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## MAKUYA PENTECOSTALISM: A SURVEY

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### 1. Introduction

It is generally pointed out that ordinal Japanese have difficulty accepting Western ecclesiastical institutionalism as indicated by the stagnation of church growth in Japan. Many things found in the Japanese church are alien to the Japanese socio-cultural context. The general recognition among the Japanese that Christianity is a foreign religion fatally hinders the penetration of the gospel into them. Song considers the fact that Christians in Japan are still composed of one percent of the whole population as the failure of acculturation of Christianity.

Culture is like a living organism equipped with rejection mechanisms against the intrusion of foreign elements. The transplantation of human organs has to reckon with rejection. Every organism needs rejection mechanisms for its own survival. The rejection of Christianity in its purely Western form was a matter of survival for the culture of Japan.

In spite of this situation, it is reported, whether accurate or not, that the *Makuya* (Tabernacle), an indigenous Pentecostal movement, is proud of counting about 60,000 members.<sup>2</sup> It may be because the Makuya

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<sup>1</sup> Choan-Seng Song, *Third-Eye Theology: Theology in Formation in Asian Settings*, rev. ed. (New York: Orbis, 1979), p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Carlo Caldarola, *Christianity: The Japanese Way* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), p. 3. Since Caldarola reported this statistics in 1979, it is not so sure that the Makuya movement still holds such many adherents even now in 1999. For I was told before that after the death of their founder, the Makuya movement might lost not a few members. According to another statistical source, the Makuya movement counts 150 congregations in Japan, 12 congregations in abroad, and 40,000 regular readers of their periodical magazine. At any rate it is enough to

movement rejects to register itself as a denomination that Japan Assemblies of God is officially conceived as the largest Pentecostal church in Japan. It seems to me that the rapid growth of the Makuya movement is by virtue of their attempt of integration of Pentecostalism with the Japanese traditional religiosity.

The Makuya movement provides us with an example of acculturation of Christianity in a Japanese context. As such, even it could be said that the Makuya movement is an expression of Pentecostalism that could tell us how we should understand Pentecostalism in the current global context. In this research paper, therefore, I would like to explore the Makuya's unique Pentecostalism. In the first place, I will briefly describe the history of the Makuya movement, focusing attention on Ikuro Teshima, the founder of this movement. In the second place, the theology of the Makuya movement will be expounded with its Pentecostal distinctiveness. In the third place, I will discuss the pentecostal significance of the Makuya movement.

## 2. Historial Description

Ikuro Teshima (1910-1973) started the Makuya movement. When Teshima was 12 years old, his elder sister brought him to a Baptist church. Listening to a hymn sung by the members, he had a spiritual experience, which urged him into the quest for Christian faith. One day he happened to come across to the book written by Toyohiko Kagawa, *Iesu no Shukyo to sono Shinri* (The Religion of Jesus and its Truth). Kagawa himself and this book deeply influenced Teshima's faith, which continued until the end of Teshima's life.<sup>3</sup> At the age of 15, he received the baptism in water in a Protestant church. In 1931, his failure of the entrance to an university led him to encounter with a writing of Kanzo Uchimura,<sup>4</sup> the founder of the Mukyokai (Non-Churchism) movement to

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acknowledge that the rapid growth of the Makuya movement is remarkable. See, Christian Year Book Editorial Committee, *Kirisutokyo Nenkan* 42 (Tokyo: Kirisuto Shinbunsha, 1999), pp. 251-53.

<sup>3</sup> Kiichiro Yoshimura, *Wagashi Teshima Ikuro* [My Master Teshima Ikuro] (Tokyo: Kirisuto Seisho Juku, 1996), p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> That book is following: Kanzo Uchimura, "Kyuanroku," in *Uchimura Kanzo Zenshu*, vol. 2., ed. Toshiro Suzuki. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980), pp. 134-249. For further study, Kanzo Uchimura, *Uchimura Kanzo Shinko Chosaku Zenshu* [Uchimura Kanzo Devotional Writing Series], 25 vols., ed. Toshiro

which Teshima himself would belong later.<sup>5</sup> Disappointed by the dogmatism of the institutionalized churches in Japan, Teshima jointed to the Mukyokai movement and became a disciple of Toraji Tsukamoto who was a prominent successor of Uchimura.

At the age of 38 in 1948, Teshima experienced the presence of God from which he inaugurated his charismatic ministry. He heard the voice of God, which was actually Isaiah chapter 30, and suddenly spoke in tongues. After this mysterious encounter with God, he employed himself in the intensive prayer and meditation, and soon after, such charismatic gifts as speaking in tongues, healing, and prophecies increasingly began to manifest in his ministry. In the same year, he held a summer Bible Conference, hoping that his disciples would also receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Yet, in the last day of this conference, he was prostrated with the self-despair that he had nothing to do any more since his disciples were in slumber during his lectures. He began to groan out his prayer, prostrating himself upon the pulpit, "Lord, I can no longer continue...." All of sudden, his disciples fell under the intensive presence of the Spirit in a religious ecstasy, and spoke in tongues.

This spiritual phenomenon was nothing but the prelude to the monumental revival that the adherents call the "Makuya Pentecost." The Makuya Pentecost occurred in 1950. Fifty-nine Makuya Christians gathered together in a prayer conference three months after the summer Bible conference. It continued for three days until the afternoon of November 5 in 1950. No sooner had the meeting began on the last day, then a monumental revival began. Many fell to the floor and spoke in tongues. The spiritual power was so overwhelming some were not able to remain standing.

Since then the cleavage between the Teshima group and the Mukyokai movement became apparent, which resulted in the apostasy of

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Suzuki (Tokyo: Kyobunkan, 1981-82): *Uchimura Kanzo Zenshu*, vols. 40, ed. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981-1984); this series contains many English writings of him; *Uchimura Kanzo Seisho Tyukai Zenshu* [Uchimura Kanzo Biblical Commentary Series], vols. 17, ed. Taiziro Yamamoto (Tokyo: Kyobunkan, 1965).

<sup>5</sup> Yoshimura, *Wagashi Teshima Ikuro*, p. 55.

<sup>6</sup> Tsukamoto's writings is the following: Toraji Tsukamoto, *Iesuden Kenkyu* [A Study on Historical Jesus], vols. 10, ed., Jiro Yamashita (Tokyo: Seisyo Tishikisha, 1988-1990).

<sup>7</sup> Tsukamoto, *Iesuden Kenkyu*, pp. 157-59.

the Teshima group from the Mukyokai movement in 1953. Teshima repudiated any denominationalism and advocated the restoration of the “Original Gospel.” In contrast to the stagnation of the Mukyokai movement, the Makuya movement remarkably grew and the membership increased.<sup>8</sup> Although Teshima on whose charisma the movement depended in large was dead in 1973, the movement continued to expand throughout Japan and has presently reached more than 2,000 house meetings.<sup>9</sup>

### 3. Theology of the Makuya Movement

#### 3.1 Framework

Before we examine the Makuya’s Pentecostal theology, three significant aspects of their theological backgrounds should be noted here. First, the Makuya movement stems from the most prominent indigenous

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<sup>8</sup> Teshima named this new charismatic movement in 1950 “Makuya.” “Makuya (Tabernacle)” reflects Teshima’s understanding of how the people of God should be. According to Teshima, the people of God have nothing to do with a church building. The building is not where God’s presence dwells, but the people of God itself. For Teshima, the word tabernacle, just as in the Old Testament, is the symbol of the presence of God which dwells in the midst of his people: Hiroshi Yokohama of Tokyo, interview by author, 10 August 1999, Tokyo, note-taking, Kirisuto Seisho Juku [The Christ Private Bible school], Tokyo.

<sup>9</sup> *The Light of Life Magazine* (November 1993), p. 64. Here I briefly describe their meetings. Their worship service takes place on every Sunday. The place for worship service is not necessarily at house. It may be a rent room in a building, or whatever it is convenient for each congregation to assemble. Common, they sit on floor in worship service. The typical worship service begins with meditation, and proceeds to singing their original hymns and prayer. Then volunteers give testimonies to the congregation. Next the professional leader gives a Bible lecture, which may be equivalent to preaching sermon in the traditional Protestant church, but they do not call it sermon. After the Bible lecture, they conclude their worship service with singing hymns and prayer. They do not collect offering in their worship service. Their worship service usually takes them for three hours. Besides Sunday worship, each congregation has a prayer meeting or Bible study in every week. 2000 house meetings refer not to congregations that assemble on every Sunday but to a kind of sell groups actually: Hiroshi Yokohama of Tokyo, interview by author, August 10, 1999, Tokyo, note-taking, Kirisuto Seisho Juku [The Christ Private Bible school], Tokyo.

Christian movement in Japan, the Mukyokai movement. Thus, the Makuya movement, at the very outset, has aggressively stood against the western Christianity. And as such the Makuya movement has sought to actualize what was inherited from the Mukyokai movement.

The Mukyokai movement can be labeled as a radical Protestantism. They insist on the thorough reformation of the Reformation. According to Uchimura (1861-1930), the founder of the Mukyokai movement, one can be saved only by his or her faith. Hence, a person must enter the direct relationship to God as an individual without any human mediums.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the person does not need the ordain ministry and sacraments but only faith. Neither does the person need the “church.” Uchimura advocated one person is one church principle. Further, he protested against any kind of institutional structure of the church.<sup>11</sup> For him, the church history is the history of degeneration of Christianity in which the spiritual life of Christianity has been institutionalized in the form of the ecclesiastical structure and the Western culture.<sup>12</sup> The genuine Christianity, therefore, could be restored only if Christians renounce all ecclesiastical structures and found their spiritual lives exclusively upon faith. The true *ecclesia* could exist only as a spiritual family. The Makuya movement<sup>13</sup> inherited such Non-Churchism from the Mukyokai movement.

Uchimura’s nationalism in relation to his theology is also worth noting here since his attempt to integrate nationalism with Christian faith was followed by the Makuya movement. Uchimura states,

<sup>10</sup> Hiroki Nakazawa, “Watashino Mukyokairon [My Non-Church Principle],” in *Mukyokaironno Shisseki* [The Trace of Essays on Non-Church Movement], ed. Mukyokairon Kenkyukai (Tokyo: Kirisutokyo Tosho Shuppansha, 1989), p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> It was Emil Brunner, a leading Neo-Orthodox theologian, who highly evaluated the Mukyokai movement as an outstanding phenomenon that is determined by the idea of *ecclesia* in the New Testament. Recognizing that the Mukyokai movement denies having any institutional structure, Brunner discusses that it has less danger to degenerate into the church. (For Brunner, the word church connotes the degeneration from *ecclesia* in New Testament sense.) See, Emil Brunner, *Dogmatics*, 3 vols., trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1950-79), vol. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Arimichi Ebisawa, *Nippon Kirisutokyoshi* [A History of Christianity in Japan] (Tokyo: Nippon Kirisutokyodan Shuppanyoku, 1990), p. 385.

<sup>13</sup> As such, the Makuya movement does not exercise both baptism and holy communion at all.

I love two J's and no third; one is Jesus, and the other is Japan. I do not know which I love more, Jesus and Japan.... Jesus strengthens and purifies my love for Japan; and Japan clarifies and objectifies my love for Jesus.... Jesus makes me a world man, a friend of humanity; Japan makes me a lover of my country, and through it binds me firmly to the terrestrial globe. I am neither too narrow or too broad by loving the two at the same time.

He asserts that it is definitely wrong for the Japanese to import the western systems of Christianity. The gospel must be grafted onto the Japanese culture.<sup>14</sup> He was confident that if the Japanese maintain their culture while following Jesus, Japan would be a superior Christian nation over any European nation due to their cultural excellence.<sup>15</sup>

Second, the Makuya movement grafted Pentecostalism onto the Japanese folk religions, whereas the Mukyokai movement grafted a Puritan form of Christianity onto *Bushido*, the Confucianistic Japanese tradition represented by the *Samurai* class. Hence, whereas the Mukyokai movement finds its adherents among the educated, the Makuya movement, in contrast, appeals to mass.<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that Makuya movement arose from the reaction against the intellectualism of the Mukyokai movement.<sup>18</sup> Despite of the affinity, the Makuya movement has the characteristics distinct from the Mukyokai movement.

Third, the Makuya movement was born without any contacts with the Western Pentecostalism. Unlike Japan Assemblies of God and Japan Foursquare Gospel, the Makuya movement was immune from the missionary influence from their outset. There is, thus, no wonder that such theological issues that the North American Pentecostalism argues as tongues as the initial evidence, the Spirit-baptism subsequent to conversion, and the purpose of the Spirit-baptism (sanctification or empowerment) have never arisen in the history of the Makuya movement.

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<sup>14</sup> Kanzo Uchimura, "Two J's," *Uchimura Kanzo Zenshu vol. 30*, ed. Koichiro Michiie (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1982), pp. 53-54.

<sup>15</sup> Hiroshi Shibutani, "Uchimura Kanzo," in *Mukyokaironno Shisseki [The Trace of Essays on Non-Church Movement]* ed. Mukyokairon Kenkyukai. (Tokyo: Kirisutokyo Tosho Shuppansha, 1989), p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> Shibutani, "Uchimura Kanzo," p. 30.

<sup>17</sup> Caldarola, *Christianity: The Japanese Way*, p. 193.

<sup>18</sup> Nakazawa, "Watashino Mukyokairon," p. 8.

It is evident that such a situation enabled the Makuya movement to develop indigenous Pentecostal theologies in their own unique ways.

These three aspects we have seen above help us understand their approach and its distinctiveness. To sum it up, the Makuya movement is an indigenous Christianity out of another indigenous Christianity: an indigenous Pentecostalism that originated spontaneously in no encounters with the Western missionaries: an indigenous Pentecostalism grafted onto Japanese popular religious traditions. Caldarola rightly notes that “...they are highly significant as expressions of a *spontaneous* form of Japanese Christianity versus the *controlled* versions of denominational Christianity operating under an imposed Western ecclesiastical dominance.”<sup>19</sup>

### 3.2 The Way of *Kami* as the Old Testament

Teshima's incentive to indigenizing Christianity is based on his fervent nationalism. He claims that Japan is granted a great commission from God to be the altar of the globe on which the light of salvation will shine to lead mankind to Christ. According to him, the Western church, due to their intellectualism, has failed to grasp the spiritual mystery of Jesus first manifested in Asia. The Japanese as Asians, thus, are commissioned to perceive the spiritual mystery of Jesus and to declare and to extol it to the world.<sup>20</sup> Japan could be able to accomplish this divine assignment when the Holy Spirit regenerates the Japanese and makes them a spiritual temple of Christ.<sup>21</sup>

Teshima stresses that “The Way of *Kami* (god)” should be made into the Old Testament of the Japanese Christianity for the indigenization.<sup>22</sup> Two factors need to be clarified concerning his assertion. First, the term “The Way of *Kami*,” which has originally designated a Japanese traditional religion *Shinto*, represents for him the original Japanese spirituality. He acknowledges incomparable nobility, beauty, and excellence in the ancient Japanese spirituality. This spiritual existence of the ancient Japanese found in the ancient Japanese literature and myth is

<sup>19</sup> Caldarola, *Christianity: The Japanese Way*, p. 3 (italics are the author's).

<sup>20</sup> Ikuro Teshima, *Seireino Ai* [*The Love of the Holy Spirit*] (Tokyo: Kirisuto Seishojuku, 1995), p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> Teshima, *Seireino Ai*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>22</sup> Yoshimaro Usui, *Genshifukuinno Shogen* [*The Witness of the Original Gospel*] (Tokyo: Kindai Bungeisha, 1996), p. 36.



that which must be the Old Testament of the Japanese. For it is the ancient Japanese spirituality in which one could rediscover the inherent life of the Japanese and onto which Christianity is to be grafted, according to him.<sup>23</sup>

Second, for Teshima, that “the Way of *Kami* is the Old Testament does not mean at all that the canonical Old Testament is no longer needed. By this statement, rather, he means that just as Christianity came to being on the basis of the Old Testament, the genuine Japanese Christianity comes to being on the basis of the Japanese spirituality. He is convinced that when the Holy Spirit comes upon the Japanese and unites himself with the Japanese spirituality, then the Japanese must become the light of the world.<sup>24</sup> In this respect, Teshima is faithful to his master, Uchimura. Led by an observation, Uchimura suggests that the best Japanese converts in his time never renounced the teachings of Confucianism and Buddhism: the reason why they joyfully welcomed Christianity was that it helped them attain their ideal which came from their own tradition. He then affirms that it is only paganism plus life (Christianity) which enables to fulfill the Law.<sup>25</sup> His concept of paganism plus life was in turn adapted later by Teshima from a pneumatological viewpoint.

### 3.3 Grafting the Holy Spirit onto the Japanese Spirituality

The most prominence of Teshima's theology is his pneumatological contextualization. As a descendant of the Mukyokai movement, Teshima protests against any dogma, creed, and theology as a conceptualization of faith. Accordingly, for him, the term indigenization does not have to do with the conceptual adaptation that tries to associate pagan or cultural concepts in Japan with Christian beliefs so as to make the gospel understandable. Rather, for him, the indigenization has to do with the spiritual adaptation that tries to associate the ethnic spirituality of the Japanese with the Holy Spirit in such a way that the latter fulfills the former's highest ideal.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Teshima, *Seireino Ai*, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Teshima, *Seireino Ai*, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Shibutani, “Uchimura Kanzo,” p. 30.

<sup>26</sup> Ikuro Teshima, *Nippon Minzoku to Genshifukuin* [*The Japanese and the Original Gospel*] (Tokyo: Kirisuto Seishojuku, 1997), pp. 150, 194.

### 3.4 The Original Gospel

Teshima advocates the restoration of the Original Gospel. The Original Gospel, coined by Teshima, refers to the reality of the living Christ as the Spirit seen in the New Testament. Teshima contends that the Christianity which has come to Japan is nothing but a form of the Western culture. What we need is, hence, by no means Christianity as a Western religion but only the Divine-Spirit itself, that is, Christ.<sup>[67]</sup> The Original Gospel demonstrates that Jesus is a spiritual person who is living and working in us as the Spirit.<sup>[68]</sup> Therefore, the ultimate attainment of Christian faith is the mysterious union with Christ in the Spirit.<sup>[69]</sup> The Original Gospel awakens by immersing in the Spirit charismatic gifts in us. Speaking in tongues are an (or the) accompanied sign that indicates a spiritual awakening in us.<sup>[69]</sup> The Spirit-receiving experience empowers a person with such manifestations of the Spirit as prophecy, healing, and miracles.

The concept of the Original Gospel is characterized by Teshima's understanding of faith. Teshima emphasizes that faith has nothing to do with either dogma or creeds. Rather, faith is an experience. Faith is the spiritual regeneration in which one receives the Spirit and becomes a new person, therefore transforming his/her spiritual nucleus. As such, it is Spirit-receiving.<sup>[69]</sup> In fact, defining faith as Spirit-receiving, Teshima actually refers to the baptism in the Spirit, and for him, conversion is identical with the Spirit-baptism as well.<sup>[69]</sup>

He pneumatologically interprets even the justification by faith. Denying the substitutionary atonement, Teshima demonstrates that the blood of Jesus represents His Spirit since blood is the symbol of life; therefore, unless one receives the Spirit-baptism, the individual would not be atoned because the Spirit is the blood of Jesus.<sup>[69]</sup> The righteousness of faith is formulated not as the *imputed* justification but the *imparted*

<sup>27</sup> Teshima, *Nippon Minzoku to Genshifukuin*, p. 46.

<sup>28</sup> Teshima, *Seireino Ai*, p. 95.

<sup>29</sup> Teshima, *Seireino Ai*, p. 92.

<sup>30</sup> Teshima, *Genshifukuin Shinkojosetsu*, p. 131.

<sup>31</sup> Teshima, *Seireino Ai*, p. 87.

<sup>32</sup> Teshima, *The Light of Life*, p. 26.

<sup>33</sup> Teshima, *Nippon Minzoku to Genshifukuin*, pp. 14-15.

justification in the Spirit.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, the faith of the resurrection refers to not so much the belief of the miracle that Jesus was risen from the dead as the experience to encounter with the living Jesus.<sup>35</sup> Teshima transposes the emphasis of Uchimura, that he radically centers the Spirit whereas Uchimura centers faith. Teshima stresses that we need nothing but the Spirit; the Spirit-baptism is the outset, the process, and the end of the Original Gospel.<sup>36</sup>

As we have seen, for Teshima, faith is not a conceptual acceptance of the gospel. Rather, it is the Spirit-receiving experience. What is significant for him is, therefore, not how to get the gospel across to the Japanese; but how to lead them into the experience in which they receive and are filled with the Spirit as the fulfilment of the Japanese spirituality. His approach is rather a kind of contextual *spirituality* than a kind of contextual *theology*, an attempt to graft the Japanese traditional spirituality as the Old Testament onto the Holy Spirit as the New Testament.

### 3.5 Anti-Puritanism

Unlike the North American type of Pentecostalism, the Makuya Christians do not abstain from drinking and smoking. From the beginning of his Christian life, Teshima had thoroughly abstained from drinking, smoking, movies, and even going to cafes. In order to emulate Jesus, who was called a drunkard (Luke 7:34), however, he began to drink with his followers in their fellowship.<sup>37</sup> He predicates puritanical Christians to be hypocrites and Pharisaic. The Original Gospel, according to him, liberates Christians from the hypocritical Puritanism, making them fully humans. Teshima contends that the Original Gospel does not bind people up with commandments, rather, it does restore true and free humanity in them.<sup>38</sup>

As such, the Makuya movement is contrast with the puritanical Protestantism in Japan to which the Japanese holiness-Pentecostal

<sup>34</sup> Yoshimura, *Wagashi Teshima*, p. 343.

<sup>35</sup> Ikuro Teshima, *Genshifukuin Shinkojosetsu* [*The Introduction to the Beliefs of the Original Gospel*] (Tokyo: Kirisuto Seishojuku, 1993), p. 173.

<sup>36</sup> Teshima, *Nippon Minzoku to Genshifukuin*, p. 67.

<sup>37</sup> Teshima, *Nippon Minzoku to Genshifukuin*, p. 144.

<sup>38</sup> Teshima, *Nipponminzoku to Genshifukuin*, p. 32.

tradition belongs in terms of personality traits and attitude toward the world. As for guilt consciousness and ethical behavior, Protestant Christians in Japan are more apt to be concerned with spiritual purification, staying away from worldly affairs. For them, what outwardly differentiates Christians from non-Christians is such habits as non-smoking and non-drinking.<sup>39</sup> Their pietistic mentality focuses more on the awareness of sin and guilt as a condition for genuine sanctification. They are always aware of their inner conflict between Christian values and those of the secular and pagan society.<sup>40</sup>

In contrast, much optimistic and positive to worldly and culturally habits, the Makuya Christians enjoy peace of mind and have less conflicts to resolve since their religious experience is a constant source of happiness and success.<sup>41</sup>

They stress the actual possession of mind and body by the Holy Spirit as the means of removing the taint of sin and of endowing the believer with the supernatural powers evidenced in the intensive emotional-spiritual experience.... Not surprisingly, the Makuya believer bases his status in society almost exclusively upon his spiritual achievements. Spiritual baptism has provided him with a valued personal status and though it he has acquired certain transcendental qualities which set him apart from ordinary, conventional people.... By thus stressing the overriding value of religious accomplishment, the Makuya member is able to transcend any secular disabilities, including low socio-economic status and marginality as a Christian in Japanese society.<sup>42</sup>

In addition, though I have read through several Teshima's books, I did not come across any teachings on the Second Coming in those books. They are present-oriented. As Caldarola points out, the Makuya Christians are more concerned with the experience of supernatural power of the Spirit now: "heaven is the experience of salvation, and hell the lack of it."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See, Hiroshi Horikawa, "Hukuin Senkyo no Shogai [Obstacles of Evangelism]," *Kodan* 22 (December 1993), pp. 42-65.

<sup>40</sup> Caldarola, *Christianity: The Japanese Way*, pp. 193-207.

<sup>41</sup> Caldarola, *Christianity: The Japanese Way*, p. 207.

<sup>42</sup> Caldarola, *Christianity*, pp. 206-207.

<sup>43</sup> Caldarola, *Christianity*, p. 207.

### 3.6 Spiritual Disciplines

To acquire the Japanese traditional spirituality, as is found in mainly Shinto and partly Buddhism and Confucianism, the Makuya Christians practice various forms of spiritual discipline which are of Japanese folk religions. They walk barefoot over live coals in order to experience the power of faith and prepare for future trials. Besides, they practice the traditional custom of purification under adverse physical conditions; for instance, they pray and meditate long hours in a frozen lake in the midst of winter.<sup>44</sup> Unlike those theologians who strive to conceptualize Asian religious traditions, the Makuya Christians strive to experience them in order that the gospel would be actually incarnated in their ethnic soul. To make the Japanese traditional religiosity infiltrate into the hearts of members, their periodical magazine, the *Light of Life*, regularly carries the biographies of great Buddhist masters. It encourages readers to emulate those masters' religiosity and to apply to their own Pentecostal spirituality. In those efforts, The Makuya movement experientially integrates nationalism, traditional religiosity, and the Pentecostal spirituality.

## 4. Pentecostal Significance of the Makuya Movement

What remarkably stands out as significance in the Makuya movement is that they have linked the gospel not with Asian conceptual traditions but with Asian spirituality. Just like Teshima, Song, whose theology has some similarities with that of Teshima, to be sure, points out the inadequacy of Western conceptual and propositional theology that can hardly touch the heart of Asian humanity.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, Song explains the necessity of spirituality as a part of theologizing in Asian contexts.

the Christian Gospel that seeks to lead people to the God of love manifested in Jesus Christ must find its echoes and responses from within their spirituality....And the discovery of such spirituality in the essence of Asian cultures will open the eyes of Christians to see something new in their understanding of the Gospel. It will enable

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<sup>44</sup> Caldarola, *Christianity*, p. 202.

<sup>45</sup> Choan-Seng Song, "From Israel to Asia: A Theological Leap," in *Mission Trends No.3: Third World Theologies*, eds. Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 211-22(221).

them to discover fresh insights into how God is at work in nations and peoples alien to Western Christian culture.<sup>46</sup>

Song calls upon us to take Asian spirituality into consideration on the basis that God has been at work positively through the indigenous faith and ideologies in Asia.<sup>47</sup> Teshima, on the other hand, deals with Asian spirituality on the basis that the gospel not as a conceptual message but as the Spirit himself must be rooted in the soul and blood of the Japanese. For him, unlike Song, the Japanese traditional spirituality is simply a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities. Only in this sense, can it be called the “Old Testament” for Teshima. He emphasizes that the Japanese traditional spirituality is needed to be “grafted” onto the Holy Spirit to fulfil its intrinsic aim of existence.<sup>48</sup>

Moreover, the existence of the Makuya movement is significant in terms of what Pentecostalism is. Historically, they have no continuity with Azusa Street at all. The Makuya movement is a pure spontaneous and indigenous Pentecostalism in Japan. If, as Chan implies, the first ten years represents the heart of Pentecostalism, the Makuya movement has nothing to do with it.<sup>49</sup> If we link the term Pentecostalism exclusively with the Azusa Street, then the non-white Pentecostal movements which have no historical continuity with Azusa revival would be excluded within that definition.

Theological attempts to define Pentecostalism in the North American Pentecostal circle have difficulties to be applied to the Makuya movement. The most striking reason is that the Makuya Christians do not ask questions to which the North American Pentecostalism tries to give

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<sup>46</sup> Song, *Third-Eye Theology*, p. 26.

<sup>47</sup> Song, “From Israel to Asia: A Theological Leap,” p. 219

<sup>48</sup> The oldest Christian approach to spirituality in Asia viewed Asian folk religions, liturgies, symbolism, and religious philosophy as false, superstitious, and satanic. As a result, those Christians who are taught by this approach never visit a Buddhist or other religious temple, and reject entirely their own spiritual heritage. They are like foreigners in their own country. See, Daniel J. Adams, *Cross Cultural Theology: Western Reflections in Asia* (Westminster, Georgia: John Knox, 1987), p. 27.

<sup>49</sup> Simon Chan, “The Pentecostal Reality and the Christian Tradition,” paper presented at the 7th Annual Lectureship of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Baguio City, Philippines, 18 January 1999.

answer. The Makuya movement has, just like other traditional Japanese religions, no concern about any attempt of theological and dogmatic formulations. To be sure, they do regularly speak in tongues. Yet, they do not theologize as to whether speaking in tongues is *the* sign of the Spirit-baptism or *a* sign; and as to whether the Spirit-baptism is the distinguished experience from conversion or not.

To understand this, we should know a general Japanese religiosity as the cultural background. For the Japanese, the term *Shinri* (• • ) denotes an experiencing truth, true reality.<sup>50</sup> For the Makuya Christians, therefore, the theological verification of the Spirit-baptism is not their existential concern at all. Their existential concern is rather the experiential verification of the Spirit-baptism.

What is Pentecostalism? To answer this question, contextual differences must be taken seriously. Admittedly, the term Pentecostalism is bound up with the spiritual movement which originated in Los Angeles in 1906. Hence, in a narrow sense, the term Pentecostalism inevitably carries with it a cultural peculiarity. In the broad sense, however, Pentecostalism is found outside of the concatenation of revivals related to Azusa Street. No regional Pentecostal movement, therefore, can monopolize the right to be called Pentecostalism.

Every regional Pentecostalism has its roots in two levels of experience, universal and cultural,<sup>51</sup> which corresponds to the relationship between content and form.<sup>52</sup> The Pentecostal experience is the experiential content of Pentecostalism, and a cultural expression gives it a form. Thus, the Pentecostal experience cannot be divorced from the culture in which it occurs.<sup>53</sup> Chan suggests that “diverse Christian spirituality is a gift of Christ to his church.”<sup>54</sup> The existence of the Makuya movement reminds us that the Pentecostalism is a potentially universal Christian experience, but it can occur as well in any cultural diversity and take on any forms of cultural expressions in the global

<sup>50</sup> Robert S. Ellwood and Richard Pilgrim, *Japanese Religion: A Cultural Perspective* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1985), p. 86.

<sup>51</sup> Adams, *Cross Cultural Theology*, p. 33.

<sup>52</sup> Adams, *Cross Cultural Theology*, p. 34. Adams argues that “...the meeting point between universal content and cultural form can play a significant and creative role in the search for new forms of spirituality.” See, p. 33.

<sup>53</sup> Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1998), p. 21.

context.<sup>54</sup> And it should be said, at the same time, that equally important, any provincial Pentecostalism should be balanced<sup>55</sup> with what seems universally “Pentecostal” implied in the Scriptures.

## 5. Conclusion

In this research paper, I have explored an indigenous Pentecostalism, the Makuya movement. To sum it up, the Makuya movement has three peculiarities in contrast to the North American type of Pentecostalism such as the Japan Assemblies of God. First, they were born in no contact with the Western Pentecostalism. As such, they have been immune from the Western missionary influence, which accounts for their indigeniousness. Second, the Makuya movement came to being through the Mukyokai (Non-Churchism) movement which is also an indigenous Christianity in Japan. For the Mukyokai movement, faith is an

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<sup>54</sup> In this respect, Hollenweger meaningfully discusses “a theologically responsible syncretism.” Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), pp. 132-41: “The question is not ‘syncretism yes or no,’ but what kind of syncretism. Already the Bible is an example of theologically responsible syncretism....We shall see later that Paul, too, does not shy away from syncretism. His famous thirteenth chapter in 1 Corinthians is a collage of contemporary popular religious sayings (as one can find out by consulting any critical commentary). He even manages not to mention Christ in the whole chapter....It is also known that our rites and festivals (Christmas, Easter), and even the names of our days (Sunday, Monday, etc), do not come from the New Testament, but from our Celtic and Germanic forefathers. So too with the form of our sermons, and with our church buildings, which are often built on the foundation of pagan temples. Our Christian rites and festivals carry with them a great heritage from our pagan past. Think of our marriage ceremonies and funerals—they too go back to pagan patterns. The New Testament Christians did not conduct funerals.”

<sup>55</sup> I should add that currently the Makuya movement appears to go too far toward the right wing. For instance, they extol such as the emperor veneration and militaristic nationalism, which alienates them from the fellowship with other Christian bodies. Therefore, questions inevitably come up in mind. That is, is there any certain form of the Japanese traditional spirituality?; how can we possibly draw a picture of the Japanese culture which would not vary despite the fact that every culture is always in change? There would be always a danger to be too ideological in groups making a particular peace of cultural puzzle represents whole picture of the culture.



unconditionally direct experience with God; as a result, no Christian is in need of being connected with any church, creed, dogma, and ritual. Likewise, for the Makuya movement, faith is the spiritual union with the living Christ the Spirit: for them, such the Spirit-receiving experience has nothing to do with any rational or logical justification. Third, the Makuya movement attempts to “graft” the Japanese spirituality onto the Holy Spirit. According to Teshima, it is the Holy Spirit which fulfills the intrinsic aim of existence of the Japanese spirituality.

I believe that those uniqueness of the Makuya movement could contribute to the global Pentecostalism as they point to the freedom of the Spirit to create new Asian Pentecostal spirituality. “No single type of spirituality satisfies every one” and every culture.<sup>56</sup> On the basis of this recognition, we should keep seeking to grasp the heart of Pentecostalism.

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<sup>56</sup> Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, p. 21.

## The Second Annual Meeting of **Asian Pentecostal Society**

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