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Conclusions

A review of the American and Japanese financial crises reveals similarities and differences. The two cases seem to have been similar in the following areas. First, in both countries, the crisis developed through macroeconomic conditions beyond the control of the financial institutions under analysis; inflation in the US and international economic policy coordination in Japan. Second, deregulation of interest rates and business lines in particular, and intensified competition by various categories of financial institutions contributed to the development of the bad loan crisis. Third, real estate loans played a central role in the development of the crisis. Fourth, negligence or inability on the part of relevant public authorities to monitor closely financial institutions' activities after the deregulations also contributed to the development of the crisis. Fifth, the government delayed actions or took piece-meal actions in fear of taxpayers' possible outcries against bailouts of failed financial institutions with public funds. Sixth, the above-mentioned behavior of the government contributed to the worsening of the crisis so that drastic surgery was required later on.

The Japanese case seems to have been different from the American experience in the following areas. First, the Japanese loan crisis engulfed virtually all segments of the financial industry, ranging from large commercial banks to small non-bank lenders, as compared with the US case that mostly involved thrift institutions. Second, the magnitude of the Japanese crisis has been far greater, involving the largest amount of bad loans in the history of the world. Third, the real sector and monetary sector interacted in the development of the crisis much more in Japan than in the US. Fourth, the practice of Japanese banks to purchase and own stocks greatly contributed to the disaster. Fifth, the Japanese practices of preparing financial statements regarding a valuation of assets as well as a separation of subsidiaries' accounts led to the development of the crisis. This was not a factor in the US because US financial statements are prepared on the basis of present valuation and consolidated statements. Sixth, in Japan, a relative lack of disclosure and transparency of facts contributed to the cover-up of the crisis by industry and government officials and delayed appropriate actions. In the US there was some amount of cover-up, but it was not as far-reaching as it was in Japan. Seventh, the Japanese crisis has been substantially linked to international developments, including the Plaza Agreement of 1985, Louvre Accord of 1987, BIS rules of 1989, and Asian currency and economic crises of 1997. At the time of their crisis, the US was not being impacted by such international developments. Finally, Japanese policy-makers could have learned lessons from the US experience of the S&L crisis, but they apparently did not.

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JAPANESE RELIGIONS AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN BRAZIL

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This article discusses the present situation of Japanese religions within the Brazilian religious context, as well as the state of recent scholarship. In the first section, religiosity in Brazil is characterized as pluralistic and syncretistic, with the Catholic element being predominant. The second section shows that Kardecist-Spiritualism (*Espiritismo-kardecista*) and various esoteric traditions have contributed to the diffusion and acceptance of eastern religious concepts such as karma and reincarnation. In this connection, Japanese religions will be depicted as being prominent among the various Asian religions. Although the number of religious groups from Japan (Shintô, Buddhist, Christian, and others) has grown considerably in Brazil, only some of them – particularly those which are classified under the category of "New Religions" (*shin shûkyô*) – have been able to spread successfully among Brazilians of non-Japanese origin. Finally, it will be shown that Eastern religions are growing and are also being more intensively studied in the past few years in a context of the trans-nationalization of religious communities in Latin America.

Religious Diversity

Even before the Portuguese colonization, one may find pluralism in what came to be Brazil's religious culture. By the time the Portuguese arrived in the year 1500, there were hundreds of indigenous groups, each with its own language, habits, and religious practice. Later, the Portuguese started to exploit their new colony through developing sugar plantations, which were worked by African slaves. Catholicism as the religion of the dominant white people eventually became prevalent in a context of unequal power relations.

The Catholic Church was not the only manifestation of sacred power in colonial Brazil, but it used its alliance with the political-economic power

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structure to perpetuate its hegemony and impose its faith, often resorting to violent methods such as the Inquisition.² If, on the one hand, indigenous peoples and Africans were "the pagans" and "idolaters," and thus had to be converted, on the other hand, Jews and Protestants were "the heretics," whose presence and activities needed to be controlled. Therefore, under this political-religious orientation, the various Indian faiths remained marginalized; Black slaves had to disguise their beliefs in *orixás* (African gods) and in *Allah* (as was the case of the Black Muslims called *malês*) under the maquilage of the cult of Catholic saints; Jews were forced to be baptized; and Protestants received official permission to come to Brazil only after the separation of Church and State in 1891. However, it is known that, as early as 1839, a Methodist pastor – Daniel Kidder – was carrying out religious activities in the Amazon area.

Brazil's status as "the biggest Catholic nation in the world" must be understood in the context of European maritime expansion, and, above all, in terms of shared objectives between the Portuguese Crown and the Vatican, as Carmen Cínira Macedo accurately points out: The union of State and Church in the origin of Brazil was characterized by the institution of patronage (*padroado*). This consisted specifically in the right to manage ecclesiastic matters received by Portuguese kings from the Popes. It made the Portuguese sovereigns the real chiefs of the Church in Brazil, thus adding the force of spiritual power to the material power they already held. All this caused colonization in Brazil to be marked by Christianization and, moreover, established a strong relation between the idea of evangelization and "Portuguesation." This conception, that to colonize meant spreading the Catholic faith, brought about a rejection of indigenous and African religions, which were considered "deviant" practices that should be eliminated. In return, all Catholic action was committed to the colonization project, which did not prevent eventual conflicts between administrators and priests. Thus, the economic and political spheres mingled with the religious one, and there is no surprise that the "expansion" of Catholicism in the country has been so intense (Macedo 1989:30).

Until recently, it was mainly Catholic and African religious traditions that marked the Brazilian popular religious field. Indigenous traditions have also made their contribution, though not as pervasively as the former two traditions. The influence of indigenous traditions is more localized, such as a

² It is known that members of the Portuguese clergy came to Brazil between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in order to control the work of evangelization and to detect the "heretical" people, who were taken to the metropolis in order to be judged by the Holy Office. The ones accused of practicing "witchcraft" and "sorcery" were submitted to violent torture, and quite frequently were burnt.

special category of spirits in the *Umbanda* cult, in some practices in the newly established *Santo Daimé* cult, or even in the Amazon Region's faith healing practices called *pajelança*.

From colonial times up to the beginning of the twentieth century, it was almost a crime not to be a Catholic. According to data provided by the Brazilian official institute of statistics (IBGE), in 1872, 99.7% of Brazilians declared themselves to be "Catholic." But, from this time on, the decline of Catholicism in terms of percentage has been steady. The manifestation of other religious trends was made possible, though still not well tolerated. Kardecist-Spiritualism (*Espirítismo-kardecista*) was introduced in Brazil from France in the second half of the nineteenth century. Also, immigrants to the southern and southeastern parts of the country did not fail to bring in new creeds: Protestantism, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Shintô, and others. To add to this ever richer religious pluralism, at the beginning of this century a new religion was formed. Because it combines and reelaborates elements of indigenous and African beliefs, as well as Catholicism and Kardecist-Spiritualism, it is considered "a Brazilian way of religious expression" par excellence. We are referring to *Umbanda*.

According to what has been stated, the Brazilian religious scene has never been static. On the contrary, there have been many messianic movements, new sects and schisms within and without the Catholic Church (as, for instance, the establishment of the *Igreja Católica Apostólica Brasileira* or Brazilian Apostolic Catholic Church by "Dom" Carlos Duarte da Costa, in 1945). In the past forty years in particular, groups of all kind of creeds both in the rural and urban areas have appeared, competing with each other in the "market of the sacred." The present proliferation of new creeds suggests a change in the Brazilian religious scenery, in which the fragmentation of the hegemonic power of the Catholic Church becomes evident. This, however, does not mean that the Church will lose its social prestige soon, as is shown in a survey made in December 1990, by agency *Ibope* about the credibility of institutions among Brazilians. The Catholic Church ranked first with 78%, followed next by the radio (58%).

Many reasons have been given to explain the decline of Catholicism and the boom of new sects. This phenomenon could be related to radical changes suffered by the nation as a result of urbanization, rural exodus, the impact of mass media, democratization, and other factors. Another element might be the political interest in manipulating non-Christian groups (such as *Umbanda*) as a reaction to the "leftization" of some sectors of the Catholic Church, especially during the military regime (1964-1985). No matter which specific factors determined the increase and diversification of the Brazilian religious universe, the introduction and growth of Asian religions must be understood in this historical context.

To sum up, the Catholic hegemony – almost a monopoly – in Brazil is very much evident and can be explained in terms of historical and political reasons. This hegemony would also appear to indicate a religious homogeneity, but the basic pluralism of Brazilian culture has been perpetuated in the religious field since colonial times. Even in the interior structure of the Catholic Church one may find evidence of diversity, or of a more popular, little tradition coexisting with an ecclesiastic, great tradition. With the process of globalization, this syncretistic orientation has become more complex, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Finally, it is important to state that Brazilian pluralism has developed a peculiar kind of syncretism, in which each of the primary cultural forces operating in contact with other cultures has been experienced by a bigger parcel of the population than the specific social group of the particular culture (Segato 1997: 236).

The Diffusion of Asian and Japanese Beliefs

The diffusion of Asian religious traditions in Brazil began in the second half of the nineteenth century. In legal terms, this was made possible with the separation of Church and State after the establishment of the Republican regime in 1889. A few decades before, the introduction of a great contingent of immigrants in the southern and southeastern parts of the country brought in new creeds, including Protestantism, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Shintô. With respect to the spread and acceptance of Asian beliefs, the role of Kardecist-Spiritualism (*Espiritismo-kardecista*) and various esoteric traditions must be mentioned. Spiritualism is a religion that was codified by Allan Kardec in the nineteenth century. In an attempt to synthesize religion, science, and philosophy, it holds spirit-mediumship – communication between spirits and humans – as a central aspect. It was introduced in Brazil from France soon after its codification and has spread throughout the country, at once exerting a great influence on Brazilian religiosity (for example, it constitutes part of the Umbanda cult) and being influenced by Christianity (in Brazil, it became a Christian teaching that a Spiritualist era will prevail after the Hebrew era of the Old Testament and the Christian era of the New Testament). Many esoteric traditions were introduced in Brazil at the same time as Spiritualism. Some of these traditions, particularly the Theosophical Society,³ permeate the Brazilian religious universe, and play a significant role in the diffusion, understanding, and acceptance of Eastern religions, especially the Hindu tradition (Carvalho 1994:75). In fact, many Eastern ideas such as karma and reincarnation were widely popularized through

³ Founded by Madame Blavatsky (Helena Petrovna Blavatsky) and others, in 1875, advocating an eclectic religion based largely on Brahmanic and Buddhist teachings. In Brazil, it was introduced in 1919.

these Spiritualist and esoteric traditions and became a sort of *lingua franca* for a great number of Brazilians, even taking into consideration that these traditions had a marginal and stigmatized status until recently.

Another wave of eastern religions came along with the counter-culture movement of the 1960s and continues with the ever-increasing worldwide interest in New Age spiritual themes. Most of these groups have been introduced in the main Brazilian cities such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre, Brasília, etc. Among others, I mention a Theravada Buddhist Temple in Rio (headed by a Sri-Lankan monk), a Korean Zen group in São Paulo, a Taoist Temple in Rio, and many sects of Tibetan Buddhism. Tibetan Buddhism started to attract Brazilians around 1990, with the move to Brazil of an American couple (Lama Tsering Everest and her husband, who is also a lama) and the visit of the Lama Gangchen Kimpoche. New movements such as Ananda Marga (founded in 1955 by Shrii Anandamurti in India and introduced in Brazil in 1971), the International Society of Krishna Consciousness (started by Srila Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada in 1965 in New York and introduced in Brazil in 1972), Shree Rajneesh's movement (which established its first Brazilian center, *Centro de Meditação Rajneesh*, in 1980), and others can also be mentioned. Chinese religions are still rather unfamiliar, although a group based on the syncretistic Buddhist tradition of Mt. Wu-t'ai worship recently opened its doors to Brazilians with no Chinese ancestry. Koreans, who started to migrate to Brazil beginning in the 1960s, are chiefly Protestants and have established Christian Churches in cities such as São Paulo and Brasília.

Japanese religions followed a distinct course in Brazil. They were introduced with the great flow of immigrants but remained confined to the Japanese-Brazilian community until the 1960s. Since that time, they have been prominent among the various Asian religions that are spreading in Brazil. In the initial period of immigration, religious activities were rather meager. On the one hand, when Japanese immigrants started to arrive in Brazil in 1908, the Japanese government took the initiative of prohibiting the proselytizing activities of non-Christian missionaries among the immigrants, in order to avoid their facing hostility from Brazilian Catholics. On the other hand, at first many immigrants were too concerned with how to pay back the trip to Brazil and too busy struggling to survive and to adapt to their new place of work and residence to have much interest in traditional religious life.

Another reason for the low level of religious activity among the first immigrants was the Japanese custom concerning ancestor worship (Mori 1992: 562). In traditional Japan, the burden of maintaining the ancestor cult rested upon the successor son, usually the elder one. The great majority of immigrants to Brazil were non-successors (second sons, third sons, etc.) who had only intended to migrate temporarily, keeping their status as mem-

bers of their home trunk family (*honke*). In this case, when an immigrant died, provisory funeral rites were done under the assumption that his/her "soul would travel back to Japan" and that these rites should be done definitively in the home country; there the deceased would rest peacefully in his/her native place. This orientation only changed after World War II, when most immigrants made the decision to settle permanently in Brazil.

Thus, in a climate of restricted religious activities for non-Christian missionaries as well as financial difficulties, religious practice among immigrants was limited, in general, to crucial moments (such as a death) and/or to individual devotions.⁴ This situation favored the establishment of the system of "lay" or "improvised" monks. That is, faced by innumerable deaths caused by work accidents or diseases (particularly, malaria) in the first years of migration, and because of the lack of professional monks, the more faithful lay Buddhists, who knew some prayers, were called on to pray for the dead.

Despite these initial difficulties, there was a monk of the Buddhist sect Honmon Butsurū-shū among the first group of immigrants who succeeded in keeping and spreading this faith among his countrymen. Other religious groups (such as Shingon-shū, Jōdo Shin-shū, Oomoto, and Tenrikyō) were also present in the initial period of migration. Members and missionaries of various groups – Buddhists, Shintōists, and representatives from the so-called "New Religions" – slowly began to establish a mosaic of "Japanese religions" within the Japanese-Brazilian community. Until some time ago, about 45 denominations were estimated to exist in Brazil. But this number is now a little higher, as is seen from a study conducted several years ago.⁵ We found the following numbers up to the year 1996:

Shintō ⁶	14
Buddhism.....	13
New Religions.....	21
Others (ethic-moral groups, fraternities, etc.).....	5
TOTAL.....	53

⁴ It is not my intention to affirm, however, that immigrants did not care about religion in the first years of migration. As early as 1920, the Shintō shrine *Sarutauário do Bugre* was built in the colony of Uetsuka in Promissão city (state of São Paulo), and in 1928 there was an unrealized project for the construction of a Shintō shrine at the Aliança colony (which was to be named *Suwa Jinja*).

⁵ See previous surveys, such as Nakamaki (1985:137-8), Mori (1992), and Aliança (n.d.:440-50).

⁶ In this work I changed slightly the classification used by the Japanese Ministry of Education, that is, traditional Shintō, traditional Buddhism, Neo-Shintō, Neo-Buddhism, and New Religions (all others).

The great majority of these religious groups have built their headquarters in São Paulo City or in its surroundings (in the cities of Suzano, Arujá, Mogi das Cruzes, Diadema, etc.). The numbers presented above do not include certain groups we have heard are present in Brazil, but whose contact addresses were impossible to obtain thus far (such as Tenshō Kōtai Jingūkyō, Shōrei-kai, Gedatsu-kai, Kōfuku-no-Kagaku, and others).

In traditional Japan, Shintō, a syncretistic religion which best preserves the native Japanese faith, relates more to community life (with the *ujigami* or guardian deities of villages, the *matsuri* or popular festivals, etc.), whereas Buddhism is more centered in the corporate family or *ie* (with funeral rites and ancestral cults). The construction of the majority of Shintō shrines in Brazil was aimed at reproducing this Japanese pattern. Thus, the shrines were built in order to have Japanese deities (*kami*) protecting in foreign lands the immigrants of a certain community and its surroundings, or immigrants from a certain Japanese prefecture. Although Shintō shrines in Brazil follow a basic, core set of ideas and practices, they usually represent different denominations related to different gods. A point to be made here is that, curiously, some religious groups created in Brazil by Japanese or their descendants which possess distinctive Shintō elements, have incorporated various elements from Brazilian religiosity. These groups do not limit their work to the traditional Shintō role of spiritual assistance to Japanese immigrants; on the contrary, they have been offering religious services to many Brazilians without Japanese ancestry, mainly through shamanistic practices. As an example of this, we may cite the *Associação Religiosa e de Assistência Social Shōiti Sueiti Inari Daimyōjin*, which has its headquarters in São Paulo city, and whose leader is occasionally possessed by *Nossa Senhora da Aparecida* (Brazil's Patron-Saint "Our Lady of Aparecida," a counterpart of the Mexican "Our Lady of Guadalupe").

Buddhism was also perpetuated as a supportive religion to the immigrants' families, basically offering funeral services. But, as Ricardo Gonçalves states, "The old Buddhism of funeral rituals in Japanese, at the level of a religion of the *ie* [family], tends to disappear since the generation of old Japanese immigrants is vanishing and the migratory flux of Japanese to Brazil ended some time ago" (Gonçalves 1990:179). In essence, with quite a few exceptions, traditional Shintō and Buddhism have stayed basically inside the Japanese-Brazilian community in Brazil.⁷ Generally speaking, these two religions are not characteristically aggressive in proselytizing.

⁷ Though its missionary work is practically limited to the Japanese and their descendants, the Nishi Honganji became the biggest traditional Buddhist School in this country, with 67 temples and missionary centers, and nearly 200,600 followers (among whom, nearly 600 would be Brazilians of no Japanese ancestry).

This is also one of the reasons why they have had problems in maintaining or increasing their membership numbers, even among Japanese descendants.

Zen Buddhism, especially the Sôtô sect or Sôtô Zen-shû made the first steps toward growth in Brazil during the wave of the counter-culture movement – precisely, in the 60s and the beginning of the 70s – as also occurred in the US and Europe, where large meditation centers (*dôjô*) were established.⁸ Although there was no real Zen boom in Brazil, there is some indication of the existence of a vigorous movement at present. This is due mainly to the work of the Japanese monk Tokuda Ryotan, the creator of *zazen* meditation groups in the States of Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, Goiás, Minas Gerais, and the Federal District. Here, it is interesting to note that – in marked contrast with other Japanese religious groups, which started their activities among immigrants and later made use of the descendants (*nikkei*) as a bridge to reach non-descendant Brazilians – the present renewal of Zen Buddhism has occurred without this kind of “bridge.” On the contrary, lay and non-descendant Brazilians are in the front line of the diffusion of Zen meditation practice.

However, the Japanese religions with the highest rates of growth in Brazil are the so-called New Religions (NR), which include all the Japanese religious movements (Shintô, Buddhist, and others) that have risen since the beginning of the century. The largest NR in Japan are mostly those which are offshoots of traditional Buddhist sects, especially Sôka Gakkai (Ni-chiren-shû), Risshô Kôseikai (Tendai-shû), and Reiyûkai (Tendai-shû), etc., all of which are quite large in Japan. This varied category of religions tends to be syncretistic and non-exclusivist. Today, the great majority of the main NR that are present in Japan also exist in Brazil. Some of them have found great success and spread to almost all Brazilian states.

Although statistics are rarely foolproof in this field, it can be estimated that the most successful groups in Brazil are: Seichô-no-ie, Sôka Gakkai, World Messianity Church, Perfect Liberty, Sûkyô Mahikari, as well as Ni-shi Honganji, which is a traditional Buddhist sect (see note 8 below). These denominations are the largest on the Brazilian religious scene in terms of diffusion, membership, publication, and “visibility.” All but the last one belong to the category of New Religions and have their majority of members outside the Japanese-Brazilian community. In addition, they have other features in common, such as an emphasis on the strength of positive thinking and self-confidence; an interest in promoting meetings of small groups

⁸ Parenthetically, a top Brazilian Zen leader, Cláudia Coen Murayama, did her initiation in a Zen center at Los Angeles, before living in Japan for some years.

(generally of neighbors), which eventually perform social and therapeutic functions, so to speak; an ethic or guidance for daily life, which is presented separately or combined with the doctrinal teachings; and an emphasis on the cult of ancestors. Another feature of these groups in Brazil is that communication among them is practically absent.

In terms of numbers, the NR do not compare to the membership numbers of Catholicism or Pentecostalism, in spite of their rapid diffusion outside the Japanese-Brazilian community.⁹ In fact, the majority of members of the main NR nowadays are Brazilian, with no Japanese blood. These groups have grown very quickly in urban areas in a relatively short time. Although there are no exhaustive and sufficiently comprehensive studies that provide conclusive data, many researchers believe that the biggest NR have been growing mainly among the middle class and/or people with a minimum level of education (for instance, Paiva 1990:182). It seems that they have made a division of the religious market with the Neo-Pentecostal sects, which have been spreading chiefly among the lower classes.

It must also be noted that Brazil is the country which currently experiences the largest growth of Japanese religions outside Japan. This has developed to such an extent that some groups are building the South American “Sacred Land” in Brazil (for instance, the World Messianity Church and the Perfect Liberty Kyôdan). In general, Japanese religions have not yet been a target for radical confrontation with other religious denominations, though there is a frequently remembered unfortunate incident involving Oomoto members in 1932. They were almost lynched by zealous Catholics in the state of Minas Gerais. In my research in the state of Pará (1991), I was told about Protestant pastors who took part in Seichô-no-ie meetings in order to find out about it personally so that they would be able to depict it to their faithful as “a thing of the Devil.” Also, I heard about a Catholic priest who used to write against the Seichô-no-ie in a newspaper from Belém City. But it does not match the actual “holy war” carried out by certain Pentecostal churches against Afro-Brazilian religions, which sometimes

⁹ Due to its non-exclusive and syncretistic orientation, its flexibility in interpreting its doctrine, its type of dual organization (one organized in the Japanese language and another in Portuguese), its great publishing capacity, and other peculiar characteristics, Seichô-no-ie is undoubtedly the biggest and the most popular Japanese religious-philosophic movement in Brazil. One of its leaders told me in 1992 that the total number of “followers” would be estimated at about three million, which was the publication figure for its “Holy Sutra” in Portuguese at that time. However, Peter Clarke (1994:159) calculates Seichô-no-ie membership as being nearly one million. If we consider that this movement has about 900,000 members in Japan, Brazil’s branch still competes with its headquarters in terms of followers.

erupts in an invasion of the latter's sacred places in order to "expel the devil" from them (cf., for instance, Soares 1990:93).

Finally, it must be pointed out that many Christian (Catholic and Protestant) churches carry out specific missionary work within the Japanese-Brazilian community. It has been estimated that 60% of Japanese and their descendants have been baptized in the Catholic faith, although only 10% of them may be considered "practicing Catholics." This pattern is not much different from the general situation of Catholics in Brazil. As for Protestants, we have information on about at least 14 different denominations which work within the Japanese community (Mizuno 1978).

Studies of Brazilian Religious Diversity

The study of religious diversity in Brazil has come to constitute a tradition of scholarship that has given priority to religious groups and themes such as Popular Catholicism, the relationship between the Church and the State, Afro-Brazilian religions, Spiritualism (*Espiritismo-kardecista*), Pentecostalism, and the like. Some marginal and/or newer groups have been relegated to minor or lesser known studies. Among these groups we may include Asian religions. In fact, the number of scholars studying Asian religions is very small among researchers working on religiosity in Brazil. Moreover, the number of published works on these religions is comparatively small. Furthermore, these studies are not well-known either in Brazilian academia or in society in general, due to various factors.

First of all, the influence of Asian religious groups in Brazil was not felt until recently. On the one hand, this can be related to the relatively small size of the Asian community in Brazil; on the other hand, until the recent process of democratization and modernization of Brazil, the Catholic Church struggled to inhibit the spread of "new sects" in this country. Notwithstanding this Catholic resistance, the counter-culture movement came to exert a significant influence on the diffusion of many religious ideas from Asia in Brazil, as also happened in many parts of the world.

In the specific case of Japanese religions, we can find some additional reasons for the general lack of scholarship. First, some of the texts on Japanese religiosity in Brazil were published forty to fifty years ago in specialized magazines, which are not accessible in contemporary Brazil. Also, a great part of this bibliography is written in the Japanese language and, to a lesser extent, in English. In compiling a bibliography on Japanese religions in Brazil, I have so far found more than eighty books and articles, of which approximately half were written by Japanese or their descendants, and twenty-seven were written in the Japanese language. The number of works on Japanese religions written by Christians (priests, pastors, and laymen) is also rather small. Another reason for the lack of development of this area of

study is the fact that Japanese religions first began to cross over from the exclusive concern of the Japanese-Brazilian community to the cultural frontiers of Brazilian society at large just a few decades ago. That is, although the official history of Japanese immigration to Brazil started in 1908, the phenomenon of Japanese religions was noticed just some thirty years ago.

The rapid diffusion of Asian religions among Brazilians of non-Asian ancestry is a phenomenon that has not yet received due attention from Brazilian scholars. However, although the number of centers for religious studies and works on the subject of Asian religions is still small, there is definitely a tendency toward growth. Research on Asian religions seems to have started in the form of studies in marginal groups and/or on Brazilian religious syncretism, as reflected in the book *Religious Syncretism in Brazil* (O *Sincretismo Religioso no Brasil*), by Gonçalves Fernandes, which was published in 1941 and included a chapter on the Japanese religion Oomoto (Fernandes 1941). These studies increased to some extent after World War II, and then again at the end of the 1950s. The most recurrent topic of research was undoubtedly Japanese religious expressions in Brazil. Studies can be found on the social movement *Shindô-Renmei*¹⁰ soon after the war (for example, Willems & Saito 1947); on religion as part of Nippon-Brazilian community studies (for example, Izumi 1957); and, finally, more systematic and intensive research on Japanese religions in Brazil, such as the pioneering thesis by Takashi Maeyama on *Seichô-no-ie* (Maeyama 1967).

Presently, at least four main university level centers maintain religious studies programs in Brazil: (1) the Center for Religious Studies (*CER- Centro de Estudos da Religião "Duglas Teixeira Monteiro"*), attached to the University of São Paulo; (2) São Paulo's Catholic University (*PUC/SP- Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo*) graduate program in religious science; (3) Rio Grande do Sul Federal University's Center for Relig-

¹⁰ During World War II and the immediately following years, the Japanese-Brazilian community was divided between the "victory group" or *kachi-gumi* (formed by those who did not accept the fact of Japan's failure in the war) and the "defeat group" or *make-gumi* (formed by those who accepted that Japan had lost the war). With the end of the war, the "victory group" radicalized its position through a social movement known as *Shindô-Renmei* ("League of the Way of the Loyal Subjects"). Vieira (1973:239, note 21) points out a messianic connotation in this movement, which is confirmed by "many references, in this period, to the arrival of ships which would bring the Japanese back to Japan, a victorious Japan, where they would not suffer oppression and ill-treatment anymore." For more information on the topic see Nakadate's thesis (1988).

ious Studies (UFRGS-Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul/Núcleo de Estudos da Religião); and (4) the Institute for Religious Studies (*ISER-Instituto de Estudos da Religião*). In general, these centers sponsor seminars, congresses, research, and publications.

The Catholic University graduate program is one of the most productive in terms of theses on Asian religions, particularly on Japanese religions. As far as I know, this program has produced a master's thesis on Seichō-no-Ie (Marrach 1978) and three others on Perfect Liberty (Telerman 1990, Fujikura 1992, Gonçalves 1998). The Institute for Religious Studies (ISER) has a solid research team and publishes the journals *Comunicações do ISER* and *Religião e Sociedade*, besides the book series *Cadernos do ISER*. From 1986 to 1987, this Institute was asked by the National Council of Christian Churches (*CONIC-Conselho Nacional de Igrejas Cristãs*) to develop the program "Religious Diversity in Brazil," which contains nine studies on Asian religions, including a few Japanese denominations, Hare Krishna, Ananda Marga, Shree Rajneesh's movement, and others (Landim 1990). This was a very important step towards a wider comprehension of the manifestation of the sacred in Brazil.

The phenomenon of the trans-nationalization of religious communities in Latin America has had a great impact in the field of religious studies in Brazil and in Latin America in general. One of the consequences has been the creation in 1994 of the Association of Mercosur's Social Scientists of Religion (*Associação dos Cientistas Sociais da Religião no Mercosul*), which includes researchers from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and others. This Association has a newsletter (*Estudios sobre Religião*) and sponsors every year an international congress called *Jornadas sobre Alter-nativas Religiosas na América Latina* ("Workshop on Religious Alternatives in Latin America"). Besides traditional research topics (theoretical and methodological aspects of religious studies, traditional Christian churches, popular religiosity, etc.), members of this Association are carrying out comparative research on the expansion of new religions in the Mercosur (South America's Southern Cone counterpart of NAFTA), the trans-nationalization of Afro-Brazilian religions, and the spread of esoteric beliefs and New Age practices, etc.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Lincoln, Edward J., *Troubled Times: US-Japan Relations in the 1990s* (Brookings Institution Press, 1999). ISBN hard cover, 0-8157-5268-7; paperback 0-8157-5267-9, \$18.95.

Robert C. Angel, University of South Carolina

Edward J. Lincoln of the Brookings Institution is established as the leading American economist writing today on Japan's economy and US-Japan economic relations. A Yale Ph.D. who trained under Hugh Patrick in the early 1970s, Lincoln brings to his analysis two decades of experience in the Washington policy community and two years recent service in the US Embassy, Tokyo, as special adviser to Ambassador Walter Mondale.

In his most recent book, Lincoln again addresses squarely economic problems in the US-Japan relationship. He summarizes in the introduction arguments that economic Japan during the past ten or so years has changed fundamentally, and that Japan has become as open to international participation as any other large industrialized nation. Then he states:

The conclusion of this study, however, is decidedly cautious. A variety of statistical evidence shows that the presence of foreign firms and their products has not increased in Japan very much over the past decade and remains remarkably low in comparison to other countries. Those increases are insufficient to suggest that Japan is no longer distinctive. In many ways the contrast between Japan and the rest of the world remains startling (p. 4).

The remainder of the text supports that assertion through sophisticated application of quantitative and qualitative research techniques. As in his earlier books, Lincoln in *Troubled Times* proves it possible to discuss controversial policy issues without resort to polemical rant. His conclusions and the policy prescriptions he derives from them are moderate in tone and make political as well as economic sense. His work will please neither those who see Japan's mercantilist foreign economic policy as the greatest threat to Western Civilization since Attila's European excursion nor those who shrink from critical comment on any post-1945 Japanese government policy. We can expect MITI and its American agents to attack this book as vigorously as they did *Japan's Unequal Trade*.

Twenty-some years of insider observation of Tokyo's policymaking processes have led Lincoln to conclude that self-generated change in Ja-