Catholicism in the History of the Integration of Japanese and their Descendants into Peru

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Abstract: Japanese migration to Peru started in 1899; from that time on, their settlement, community-building and adaptation would be faced with many difficulties due to cultural, language and social differences. The Catholic religion played a crucial role in the process of the integration of Japanese immigrants and their descendants, the so-called *Nikkei*, into Peruvian society. Decades later, the majority of the Japanese and *Nikkei* Peruvian population would declare themselves to be Catholics. By examining the history of Japanese in Peru, this paper aims to analyze the adapter role of Catholicism in the process of their integration into Peruvian society, by examining the contextual characteristics in which this role developed. It will be argued that factors such as the 'majority status' of Catholicism in Peru, the Peruvian assimilationist model of integration, the effects of World War II, and the participation of missionaries, would have played a key role in the religious adaptation of the Japanese. Through a religious perspective, this study tries to underscore the influence of contexts, migratory circumstances and dynamics of groups in integration.

***Keywords**: Catholicism, religion, integration, Peru, Japanese migration, Nikkei.*

1. Introduction

In the late nineteenth century, thousands of Japanese began to migrate to Asia, the Americas and the Pacific. In 1899, the first immigrants arrived in South America, at the port of El Callao, Peru. Over time, Peru would become the country with the second largest community of Japanese in South America after Brazil, a community that would face many difficulties adapting to the new environment due to cultural, language and social differences. Here, the Catholic religion played an active and significant part in the process of their integration to Peruvian society, as Japanese immigrants received support and comfort from missionaries, but also because Catholicism was a crucial cultural resource to adapt to a majority Catholic society like Peru, and to create social relationships. By 1989, eighty years after the arrival of the first immigrants, and having survived the hardships of wartimes, around 92 percent of the total population of Japanese and their descendants would define themselves as Catholics, according to a census conducted on this community (Morimoto, 1999). In which ways did the Catholic religion help the Japanese to adapt to Peruvian society? What characterizes the adapter role played by this religion in the history of Japanese integration into Peru?

To study the role of religions in the integration of migrants from a historical perspective requires the consideration of the key factors and the full context in which the migrant community and religions

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have developed. The seminal work of Frank Van Tubergen (2006) offers an interesting model to identify and examine the elements that help to understand the integration process and lived experiences (like religious) of an immigrant group. This author suggests that the circumstances and realities of immigrants are the outcome of three contextual characteristics: the characteristics of the 'country of origin' (or 'origin effects'), which refers to those historical and inherent characteristics of a country that affect the type and reasons of emigration; the characteristics specific to the 'immigrant group', such as the size of the community, their language or religious traditions, that can provide a thorough appreciation of their behavior; and finally, the characteristics of the 'receiving country' (or the 'destination effects'), concerning the conditions that will determine the type of incorporation the group will face, such as the migratory or integration policies in force. Looking at the context, and at these three variables, according to the author, can provide a more complete knowledge of the object/subject of study (Van Tubergen, 2006), especially in a case like the Japanese Peruvian diaspora, which has a long-term history that involves more than one context (Peru and Japan, after the 1990s).

In consideration of the above, this article attempts to analyze the role played by Catholicism in the integration process of Japanese and their descendants to Peru until 1990, by examining the context in which the adapter role of this religion develops (the characteristics of the immigrant group, and the characteristics of the sending and receiving countries), and focusing on the main factors, actors and historical processes that shaped this role. This paper argues that this adapter role is characterized at first by the use of the Catholic religion as a social tool that would become a spiritual value, mainly due to both the 'majority status' of Catholicism in Peru, which shaped the values and morality of Peruvian culture, and the assimilationist model of integration experienced in this country. This is expressed in the interplay of specific actors (church members, the Peruvian state and the community itself), and as an effect of the historical process of World War II, all of which would explain the religious adaptation of first-generation Japanese, and the subsequent adoption of Catholicism as a national religion by second and third generation Japanese.

This work draws on primary and secondary sources in English, Japanese and Spanish languages (testimonies and documents in Spanish were translated into English). It covers ninety years of the migratory history of Japanese and *Nikkei* Peruvians. In the 1990s, a new juncture in the history of Japanese diaspora would start, when the Japanese state permitted the entrance of *Nikkei* people to Japan as *dekasegi* with a work visa, which would affect the dynamics and identities of this community. When they travelled, they took with them a mix of all the traditions gained in Peru, in which Catholicism was included, which in turn created further problematic issues and adaptation strategies on entering Japan. Considering this, the scope of this paper is limited to the Peruvian context and the time frame of 1899-1990.

(1) Previous Studies and Conceptual Framework

Studies regarding the role of religion in the socioeconomic, civic and/or cultural integration of migrants to a host country are often categorized into two main trends (religion fostering or religion hindering integration) and two main focuses (belief/spirituality and religious institutions). All these aspects of religion, the positive and negative, the private and public, can evidence more comprehensively the mechanisms and dimensions migrants use to integrate into a receiving country (Cadge and Ecklund, 2007; Kogan, Fong and Reitz, 2020; Sarli and Mezzetti, 2020). Extensive literature exists for the cases of the monotheistic religions in Europe and the United States (Foley and Hoge, 2007; Hirschman, 2007; Kastoryano, 2007; Levitt, 2003; Riesebrodt and Konieczny, 2005; Sarli and Mezzetti, 2020; Zanfrini, 2020), especially about the role religious organizations play in the process of adaptation to the country, but also concerning how immigrants construct their identities,

beyond the domains of institutions, ideas developed by the approach of 'Lived religion', exposed by Cadge and Ecklund (2007) and worked on by Peggy Levitt (2007).

From the many functions religion can play for immigrant communities, there are two that can be considered the most predominant: the adapter role and the ethnic role (Foley and Hoge, 2007; Mullins, 1987). The ethnic character refers to how a religion can become an identity marker, by playing the function of preserving a specific identity and ethnic features, while providing a sense of belonging, which may, however, encourage social isolation (Kogan, Fong and Reitz, 2020). The adapter role, on the other hand, explains how religion can help to adapt (civically, culturally, socially) to a host country, particularly through religious organizations and institutions, such as churches, temples or congregations (Mullins, 1987).

The focus of the scholarship researching Asian communities mostly situated in the United States, and the role of Western and non-Western religions in their integration, has been primarily focused on the way organizations and institutions emerge to/from a community (Alves Pereira and Hideaki, 2007; Chong, 1998; Foley and Hoge, 2007; Hagan and Ebaugh, 2003, and Yang and Ebaugh, 2001b). This paper draws on the study of Yang and Ebaugh (2001a), as it offers a constructive framework to understand the role of religion based on how the 'minority/majority statuses' of religion influence the experience of incorporation. This particular research focused on the case of Chinese immigrants to the United States and their dialogue between Chinese Buddhism and American Christianity, and its aim was to elucidate whether religious institutions such as churches, facilitated assimilation or instead helped to preserve ethnic identity, depending on the statuses of both religions and the group. By borrowing this conceptual framework, it is possible to interpret whether the status of the Catholic religion has affected the way Japanese and *Nikkei* Peruvians interacted with the Peruvian society, where Catholicism holds a majority status.

Specifically in the Japanese case, topics such as the relationship between religion and integration have not been studied as extensively as other topics such as economics, political or identity matters, but there are important previous studies in the American and Brazilian cases about religion, that offer interesting insights for this work with studies on Japanese religions or Christianity (Alves Pereira and Hideaki, 2007; Kimura Gaudioso and Ramos Soares, 2010; Shoji, 2012). In particular, the work of Yoshie Matsue (2006) in the first place, coped with the relation between displacement and religious practices among Japanese-Brazilians in Japan, and the process of adaptation of both the community and the religious institutions to each other. Catholicism and New Religions are studied in both contexts of Brazil and Japan, and her argument is that Catholicism in Brazil played a role of adaptation to the society, whereas in Japan it may have helped the community to reinforce Brazilian ethnic features. The contribution of this work to the present study is highly relevant, because it stresses the importance of looking at the contexts and the roles of religion, all from a long-term historical perspective. The Peruvian case provides us with a variety of resources on cultural matters where information on religion is incorporated, but there no comprehensive work including historical, migratory and religious perspectives is available. Therefore, this article expects to be a contribution to the Peruvian case.

This paper starts with a historical overview of Japanese emigration to South America and the most relevant characteristics of Japan during those times. It is followed by the migratory context lived by Japanese and their descendants in Peru, until the end of World War II. The next section elaborates on Catholicism and its role in integration, starting with an overview of the religious contexts lived in Peru and Japan at the time of migration, and then addresses the religious life of Japanese in Peru, with accounts on Buddhism and the participation of missionaries, the Peruvian state, and the Japanese community. It ends with the post-war review of religious life for Japanese and Nikkei Peruvians.

2. Japanese Emigration to South America

After almost three hundred years of Tokugawa rule (1603-1868) during which Japanese society was secluded from the outside world, Japan entered into a new political phase in 1868, characterized by the quest for modernization and industrialization, that drastically changed the way the country had developed for the past thousand years. The new rule of the Meiji government (1868-1912) led Japan to several economic and political changes that, since the onset, had a major social impact on the population. The new taxation system to the land affected nearly 80 percent of the population of the country, who were either farmers or peasants (Stanlaw, 2006, 37-38). This, along with the increase of the population, inflation and the succession of natural disasters and famines, created unemployment and poverty. Japan's population grew from around 26 million before the Meiji period, to 33 million in 1872, and 52 million in 1912, a rise which could arguably have stimulated the emigration (Stanlaw, 2006, 40). In this new context, migration, prohibited for almost three hundred years, became a legitimate alternative for both the country and for those affected (Daniels, 2006, 31).

The government played a key role in encouraging migration. Ayumi Takenaka (2004; 2020) argues that, in some ways, emigration was a situation imposed by the government as a form of exclusion of the low-class sector that was rapidly increasing, and would eventually become a threat to the development and industrialization process that Japan was aiming to achieve by the late 1800s. The desire for the expansion of trade and territories, and the potential remittances may have also pushed the government to promote migration (Takenaka, 2004, 79-80).

In 1885, the Meiji government approved the official emigration of contract workers between the ages of 25 to 40 to Asia, Australia and the Americas, managed through national and later private companies (De Carvalho, 2003, 3). In Asia, the first migrants travelled mainly to Manchuria, the Philippines, Korea, and other islands of the Pacific. Japanese pioneers were also recruited from Australia in 1883 and from North America – Hawaii, Canada and United States–, to work on sugar and pineapple plantations. These countries were the priority destinations for the Japanese pioneers, due to the opportunities of labor, education and the promise of a better quality of life.

However, after official emigration started, an anti-Japanese movement began to grow, partly as an effect of the wars fought against China (1894-1895) and Russia (1904-1905), the increasing number of Japanese workers entering United States through Canada, Hawaii and Mexico, and the experience of Chinese indentured labor migration, banned in 1882. In 1907, the government of the United States decided to sign the Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan, as a way to reduce the entry of Japanese to the country through Canada, Mexico or Hawaii. One year later, a similar treaty would be signed with Canada, the Hayashi-Lemiuex Gentlemen's Agreement (Kikumura-Yano, 2002, 36). By 1924, the Quota Immigration Act prohibited all kinds of immigration to the United States. These treaties, along with the abolition of African slavery, can somewhat explain the conditions that prompted Japanese to change their destination to South America (Masterson and Funada-Classen, 2004).

The first South American country Japanese people had migrated to was Peru, starting from 1899. From Peru, some re-emigrated to other countries during the following years, such as Chile to work in the mining and agricultural sectors or Bolivia in the rubber plantations. Migration to Brazil began in 1908, from where Japanese would re-emigrate to Argentina, from 1909 (Kikumura-Yano, 2002, 36).

Most of the first immigrants were from south-western Japan, especially Hiroshima prefecture, and the Ryukyu Islands, mainly Okinawa. Most of them were male farmers, second or third sons of their families, between the ages of 20 and 45 years old (Takenaka, 2004, 80). They all expected to

return to Japan with savings after completing a four years-contract, and to have "'stability of life after retirement' (…). The reality was that few would ever make their home again in Japan" (Masterson and Funada-Classen, 2004, 58).

The colonialist expansion of the Empire of Japan during the 1920s and 1930s, especially after the events in Manchuria, promoted the emergence of a widespread anti-Japanese sentiment that resulted in the restrictions and eventual prohibition of Japanese from immigrating to the countries of Latin America. Even so, by 1940, a total of 234,574 Japanese and their descendants lived in Latin American countries (Tigner, 1981, 459).

3. Historical and Migratory Context in Peru until 1945

Japanese immigration to Peru is explained, among other factors, by Peru's need for a labor force, due to the abolition of African slavery and the ending of Chinese coolie trade in 1874. The abolition of slavery significantly changed the socioeconomic foundations of many Latin American countries during the nineteenth century, especially Brazil and Peru. Brazil, however, could replace its labor force with European immigration during the first decades. Peruvian lands, on the other hand, did not appeal to Europeans the way Brazilian's coffee plantations did: "Peru's lack of arable land, its unstable political environment, and its rigid social structure" were partly the reasons why Peru had ended up replacing African with Chinese labor from 1847 until 1874 (Masterson and Funada-Classen, 2004, 22). After this, however, Peruvians could not fill the slave-like positions that Chinese had been forced into. Consequently, the nation which Japanese migrated to was socially segmented, and the experience of the Chinese had left a rather bitter negative image about Asians in Peruvians' minds.

Peru offered attractive conditions of economic growth and labor opportunities in mining, rubber, and agricultural sectors, which evolved hand in hand with a political process of institutionalization and consolidation of the state during the nineteenth century (Normano and Gerbi, 1943, 67). After the signing of the 'Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation' in 1873, Peru and Japan began discussions to import labor force from Japan.

Immigration was first arranged between the Japanese Teikichi Tanaka and the Peruvian Augusto B. Leguía[1], and the approval of a decree by the President Nicolás Piérola in 1898 in Peru, that regulated and gave the permission to administer Japanese immigration to the Morioka Emigration Company (*Morioka Imin Kaisha*). In this way, the official Japanese immigration to Peru started on April 3, 1899 with the arrival of 790 male contract workers to the port of El Callao, who were recruited to work in sugar cane fields on the coast of Peru during a time span of four years (Masterson, 2006, 142-143). They came from forty-seven different prefectures from all over the Japanese territories, and from the Ryukyu Islands starting 1906.

As mentioned earlier, most of these Japanese were laborers and farmers, who expected to receive enough wages to save the amount to return successfully to Japan after the end of the contract. They agreed to work between 10 to 12 hours per day, to pay for their own expenses and food, while the Company would provide working clothes and the necessary supplies to fulfil their duties (Irie and Himel, 1951, 443). However, the job promised in the plantations differed considerably from that advertised by the Company. Most of the plantations were run by European or European descendants, who had a particular abusive approach to work, inherited from a centennial tradition of the colonial labor system and slavery (Irie and Himel, 1951, 445). Both Japanese and local farmers had hard times in trying to accommodate to each other, especially for Japanese who expected in vain that either the Company or their government would protect them. The sustained violations of the contract by the landowners, and the poor living conditions that Japanese were exposed to, drove many of them to

[1] Augusto Leguía Salcedo ran a sugar manufacturing company at that time, and later would become President of Peru in four opportunities.

escape from the plantations or to move to new jobs; others saw their health conditions deteriorate and died. By 1909, of a total of 6,065 immigrants who had arrived in nine shiploads, 481 of them had died. The main causes of their deaths were typhoid, yellow fever, and dysentery, but mostly malaria (Masterson and Funada-Classen, 2004, 36).

The contract migration officially finished in 1923 and, until the 1930s, it continued as *yobisobe* (invitation), with the entry of family members or brides-to-be (through *shasshin kekkon*), which permitted the entrance of another 7,933 Japanese, among whom women and children were included (Araki, 2002, 78). In this period, Japanese oriented their lives to cities, primarily in the central regions of Lima, the capital city of Peru, and El Callao, looking for better work conditions, and for the assistance and construction of friendly and familiar environments to create businesses. Others, preferred to stay in the countryside, and to rent small portions of land and work on cotton and vegetables that were in great demand during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

The region of origin in Japan shaped the relationships within the community: those who came from the same prefecture were susceptible to creating stronger bonds. This characteristic, in fact, prompted the foundation of the first forms of organization and unions among Japanese, such as the *tanomoshi* (credit unions) or the *kenjinkai*, based on the land of origin either in Japan or in Peru; this trend was particularly strong in the case of Okinawans. By the 1940s, Japanese had built a robust community, with their own schools, such as *Lima Nikko*, their own press, like *Andes Jiho*, and associations, like the 'Central Japanese Association of Lima', which became "(…) the heart of the entire system" (Titiev, 1951, 232).

With the passing of time, the rural/urban divide in the Japanese communities was exacerbated. Those in the countryside had more contact with the indigenous population of Peru, which resulted in intermarriage and faster cultural assimilation (Araki, 2002, 78-79).

The economic success and the seemingly unwillingness of Japanese to incorporate into Peruvian society influenced the public opinion of Peruvians nationals, who regarded them with suspicion and resentment, as they had the idea that Japanese were stealing their jobs (Masterson and Funada-Classen, 2004, 37). All this negativity prompted anti-Japanese actions to be taken by the Peruvian state. Examples of these are the '80% Law' of 1932, that forced foreigners' businesses to hire Peruvians in at least 80 percent of their work force; the enactment of the 'Immigration Act in 1936', also named the 'anti-Asian bill', that limited the number of foreigners in Peru to 16,000 people, referring tacitly to Japanese; and in 1940 double nationality was prohibited, and later also naturalization, leaving many Peruvian-born Japanese in great difficulties (Masterson and Funada-Classen, 2004, 37). All these policies, coupled with the public perception that Japanese were culturally and socially uncapable to assimilate into the Peruvian society, and the growing presence of Japanese internationally, prepared the grounds for the events that would unfold during the 1940s.

On May 13, 1940, the anti-Japanese movement peaked when a riot broke out in Lima. Around 600 businesses run by Japanese were attacked, forcing them to hide; one person died, and many were injured (Takenaka, 2004, 93). This xenophobic act is a clear manifestation of the animosity that Peruvian people and politicians helped to create, that culminated with the measures taken by the government after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

The United States, intending to stop the expansion of the Japanese Empire, toughened its influence over Latin America after declaring war on Japan in 1941. Peru, as an ally of the United States, followed its lead, and President Manuel Prado (1939-1945) took measures against the Japanese community, such as banning social gatherings and closing some cultural institutions and the Japanese press (Shintani, 2007, 84). The shift came with the deportation and internment of nearly 1,800 Japanese living in Peru, who were sent to concentration camps in the United States from 1942, under the Roosevelt's Administration. By this strategy, the United States thought they would be able "to exchange them for U.S. soldiers detained by the Japanese army" (Takenaka, 2004, 92). Most of these Japanese were forced to go back to Japan eventually, and few could return to Peru.

Until this decade, the integration of Japanese was, broadly speaking, characterized by 'self-integration' to the group and to their associations, and by interaction with Peruvian society to an extent that would allow them to keep building their community, particularly strong in Lima, because their stay was still deemed temporary. However, the historical events that Japanese people underwent during the 1930s and 1940s, the expansion of the Japanese Empire, Pearl Harbor and World War II, strongly marked the way Japanese conceived of their presence in Peru and would lead to a re-orientation of their place during the following decades, especially for their descendants, forcing them to focus on their assimilation into the Peruvian society (Titiev, 1951, 247). All of these were factors that somehow oriented and affected their attitude and experience towards their own religious traditions and the adopted one, Catholicism.

4. Catholicism and Integration to Peruvian Society

(1) Religious Activities and Institutions in Japan and Peru

In the beginning of the emigration process, Japan was experiencing important transformations in its cultural and religious spheres. Until that time, Japanese people had practiced mainly two religious traditions: Shinto and Buddhism. Even though until the ninetieth century both religions had become intertwined, they had specific characteristics, beliefs and backgrounds. Shinto, literally 'the way of the kami', broadly refers to an animistic religious system that in Japanese culture is connected with the celebration of nature, the veneration of ancestors, local and national festivities and with mythical notions about the origins of Japan and its people (Kisala, 2002, 135). Buddhism on the other hand, a religion that originated in India, arrived in Japanese Islands in the sixth century, when the Japanese state was in process of consolidation, and from that time on, was popularized and adapted to Japanese culture. Therefore, during almost one thousand years, Shinto and Buddhism coexisted, and developed a religious syncretism that was temporarily interrupted by the arrival of Christianity.

Christianity reached Japan with Catholic missions during the influx of Spaniards and Portuguese merchants during the sixteenth century. After a promulgation of an edict during the Tokugawa rule in 1614, Christianity and the presence of foreigners in Japan were prohibited in the territory until the ninetieth century, when Japan 'opened its doors'. With the Constitution of 1889, Japan declared 'religious freedom' and the practice of Christianity was once again allowed. Yet, with the new Meiji rule, Shinto became a state religion, centered on the figure of the emperor, aiming to be a moral and spiritual code for the whole country (Hane and Perez, 2009, 107).

Consequently, in the late ninetieth and early twentieth centuries, Japanese were aware of the existence of Christianity, particularly Catholicism, although the vast majority practiced Buddhist and Shinto rites. It is difficult to say what the religious identity of Japanese pioneers in Latin America was, especially due to the lack of official data during those years. However, based on the information available, at the onset of the Meiji period most of the Catholics were located in Nagasaki prefecture, and by the 1930s there were around 300,000 Christians in Japan out of nearly 70 million Japanese (Hane and Perez, 2009).

On the other hand, when Japanese first arrived in Peru, they encountered a highly Catholic nation, mainly due to the Spanish cultural and religious heritage of the relatively recent independent Peruvian Republic. The national census of 1940, the first one conducted in the twentieth century, showed that 98.51% of the total population declared themselves to be Catholic (Marzal, 1995, 364). Moreover, Catholicism was openly protected by law, as stated in Article 3 of the Political Constitution of 1867, which was in force until 1933: "The nation professes the Roman Catholic Religion. The State protects it and does not allow the public exercise of any other religion" (Congreso del Peru, n.d.). In other words, the exercise of any other religion was banned. This situation would slightly change in the Constitution of 1933, when the Peruvian state declared that other religions could be practiced; however, the place of Catholicism in the state and Peruvian culture would remain unchanged: "Art. 232.

Respecting the national majority's sentiment, the State protects the Roman Catholic Religion. Other religions have freedom to practice their cults" (Congreso del Peru, n.d.).

Carlos Valderrama (2004) explains that Peru followed a confessional model, which implies the prohibition of any other confession, where the limits between religious and political functions are blurred (Valderrama, 2004, 295). Only in 1979, would the Catholic religion formally separate from the state in Peru. Still, in the national census of 1993, the majority of Peruvians, 88.9% of the total population, said they were Catholic.

(2) Catholicism and Japanese Immigrants until 1950

The first direct contact between Japanese immigrants and Peruvian Catholicism should be understood by looking at the interplay of two different religious traditions in the first period of adaptation to Peru: Buddhism and Catholicism.

At the onset of immigration, Japanese religious missions were not allowed to enter Latin America, mainly as a concrete action to foster the adaptation of Japanese to the new settings. This was particularly clear in Brazil, where the public practice of Japanese religions was activated only in the 1950s, since they were prohibited in the beginning by Japanese emigration companies (Adachi, 2005, 912).

In Peru, on the other hand, the first Buddhist mission arrived with the second shipload of immigrants in 1903, headed by the monk Taian Ueno, from the Sōtō (Soto Zen) school, along with two other monks from the Jōdo (The Pure Land) school. It is due to the initial work of these three missionaries that Buddhism first arrived in South America. They all travelled as contract workers, because their Buddhist schools only supported them nominally, not economically. Initially, their goal was to offer doctrinarian lessons and meditations to the Japanese (Ota, 2004, 20). However, the needs of the pioneers were more practical: they needed someone who could perform ceremonies and that knew Buddhist rituals and sutras.

Taian Ueno, in particular, was very important for the pioneers. The monk, who worked in the plantations of Tumán and Santa Bárbara, could eventually build a small temple in this last plantation in 1907, the first Buddhist temple in South America. This temple was ultimately named *Taiheizan Jionji*, and its main duties were offering lessons and traditional religious ceremonies for the departed. The temple doubled as a school for Japanese children, also lead by Ueno.

The lives of Japanese consisted of working most of the day, which was the reason why Buddhist monks had to abandon the doctrinarian work, since the life of the immigrants did not permit it. The doctrinarian and moral education, however, passed into the hands of Catholics (Morimoto, 2007). Thereby, it was possible for Catholicism to pervade deeper into the daily lives of Japanese and their experience of integration, through the work of church members, the Peruvian state and the Japanese themselves.

1) Church Members

The first Christians to have contact with Japanese were foreign nuns and priests, mostly from the orders of the Franciscans and Jesuits. Probably, the first encounters were made in the *Dos de Mayo* Hospital in Lima, where Japanese were sent to or transferred from other localities, especially during the first years, when unfamiliar climatic conditions and several diseases affected many of the pioneers. In this hospital, the French nun Francisca Gros, daughter of the Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, worked assisting patients from 1900.

Mother Francisca constantly received and helped the sick and dying Japanese in the hospital. Without any previous knowledge of the Japanese language, she is known for having managed to nurse them and baptize them. After a while, she started to receive Catholic materials in Japanese language for her work from those Japanese who could recover and became her friends. During those years, she

was assisted by Jesuit priests, Father García and Father José Pineda, as spiritual supporters, who did not have any knowledge of Japanese language either. Mother Francisca nursed and converted thousands of Japanese until the day she died in 1957, being the reason why she is considered until today as the 'Mother' of the community.

During the 1930s, a Japanese plenipotentiary minister, Masamoto Kitada who, being familiar with the situation of the immigrants in their new environment, understood that the best way of adapting to the Peruvian society was converting to Catholicism, and wrote to the Vatican to send priests who could fully understand Japanese, oriented particularly to *issei*[2] (Fukumoto, 1997, 497). This marked the beginning of the Japanese Catholic Mission (Japan's Catholic Church) to Peru.

The Vatican sent two Franciscan missionaries to work exclusively for the Japanese community, the Canadians Father Calixto and Father Urbano Maria Clotier, both of whom were nationalized Japanese and had been given the surname Yonekawa after almost two decades living in Japan. They, as other monks, arrived in Peru in the1940s, and were in charge of the *Lima Nikko* school. Father Calixto worked until his death in 1953, and Father Urbano until 1959, when he returned to Canada.

The fact that most of the missionaries who devoted their lives to the community were foreigners may have helped in the success of the acceptance of Japanese into the Catholic religion, as suggested by an immigrant from Cusco in 1990: "The first contact Japanese had was with Priests. … [The priests] tried to win them over. Since the beginning it was in this way" (Fukumoto, 1997, 496); and reinforced by Father Valentín Lescano in 1990: "Japanese got along very well with missionaries because they sympathized with them as they were foreigners. They were baptized and got married very old. They were not opposed to any change and with baptism they could adopt names from the saints" (Fukumoto, 1997, 495).

In 1940, the first Japanese Catholic initiative emerged, called the 'Association of Catholic Culture' (*Nisei Katorikku Shuyokai*), founded by second generation Japanese, *nisei*, with the support of members of the church. This organization sponsored several activities, both cultural and religious, until 1967. It was initiated by a Catholic diplomat of the Japanese government in Peru, to help the community. The association had several branches throughout the country, and received the support of the Franciscan Fathers Calixto and Urbano Yonekawa. As part of its activities, this association organized festivities, such as Christmas parties and masses, held in Latin, Spanish and Japanese. Especially during the wartime, the association played a significant role as a supporter for those who were in trouble: "(…) the Association of Catholic Culture was the only institution of the Japanese community that was able to withstand the ordeal of World War II and faithfully continued to work and organize activities" (Asociación Peruano Japonesa, 1999, 182).

World War II scarred the lives of Japanese and their children in Peru as they were subjected to the harsh decisions of the Peruvian and American governments, and the Peruvians' animosity. Pope Pius XII himself tried to help and protect the Japanese community from the political and social situation: "Pope Pius XII, upon learning about the situation of the Japanese Catholics of Peru, sent funds that were personally distributed by Father Urbano to those who were in need" (Asociación Peruano Japonesa, 1999, 233).

In 1950, the 'Saint Francis Committee' initiative emerged, this time from the Catholic Church, especially from Fathers Calixto and Urbano. This organization started to work right after the war, so this juncture substantially forged the methodology of this association. That is why one of the central goals of this institution was to provide charitable and social support to the Japanese community, such as distributing food, organizing community meetings and collecting private donations, among others.

[2] *Issei* refers to 'first generation' Japanese.

It helped to channel the mutual help from *issei* and *nisei*, and worked side by side with the Association of Catholic Culture, until the latter's dissolution.

It was also in these decades that many immigrants and their descendants started to actively practice Catholicism. The first *nisei* Peruvian priest was Manuel Sotelo Kato who was ordained in 1954, followed by the nun, also a *nisei*, Shizuko Clara Delia Tomé, in 1955 (Asociación Peruano Japonesa, 1999, 234).

2) Peruvian State

Catholicism played a role in the incorporation of Japanese not only as an enterprise of the Catholic Church, but also as a resource used by the Peruvian state. It was not until 1979 that the Peruvian state separated completely from Catholic Church, but the crucial role it had played in the formation of Peru as a culture and society was still stressed, as seen in Article 86 of the Constitution of 1979:

> "Within a regime of independence and autonomy, the State recognizes the Catholic Church as an important element for the historical, cultural and moral formation of Peru. It collaborates with it. The State can also collaborate with other confessions" (Congreso del Peru, n.d.).

According to this principle, being part of Peru was to some degree linked with being Catholic. Adopting the Peruvian moral code meant having a Catholic moral code, as noted by an *issei* from Ica in 1990: "In Peru, in the past there was no freedom. If I wasn't Catholic, I wasn't Peruvian (…)" (Fukumoto, 1997, 499).

This explains how the assimilationist model adopted by the Peruvian state worked in practice. Being accepted as belonging to Peru, required foreigners to make the adjustment to the society linguistically and culturally. Those who did not fit the requirements to achieve this were not assimilable, and therefore, unlikely to be Peruvian, especially if they did not behave as Peruvians would do; the case of Chinese is a good example of this concept. Chinese in Peru were a case of almost immediate assimilation, compared to the Japanese. They arrived decades before them, and by 1840, some parishes already had records of Chinese parishioners (Klaiber, 1996, 142). According to Thompson (1979), "Assimilation of the newcomers began almost immediately. (…) conversion to Catholicism was rapid and widespread, and intermarriage with Peruvians frequent. (…) Peruvian Chinese are literally submerged into the larger society" (Thompson, 1979, 576).

The perceptions of Normano and Gerbi in 1943 were that:

> "even in this melting-pot of widely different races which constitute Peru, the Japanese are the most difficult to assimilate. Intermarriage is exceptional. Neither indigenous customs nor the Spanish heritage attract them. Even republican institutions and democratic ideals, painstakingly fostered in these lands of autocratic traditions, remain unreal to the loyal subjects of the Son of Heaven" (Normano and Gerbi, 1943, 124-125).

They supported the claim posed by the Peruvian state, and its emphasis on European immigration, under the argument that Europeans shared a closer cultural and religious background.

Because the Peruvian state adopted the *jus soli* regime of nationality, which meant that anyone who were born on Peruvian territory could become a national, the possibilities for foreign immigrants during the first years of twentieth century were rather open. However, over time, the actions of Peruvian governments hampered the road for Japanese. In 1936, the government restricted Japanese future entries to Peru and later cancelled their possibility of naturalization to become Peruvian. Although these measures never stated that their focus were the Japanese, it was implied, considering the numeric importance of this community.

The Peruvian public educational system also played an important part in promoting Catholicism, even in the ethnic schools for Japanese. As Japanese schools, these institutions were modelled as in Japan, but had to follow the legal procedures and curriculum of Peru, and the classes had to be taught in Spanish as well as by Peruvian and Japanese teachers. Therefore, the Catholic religion was an important element of the education of the Japanese schoolchildren, and *nisei* children were baptized in large numbers during those decades. There were no special teachings on Japanese religions such as Shinto or Buddhism, although there were opportunities to pay their respects to the emperor, and Japanese children had to occasionally listen to the Imperial Rescript on education (Titiev, 1951, 234).

For *nisei* Peruvians, compulsory religious education was particularly influential. Most of them were baptized as a requirement to enter to national schools. Mischa Titiev describes in 1951 an emergent Catholic movement among *nisei* as the result of the education they received (Titiev, 1951, 243), and how by their own agency, they tried to convert other *nisei*: "Lately, the converts themselves took the initiative, sometimes with an enthusiasm that surpassed that of Peruvians or foreign missionaries who had that task. (…) In Huaral, in 1941, a Japanese teacher prepared 174 children out of 58 families for a massive baptism" (Klaiber, 1996, 142-143).

3) Japanese Community

For Japanese, therefore, it was impossible not to interact with Catholicism. But assimilation through this or any other cultural elements seemed contradictory to their lives. From the beginning, they struggled in their incorporation into Peruvian society. The nature of their migration made them realize the inconvenience of their eventual assimilation to Peruvian society. Their strong ethnic identity that was intensified by the institutions and organizations built in the first decades restricted them from doing otherwise, especially with the influence of the clear rejection that Peruvian society started to show in interwar times. Probably these circumstances helped them to strengthen their ethnic and communal identity. As described by Titiev (1951), the integration of Japanese into Peru was mainly through their community associations, especially for those who arrived after 1923. Immigration to Peru meant immigration to the resident Japanese community and their institutions, and they were strongly advised to be part of at least one association, it being highly unlikely that any Japanese would prefer to be regarded as an outsider by the community.

The Japanese government was crucial on this process. It tried to advise its nationals to integrate into Peruvian society and demonstrate to Peruvians that their anti-Asian stance was unjustified, while extoling their community solidarity which would ensure their safety (Masterson and Funada-Classen, 2004, 56). Normano and Gerbi (1943), regarded this 'inward' looking attitude as an openly conscious tactic of the community to interact with Peruvian society only when convenient, and they questioned: "[i]s it any wonder, then, that cultivated Peruvian opinion should resent Japanese immigration, if a society which has always prizes spiritual values should be inclined to exhibit impatience towards such a utilitarian community?" (Normano and Gerbi, 1943, 126).

Moreover, spiritually, Japanese did not cease to practice their rituals. They never saw a contradiction in doing so. They had *butsudan* and *kamidana*[3] at home, but at the same time, they went to mass every Sunday. Shinto was more difficult to maintain, due to its close linkage with Japanese territory, local shrines and festivals, as opposed to Buddhism, which could survive longer due to its function in providing specific rituals concerning the deceased. The ability of Japanese to negotiate their religious affiliations and practices can arguably express how Catholicism seemed rather a

[3] *Kamidana* and *Butsudan* are miniature altars and shrines located inside homes in Japan from Shinto and Buddhist traditions, respectively.

convenient resource to interact and incorporate into Peru. They also managed to combine their religious lives in a way that could allow the old and new to coexist. Especially for the *issei*, syncretism was the way they lived their religious life, trying to combine Japan and Peru, as expressed in this example of the1980s: "…but a Buddhist can go to a Catholic mass. There is no reason, but they are present. When Hirohito died, they performed a mass in a Catholic church and also held a meeting ceremony in the colony's place to put senko[4]" (Fukumoto, 1997, 503).

Despite their unwillingness to assimilate, many Japanese converted in one way or another to Catholicism, and the Catholic religion became a present part of the lives of their children:

> "Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that the youngsters who were born in Peru, and who are automatically classes as Peruvians, have few of the loyalities [sic] to Japan that their elders had. They speak and read Spanish without hesitation, they attend Peruvian schools, they plan to practice professions in Peru, they adopt Christianity, and in every way, they are coming to look upon Peru as their own country." (Titiev, 1951, 247).

Especially in the cities, *issei* were reluctant to give up their culture and Japanese lives, but they found in Catholicism an opportunity to play a part in the social network system of Peruvians, through Baptism, and in Churches. That is why for *nisei*:

> "Catholicism was adopted in its rituals and social aspects (…). Japanese descendants got married in church, baptized their children, had their business and stores blessed, and celebrated masses for their decease. They also had godsons and godfathers, and celebrated Christmas and other religious festivities" (Fukumoto, 1997, 500).

After World War II, the perspective towards adaptation changed. Assimilation was seen as the proper way to avoid all the problems and sufferings they went through before the 1940s. That meant that adopting the most important Peruvian cultural features was essential.

(3) Catholicism and Japanese and Nikkei Peruvians until 1990

After World War II, reality for Japanese Peruvians changed drastically. The experience of deportation and internment in concentration camps in the United States, the inability to return to Peru and the consistent hostility received from the whole Peruvian society had fractured the Japanese and their descendants. The strategy they had chosen since the first waves of immigration until the wartime of focusing on their community and associations, and interacting only in certain matters with Peruvian society had not been successful. Thus, from the 1950s, Japanese visibly changed their approach towards their host country and gave importance to the second and third generations onwards, so they could have a smoother inclusion in Peru. In this process, language and religion were instrumental resources.

Japanese re-opened schools and newspapers, hoping to renovate the unity of the community of pre-war times. However, the *nisei* generation had lost or simply never gained a command of the Japanese language, making it difficult for these institutions and association to play the same role they did in the decades before. Japanese descendants started almost exclusively to attend Peruvian schools and universities, read Spanish newspapers, and embrace their Peruvian nationality (Masterson and Funada-Classen, 2004, 220-221).

Nikkei Peruvians accepted their new religious background in a more active sense, as this could be seen in the establishment of the *nisei* Catholic and Franciscan associations, which were the first examples of this new strategy. Moreover, during the decade of 1960, an active social movement that

[4] Senko is Japanese incense, often used in Buddhist rituals.

became popular in Latin American countries also affected the Church in Peru. The Jesuit father Luis Martínez, the episcopal vicar of the Japanese Catholic Mission, directly targeted and organized assistance for those Japanese who needed it, impacting especially the *nisei*. Father Martínez was born in Spain, and was sent to Peru after having been a missionary in Japan until 1964, remaining in Peru until 2001. He would become a very important figure in the religious life of the *Nikkei* community within the frame of this social action movement.

Even though Japanese religions kept exerting an important influence on the community in post-war times, especially for ceremonies and festivities, the affiliation was openly Catholic. These interesting degrees of affiliation can be seen in the survey concerning all matters of their lives (see Table 1), which surveyed nearly 32,000 *Nikkei* Peruvians in 1966.

Table 1. 1966 Census of the Nikkei Community, Religion

Generation	Catholic	Protestant	Shinto	Buddhism	Others	No-religion
Issei	34%	1%	2%	59%	3%	1%
Nisei	95%	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%
Sansei	97%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Yonsei	98%	-	0%	-	1%	1%

Source: Zai Peru Nikkeijin Shakai Jittai Chosa Iinkai (1969, 86)

The results of this survey show how Japanese religions, particularly Buddhism, maintained a relatively significant presence, mostly in the first generations, considering that six decades had passed since the arrival of the first pioneers (Zai Peru Nikkeijin Shakai Jittai Chosa iinkai, 1969, 86). Perhaps because of this, *issei* were not as committed or interested in Catholicism as their offspring. By the 1970s, many of the Japanese pioneers had reached old age, which is why Father Manuel Sotelo Kato, now active missionary to the community, brought to the attention of the Vatican the need to send to Peru nuns and priests able to speak Japanese and *Uchinaguchi* (Okinawan language), to target those who had still not converted to Catholicism.

In 1989, a new census was conducted on the Japanese community in Peru (see Table 2), that shows a more comprehensive and detailed examination of their religious affiliations.

Table 2. 1989 Census of the Nikkei Community, Religion

Religion	No. of Members	%
Catholic	**47,678**	**92.41**
Buddhist	1,507	2.92
Shinto	149	0.28
Evangelist	420	0.81
Protestant	62	0.12
Others	1,072	2.07
No-Religion	705	1.36
TOTAL	51,593	99.97

Source: Morimoto (1991, 164)

The data shows that, ninety years after the immigration of Japanese to Peru, a certain syncretism in rituals and practices that combined Catholicism and Japanese religions was still visible, although, 92.41% of Japanese community considered themselves to be Catholic. Buddhism and Shinto were still followed, perhaps mostly by the first generations. The same census showed that 32.45% of the families

reported to have either *kamidana, butsudan* and/or an *ihai*[5], regardless of their religious beliefs (Morimoto, 1991, 165). Despite some persistent features of Japanese culture, *mestizaje*[6] and assimilation have characterized the behavior of the community, but this assimilation, still in progress, had not been homogeneous for the whole group, showing a considerable degree of diversification, like a mirror of Peruvian society, as analyzed by Amelia Morimoto, the director of the survey (Morimoto, 1999, 167-173).

This diversity can also be seen in the differences between life in the countryside and the cities. Outside the region of Lima-El Callao, especially where the Catholic tradition is stronger, the *Nikkei* community was more prone to adopt Catholicism devoutly, as the testimony from a *nisei* in Cusco expresses: "Here [in Cusco] Nikkei families are practicing Catholics. Traditional customs from Japan have been almost completely lost, because our parents were no longer thinking about returning to Japan, rather, they were thinking about the daily work, about surviving, and besides, the colony has really shrunk" (Fukumoto, 1997, 502). Hence, in these regions, syncretism with Japanese religions was less visible.

By the 1990s, the evangelization of the Japanese community was under the leadership of Father Kato. His work was mainly focused on third generation Japanese onwards. Several other priests, both Japanese and foreigners, were making important efforts on the development of the mission for the *Nikkei* community, as was the case with Father Mario Mazzoni, who supported the *nisei* groups, like *Tomodachi*, which promoted gatherings to practice and foster a Christian life (Fukumoto, 1997, 504).

5. Conclusions

This model of a historical and contextual analysis of the Catholic religion in the integration of Japanese and *Nikkei* Peruvians in Peru enables us to identify several important factors, actors and historical processes that were present.

The 'majority status' of Catholicism in Peru affected the way Japanese saw this religion when communicating with Peruvian society. It was a religious tradition, but also the core of their society and a key component of their national identity. In the same way, the 'minority statuses' of Japanese religions enabled the acceptance of the Catholic religion as an initial instrumental resource. An equally significant aspect was that Peru did not initially offer legal or social mechanisms to negotiate the two worlds, so Japanese chose to adapt to few specific areas of Peru, while maintaining their Japanese identity. Nonetheless, the circumstances of war and the experience of concentration camps reoriented their efforts towards their children, motivating them to choose to assimilate into Peruvian society.

The conditions set by Peru, in this sense, were important, but not as important as the characteristics and practices of the community itself, especially visible when compared to the Chinese case in Peru (like the creation of associations by regions of origin). The turning point in their stance towards incorporation was World War II, rather than the 'conditions of the receiving country'.

Further, in Peru, 'religion' as a belief, practice and moral/value system, seemed more influential to the community than religion in its institutional form in the first half of the twentieth century. Missionaries, social networks and Catholicism as a way of access to education, were present in the lives of Japanese, but the Peruvian Church as an institution was not. It was mostly the work of missionaries what directly influenced the affiliation of Japanese community towards Catholicism. As has been shown, the Peruvian Church did not play an active role for Japanese community. On the contrary, it was Japanese Catholic Mission (Japanese Catholic Church) paradoxically, the one in charge of the evangelization of *Nikkei* Peruvians, especially active during post-war times. After the war, Japanese descendants played a more active role in Catholicism as a spiritual belief, but also as

[5] *Ihai* refers to funerary tablets to commemorate the memory of ancestors.

[6] The term *mestizaje* broadly refers to the process of racial and cultural miscegenation between Spaniards and aboriginal people of the Americas, as well as from Africa.

one of the ways to embrace a Peruvian lifestyle over a Japanese one. In this way, religion began as a social resource/institution and derived in spirituality.

This historical study has provided a wide perspective for studying this Japanese community abroad and the role of religion for this group. It has tried to emphasize how the contexts, migratory circumstances and dynamics of groups could be influential in integration. In the decade of 1990, thousands of Nikkei Peruvians would start migrating ('returning') to Japan, due to the amendment of the Immigration Control and Refugee Act. How would the history of the integration of their ancestors to Peru have affected them in this new environment? Catholicism is shown to be an important lens to understand the integration of Japanese to Peru, but could also become instrumental in a long-term perspective of Nikkei Peruvian's history.

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