2
(3) L1-2 → [2] [3]
(4) L2 → [4]
(5) L3 → [5] [6] [7] [6] [5]
(6) L4 → [8] [10] [9]

where

S is the traditional Shingon Household Altar,
Ln is the n-th level of the altar
L1-2 is a sublevel from L1

[1] is a Dainichi Nyorai figure or statue,
[2] and [3] are a Fudô Myô-ô and Kôbô Daishi figure or statue, respectively,
[4] is the water and rice offering cups,
[5], [7] , are respectively the memorial tablets and register of family memorials,
[6] is the fruit and food offerings,
[8], [10], [9] are the flower offering, the incense burner and the light offering (candle).

S is formally the initial symbol of grammar, L1, L1-2, L2, L3 and L4 are non-terminal symbols and [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8], [9] and [10] are the terminal symbols, the lexical items corresponding to the real object items from the Shingon altar as presented in Figure 8.3.

This grammar, given its character as an example, is the simplest possible in the sense of not having any optional item, that usually appears in the description of religious altar, and also not having a differentiation and possible structuring, for instance, among the offerings in the third level and the *ihais* to the ancestors. For the objectives of formalization proposed in this item, however, this grammar is sufficient to specify a traditional Shingon altar.

The grammar above can be formally interpreted as the grammar that accepts a sequence of symbols as a traditional household altar organization. The serie given by [2] [1] [3] etc., for instance, is not accepted as a traditional altar, because item [2] (Fudô Myô-ô figure or statue) has a precedence that it should not have at the traditional organization. In fact, the grammar above is very rigid to the point of accepting only the sequence [1] [2] [3] [5] [6] [7] [6] [5] [8] [10] [9], but it serves for the effects of this example. Besides being able to be formally used to classify a traditional shrine, the grammar structures the given elements in levels through what is formally called tree derivation[331], below represented with the non-terminal (levels) and the only chain of lexical items accepted:

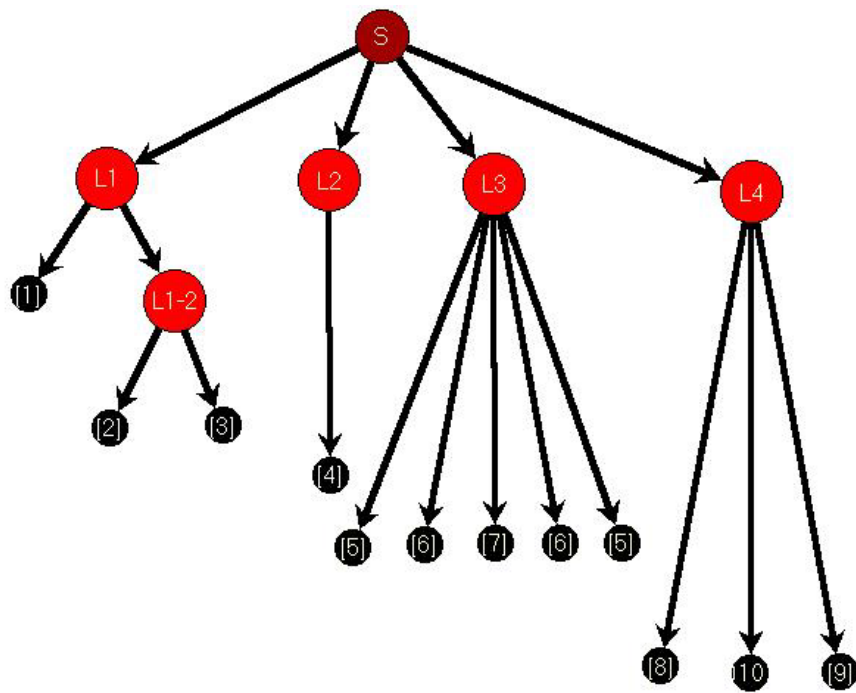[331] See Hopcroft and Ullman 2000[1979]: 88ff for more details.

Figure 8.4: Derivation tree from the grammar of a traditional Shingon household altar.

Given this formal grammar proposed, the second step is to analyze the syncretic altar of Shingon found in the field work. It was set up from pictures of deities and from some instructions provided by the monks, but some elements placed indicate a religious combination that can be analyzed through the religious relexification by addition or substitution, or as grammatical transference:
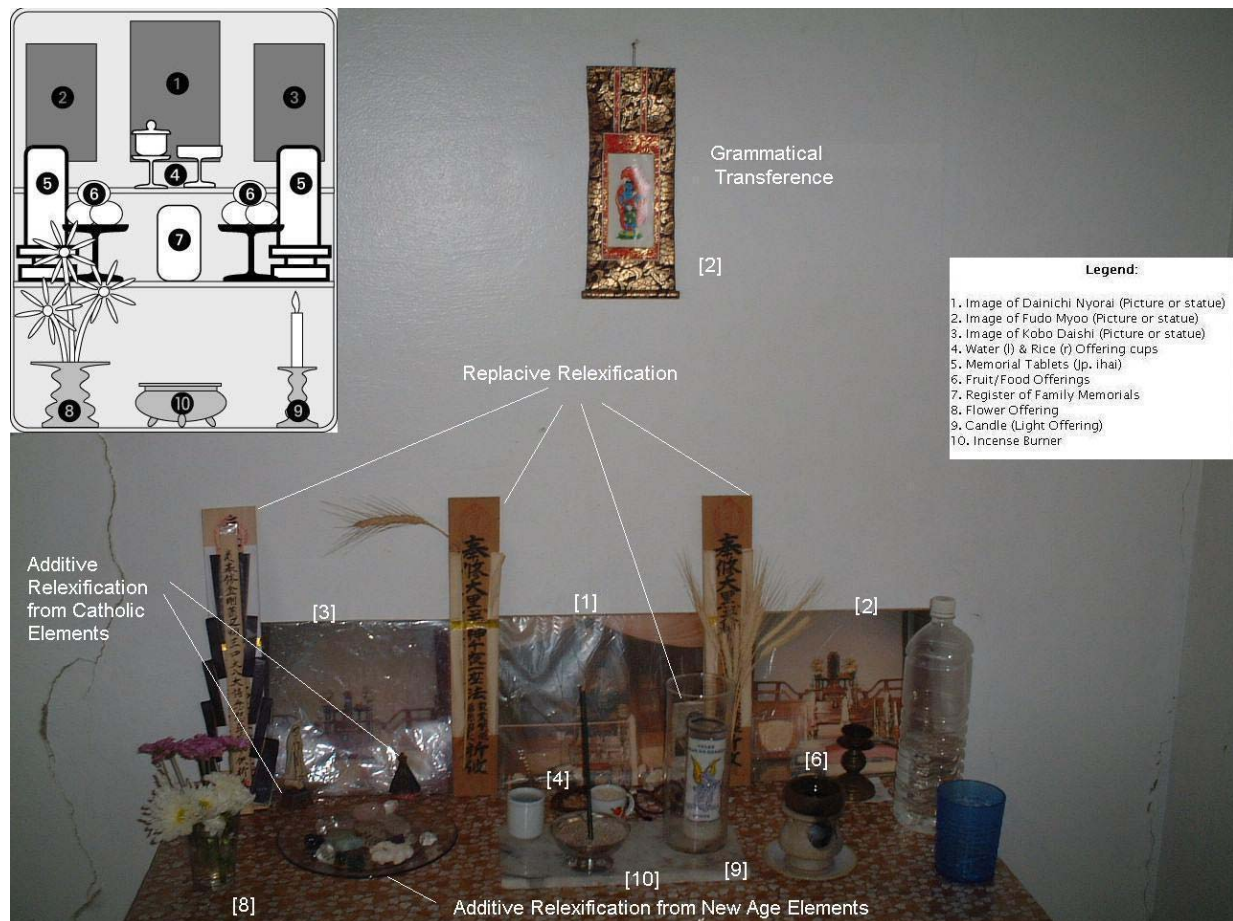
Figure 8.5: Private household altar from a Shingon devotee in São Paulo, annotated with the traditional recommendations and legend.

For an analysis of this household altar, it is necessary to investigate the criteria that its owner used to arrange it. In this Shingon temple each adept has a relative liberty of combination, which reflects a contemporary religious tendency, not only including magical elements, but also including individual reasons for personal combination. In this sense, the *additive relexification* from Catholic devotion with Kôbô Daishi and the inclusion of New Age elements is justified through her Catholic background and her reading of New Age books. Institutions are often mentioned only so fare as they affirm a more individual view. Asked about Catholic influences in Shingon, it is possible to perceive recognition and rejection at the same time, with a higher valorization of the individual aspect as an important characteristic of Buddhism. Catholic features become attractive *and* are rejected through Shingon: "People in Shingon have the necessity of images, of objects and of a superior person with mental or spiritual powers to cure them, remove their problems, give them direction for life. [. . .] The Brazilians in general, due to Catholicism, due to our culture [. . .] They arrive with the idea that the priest will do, the priest will bless and you are cured, the priest will pray

and move away the evil. Some way this helps, because he really will bless you, he will do a ceremony that is going to move away certain spiritual things, what they also for example do in the [Shingon] center, they will put away negative energies that you normally, because you are distracted, because you do not have the direction or you do not have the opened and developed chakras; then you will search this help to follow your way. But it is not the priest that will do, you will do. Buddhism has this characteristic. You are always able to do. You will drive your life. You will do. The Universe, the Father, this God, He gave you mind, memory, intelligence, a perfect, healthy, physical body, and you will drive, you are able."

The great importance of Japanese amulets and signs of protection in this altar can be interpreted as a *substitutive relexification* of what is the main purpose of the cult of the ancestors in Brazil, which is to avoid evils and to get protection. The Brazilians of Shingon do not have control of their genealogies and there are hardly memorial tables to represent ancestors, but a protection is possible of being obtained through *omamoris*. Another type of substitutive relexification happens in the presence of the picture of the negro hero Zumbi in this household altar, represented as a symbolic ancestor. An ex-militant from the black movement in Brazil, she interprets the injuries and problems of black race through the concept of ancestors' karma. The descendents of Africans in Brazil would have many problems due to the consequences of slavery, such as violent deaths and suicide. The fact that the descendents were forced to come to Brazil, their lives in Africa violently broken, would be a reason for this historical karma.

The Afro-Brazilian religions also appear in her understanding of Shingon, where it is possible to see a new suspension of barriers. She considers karma and the ancestors' cult as a common point between Buddhism and African religions. She states that even in the case of the Catholic Church it is possible to practice the worship of ancestors through a mass for the surname, which she one time requested when she could not go to the Shingon temple in Suzano. Besides, she sees many other resemblances between African religiosity and Shingon, such as the importance of nature elements, and more aesthetic aspects like the use of white clothes, mantras, bells, and drums. Bodhisattvas are recognized as intermediates, much like the Catholic saints or the *orixás* in Candomblé. In Candomblé there are several *orixás*, associated with nature elements, and each adept is associated with one. The same would exist in the case of Shingon as well, she says, because each person has a relationship with a particular deity. When one knows his bodhisattva through a consultation with the Shingon

priests, one then tries to know better the history and the mantra of this bodhisattva. She says that Fudô Myô-ô is her deity, being among others things, the bodhisattva for the cure of illnesses and physical pains[332]. She identifies Fudô Myô-ô with her orixá in Candomblé, called Abaluaiê. Reinterpretating Abaluaiê, she states that he was burned but "arrived at nirvana through physical suffering." As stated already in figure 8.5, I analysed this valorization of Fudô Myô-ô (in a new level above all) as a *grammar transference.* In this way it is possible to present the following tree structure of this syncretic household altar in comparison to the grammar of a traditional Shingon recommendation, emphasizing the elements of religious relexification and grammatical transference:
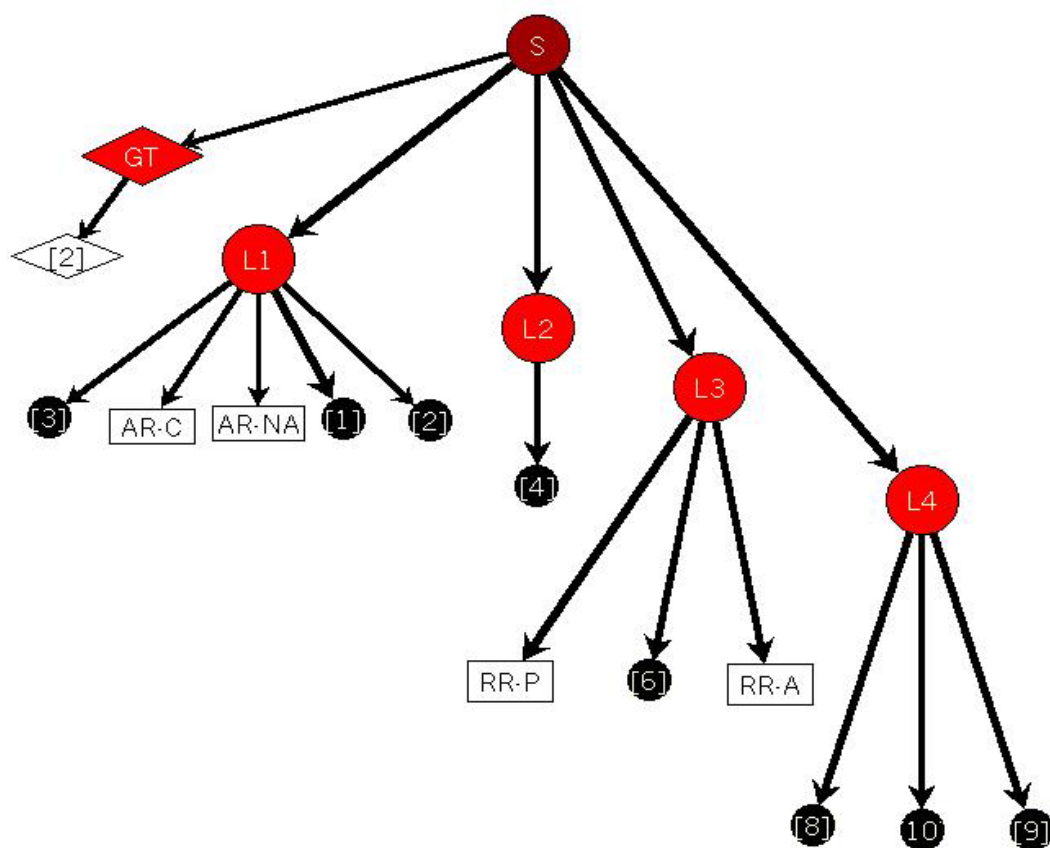

Figure 8.6: Derivation Tree of the main differences of a syncretic shrine with the grammar of a traditional Shingon shrine. The lozenges symbolize a grammatical transference (grammar transference, GT), the squares indicate a religious relexification. AR-C indicates additive relexification from Catholicism, AR-NA means additive relexification from New Age elements, RR-P indicates replace relexification for religious protection and RR-A indicates replace relexification of ancestors.

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[332] In Japan, this relationship is more formalized and normally defined in the initiation ritual, in which the adept casts a sprig of anise on a Shingon mandala. For more details, see Yamasaki 1988: 176.

Final Reflections

This study was initially directed to the question of the adequacy of current theories in the Brazilian case. Since my answer was that these views are not completely applicable, I should justify this position with the collected sources, describing the East Asian Buddhism in Brazil (Chapters 1-6) and also try to offer some complementation to the existing perspectives through new proposals (Chapters 7-8). These final reflections are intended to summarize East Asian Buddhism in Brazil from the perspective of a historical and on-going process of nativization across generations, with specific interactions with the local context.

Indeed, *local historical and sociological characteristics* define a very specific appropriation of Buddhism. Using Marxist terms, it is possible to affirm that with immigration the social links were broken between the base structure and the superstructure. These links, having to be redone in a new social context, lead necessarily to a reinterpretation of the role of religion in the new base structure. As Takashi Maeyama already showed in the 1960s, the *ie* (household) and *dôzoku* (communitarian groups based on household), that were at the same time an economical system of production and of regulation of social relationship, could not be transplanted to Brazil in its entirety. This occurred not only because of the fact that a complete *ie* and *dôzoku* immigration did not occur but also the permanence was intended to be temporary and most of the oldest sons (responsible for the worship of ancestors and *ie* leadership) in general did not immigrate. As the *ie* system defined the role of a familiar religiosity and the *dôzoku* a communitarian religious belonging, the institutionalization of Buddhism and Shinto could only reappear later, through kinship and communitarian links recreated with bigger or smaller success, after that the State Shinto based on the worship of the emperor collapsed dramatically after the Second World War. Later, Buddhism as a Japanese religion became, besides a religion that preserved the Japanese culture, also the ideological support of a economic household system. In this sense, it is possible to identify a division in which the responsible for inheriting the economical activities of the recreated *ie* should, among other things, also be an adept of a Japanese religion.

This helps to explain the importance of the ethnic aspect in nikkei Buddhism in Brazil, being enough to remind that even now most of Japanese Buddhist schools in Brazil are still organized as missions and that one of the main events of the Japanese Sects Federation is the

celebration of pioneering immigrants. Even though the new generations are not identifying themselves with this ethnic meaning anymore, nikkei Buddhism is still part of the family religiosity. With the possibility of the simultaneous practice of different religions in Brazil and given the particular history of the nikkei, it can also be verified that Buddhism represents the family and the ethnic identity, while Brazilian religions, mainly Catholicism, are practiced as a form of belonging to the majoritarian society. This possibility of religious ambiguity, in opposition to the USA and Europe, allows a relaxation of ethnic tensions, but also a dilution and uncertainty in the continuity of several Buddhist groups, that runs the risk of social anomie. This risk of a decreasing number of adepts or even disappearance is noticeable in nikkei ethnic temples that did not form groups of monks that speak Portuguese and who do not accomplish a work with the new generations. On the other hand, it can still be observed an independent ethnic identity in the case of immigrants and Japanese descendants. In the ethnic Buddhism's case, a future research direction is to study the influence of the migratory refluxes caused by the *dekassegui* phenomenon in the evolution of ethnic temples.

In the case of converts, an elitization of the intellectualized Buddhism and the success of karmic Buddhism seem an irreversible phenomenon in Brazil. At present, a current interpretation of Buddhism for results already reaches the middle class also from a meditation as therapeutic method and alternative medicine. At beginning the existence of parallel congregations minimized the contact among the nikkei and Brazilians, but began to lose meaning with the progressive cultural integration of the nikkei community. What seems to remain, however, is what could be called vertical congregations, since in most Japanese religions in Brazil the political command and, in many cases, the financial sustentation is also nikkei's responsibilities. Parallel congregations, however, are transient organizational resources and seem to disappear through generations and with the use of a common language. In Brazil, when they exist congregations are hardly parallel in the sense of not presenting any interaction, even conflicts may appear if some of the groups do not want to live with this ambiguity or to feel the only economical provider of the institution. In the case of Zen independent communities arose, but until now with a fragile institutionalization and a limited number of adepts.

Regarding Chinese Buddhism, even though the Chinese community is considerably smaller than the Japanese, there is a significant number of immigrants concentrated in the southeast area of the country. Although the Chinese presents itself ethnically and culturally

quite diversified, religious groups accomplish an integration role in the construction of an identity in diaspora. In some cases, from a secularized vision of the Pure Land and its application in the social assistance, the Chinese community integration is also stimulated through the Third World aspects of the Brazilian society. Moreover, again it is possible to point out that a group with a globalized structure already offers patterns of reinterpretation of Buddhism in agreement with Western concepts. In the case of converts, it also seems that there is already a role for Fo Guang Shan in Brazil. The characteristics that seem to define this role for Brazilians are a reflex of the interest for Zen in the middle class, for the role of Buddhist's social assistance and the search for an alternative health from Chinese elements, like meditation and acupuncture. Additionally, Fo Guang Shan has had a great presence in the media and in ecumenical events, having recently inaugurated an important headquarter in Cotia. Those factors point out a growing importance of Chinese groups in Brazil.

In spite of that, countless difficulties exist in the adaptation of Chinese Buddhism. First of all, the difficulty of Brazilians in identifying and understanding several aesthetic and doctrinal elements that compose Chinese Buddhism should be considered, starting with the language. The possibility of conflicts between cultures and ethics so different as the Brazilian and the Chinese cannot be ignored, in spite of the existence of doctrinal and organizational elements that tend to minimize them. Secondly, a difficulty seems to be the formation of a Brazilian Buddhist community, not only of monks but of laymen. This has not consolidated yet even in Fo Guang Shan. Unlike the Japanese Buddhist's missions, Fo Guang Shan has been aiming at forming Brazilian monks in Brazil, giving prominence to those that do not have Chinese descendance. But in fact, although a monastery and a Buddhist college are being initiated, it is necessary to wait to find out if a demand that justifies these facilities will exist.

In relation to *cultural* factors, East Asian Buddhism in Brazil is diluted because of the presence of a syncretic and peculiarly magical religiosity and is clearly influenced by the presence of Catholicism, Spiritism and Umbanda. That turns out to be more noticeable the less is the relationship with headquarters abroad and the more the acceptance of religious combination within the group's doctrine. In fact, Japanese and Chinese are already accustomed to a multiple religious practice, but that redefines when they are inserted in another environment of multiple religious practice like Brazil. Rather, Far East Buddhism in

Brazil must be analyzed as a particular product of interpenetration of the civilizations as a result of immigration and new reinterpretation patterns.

From these starting points, three main patterns of religious combinations could be identified in Brazil. In the first case, the combination pattern develops because of ethnic integration, in which the *elements from Brazilian society and Catholicism are reinterpreted from a Buddhist perspective,* something that can decrease in the nativization process across generations. In general, these combinations could be analyzed as reflexes of a hybrid identity because of the gaps in the collective memory and in which different religious practices accomplish different levels of social identity. The second pattern is to combine conceptually the contents of different religions from analogies and correspondences, mainly an *intellectual reinterpretation* of Buddhism since perennial philosophy, mysticism or psychology. An intellectual globalization and the media furnish ready-made reinterpretation patterns, but that are increased or modified according to Brazilian society and culture. A last pattern of religious combinations appears from a search of results for concrete problems, that generates practices and interpretations typically local. This last combination pattern produces a *reinterpretation of Buddhism from Brazilian religiosity.* In Bastide's terms, without corroborating his ideological and psychological desegregation criticism in Umbanda, one can say that a formal acculturation occurs, in which Buddhism is frequently instrumentalized and diluted.

Regarding the structural processes of these religious combinations, studies on the acquisition of a second language and the formation of Creole languages supply interesting theoretical models for religious nativization and syncretism. In the immigrants' case, in linguistic terms many in the first generation are monolingual, although some acquire the local language as a second language. In the second generation, many are bilingual, existing however a frequent code-mixing or lexical and grammatical borrowing. The third generation is speaker of the local language, but often retain characteristics of the immigrant language as a lexifier language, that provides some vocabulary. In the case of the acquisition of a second language, a separation between a lexicon and a grammar is something automatic in the learning of a foreign language and the language adquired in the first socialization is often present as a substrate grammar, affecting the structure of the spoken foreign language. These elements inspired new structural perspectives given by a concept of religious relexification and grammatical transference.

The proposed concepts compose a model of religious nativization through combinations, being able to bring new elements for other models currently used, in a way to have a general validity both for ethnic religions and for converts. In a more detailled version, this model can inclusively help to explain the historical evolution of Buddhism in its different processes of nativization through Asia, that predominantly occurred through the combination with local religions. Regarding the Western Buddhist communities, a contribution that the studies of Buddhism in Brazil can offer is an analysis of transformations that occur in religions when religions enter in contact in an environment that propitiates interpenetration. Indeed, there is always a level of interaction and combination with the local religions and the categories of immigrant and convert Buddhism have a limited validity. Besides, in sociological terms, the theoretical perspective here defended has many valid points for Latin America and for the Third World.

In the case of Buddhism in Brazil, it can be verified that the nativization has been occurring for a long time, without, however, having the intellectualized meaning that a conscious and systematic search as a label like "Brazilian Buddhism" could indicate. In the table below, I try to relate these processes within ethnic, intellectualized and karmic Buddhism. In spite of expressing only general tendencies, this table summarizes the main functional and structural characteristics of the nativization of East Asian Buddhism in Brazil:

	Ethnic Buddhism	Intellectualized Buddhism	Karmic Buddhism
Lexifier Religion	Catholicism	"Western" Buddhism	New Japanese religions
Substrate	Asian Buddhism	worldviews based on a religions unity; esoteric and New Age tendencies	*continuum* of karmic religions in popular religiosity
Function of the combination	Social Integration	harmonization of conceptual differences	maximize benefit possibility in this world
Main Structural method	Relexification for substitution	Grammatical transference	Relexification by addition

Table 1. Main processes of East Asian Buddhism nativization in Brazil.

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Erklärung

Ich versichere hiermit, dass ich die vorliegende Doktorarbeit selbständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel benutzt habe und dass sie nicht schon als Prüfungsarbeit verwendet worden ist.