

The Historical Development of the Santo Daime: Section One – The Life and Work of Mestre Irineu

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Mestre Irineu's Early Years

Raimundo Irineu de Mattos (later known in the Santo Daime tradition as Mestre, or “Master” Irineu), a black man who later grew to around six feet, six inches in height, was born on December 15th of 1890 in a small thatched-roof house on the outskirts of the tiny town of São Vicente Férrer, in Maranhão, a state in the northeast coast of Brazil. His mother, Joana Assunção Serra, was the youngest daughter of two slaves, and as was customary at the time, the slaveowner's last name, Serra, was passed down to Joana. (Slavery was not abolished in Brazil until 1888.) Joana married Sancho Martinho de Mattos on January 23rd of 1890. Raimundo Irineu was the oldest of six children that Joana had with Sancho. Raimundo Irineu was baptized on March 22nd of 1891.

This baptismal date is crucial since until very recently it was customary to say that Mestre Irineu was born on December 15th, 1892 (which is not surprising since Mestre himself would give that date when asked when he was born, and December 15th, 1892 is the date listed on his identity card). Nonetheless, researchers for *Eu Venho de Longe* found his name listed in the baptismal registry of his church in San Vicente Férrer, listed between other persons with dates given in an orderly sequence. Since the baptism occurred in March of 1891, it is almost certain that the date given on the registry for his birth (December 15th, 1890) is the correct date. (The authors of *Eu*

Venho de Longe note that “it is very common for quasi-illiterate people to not know the date of their birth with precision, along with the fact that it was very common to see errors on the birth certificates.”¹

The researcher who initially found the registry (Marcos Neves), thinking that Mestre’s community would appreciate knowing this information, brought a photograph of the baptismal registry to Alto Santo, where Mestre lived for many years and where his widow, dona Peregrina, now runs a crucially important Santo Daime church – the “orthodox” Santo Daime community (as opposed to the “expansionist” or “eclectic” lineage of the Santo Daime that began when Padrinho Sebastião formally split from the Alto Santo leadership a few years after Mestre’s death in 1971.) When Neves showed the photo to dona Peregrina, to his surprise she said, “How great! You found a document about ‘My Old One.’ But, if he said to us that he was born in 1892, then he was born in 1892. Thanks.”² (As Neves points out, clearly this is a community that is formed around a deeply rooted oral tradition – a tradition that is so strong that the current leader of the community would prefer to deny the factual value of such a crucial document if it was seen as undermining what she had been told in the past.)

Another complexity surrounds Mestre’s name. Normally, his name should have been Raimundo Irineu de Mattos, but in Mestre’s official documents his name is given as Raimundo Irineu Serra. It is almost certain that Irineu himself chose to change his surname, perhaps due to his disappointment when his father separated from his mother after ten to twelve years of marriage, leaving her to care for his children. Interestingly, Irineu was the only one of the six siblings to not use his father’s surname, although even this issue is complicated by the fact that although

Joana returned to using her maiden name Serra, not long after the separation she married a man named Ezequiel de Mattos, and her death certificate lists her as Joana da Assunção de Matos (sic).

Nonetheless, before marrying Ezequiel, Joana enlisted the support of her brother, Paulo Serra, to help raise Irineu and his brothers and sisters. Paulo Serra was very important in Irineu's life, acting as a type of father figure for him, and he appears to have influenced Irineu's decision to leave his hometown and travel to São Luis, the capital of Maranhão around 1905 (i.e., when he was only fifteen years old). There are two stories from that time period that are often cited to explain Irineu's decision to leave his home, and Paulo Serra has a central place in both.

In one story, Irineu was around fifteen years old and was in a relationship with a young woman named Fernanda, who was in some way or the other related to Irineu (he referred to her as his "cousin."). But when his mother learned that Irineu wanted to marry Fernanda, she attempted to talk him out of this decision, pointing out how young Fernanda was, while also noting that people in the village were already talking about her, saying that she was not a virgin. Irineu then decided to talk the issue over with his uncle Paulo while they were working together in the fields, and (according to Francisco Granjeiro, an old disciple of Mestre's) Paulo asked him: "Raimundo, are you wanting to get married?" "I am uncle." "That's good. Because you will marry early, you'll soon have a family. . . But know, Raimundo, in order for a man to marry he should first travel around a bit. And when he returns, he should know how much a kilo of salt and a kilo of sugar costs. Then he's ready to marry."³

In another story, Irineu (again, around 15 years old) along with his cousin Casimiro (who was around the same size as Irineu) snuck off to a “*Tambor de Crioula*” (a circular dance done to the sound of drums made from tree trunks that was characteristic of the black culture in Maranhão). Neither his mother nor his uncle Paulo, who was basically raising Irineu, knew that he had gone to the dance. Sometime around 10:00 or 11:00 that night, Irineu and his cousin started a fight, and began (in the words of one of Mestre’s cousins) “knocking everything down and grabbing a machete and cutting down all of the hammocks in the house, knocking down the door and everything.”⁴ His mother soon learned what her eldest child had done and around 1:00 in the morning, she went to her brother’s house to let him know about his nephew’s behavior. Paulo told his sister that when he came by the next morning to give water to the cattle that he would talk with Irineu. When Paulo arrived the next morning, (in the words of one interviewee) “He asked, ‘Where is “*preto*”?’ [The black one]. And Irineu’s mother, who was filling gourds with water from the well said, ‘There he is.’ And Paulo, with a little whip [something like a “cat o’ nine tails’] called his nephew, yelling. And he hit Irineu with [the whip], three times on his head. [Irineu] left then; he grabbed a pair of trousers, a shirt, [putting everything] in a wheat sack and went away, only to appear again 46 years afterwards, no one knowing if he was alive or dead.”⁵

[Sidebar: It is clear that Irineu was very close to his mother and that she loved him very much. In one touching story, it is said that for years after his departure, she would frequently in the evenings make a corn cake, his favorite food, just in case he might return. (Irineu finally did return to Maranhão in the end of 1957, but by then his mother had died.)]

Regardless of what actually propelled Irineu's departure (it might have also been motivated by Irineu's desire to have better economic prospects than were possible in São Vicente Férrer), he eventually made his way to São Luis, the capital of Maranhão, where it is believed that Irineu enlisted in the infantry. Then, after finishing his military service, he worked in the quays of the port there, loading and unloading boats. While working on the quays as a longshoreman, Irineu met Daniel Pereira de Mattos, a low-level sailor and ex-seminarian who, when Irineu eventually decided to leave São Luis, helped Irineu to find a position among the crew of a boat that was headed to Belem – since Irineu had by that time decided to make his way the Amazon rainforest to find work as a rubber tapper.

[Sidebar: Years later, in Rio Branco, Daniel and Irineu (now in his role as Mestre Irineu) were re-united and re-kindled their friendship. Mestre Irineu (with the help of the Daime) cured Daniel from alcoholism, and Daniel, in turn, became a follower of the Santo Daime. Daniel eventually (with Mestre's blessing) went on to start another ayahuasca-based religion, today known as “*Barquinha*” (“Little Boat”).]⁶

Rubber Tapping

Irineu Serra, like thousands of others from the *sertão*, the northeast region of Brazil (primarily the states of Ceará, Maranhão, and Bahia) that had been suffering from a drought since 1877, was heading to the rubber-tapping plantations (*seringais*) in the Amazon, hoping to make his fortune extracting latex for rubber. For sixty years, from 1860 to 1920, the Amazon region of Brazil was the most important source of rubber in the world. During the first decade of the 20th

century, for example, Brazil provided one-half to two-thirds of the world's rubber, much of it coming from the territory of Acre.

There was, therefore, a great need for labor in the seringais. And many of those in the drought-stricken regions of the northeast saw rubber tapping as their opportunity to extract themselves from poverty. It is estimated that between 300,000 and 500,000 migrant Brazilians from the northeast made their way into the Amazon between 1872 and 1910, many of them heading for the seringais of Acre.

But the reality they encountered was not one that was supportive of *seringueiros*, the men who collected latex from the rubber trees that were interspersed throughout the huge uncultivated Amazonian rainforest regions of the seringais. Not surprisingly, most of the profit went to those higher up on the capitalistic food chain. The biggest piece of the pie (after the foreign capitalists who funded the entire venture) went to the *aviadoras*, or the wholesalers in the major port cities such as Belém and Manaus. The *seringalistas*, the owners of the seringais (also often called the *patrões*, or the “big bosses”) got the next highest cut, followed by the indebted and subjugated rubber tappers who were basically excluded from the wealth that came from rubber extraction.

Particularly during the height of the rubber boom, between 1890 and 1910, the *patrões* would contract with the *aviadoras* to outfit the migrant laborers and transport them upriver in exchange for rubber to be delivered at the end of the tapping season. Most of the migrants making the long and arduous journey up the Amazon river by riverboat steamer were recruited with promises of wealth – and had their tickets and all of their supplies paid for by the *aviadoras* – but this meant

that when they finally arrived in the Amazon rainforest, not only did they have to deal with malaria, attacks by ferocious animals, and resistance by indigenous populations to the invasion of their land, but they also arrived already deep in debt to their patrão. These greedy rubber-camp owners made sure that it was almost impossible for the rubber tappers to pay back what they owed, since the rubber tappers were required to buy everything from the *barracão*, the rubber-camp store, at prices set by the patrão (the rubber tappers were even forbidden to hunt, fish, or farm, in order to increase their dependence on the barracão and its inflated prices.)

However, the rubber tappers were not trapped into a kind of serfdom. Although economically exploited, they were simply too isolated and spread out over vast stretches of unpopulated rainforest for the patrão to effectively control them (although they very much attempted to do so, often using hired thugs to enforce their edicts). Rubber tappers, who were usually ethnically mixed – often a fusion of Indians and migrants coming from the Northeast regions of Brazil, who themselves were also typically racially mixed, but often blacks as well – usually shared a small rustic hut with about six other tappers, with only a handful of other huts scattered throughout the rainforest. Each rubber tapper would get up around four or five am and walk their own *estrada*, a tear-shaped path through the forest, beginning and ending at the hut, that connected between 100 and 200 rubber trees. The rubber tapper would slice the bark of each tree, leaving a bucket to collect the sticky latex sap, and would then later in the day return to collect the buckets.

[Sidebar: The fact that most of the migrants were unmarried men often created frequent disputes over women, who were at times bought and sold, acting in essence as a type of money.]

The religious life of the rubber tappers was also not strictly supervised by the Catholic church. Priests would typically appear at most once or twice a year to perform weddings, baptisms, and so on, so most of the spiritual life of rubber tappers took place in prayer meetings or informal times of catechetical instruction, perhaps singing hymns or praying the rosary in services that were often led by laypeople, especially by women. The migrants also brought with them some rather “unorthodox” religious practices such as a variety of saint cults, brotherhoods, and a tendency towards messianic movements, and these more marginal religious practices were often augmented upon their arrival in the rainforest with a belief in various enchanted beings that were thought to inhabit the forest and the rivers.

The life of a rubber tapper was exceedingly difficult and dangerous. Thousands upon thousands died each year, not only from malaria, but also tuberculosis, malnutrition, injuries, and animal attacks. In that remote region of Brazil, there was hardly any medical care, so rubber tappers depended primarily upon home medicinal remedies, or called upon *rezadores* (people who healed via a ritualized form of prayer/communion with spiritual beings), or participated in *pajelança* – a type of indigenous/mestizo shamanic ritual practice.

Irineu Serra’s Arrival in Acre

It appears that Irineu’s ticket to Belem was not paid for by some rubber camp boss/patrão, otherwise he would not have been free to disembark as he did in Belem (probably around 1909), where he worked as a gardener for a few months in order to pay for another riverboat ticket to Manaus, where he worked for a while as a butcher in a nearby city. It’s not clear what route he took after Manaus, but he eventually ended up working for the Commission of Limits in the

frontier between the new Brazilian Federal Territory of Acre and Peru. (In a treaty between Brazil and Peru on September 8, 1909, Peru gave the land that became Acre to Brazil.) It seems that Irineu worked for the Commission between 1910 and 1912, apparently gaining the trust of the commander, since he was responsible for transporting all of the cash of the expedition in a safe that was under his guard. His experience with the Commission was invaluable, since during that time he was able to learn a lot about the land of Acre – its forests, rivers, the seringais, and the indigenous populations – where the ritual consumption of ayahuasca was common.

After his time in the Commission of Limits, probably around 1912, Irineu went to the small town of Xapurí in search of work. During this time period, he most likely worked either as a *regatão* (a merchant who traveled the region primarily on boats), or as the assistant to a *regatão*. (It appears that he did not work much, if at all, as a rubber tapper.) After around two years in Xapurí, Irineu moved to another tiny town, Brasileia, and soon met Antônio and André Costa, two brothers – blacks like him, who were also from Maranhão. (Antônio himself worked as a *regatão*, and it is possible that Irineu became his assistant.)

It is almost certain that it was in the company of Antônio Costa that Irineu first drank ayahuasca. (In that region, ayahuasca was also known as “*caapi*,” or “*yajé*,” and among the Amazonian *caboclos* – the mixed-race people who lived along the rivers in the Amazon rainforest – it was also known as “*cipo*” or “*vegetal*”, as well as corruptions of the name ayahuasca such as “*oasca*” “*huasca*,” etc.) There are many different versions of the story of Mestre’s first encounter with ayahuasca, not all of them completely uniform. Here, for example, is an account from Luis Mendes de Nascimento, who says that Antônio Costa “was the one who told Irineu about some

caboclos in Peru [who were living in seringais there] who drank ayahuasca. It's just that the people who drank this drink there had a satanic pact to increase their good luck and to help each person's life. Mestre had, until then, always searched for God, but God had given so little to him in that it had been a difficult struggle to survive. So, he decided to experience the drink and went there. He drank the drink and when the others began to work, calling the demon, he also began to call. However, whenever he called the demon, crosses would appear. He felt suffocated by how many crosses appeared. Mestre began to think to himself: 'The devil is afraid of the cross, and to the extent that I call for him, crosses appear. There's something to this . . .' He asked to see a series of things. Everything that he wanted, he could see . . . And this was the first time."⁷

The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* also interviewed Francisco Granjeiro, another longtime follower of Mestre Irineu, about this seminal event. According to Granjeiro, "[Irineu] went there to cut rubber. There he met Antônio Costa who told him about 'oasca.' [Irineu asked], 'What is this oasca?' 'It's a drink that people take to see things.' 'Do you think we'd see something too?' 'We'll see.' [Irineu went on to say,] 'I went to drink oasca. I quarreled with God many times [but God didn't give me much] so now I'm going to fight with the devil. I'm going to see what the devil's going to give me.' Then he went. He went there with Antônio Costa and he drank it. But he didn't see anything. He took it two or three times and then he . . . said: 'I know one thing, I'm not going to take this anymore. No one sees anything there. Nobody sees anything.' [However,] one Wednesday he decided to go, he arrived there and drank it. Then he sat down on the wooden floor of the rubber-tapper's house, leaning up against a little wall on the edge of the floor, and he little by little began to see a little bit, he began to have visions [*afluído*]. [At that time] he didn't call it 'afluído,' [although later] he gave it the name 'afluído.' [At that time] he

called it '*borracheira*.' When a person had *borracheira*, then he'd call, he'd call the Devil. They'd call it one, two, three, six hundred times, calling the name of the Devil. Then the lights went out, and it became completely dark. Sometimes they'd light a cigarette and they'd smoke. It was completely dark, right? Then, when he started to see [afluído], he began to call, to call. [But] each time he called the Devil, a cross would appear. Then it seemed like it was a cemetery, a cemetery with only crosses. Devils, six hundred devils, one thousand six hundred devils. Each devil that he called, a cross would appear before him. Then he said to himself, 'I want the Big Guy, I want the leader of the devils. I want the boss to come, I want to talk with him.' And a huge cross appeared. Then he realized that it wasn't the devil, because the devil was afraid of the cross, he didn't like the cross. That's when he realized that it wasn't the devil, that this wasn't a thing of the devil . . ."⁸

Clearly, from these (and other) accounts of Mestre's initiation with ayahuasca, Mestre's followers believed that the group of ayahuasqueros with whom Mestre had his first experiences with ayahuasca were doing something satanic. But as the authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* point out, we need to examine this preconception carefully, given that any religious practices that did not conform to the dominant Christian ways of worship would likely be seen in this way. It is actually quite probable that the entities that were invoked in ayahuasca ceremonies, instead of being "demonic," were actually indigenous entities. And although these accounts clearly demonstrate that many of his followers saw this event as a clear-cut repudiation of the prior practices of *vegetalismo* (the beliefs and practices of *ayahuasqueros* in that region), as we will see, Mestre did not totally negate these practices. Instead, he (as it were) "Christianized" these beliefs and practices, thereby giving them a new set of meanings.

[Sidebar: The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* also note that the changes that Mestre made in several of the terms commonly used in the vegetalista tradition (for example, changing “oasca” to “daime,” “borracheira” to “afluído,” “mariri” to “jagube,” and “chacrona” to “rainha”) most likely took place in an attempt to avoid the negative cultural connotations that were linked to the indigenous and caboclo traditions during that time. For example, the term “afluído,” which was common in the esoteric tradition that Mestre was later affiliated with, was probably understood to be more dignified than the Spanish term “borracheira” which the authors claim came with cultural connotations of drunkenness.]⁹

Another key figure in stories about Mestre’s first exposure to ayahuasca is an ayahuasquero named Don Crescêncio Pizango. João Rodrigues (Nica), an old-time follower of Mestre, says that “Mestre was invited by Antônio Costa to meet . . . Pizango, who was a Peruvian caboclo, a descendant of the Incas. Antônio drank daime with him. This was around 1918. Pizango was, so to speak, someone who knew where the swallows nested [he knew his stuff]. When they drank daime, there were approximately 12 people, and they were seeing visions, and the caboclo appeared. The only one who saw him was Raimundo Irineu Serra. He came to make it clear that Mestre was the only one who was really able to work with the drink during a work. Pizango came and went into the gourd bowl that was serving the daime. At that time they served daime in a large gourd bowl. The caboclo Pizango turned toward Irineu and told him to invite his companion to look into the gourd bowl and to ask him if he saw anything. The answer was ‘No!’ They looked and said that they only saw the daime. Then Pizango said, ‘Only you have the capacity to work with the Daime. No one else is seeing what you are seeing.’ He went to the

little house where they smoked the rubber and asked someone to bring a little cup of daime. Mestre called one of his companions. It was André Costa who brought the cup. When the work finished, he discovered that the cup was dry. The daime had been consumed [implying that Pizango had spiritually drunk it.]¹⁰

[Sidebar: For the sake of consistency, I have chosen to capitalize “Daime,” unless a direct quote does not capitalize this term, in which case I have left it lower-case. Also, in order to avoid confusion, I use the term “Santo Daime” to refer to the religious tradition founded by Mestre Irineu Serra, even though during his lifetime, the tradition referred to itself as the Daime. The term “Santo Daime” was only later adopted by followers of Padrinho Sebastião.]

Once again, this story is filled with ambiguity. In Rodrigues’ account, Pizango initially is referred to as a human being, an ayahuasca master, the friend and instructor of Antônio Costa, as well as a descendant of the Incas (an origin that, to the people of that time and place, would underscore his worth and wisdom). However, soon into the narrative, Don Pizango morphs into a spiritual entity, manifesting himself within the gourd bowl that served the ayahuasca, and was only seen by Irineu – a clear indication of Irineu’s spiritual ability. And throughout the story, Pizango is seen in a positive light, unlike the prior story of the devils and the crosses (it’s not at all clear if Pizango was thought to be the one who served Irineu ayahuasca during the “demonic” ritual.)

Clara

At some point after Irineu's initial experiences with ayahuasca within a vegetalista context, it seems that he was taught by Antônio Costa how to identify the vine (*jagube*) and the leaves (*rainha*) that are boiled together to produce ayahuasca. It was during this time period that we first learn of the female entity or divine Being named Clara who would become his spiritual teacher. (Later in the development of the Santo Daime, Clara became identified with the Queen of the Forest, as well as Our Lady of Conception.) Here is Luís Mendes do Nascimento's account of those early experiences: "Then Antônio Costa went on a journey. Mestre stayed. Desiring to take daime, he decided to prepare it. He did it like Antônio Costa had shown him. He got the vine, he prepared it, he put it together with the leaves and boiled it. [But] when he was about to drink it, he became a bit concerned and decided to not take it alone. 'It's better to wait for Antônio Costa' he thought. So, when he [Antônio] arrived, Mestre offered him the drink. The two drank it together. Antônio Costa stayed in the living room, and Mestre was in the bedroom. When they began to '*mirar*' [to see visions] Antônio Costa said to him, 'There's a woman talking with me and she told me that she's been your companion since Maranhão. She's been with you since then.' Mestre didn't understand, because he had traveled alone. He asked, 'What's her name?' 'She says that she's called Clara. Prepare yourself, since she herself is coming to talk with you.' Having finished that work, he [Mestre] began to want to take [daime] another time so that he could meet with her. During the next work, after taking daime, he hung the hammock in such a way that he could see the Moon. It seemed that it was full, or almost full. It was a clear night, very beautiful. And when he began to have lots of visions, he wanted to look at the Moon. When he looked at it, she came towards him, until she was really close to him, [looking down at him] from the ceiling of the house. She stood still. [He saw,] within the Moon, a Lady, seated in an armchair, very beautiful. She was so visible, everything was defined, even

the eyebrows, to the tiniest detail. She said to him: ‘Do you dare to call me Satan?’ [And Irineu Serra replied:] ‘Ave Maria, my Lady, of course not!’ [She then asked,] ‘Do you think that anyone else has ever seen what you are seeing now?’ At that point he vacillated, thinking that perhaps others had already seen what he was seeing. And Clara continued to speak: ‘You are wrong. What you are seeing, no one else has ever seen; only you. Now tell me, who do you think I am?’ In front of that Light, he said, ‘You are a Universal Goddess.’ [She replied,] ‘Very good. Now, you should undergo a diet, so that you can be able to receive what I have to give to you.’”¹¹

[Sidebar: To undergo a “diet” in this case does not mean to eat less food. Instead, the “dieta” was an extremely common, and important, aspect of the *vegetalista* way of working with *ayahuasca*. The “dieta” often, for example, consisted of eating only bland foods, with no salt, often foods such as manioc, rice, plantains, and certain fish that were white in color.¹²]

In another overlapping version of how Mestre first encountered Clara, Francisco Granjeiro describes how, in the middle of an *ayahuasca* ceremony, “Antônio Costa said to [Irineu], ‘Raimundo, I am seeing a very beautiful lady here, and she has an orange in her hand. She wants to give you the orange.’ Then Irineu said, ‘Antônio, why doesn’t she give it to you?’ ‘No, she doesn’t want to give it to me, she wants to give it to you, and she is saying that she has been with you since you left Maranhão, that’s she’s been accompanying you.’ . . . Then [Irineu] said, ‘Antônio, ask her what her name is.’ ‘Raimundo, she is saying that her name is Clara.’ ‘Clara!’ . . . Then one day [Irineu] took *daime* again, and she arrived, and held the orange and put it in his hand. ‘Take the orange, this orange, you are the owner of it.’ Then he looked and saw that on her

head there was a new moon, and on top of the new moon there was an eagle. . . . [Then], after many, many works he was able to understand that Clara [which means “clear” in Portuguese] is the Light. And the eagle that he saw on her head is a guide. Clara the Light, the guide [in Portuguese: “a guia”], the eagle [“águia”] is the guide. Therefore, within the star that we use [fardados wear a star as part of their uniform] he wanted us to put the eagle within the moon, just like a bird who wants to fly.”¹³

These accounts of Mestre’s first encounter with Clara (and there are several others, each with significant alterations in various details) are evocative, even if it’s not entirely clear how they should be understood. To begin with, it seems important to note that in Luiz Nascimento’s account Irineu is still struggling with the issue of whether ayahuasca is satanic or not. Another curious fact is that in all of the accounts, Antônio Costa is the first one to see Clara, rather than Irineu and that Clara offers an orange (which appears to symbolically represent the world) to both Antônio and to Irineu. Luis Mendes do Nascimento speculates that “It was as if Mestre was to govern one half of the world and he [Antônio] the other half. It’s just that Antônio Costa saw that he couldn’t do it. He was a merchant and [to do this mission] it would be impossible to also run a business. Because of this he [Antônio] asked the Queen that she pass on what she had given to him to Irineu,” seeming to imply that the power of Clara in its fullness was passed on to Irineu.¹⁴

And notice how, in Granjeiro’s account, the visionary appearance of Clara is understood as the spiritual inspiration for the detailed iconography that appeared, decades later, on the stars worn by fardados. Granjeiro also appears to have woven in the eagle/moon part of this story from a

separate story – a story found in many of the accounts that Mestre’s followers have given about what he spiritually perceived when Clara/the Queen of the Forest/the Virgin Mother transmitted the Doctrine, the seed-matrix of the Santo Daime religion, to Irineu during a prolonged fast in the rainforest. Granjeiro’s interpretation of the linguistic connection between the eagle (“águia”) in the vision/star and the guidance that Clara offers to Irineu as his guide, as *the* guide (“a guia”) appears to have come from a later time period. Granjeiro, in a separate interview, notes that he asked Mestre Irineu about the symbolism contained in the star worn by a fardado: “‘Mestre, what does the eagle on top of the moon mean?’ To which Mestre Irineu answered: ‘Chico, what happens if you take off the accent from the word “eagle”?’ (Again: in Portuguese, the word for ‘eagle’ is ‘águia’. Without the accent it would be pronounced ‘a-guia’, which means ‘the guide.’)¹⁵

At some point Clara told Irineu to prepare himself in order to receive the spiritual mission that she had to give to him. In response, he went deep into the rainforest and undertook a rigorous eight-day long diet, common to ayahuasqueros and vegetarianistas, eating only boiled *macaxeira* (manioc root) and drinking only water or lemon grass tea with no sugar, all while avoiding contact with anyone, especially women. (Some accounts say the fasting only lasted six days, and others say it went on for eleven days.) And, not surprisingly, during this time Irineu frequently drank ayahuasca. Which meant (according to several narratives of this time period) that he underwent several days of intense *mirações* [visionary/mystical experiences], often while sitting in the space created by the raised roots of a certain type of tropical tree, in which the roots acted like a type of natural hut. During his *mirações*, it was as if everything became alive, and the spirits of the caboclos (the native people) would come near. It is said that he usually received

them without fear. But when things got too intense, he would shoot off his rifle into the sky in order to scare off any spirits that he didn't want to be there with him.¹⁶ And during one of these times of intense *mirações*, he saw the moon coming towards him, with an eagle perched in the center. In this vision, a lady appeared within the moon and came to him, in order to deliver the Doctrine to him.¹⁷

Another story from this time period comes from dona [“Ms.”] Percília Ribeiro (also at times referred to by her married name, Percília Matos da Silva). As Mestre’s personal assistant for decades, Dona Percília was a crucially important woman in the development of the Santo Daime and arguably knew Mestre better than almost anyone. She was the “*zeladora*” or “caretaker” of Mestre’s *hinário* (his hymnal – the collection of his hymns). It was her responsibility to write down the hymns that Mestre received and to make sure that they were sung correctly (since Mestre could not read or write until late in his life.) Dona Percília says that after Irineu spent eight days in the forest alone, not even seeing “the skirt of a woman . . . the Queen appeared and she said that he was ready to receive what she had to deliver to him . . . She told Mestre that he could ask for whatever he wanted . . . Mestre asked to be the best healer of the world, and he asked her to put all curing powers into that drink . . . It was also then that she said that the drink should be called daime. It’s a request, a prayer that we make to God . . . ‘dai-me’ [“give me”] health, give me love . . . We can ask for everything because this drink is divinity itself, it has everything that we need.”¹⁸ (Although dona Percilia Rebeiro says that this was the moment in which Irineu was inspired to refer to ayahuasca as “daime,” it appears that the term “daime” only began to be used after the beginning of the Santo Daime tradition, more than a decade later in

Rio Branco. I have therefore chosen to continue to call the drink ayahuasca until I discuss that later time period in the development of the Santo Daime tradition.)

[Sidebar: Several Santo Daime elders claim that even with these sorts of powerful experiences, it still took Irineu five years of drinking ayahuasca before he stopped doubting the value of what he was receiving, as well as the nature of his mission. As a way to help him to overcome his doubts, it is said that Clara would give Irineu very detailed premonitions of what he'd see in the near future. For example, according to Francisco Granjeiro, at one point she told him that he would soon be clearing such and such a path in the woods, and when he'd go down the path he'd see a certain small tree, and then, in a dip in the ground, he'd see a certain type of wood, and that then he should look to his right and there'd be this other type of tree, and underneath that tree there'd be a deer for him to shoot and bring back to eat. And hearing all of this, he said to himself, "That can't be true."¹⁹ And then, according to Granjeiro's testimony: "He forgot all about what she had told him until he was in the forest and he remembered, seeing [everything that had been foretold, including] that tree and the deer lying down underneath it."²⁰

The Círculo de Regeneração e Fé

According to the authors of *Eu Venho de Longe*, the initiatory period of Irineu (that is, both the sessions with don Pizango, as well as the early visions of Clara and the eight-day diet in the rainforest) probably took place between 1914 and 1916, in the areas around the two small towns of Brasileia and Cobija (separated by the Acre river) and in the seringais of Peru.²¹ During this time, while taking ayahuasca in the frontier land between Bolivia, Peru and Brazil, Irineu received his first hymn, "*Lua Branca*" / "White Moon." Fernando da La Rocque Couto says that

before this hymn was called Lua Branca, it was referred to as the “Peruvian hymn.”²² (However, as other scholars have pointed out, saying that the hymn was received “in Peru,” in the context of early 20th century Acre, was basically the same as saying that it was received in the wilderness, outside Brazilian national territory.)

During this time period, Irineu would have been able to travel frequently throughout the region, getting to know the ayahuasca chiefs/leaders, as well as the Caxinawá Indian groups living in both Brazil and Peru.²³ And in 1916, while living Brasiléia, Irineu joined with Antônio and André Costa to found the “*Círculo de Regeneração e Fé*” (the Circle of Regeneration and Faith), the first ayahuasca center that we know of in Brazil.²⁴

[Sidebar: The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* note that the CRF was possibly inspired by the *Círculo Esotérico da Comunhão do Pensamento* (the Esoteric Circle of the Communion of Thought/Mind), an occult/esoteric group that was founded by Antonio Olívio Rodrigues, a Portuguese man, on June 27th, 1909 in São Paulo. This esoteric institution, which drew upon the teachings of figures such as Swami Vivekananda and Madame Blavatsky, was known throughout Brazil via the dissemination of a publication called *Revista do Pensamento* (“Thought Magazine”). (Mestre and many of his followers decades later became members of the Esoteric Circle). The authors made the link between these two groups based on a document that belonged to the Costa family. On this document, originally dated 1920, with the date 1942 handwritten over it, is a seal/coat of arms with the slogan “Harmony, Love and Truth,” which is very similar to the slogan of the Esoteric Circle, “Harmony, Love, Truth, and Justice.”]²⁵

For a long time, the location of the meetings varied, sometimes taking place in clearings in the forest, or in the houses of rubber tapper friends, wherever they could avoid the watchful eyes of the police, who were convinced that people in the CRF were practicing witchcraft, a stigmatization that was amplified by the fact that most of the members of the CRF were blacks. The police saw the Costa brothers and Irineu – all from Maranhão – as well as the other members of the CFR, as “*curandeiros*” (spiritual healers) who used “poisonous substances,” in direct violation of a Brazilian law from 1890 [articles 156, 157, 158 in the Penal Code] that made the practice of “*curandeirismo*” (spiritual healing) and magic, as well as the use of “poisonous substances,” illegal.²⁶ (This law was also, for many years, used to persecute members of Candomblé and Umbanda – two Afro-Brazilian religions.) Some of the meetings of the CRF took place in Brazil (the headquarters was in Brasíleia), but some also took place in Bolivia or in Peru (when the CRF members, in essence, had to cross the border in order to get away from the police.) Beatriz Costa, a daughter of André Costa, remembered how when she was little, maybe six or seven years old, she was attending one of these meetings held in a clearing in the forest. The CRF members were, fortunately, forewarned that the police were coming to imprison everyone, so they quickly left the forest and went home, and made it appear that they were simply having a party or a dance, so that when the police arrived, all that the police saw were people dancing, nothing more.²⁷

Not all of the encounters with the police went so well, however. For example, at one point Irineu was on the bank of a river (probably at the border between Brazil and Bolivia), trying to flee from the police of Cobija. Apparently (according to his nephew Daniel Serra), Irineu decided to face his persecutors, and even grabbed one of them and threw him against the others. He then

ran to the river under a hail of bullets shot at him by the Bolivian police. While swimming across the river, he was hit by a bullet in his right hand, close to his little finger, leaving a permanent scar, which was registered in his identity card.

It seems that the CRF sessions were strongly influenced by Spiritism (a mediumistic religious movement founded in the late 19th century by Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail, more commonly known by his pen name, Allan Kardec) in that various spiritual entities, identified as princes, princesses, queens, kings, and marshals would speak through Antônio Costa. These beings would deliver messages and guidance to the participants about how to handle difficult life situations or they would offer herbal and even more traditional medical prescriptions to deal with health problems. Everything would be written down by the secretary, and when the beings would finish speaking, they would, via the secretary, sign their name.

These entities would be invoked in the CRF meetings via “*chamados*” (“calls”) that is, specific sets of words that were recited and/or sung within a ritual context in order to summon the presence of various spiritual beings with names like “*Rainha da Floresta*,” (“Queen of the Forest”) and “*Príncipe Aristomundos*” (Prince Aristomundos) and so on. The beings called *Rei* (“King”) Titango, Rei Agarrube, and Rei Tintuma were also part of the pantheon of entities that communicated during the sessions of the CRF.

[FDD: These beings – understood by daimistas to refer to the three kings of the Orient – are referenced in Mestre’s hinário/hymn collection in hymn #64, “*Eu Peço Jesus Cristo*”/ “I Ask

Jesus Christ,” which was received by Mestre in the beginning of the 1940’s, in Vila Ivonete, on the outskirts of Rio Branco.]

Members of the CRF were typically given titles of nobility or military titles, similar to those attributed to the entities. So, for example, Antônio Costa was the Marshal (or President), André Costa and Irineu had the rank of General, while Josephina Ortiz Costa, the wife of Antônio Costa, had the title of queen, while others in the group had the rank of major, lieutenant, sergeant and so on. It is said that they used a white uniform, with blue details, where the ranks were marked by insignia sewn onto the clothing.²⁸

Given the intensity of the police persecution, it is not surprising that quarrels arose among the members of the center, and at some point it appears that Irineu had disagreements with Antônio Costa (the accounts vary as to whether the quarrels were over money or the leadership of the center) and Irineu left the CRF, and Brasileia, moving to Rio Branco.²⁹ When old time daimista followers of Mestre Irineu were asked about the CRF, they would often say that the center disbanded almost immediately after Mestre left, but one of the descendants of the Costa brothers became interested in researching the CRF, and in his research he discovered a book that contained the places and dates of the CFR meetings.³⁰ Based on this newly discovered evidence, it appears that the CRF was actually operative for decades after Irineu’s departure, functioning from 1916 to 1943, with a suspension of meeting (for unknown reasons) between 1926 and 1936.³¹

[Sidebar: It is possible that one of the few remnants of the presence of the *Círculo de Regeneração e Fé* in the Santo Daime are the letters CRF that are stitched onto the left pocket of the white blouses worn by women during the more informal “blue works,” such as Concentrations. However, it is more commonly understood that CRF stands for “*Centro da Rainha da Floresta*,”/ “Center of the Queen of the Forest” which was first (informal) name that Mestre Irineu gave to his Santo Daime center.]

It is quite likely that disputes with the CRF were not the only reason that Irineu decided to leave Brasileia. He also possibly left due to the tempestuous home life he had with his common-law wife, Emília Rosa Amorim. In the middle of 1916 and 1917, Irineu met and became the “*companheiro*” (common-law husband) of dona Emília, a white woman, who was either widowed or separated from her previous companion, and was the mother of a boy called Elias Manga da Silva. (Elias who was already seven years old when Irineu met his mother and apparently rejected Irineu because he was black).³² Dona Emília didn’t accept Irineu’s use of ayahuasca, nor his participation in the CRF, since both were quite different from her own religious beliefs. It is also likely that she shared the commonly-held belief that ayahuasca was a demonic drink and that the companions of Irineu were his accomplices in a demonic cult. (Remember: Irineu himself struggled with those same beliefs early on.) Irineu had two children with Emília: a boy who didn’t receive Irineu’s last name, called Valcívrio Gênésio da Silva, born on January 20th, 1918, and a girl, born around September of 1918, baptized with the name of Valcirene (the girl, sadly, only lived for around a year and a half.) When Irineu left for Rio Branco, Valcívrio remained in his mother’s care. He was only reunited with his (then ailing) father decades later, on August 15, 1970.

Rio Branco

When Irineu left Brasileia, he re-located to Rio Branco, the capital of Acre, arriving there on January 2, 1920. By this time the rubber tapping industry in the area had been economically devastated. The downfall of Brazilian rubber began in 1876 when Henry Wickham, working with the British government, removed some 70,000 seeds of rubber trees (*Hevea brasiliensis*) from Brazil. These seeds were then germinated at several British botanical gardens and eventually were cultivated in extensive British plantations in British Asian colonies (primarily in Malaysia, but also in Ceylon, India, and Borneo). The production from these cultivated rubber trees surpassed Brazilian output in 1913, and by 1915, Asian rubber represented more than two-thirds of the world's total supply of rubber. By 1919, the Asian plantations were producing nearly ten times as much rubber every year as Brazil's highest annual yield, at much cheaper prices, and many former rubber tappers were forced abandon the seringais and migrated to the cities.

Three days after arriving in Rio Branco, at the age of 29, Irineu joined the *Força Policial* – the military police (also called the “Territorial Guard” or the “Forest Guards” by other scholars) – an institution that represented the power of federal government in the territory of Acre before it became a state. Entering into the *Força Policial*, Irineu went from being persecuted by the police to serving in that institution itself. Nonetheless, Irineu discretely continued to drink Daime on his days off, since both the vine and the leaf were easily found around Rio Branco, and in this way he continued his studies with the drink, albeit by himself. At some point soon, however, he became friends with another black man in the *Força Policial* named Germano Guilherme. Germano, who was suspicious about Irineu's occasional disappearances, asked Irineu if he could

accompany him on his days off, and in this way, also began to drink the Daime. (They eventually became so close that they each affectionately referred to each other as “*Maninho*”/ “Little Brother.”)

During Irineu’s time in the Força Policial, he also met the person who would become his longtime friend and defender, Manuel Fontenele de Castro. Irineu and Fontenele de Castro both began their career in the military at the same time. However, because of Irineu’s lack of education (as well as, almost certainly, the color of his skin), he did not advance in rank, whereas his better educated (and white) friend received numerous promotions, eventually becoming a colonel. Fontelele was an extremely important military and political leader during his 47 years of living in Acre. He even ended up being appointed the Governor of the Federal Territory of Acre three times. Nonetheless, throughout it all, Fontelele always maintained his friendship with Irineu and even (as we will see) defended Irineu from the persecution of the police in several instances. (Irineu left the Força Policial around 1929 to become an agriculturalist.)

In 1928, Irineu met Francisca, a woman who was twenty years older than him (he was thirty-eight years old and she was fifty-eight) and she became his common-law wife. It was while living with dona Francisca that the following event occurred (told by his nephew, Daniel Serra): “Mestre went to live in a . . . piece of property, [where] everyone who lived there died. After four or five people died there, he decided, ‘I want to live there in that place. I want to take care of it.’ So, he went there. It was during the time that he lived with dona Francisca. When he put their baggage on the ground, he said to her: ‘Listen, don’t drink the water. Wait here, I’m going to see what’s going on.’ Then he went searching for where the water was coming from. Then,

when he found it, he found a certain type of plant that is strongly poisonous . . . Within a week or two [after drinking the water], people would die. He pulled that plant out from the source of the water and after that, no one died on that property. The year that he lived there, everyone was healthy.”³³ Mestre and dona Francisca did not live there long, however, and eventually relocated in 1932 to a former seringa (rubber tree “plantation”) that the government had bought in order to form a “colony” of farmers, a location called Vila Ivonete.

Mestre Irineu Begins the Santo Daime in Rio Branco

A couple of years before this move, however, on May 26th, 1930, Irineu, along with two of his friends (Zé das Neves and Terto), and perhaps dona Francisca, did the first “official” session with Daime – a concentration work. (Guilherme Germano did not participate in this session, but it’s not clear why.)³⁴ It is generally believed that a few years after he began to lead public sessions with the Daime he began to be popularly referred to as “*Mestre*” (“Master”) Irineu (although many of his old-time followers referred to him as “*Padrinho*” – “Godfather” – Irineu) and a community began to gather around him (his first followers were friends from the Força Policial, e.g., Germano Guilherme, João Pereira and João Leão, along with the baker, Zé das Neves). The title ‘Mestre’ was often given to the ayahuasqueiros of the vegetalista tradition, but Mestre Irineu seems to have often joked about this title, saying that people called him Mestre because he was a “master of carpentry.”³⁵

During the concentration works of this time period, the participants would take Daime and remain silent for an hour and a half. During this time Mestre Irineu often did “chamados,” (“calls”) that consisted of whistled melodies or songs sung quietly by himself with the goal of

invoking a variety of spiritual beings to overcome some obstacle or to cure sickness. Chamados are similar to the *icaros* in the *vegetalista/ayahuasceiro* ceremonies – musical compositions that call entities from the astral plane (e.g., *caboclos*, the spirits of native Americans) in order to bring force, guidance, advice, cures and to act as oracles. As dona Percília Rebeiro says, “He did so many cures . . . such beautiful calls/invocations (“chamados”). The calls were beautiful, but he didn’t teach them to everyone, because people didn’t know how to use them . . . He said that he didn’t teach these chamados to others because they didn’t know how to use them [appropriately,]; after he taught them, they’d do things that weren’t good; that’s why he didn’t teach the chamados to people.”³⁶ Similarly, in an interview in 2007, Luiz Mendes said that “In the concentration works, those who paid attention could hear the ‘chamados’ that Mestre did. He had several . . . each one different. I don’t know if they had words or not. He didn’t teach them. The ‘chamados’ were “*solfejados*” [where a person sings sounds, but no words] and whistled. It was a really subtle thing. I don’t know if everyone would perceive it, it was really quiet . . . He would do it when there was a need to heal. You know, this is serious business, because if you call, it [the spiritual entity] really comes, and if a person isn’t prepared, if he doesn’t know what to do with what arrives, then he could even get sick. I think that’s why Mestre didn’t pass the chamados on to anyone.”³⁷

[Sidebar: It appears that Mestre Irineu did in fact pass the chamados on to someone: Dona Percília Rebeiro. She arrived in the Santo Daime, along with her father in 1934, and was the only disciple to receive chamados directly from him, so that she could “care for” them (that is, be the one responsible to commit them to memory). With her death in October 27, 2004, it appears that the memory of these chamados has been lost, since she apparently did not pass them on to

anyone else.³⁸ The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe*, however, created a partial list of Mestre's chamados, the majority of which are believed to have been "received" (that is, bestowed from the spiritual world) when he lived in Brasileia.³⁹ The list includes three separate chamados for Rei Titango, Rei Tituma, and Rei Agarrube (the three kings of the Orient). There is also one for Maraximbé (a "severe" spiritual being whose job it was/is to punish wrongdoers). Some of the names of the chamados, like Maraximbé, Tamarancá, Manacá, etc., probably come from the indigenous Tupi linguistic matrix, along with several of the names found in Mestre's first hymns, such as Tuperci, Jaci, Ripi, Tarumim, Currupiraguá and Soloína – indications of Mestre's contact with this native culture during his early years in this region.⁴⁰]

[Sidebar: Certain of Mestre's hymns were/are also used to invoke the aid of spiritual beings, and in this way, these beings are said to "belong to the hinário." An example would be Tucum, invoked in hymn #108 of Mestre's *hinário*/hymnal, "*O Cruzeiro*" "The Cross." This hymn is typically sung three times, acapella, like some chamados.]⁴¹

[FDD: Hymn #2 of Mestre's *hinário* ("Tuperci") probably refers to one of the many enchanted entities in the daimista pantheon. Luis Carlos Teixeira de Freitas claims that Tuperci is one of many "caboclo entities or enchanted beings that are present in the beginning of the formation of the daimista doctrine," and suggests that this hymn is a chamado, a "call."⁴² However, Juarez Duarte Bomfim, the author of *O Jardim das Belas Flores*, a commentary on Mestre's hymns, speculates that perhaps Tuperci refers to "*tu de per si*" – that is, "you per se," you alone, and that perhaps the mysterious "me" in the hymn is the divine self within, the divine speaking in-and-through the hymns. Bomfim notes that while Tuperci is probably an entity of the spiritual world

invoked by Mestre, nonetheless it's puzzling: why would Mestre call an entity who isn't divine, who isn't evolved, who doesn't know the doctrine? He goes on to suggest that perhaps when hearing and singing this hymn, we can hear it as directed towards ourselves, with all of our doubts and weaknesses. Bomfim also notes that because Mestre often refers to his hymns as "flowers," perhaps "*minha flor*" ("my flower") refers to the message of the Doctrine. In addition, scholars note that the color of Jaci is the color of the moon (Bomfim notes that "Jaci" means "moon" among Brazilian Indians). Jaci is also a type of palm tree whose dry leaves cover homes in the Amazon, and which has a bright yellow, almost gold color. So, the term "Jaci" has the connotations of a sheltering and golden moon.]]⁴³

[FDD: Hymn #3 "*Ripi*" also appears to be an invocation of an astral entity, again, perhaps a caboclo. Dona Percília however, says that it is directed towards a brother or sister who arrives at a work, participates, but is not able to learn and stays around causing trouble.⁴⁴ Bomfim also speculates that the first two verses may also be simply a "*cantarolar*," i.e., singing or humming of syllables/sounds that don't have any explicit meaning, like the sounds of birds. (Nonetheless, like the icaros of vegetalistas, these sounds are thought to carry with them/express divine power.)]]⁴⁵

[FDD: Hymn #4, "*Formosa*" / "Beautiful" focuses on Tarumim, a "*Mãe das Águas*" (an entity of *pajelança*, a shamanic/religious practice in Maranhão.)⁴⁶ She is an elemental of nature (specifically of water), an entity of the Brazilian indigenous peoples. This hymn also reveals the presence of indigenous religiosity in the initial formation of the Doctrine. It was thought that if a person recited this hymn three times in a row, you could make it rain. Dona Percília told a story

of her brother-in-law. During a bad drought he said: “I’m going to call Tarumim.” He sang the hymn three times and created a huge storm that tore down everything, including the roof of his house.⁴⁷

[FDD: Hymn #5, “*Refeição*” or “Meal” is not sung during Santo Daime works, but rather, is sung before and after meals in some Santo Daime communities. *Before* the meal you sing “É quem dá o nosso pão” whereas *after* the meal you sing “Foi quem deu o nosso pão.”⁴⁸

[FDD: Hymn #6, “Papai Paxá”/ “Dad Paxá” begins as a chamado (again, like those that are used in the rituals of ayahuasqueiros). “*Equior*” (which is also present in hymn #18) is a cry that was commonly used by cowboys in Maranhão to herd cattle. “Equior” means “come, gather, reunite.”⁴⁹ “Equior” therefore doesn’t refer to a spirit entity, but rather is an interjection used to call someone or something. Dona Percília confirms that Equior isn’t a divine being of the celestial court, but rather, the term means “I am here because I am called.” Papai Paxá, Barum, Marum were probably Amer-Indian spirit entities who were called on for healing.]⁵⁰

The fact that so many of these chamados and early hymns invoked beings with names of indigenous origins appears to indicate that in the early years of the Santo Daime, Mestre gave a lot of value to this culture. But because these types of names began to become much less frequent later on, it appears that the influence of the indigenous culture became to diminish, whereas the presence of Catholicism and esotericism began to increase. The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* liken this shift to a type of “whitening” of the Santo Daime tradition, pointing out that

the “whitening” of the Santo Daime even extended to photographs of Mestre himself, “whose negro features at times were modified or attenuated.”⁵¹

Healing in the early Santo Daime Tradition

Mestre’s chamados very much resembled the ‘*icaros*’ of *vegetalistas*, including the fact that many of them didn’t have words, and were only melodies that were whistled. The word ‘*icaro*’ is a modification of the Quecha verb “*ikaray*,” which means “to blow smoke to cure.”⁵² “*Ikaray*” refers to the *vegetalista* practice of blowing tobacco smoke over clients or over the *ayahuasca* that was offered to those who were sick.⁵³ In the early days, Mestre Irineu did an analogous practice, in which he blew tobacco smoke over the *daime* in order to make what was called “cured *daime*.” (Luis Mendes said that this type of practice still persisted in the 1960s.)⁵⁴ As Daniel Serra notes, “When some sick person would arrive asking for *daime* in order to be cured, Mestre would take it [the *daime*] to their home and [then] . . . he took some tobacco that he himself made, or a cigar . . . And he’d blow the smoke within the glass [of the *daime*] and then he’d cover the glass with his hand for a bit, give a little puff . . . and make a small concentration . . . and then uncover the glass to give the *daime* to the sick person. It was called *daime* ‘cured’ by Mestre.” (I’m fascinated by the linguistic wordplay here, since the *daime* was both “cured” like tobacco, and via this ritual, the *daime* was specifically empowered for curing illness.)⁵⁵

Mestre would also at times (again, like an *ayahuasqueiro*), use tobacco in other ways as well during Santo Daime works (it is important to realize that the tobacco that was ritually used by Mestre was handmade and was quite different from commercial tobacco). For instance, if a person was suffering in the work, perhaps struggling because the Force was too strong to handle,

he might light a cigar and blow smoke on the person's head while passing his hand over it in order to ease the person's suffering. But as the authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* note, Mestre rarely passed on the techniques involving the use of tobacco to his followers. And although old-time followers of Mestre remember him saying "the good ayahuasquero uses tobacco," he did not encourage any of them to utilize tobacco during works. And at this point in time, most daimistas frown upon the use of tobacco.⁵⁶

[Sidebar: However, many daimistas do use "*rapé*" (pronounced "ha-pé"), an indigenous snuff that contains tobacco as one of its primary ingredients. Mestre and his followers used rapé frequently (it was said to prevent colds), and *Eu Venho de Longe* even contains Mestre's recipe for rapé.]⁵⁷

In the first few years, concentration works with the Daimé typically happened once a week, and at times these works overtly focused on healing someone who was sick (although Mestre's work as a healer was not restricted to these sessions). One of the main reasons that people came to Mestre was to receive healing, since he was increasingly gaining a reputation in Rio Branco as a powerful and effective healer – in this way demonstrating the efficacy of the gift that he had requested during one of his earliest contacts with Clara, i.e., the gift of being a powerful healer. Luis Mendes says that "After fulfilling the diet, she appeared before him, clear as the light of day. She said that she was ready to give him whatever he asked. He asked that she make him one of the best healers of the world. She told him that he would not be able to earn money doing that. 'My Mother, I don't want to earn money.' 'Very good! But you're going to work a lot. Lots of work!' He asked that she put everything related to healing into the drink. She [agreed] and

gave it to him . . . He [then] went to work to acquire [more knowledge], perfecting himself, each day receiving the powers that he needed to have. He said that this phase took about five years.”⁵⁸

In many ways, Mestre was not only the linchpin of the growing religious community, serving as a spiritual teacher, a godfather, and a benefactor, but he (crucially) also took on the mission of a divinely empowered healer, to such a degree that both the Daime and Mestre Irineu himself were inextricably linked to healing in the eyes of those within his community. The numerous people who were healed by Mestre often, understandably, became his followers, along with their families. These were people for whom modern medicine was either not available or who had come to Mestre as the last resort, when all other medical options had failed. (There’s a beautiful story in which a man came up to Mestre after trying everything else, and Mestre told him: “Don’t lose hope because the doctors gave up on you – God hasn’t given up on you. Therefore, let’s wait for/hope for the voice of God.”)⁵⁹

One striking story of the centrality of Mestre’s role as a healer took place in the late 1940s, after Mestre had already relocated to the site later known as Alto Santo. In the words of Francisco Cal Ovejero: “They would say, for example, [without any good reason] that when men and women would go to his [Mestre’s] house, he would give them a finger-length of his drink and they’d get all dazed and then he’d bring the women to the forest where he would do with them what he wanted. These stories convinced Holdernes Maia, a lieutenant of the Army, to bring his loaded 45 caliber pistol with him when he [decided] to go to [Alto Santo.] Holdernes thought: ‘If it’s true what they say, I’m going to shoot everyone.’ For Holdernes, this was his last chance. For

the last sixteen months he had been in hospitals in Rio de Janeiro . . . He was going from one to the other because his cirrhosis of the liver was terminal, and the most that he could do was to spend the last months of his life with his family. So, he returned to Rio Branco to wait for the end with his wife and four kids. Holderness found out that in the city there was a black man who was a healer, and he decided to ‘go for broke’ to save his life. He had to work hard to arrange for a horse one winter afternoon, and then had to go through enormous difficulties to arrive at [Alto Santo.] It was a really difficult journey. He didn’t have the capacity to control his bowels, and he arrived at Alto Santo yellow, exhausted, and soaked in his feces. There he got down from the horse and a stocky black man who smoked pure tobacco came out to greet him. In a few words Holdernes Maia told him about his situation and [Mestre] listened with ease and said, ‘I was expecting you. God doesn’t give up on anyone. I’m going to cure you here with this drink. Do you want to be healed?’ Holdernes warned him that he was afraid. The lieutenant then looked on as [Mestre] served him half a glass of a brown liquid and he blew a mouthful of smoke on him from his cigarette. On this day, Lieutenant Holdernes only had one dose, and soon after drinking the daime he began to feel bad. Strong sensations of vertigo arose, and that feeling of badness was threatening to bring him down. Holdernes did his prayers and felt as if something had gone away within him. The skin that covered his liver was loose, [filled] with rotten liquids, which suddenly went to his stomach. He vomited all of that, feeling with each spurt of vomit that his entire body was getting relief from it. Holdernes got better after his crisis and began to attend sessions at Alto Santo. A friendship between him and Mestre Irineu arose which lasted throughout the years. He became a Major in the Army . . . In this way he created one of the most effective shields against the persecutions to which Mestre Irineu was subject.”⁶⁰

There were also, of course, some illnesses that Mestre Irineu was not able to cure – especially those cases that were understood to be the result of a type of spiritual debt (perhaps incurred during a past life). Perhaps the clearest example of this sort of illness was the suffering endured by Germano Guilherme, arguably Mestre’s closest friend and disciple. They had known each other since serving together in the Força Policial. Dona Percília said that “Germano was sick for many years. He had a sickness in his legs. He would take daime and he fought to cure himself. Mestre would say that there would be a work for him in order for him to feel well. But he [Germano] fought against this, he didn’t do what Mestre ordered and the time for healing passed by. . . [Then] one day he took daime to see why he could not get better. The first thing he saw was a man with a sugar plantation. That was him [in a previous incarnation]. He was one of those powerful men in the time of slavery. He was one of those bad people who ordered those wretched poor people to be thrashed, so that blood poured down their backs. Afterwards he saw his mother pregnant, with him . . . He would say that [those leg wounds] were a divine sentence. He had to undergo them. Because he was paying back his debt to God.”⁶¹ After years of suffering, Germano Guilherme died in the middle of 1964.

It appears that Mestre Irineu would not promise anything to those coming to him in need, only that he would consult with the divine Mother to see if he could find the solution to the problem or the remedy for that specific illness. Nonetheless, the accounts of Mestre’s healing continued to spread, increasing his prestige as a spiritual leader (and increasing the suspicions of the local authorities who felt threatened by his influence over the growing rural community that was forming in Vila Ivonete.)

Mestre Irineu was perhaps most well known for having cured many cases of malaria with the Daime. But, as a healer, he would not just give Daime as the answer to every illness. In fact, at times he would recommend pills and syrups from the pharmacy, often having been guided to do so after having drunk Daime as a way to find, within his *mirações* (visionary/mystical experiences) the remedy that the spiritual Beings would recommend. Other divinely inspired remedies included infusions, compresses, urine (either drunk or used topically), scalding the patient's feet with hot liquid, or even more exotic remedies such as liquid from strained and boiled old bones, or reciting certain prayers while being washed with Daime, or strict sexual abstinence.

It is likely that Mestre Irineu drew upon the knowledge he had gained about different methods of healing from his time with various indigenous cultures and the *vegetalista* tradition, in which sickness and other life-problems were thought to result not only from organic imbalances, but also because of the envy of others or because of sorcery. And increasingly, these shamanic perspectives on the cause of sickness were complimented by understandings drawn from popular Catholicism, as well as by the esoteric tradition of the Esoteric Circle of the Communion of Thought. For these traditions, healing is not simply a question of fixing the physical cause of an illness, but rather, more fundamentally, emerges out of a powerful confrontation of the patient with the deeper spiritual causes of the illness. In this way, taking the Daime was not so much seen as a medicine whose chemical properties directly altered the person's physiological makeup, but rather, it was understood as a catalyst for a powerful shift in awareness during which the patients could gain knowledge of the underlying moral and spiritual causes of their difficulties, and then (via the appropriate response of repentance, forgiveness, charity, the

fulfillment of a vow and so on), they could make the changes that were needed in their lives, thereby freeing themselves from the foundational (but often hidden) cause of the physical illness itself.

[Sidebar: There are many ways in which we can make sense of the suffering that often accompanies drinking Daime – the vomiting and the diarrhea; the sweating; the alternations of blood pressure; the diminishment of motor-control; the sense of disorientation; the powerful emergence of emotions such as fear, anger, regret, etc.; as well as the brute, inchoate, raw energy of suffering-itself that seemingly oozes from every cell during some Santo Daime works. Within the CEFLURIS tradition, all of these physical and psychological and energetic ways of suffering can either be seen as a form of mediumship (whether incorporating specific suffering spirits or tapping into more impersonal strata of dense and dark negative energies that are swirling around the *salão*/the ritual space) or they can be understood as “*peia*.” It appears that from the earliest times within Mestre’s community, *peia* was understood as a type of disciplinary punishment inflicted upon the members for their moral transgressions by various non-physical beings who used *peia* as a way to cleanse these moral failures and to bring increased awareness of the need for repentance and to catalyze changes in how these daimistas were living their lives. (Other daimista terms for purifying moments of difficulty, whether in works or in life in general are “*apuração*” or “*apuro*.”) Daimistas then (and still today) would talk about being “thrashed” by the daime,” or “hit with the board,” or “the whip descending,” or they would say that “the old witch is coming to talk with [them].”⁶² The most well-known personification of “*peia*” is Maraximbé – a spiritual being of the daimista pantheon, described at times as a short, dark-

skinned caboclo who carries a whip in his hand, a “severe” being who by punishing the doctrinal and disciplinary transgressions of members, cleanses them.]

Doctrinal Innovations: 1935-1940

Beginning in 1935, Mestre Irineu began to formalize the scheduling of the works, with Wednesday (typically) as the day that was set aside for works that were dedicated to healing, while Saturday was (again, typically) the day for “normal” concentration works. During this time period, both works were externally quite similar to each other – the major difference between them was simply that healing works were done with the intention to help someone in the community who needed assistance to overcome health issues (or to resolve various life crises). These two works were also quite different from what concentration and healing works look like currently, in that there were no *fardas*/uniforms and no hymns were sung (the works were only occasionally punctuated with Mestre’s softly whistled or hummed chamados.)

During this same time, Mestre Irineu also began to organize another type of work: the “*hinário*” or dancing work, in which participants would (at least from the second *hinário* work on) dance together, all using the same simple steps, while singing all of the hymns – i.e., the *hinário*/hymnal – of Mestre Irineu (and others). The first *hinário* work took place on June 23rd, 1935, during the evening of St. John (we’ll see that this night repeatedly stands out as a significant date for innovations/important events in the Santo Daime.) Because Mestre’s house was too small for even the few number of people who wanted to participate in this new type of work, it was held on the veranda of the home of Maria Marques Viera, wife of Damião Marques, better known as Maria Damião (in essence, Maria [of] Damião). (Throughout the 1930s, as

many new followers and their families arrived, and the terrace of the house of Maria Damião became too small for the Santo Daime works, Mestre Irineu at some point gathered all of his followers for a group work day in order to construct an open sided, thatched roofed pavilion (a “*ramada*”) close to his house that became the new location for the works.)

[Sidebar: A crucially important figure in the Santo Daime, Maria Damião was one of Mestre’s earliest disciples. She (like three other key early disciples: Germano Guilherme, João Pereira, and Antônio Gomes da Silva) received her own hinário – in her case: “*O Mensageiro*” / “The Messenger.”]

[FDD: Germano Guilherme figures prominently in a fascinating story regarding hymn #13, *Estrela D’Alva*. This hymn refers to Venus, the Morning Star. Luiz Mendes do Nascimento tells us that one night, in concentration, Mestre Irineu saw the Morning Star. “Then he looked at it and thought to himself: ‘One of these days I’m going to take Daime and go to that star.’ Some days later he went there, [but] only with the right to see what was within it. And it was ‘all made of glass, the most beautiful thing in the world.’ And he saw a beautiful dwelling place, carpeted and decorated, within the Morning Star. Mestre said that it was truly made of glass – he touched it with his hand and felt that it was glass. He touched it, even though it was invisible. Then he asked his [divine] mother: ‘My Mother, tell me one thing. Why is there such an excellent, beautiful dwelling place, and although I looked for an occupant, I didn’t see one?’ She said, ‘My son, just like this one, there are many, many others waiting for a child with the merit to be able to come here to live.’” After his return from his spiritual journey to Venus, Mestre Irineu told “Maninho,” the loving nickname that he used for Germano Guilherme (it means “little brother),

that he had gone to that star. “He asked Maninho, ‘Do you believe that I went to that star?’ And Germano replied, ‘I believe it – didn’t you say so?’ And Mestre didn’t reveal anything further. But Germano thought to himself: ‘I’m also going to take Daime and go there!’ And when it was the right day, he took Daime and he went right there! And he saw everything really well. After seeing everything, he returned [to earth] and went to Mestre, saying, ‘Maninho [Germano also called Mestre by the same nickname], you told me that you went to that star, right?’ ‘I did Germano!’ ‘Well, I also went!’ ‘Then tell me how it is there.’ Then Germano described everything to him, and it was just like what Mestre saw. And Mestre told him, ‘You indeed went there.’”^{63]}

During that first hinário work everyone got together around six o’clock, prayed the rosary, drank Daime, and then (while remaining seated – dancing only came during the next hinário work) they sang the nine hymns that they had during this time, three times in a row, continuing on in this way throughout the night until dawn (with a long break around midnight for a big supper). There are differing accounts of exactly which hymns were sung. In one interview, Dona Percília said that they sang the two received by Germano Guilherme, the two of João Pereira, and the five received by Mestre. But Saturnino (Luis Mendes’ son) says that only the first four of Mestre’s hymns were sung, and that his fifth hymn, “Refeição,” was sung as a blessing for the big dinner, and that Maria Damião’s first hymn was the ninth hymn that was sung.

[Sidebar: As more of Mestre’s disciples began to receive hymns, he decided that it was important to ascertain which hymns were genuine, and not simply “invented.” After taking on this task himself for a while, Mestre then gave the job to dona Percília Ribeiro. As I pointed out above,

for almost forty years, dona Percília was Mestre's right-hand person: she not only helped him to "correct" the hymns received by others, she also organized the women's side of the works (the "female battalion"); she helped sew the *fardas* (the ritual uniforms); she wrote documents for him; she directed the works of healing and exorcism; and, importantly, she was the 'zeladora' (the caretaker; the one who memorized) Mestre's hinário, *O Cruzeiro*.⁶⁴ (She was also apparently the person who came up with the idea of numbering Mestre's hymns.) Daniel Serra, Mestre's nephew, said that Mestre even came to identify dona Percília as the reincarnation of his sister Verônica, who had died young in São Vicente Férrer.⁶⁵ In an interview, dona Percília said that "The brothers and sisters would receive hymns and would come to present them to him. Those that he approved were approved. When he didn't approve them, he sent them to me. What he told me to do was this: whichever wasn't correct I could cut. But I didn't like to do this because I liked people. So, I'd say, 'Take daime and go and correct your hymn.' I always said this. There were those who didn't say anything more about their hymn. . . His [Mestre's] already came corrected [she laughs], I didn't have to correct them. [However,] at times he would ask me if there was a melody that was similar to [the newly received hymn], so that there wouldn't be two or three with the same melody."⁶⁶]

[FDD: Mestre Irineu's hinário, *O Cruzeiro*, has no hymns with the mazurka rhythm. Among Mestre's initial close followers, hymns with this rhythmic structure only appear in the hinários of Germano Guilherme and of Antônio Gomes.]

After this first hinário work, Mestre told his followers that the next hinário should be sung while dancing, rather than seated, and that in a vision, the Queen had shown him the steps of the dance,

modeled after the dancing waves of the sea.⁶⁷ He also introduced the use of maracás, to mark the rhythm of the dance steps. In the beginning, only Mestre had a maracá, and knew how to use it. Therefore, in order for others to learn how to correctly play the maracá, and to learn the dance steps, the community began to have rehearsal sessions. Adália Granjeiro notes that “at that time all of the women smoked and there was a little can where they put tobacco used to make cigarettes or to smoke pipes. They emptied the can and put kernels of corn or beans in it or something that made a lot of noise and started shaking them . . . [Mestre] laughed so much at people not doing it right. . . [I remember] everyone shaking their cans and not getting it right. Colliding one against the other, and some going to the front and some behind, and he was laughing and it all began again. It was Percília who taught us. He had already taught Percília. She then began to help to give instructions to the others. It was so funny, him teaching with so much calm and with that joy, always smiling when people made mistakes, him laughing and telling us to soften our bodies, ‘You’ve got tight legs, everything is tight. . .’ [I remember] everyone laughing and him calling for us to begin again.”⁶⁸

During this same time, Mestre also introduced the first fardas/uniforms.

[FDD: These fardas were quite different from the fardas that are currently worn by daimistas, in that they resembled the uniforms found in the military during that time. The men’s farda consisted of a white hat, and a tunic like a “dolmans,” a type of loose robe, with narrow sleeves, often open in the front made of “mescal” (a fine fabric, usually indigo blue) with white pants. It appears that at some point later, that type of farda – the “official” farda that was worn, according to some accounts, during the works that were held in honor of the Virgin of Conception, on

Christmas, and the Day of Kings – was complimented by the “blue farda.” This farda, in which the color scheme was reversed, with the tunic becoming white and the pants navy-blue, was apparently worn during the works held during Holy Week and the night of St. John.⁶⁹ In both versions, the tunics had ornaments on the shoulders, as well as varying numbers of stars that indicated different “ranks,” (one star being a “private,” two stars a “corporal,” all the way up to six stars designating a general: Mestre Irineu.) The women’s farda was also blue and white: a white dress with a blue collar like in the navy; a handkerchief; long sleeves with three blue stripes; a twisted cord of two strings of green and yellow running from the collar to the waistline; a black belt; and an unpleated white skirt with three blue stripes.⁷⁰ (It can be exceedingly difficult to keep up with all of the changes that occurred in the style of the fardas over the decades until Mestre’s death in 1971, especially since many of the accounts differ from each other, so my apologies if some details have been omitted or misconstrued.)]

The new uniforms in many ways evoked the authority of the military, and this, combined with the fixed sequence of hymns within the hinários; the specific beats going with standardized dance steps; as well as the ranks classifying the place of followers within a hierarchy, all came together to consolidate the communal identity of daimistas as followers of a new religion, and served to differentiate them from the prior, much more informal, vegetalista ritual practices that were present in the beginnings of the Santo Daime.

But the structured, hierarchical, and regimented aspects of the formal rituals were complimented by more informal celebrations known as the “*festinhas*” / “little parties” of Mestre. These were in essence parties in which Daime was served, often held to celebrate birthdays, in which there

was no separation between the sexes; popular music of the time was played along with the hymns (which were sung in no particular sequence); and there were no uniforms, only various types of party clothes (the only requirement was that the men needed to wear a jacket.) In addition, Mestre also didn't require that his followers wear fardas during the concentration works, which meant that during these rituals, there were no overt signs of hierarchy, and the higher-ranking disciples would sit side-by-side with newcomers. And finally, during this time period, specific holy days were not yet linked with the singing of the hinários of certain disciples. Instead, in the words of Zé Dantas, "It was whatever the boss [Mestre] wanted."⁷¹

In the middle of the 1930s, Mestre also created two new rituals: Santo Daime versions of both the baptism and the funeral ritual, the Mass. Baptisms in the Santo Daime usually occurred during the works that took place on Christmas and the night of St. John, taking place at the end of the work, at dawn (consciously connecting in this way the symbolism of the "birth" of light of the new day with the baptism). This ritual, which is still followed, uses salt, water, and Daime to anoint those who are being baptized (in essence giving participants the baptism of the elements of earth and water, as well as the baptism of the spirit/the Daime). The Mass, in turn, consisted of a group of daimistas seated together, attentively present with the body of the deceased person (as in a wake), singing a specific collection of hymns (each hymn interspersed with three Our Fathers and three Hail Marys and one "Hail Holy Queen" prayer), only standing for the last hymn.

Sometime during the last years of the 1930s, Mestre also changed the form of the cross that was placed in the middle of the central rectangular table/altar. Instead of the standard cross (i.e., a

cross with one horizontal bar), that had been used previously, Mestre Irineu began to use the Cross of Caravaca (a cross with two horizontal bars, in which the top bar is somewhat shorter than the bottom bar). This version of the cross, according to legend, first made its miraculous appearance in 1231 in the southeastern Spanish city of Caravaca, and soon became associated with healing, magic, and protection against danger. Introduced to the New World by Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries during the colonial period, it was well known by the people in the Amazon in the beginning of the 20th century. The Cross of Caravaca was often associated with shamanism, magic, and esotericism, in large part due to the fact that the collection of prayers that has its name (*The Cross of Caravaca: Treasure of Prayers*) and that has its image on the cover, was often used by shamans and ayahuasqueros in the vegetalismo tradition throughout South America.⁷² It's not known when and where Mestre Irineu first became familiar with the Cross of Caravaca – perhaps during his early exposure to vegetalismo while in the frontier of Brazil, Boliva, and Peru. Within the Santo Daime, this form of the cross is known as the “*Cruzeiro*,” and it is arguably the central symbol of the Santo Daime tradition. While popularly the two horizontal bars of the cross symbolized redoubled faith, daimistas often say that the second bar refers to the second coming of Jesus Christ (within all of those who drink the Daime).

[FDD: Here is some more information on some of the hymns of Mestre Irineu that were received fairly early on in the development of the Santo Daime.

Hymn #22, “*Palmatória*,”/ “Discipline Stick,” refers to a small, circular piece of wood that was used to punish students in school (they were hit on their palms with it). Also, Bomfim suggests that when the hymn says that being in the Doctrine is not a “*traço de baralho*,” (i.e., “cutting a

deck of cards”), it is saying that it isn’t a place of manipulation, of “bluffing,” of playing with the lives of others.⁷³

Hymn #23, “B.G.” In this hymn “B.G.” refers to Mestre himself. B.G. means “*Boa Guia*,” or “Good Guide.”⁷⁴

Hymn #24, “*Canta Praia*” The phrase “Canta Praia” apparently does not refer to a beach (the literal translation of “*praia*”). Instead, it means something like “to sing in order to go.” (“Pra” and “ia” in Portuguese roughly means “in order to go.”)⁷⁵

Hymn #27, “*Seis Horas Da Manhã*”/ “Six O’Clock in the Morning”: This hymn refers to the traditional hours of prayer of the *Angelus Domini*: six in the morning, noon, and six in the evening. During these times, people pray the rosary, focusing on Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception. This ritual sequence has been followed since 1318, when the *Angelus Domini* was approved by Pope John the 22nd.⁷⁶ These also were hours when Mestre would typically pray, whether he was in the middle of a field or wherever else.⁷⁷

Hymn #29: “*Sol, Lua, Estrela*”/ “Sun, Moon, Star”: This hymn and “*Devo Amar Aquela Luz*”/ “I Must Love That Light” (Hymn #30) are the “hymns of the opening of the works.” They begin the works of the hinário of *O Cruzeiro* and all of the dance works (*bailados*) that end with the “*Hinos Novos*,”/ “New Hymns,” that is, the “*Cruzeirinho*,” the last hymns of Mestre Irineu (from #117-129). In the *feitio* (the ritual of making the Daime), the *bateção* (the beating of the vines) begins with the ingestion of Daime, followed by the singing of these two hymns. Vera Fróes

argues that this hymn exalts the elements of nature as divine beings, similar to how indigenous people did, suggesting an Amer-Indian influence on the Doctrine.⁷⁸ But according to Teixeira de Freitas, it also refers to the totality of cosmic illumination.⁷⁹ And according to Mestre Vírgilio, the Sun is the divine Masculine, the Moon is the divine Feminine, and the Star represents the third person of the Trinity, i.e., the Light of the firmament – Jesus, He who said: “I am the Light of the World.”⁸⁰

Hymn #33, “*Papai Velho*”/ “Old Daddy.” Here Mestre asks for the old Daddy and the old Mommy (St. Joseph and Mother Mary) to give him his staff, to be used to help him in his old age. (“*Caducação*” does not mean “persistence” as some translations say, but rather, “decrepitude.”) Some sources say that “Papai Velho” also refers to Obaluae, the son of Nana in the Umbandaime tradition.

Hymn #37, “*Marizia*” (also sometimes spelled as “Maresia”) refers to the mist from the ocean, the breeze from the sea, as well as the name of a female entity. Dona Percília says that this hymn is called Marizia because “this work is very involved with the sea. Lots of power comes from the sea, divine power. From the heavens, the earth, and the sea.”⁸¹

Hymn #39, “*Centro Livre*,”/ “Free Center.” Bomfim notes that Mestre’s center in Alto Santo was originally called “Centro Livre.” He also points out that the last stanza of this hymn summons Currupipiragua (or Currupipiraqua), a being of the Celestial Court, an Amerindian entity. Labate and Pacheco propose that this entity comes from pajelança, a shamanic/religious practice in Maraño where Mestre was born. They think that this word is not, however (as is

sometimes thought) derived from “*currupira*,” from the Tupi native peoples. *Currupira* is a mythical being of the forest whose heels are forward and toes are backward (i.e., its feet are on backwards), and is a violent, trickster being. While this legendary being is *not* part of the daimista cosmology, Bomfim says that *Currupipiragua* is a divine Being of the celestial court and therefore we can call upon it when we need physical, mental, emotional or spiritual help.^{82]}

Dona Raimunda

Towards the end of 1936, dona Francisca, the common-law wife of Mestre Irineu, was suffering from chronic rheumatism, and at 66 years old, was already showing signs of senility. During this time, Mestre Irineu tried to heal his companion in various ways but dona Francisca’s illness grew worse and her legs became paralyzed. Eventually, Mestre hired a young girl, Raimunda Marques Feitosa, to help in the house. She was fifteen years old when she began to work for Mestre and dona Francisca. Paulo Serra (who was informally adopted by Mestre at a young age) says that, “There came a point when, for her [dona Francisca] to be able to go to the bathroom, she had to be carried and put on the toilet. . . .One day she said: ‘Irineu, get a person to take care of you.’ That was when the mother who raised me [Raimunda] came to be her companion. She did everything really well. Then one day dona Francisca told Irineu to marry her. He said, ‘How am I going to marry her with you in the house?’ and she said, ‘Don’t worry about it.’”⁸³

Raimunda was 19 years old when, at dona Francisca’s insistence, she was married to Mestre Irineu (then 47 years old) on July 31st of 1937, in the central Catholic church in Rio Branco. She continued to care for the house and dona Francisca. One year later, dona Francisca died, at the age of sixty-eight. Soon after dona Francisca died, Mestre Irineu received a hymn called “The

Second of November” (the day of the Christian calendar dedicated to those who are dead). This hymn is not sung during hinário works. Instead, it is part of the Mass. According to dona Percília, this hymn was received in a dream by Mestre Irineu in the end of 1938. She said, “In this hymn, a person came to Mestre, a person who had just died. This person came and sang for him. It was his second companion, dona Francisca.”⁸⁴

It appears that Mestre Irineu’s marriage to Raimunda created quite a bit of discomfort in the Santo Daime community, since both Mestre and Raimunda continued to live with dona Francisca until her death a year later. The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* note that because of this, “there are few old followers of Mestre Irineu who are willing to talk about the marriage with dona Francisca.”⁸⁵ In addition, even with dona Francisca’s explicit endorsement of the marriage to Raimunda, some in the community believed that this marriage was not approved by Clara, Mestre’s spiritual teacher. And, in fact, as we shall see, for the next several decades, Mestre had numerous intense and problematic interactions with his mother-in-law, dona Maria Franco, difficulties that many in the community interpreted as a sign of the Queen’s disapproval.

Nonetheless, after the wedding, dona Raimunda and her family gained a lot of prestige within the community. She became the commander of the women in the Daime; she often led healing works; she performed chamados; and she memorized the melodies of his hymns. Her mother, dona Maria Franco, eventually began to live with João Pereira, one of Mestre’s earliest disciples, and her brother, in turn, became the commander of the *salão* (the ritual space – literally, the “large room,” or “salon,”) and along with another of her brothers, was also the *feitor* (the person in charge of making the Daime.) In addition, dona Raimunda apparently received a hymn which

is included in Mestre's hinário *O Cruzeiro*: hymn #57 – “*Eu Convido os Meus Irmãos*”/ “I Invite my Brothers and Sisters.” Dona Raimunda had a dream in which Mestre Irineu sang this hymn for her. When she woke up, she sang the hymn to him. Mestre Irineu said that he recognized the hymn, almost as if he really had sung it to her, and he put it in *O Cruzeiro*.⁸⁶ Adália Granjeiro says, “At times a hymn is received in a *miração*, but she received a hymn dreaming. Dreams, at times, for those who take *daime*, are true dreams . . . That which we don't see in a *miração* and taking *daime*, at times we'll see in a dream, right? . . . This hymn, every time that I sing it, it's like I'm seeing her; the way she sang, she sang so beautifully. I still haven't seen anyone sing equal to the way that she sang, her voice was very soft, really beautiful.”⁸⁷

[FDD: Discussing hymn #46, “*Eu Balanço* / “*I Shake*,” Bomfim notes that the term “*balanço*” is frequently found in daimista vocabulary. It can refer to an oscillatory back and forth, to and fro, movement, similar to the waves of the sea. *Balanço* can also indicate a drive or rush forward. And for those within the line of Padrinho Sebastião, it can also signify a terrestrial crisis, a “shaking” of the earth, a coming catastrophe that we must prepare for. But that doesn't seem to be the meaning of *balanço* in this hymn. Here it seems to refer both to the ritualistic dance of daimistas, and to an assessment (like a bank “balance”) of the three central sets of qualities of daimista cosmology: the sun, the moon, and the stars; or the earth, the wind, and the sea; or the vine, the leaf, and the water.⁸⁸]

[FDD: Regarding Hymn #47, “*Sete Estrelas*”/ “The Seven Stars,” Bomfim says that the Seven Stars refer to the Pleiades, a cluster of stars in the Big Bear constellation, a constellation that is of great esoteric and astrological importance. It indicates the North pole, from which (esoterically)

all the known world comes. From the astronomical point of view, it is the opposite of the Southern Cross constellation (where, esoterically, we are all headed). Some esoteric traditions call these constellations the door of the gods, and the door of humans. Mestre had heard of the Big Bear constellation and its esoteric importance through what he learned through the Esoteric Circle of the Communion of Thought. And in the summer solstice, the Seven Stars can be seen in the southern hemisphere. Juarez also claims that the seven stars esoterically refer to the seven chakras, or energy centers of the body. In addition, Dona Percília says that the “superior countenance” that Mestre sees refers to Jesus Christ.^{89]}

[FDD: Regarding Hymn #50, “*Salomão*”/ “*Solomon*,” Bomfim notes that Solomon, biblically, was the son of David and Bathsheba. He became King of Israel and governed it for 40 years. He composed proverbs and hymns; was known for his immense wisdom and sense of justice; and he built the huge temple of Solomon. Biblically, it is also said that he married many women, some of whom were not Israelites, and that they “perverted his heart” to worship false gods. Solomon is also widely revered in esoteric circles, and is known as a great magician. Solomon is also deeply revered by the *União do Vegetal*, another ayahuasca-based religion that emerged from Brazil. According to their foundational myth, it was Solomon who brought together the union of the jagube vine and the chacrona leaf to make ayahuasca. The Seal of Solomon is also very important for daimistas. It is the symbol that is worn on the chest of daimistas, the six-pointed star, also known as the star of David, formed from two overlapping equilateral triangles. Esoterically, the star combines together the four elements: the top point is linked to fire, the bottom point to water, the “V” (the “re-entrance”) to the left to air, and the “V” to the right to earth. Most importantly, for daimistas, Solomon is a Divine Being of the Celestial Court.^{90]}

[FDD: Discussing hymn #52, “*A Febre do Amor*”/ “The Fever of Love,” Bomfim notes that in the final stanza of this hymn, it seems like Mestre has a prophetic vision of how many hymns that would come together to complete his hinário, when he says “I completed my Cruzeiro with 132 flowers.” (As was pointed out earlier, the hymns are often referred to as “flowers” in Mestre’s hinário.) But in fact, when this hymn was received, the verse originally said “with 52 flowers” and with each additional hymn that Mestre received, the number was changed accordingly. The mystery, however, is why the hymn now reads 132 flowers, instead of the 129 hymns that together compose the *O Cruzeiro*, Mestre’s hinário. Some old-time daimistas say that Mestre received three additional hymns, each one either with lyrics that were only known by few, or with only the music and no lyrics (for example, the un-numbered hymn that is played instrumentally after hymn #126 “*Flor das Aguas*”/ “Flower of the Waters” and before hymn #127 “*Eu Pedi*”/ “I Asked”) Others say that the other three weren’t actually hymns at all, but were, instead, “chamados,” or the calls/invocations that Mestre taught to just two women (i.e., dona Percília and dona Raimunda) to use when the work was really heavy.^{91]}

World War II Events

In the early 1940’s, the rubber plantations owned by the US, England, and France in Malaysia were taken over by the Japanese, and all of the sudden, Brazilian rubber became crucially important to the war effort. Therefore, between 1942 and 1945, Brazil sent close to 55,000 people from the northeastern parts of Brazil to work in the serengais in the Amazon as “*soldados de borracha*/rubber soldiers.” Brazilian men were given the choice to either fight in World War II or to go to the Amazon, and while most chose to become “rubber soldiers,” in the end, many

more died in the Amazon from disease, murder, and animal attacks, etc., than on the front lines in World War II. The *aviadoras*/wholesalers reverted to their old practices of creating a monopoly on where the rubber tappers could get their supplies, and although the government contracts with the rubber tappers gave them the right to hunt and fish, the *patrões*/ “big bosses” rarely honored these contracts. For this period of time, the price of Brazilian rubber was sufficiently high for the serengais to become profitable once more, but by 1945, after the Allies re-captured their Malaysian rubber plantations, the price of Brazilian rubber plummeted, and the rubber-soldiers once more began to flood the cities.

In Mestre’s community, many of the young people were called up to fight in the war. As a way to ease the apprehensions of his people, during Concentration works Mestre would offer silent prayers for the welfare of those who were called to the “front.” As Zumira Gomes notes, “When a brother-in-law of Mestre Irineu’s was convoked [to go fight in WWII], several works happened for his benefit. [During this time Mestre] received a hymn in which he asked the Virgin Mary to defend the innocents from all of this terror. The brother-in-law wasn’t sent [to the front] and returned to Manaus.”⁹² This hymn was #43, “*O Prensor*” / “The Recruiter.”

[FDD: Hymn 43: “*O Prensor*”/ “The Recruiter,” is the only hymn in *O Cruzeiro* with a political theme. Bomfim notes that the hymn deals with war. The “prensor” is literally a clamp, and metaphorically, it is a force that dominates the entire country, a force incarnated as someone, perhaps a governmental functionary, who squeezes, or crushes, the country in his warlike fury. The hymn addresses those soldiers who, as a result of the declaration of war by some political leader, are going off to become cannon fodder, to spill their blood and lose their lives. The hymn

is a protest against this needless loss of life. Dona Percília says the following about this hymn: “He received this hymn there in Vila Ivonete, more or less around the beginning of the 1940’s. He received this hymn during a moment in the Concentration when the Force was really strong. He got up; put someone else in charge of the work; he left; he called his wife to him (dona Raimunda) and asked her to come and get me. Then he sang the hymn all at once to me. When the Concentration finished, he sang the hymn for everyone to hear, for everyone to learn. So, during this time there was an armed conflict between Bolivia and Paraguay. People were all stirred up about it, but we only heard about it from the news. But from the day in which he received the hymn, everything calmed down. He said that during the Concentration, he went there spiritually, in the middle of the battle. He said that the bullets were raining down there, everywhere, and they’d hit him and they’d fall. He was there spiritually and he brought the hymn, with its force, to control the situation.”⁹³ Bomfim points out, correctly, that the war that Percília discusses between Bolivia and Paraguay was a conflict about borders that happened between 1933-1935. During the time she mentioned (the beginning of the 1940’s), World War II was happening, so the war referred to in the hymn is almost certainly World War II. Percília, later on in the interview, specifically stated that it was not a war between Brazil and Paraguay (thus contradicting what is said in some English versions of *O Cruzeiro*.)⁹⁴

During the early 1940s, persecution of the Santo Daime dramatically increased, as did rumors about Mestre Irineu. Mestre’s community were mostly blacks or mestizos, and they were taking an indigenous drink – which meant that they were often accused of practicing “*macumba*” – or black magic (in both senses of the word ‘black’). In fact, the word used for Daime rituals, “*trabalho*” (“work”) specifically incited the suspicions of people, since the term “trabalho” was

also often used to refer to rituals of macumba or black magic, so people would at times claim that Mestre would bewitch people through rituals of macumba in order to have control over them. In addition, because Mestre would often make decisions about who should marry whom in his community, people in the surrounding area would often spread rumors that he would separate couples in order to take the women for himself. One anonymous source says that “It was very difficult in that time period. Everything had to be very hidden because there was a lot of persecutions, even from the police. A lot was said about the daime and Mestre Irineu and the people had a lot of fear because they didn’t understand the power of the daime, how it was that that tea was able to cure . . . There were even cases of people who asked Mestre for help; they would take the daime with him, and even so, afterwards, they would say that he had bewitched them, or that Mestre had done black magic against them . . . there were even those who would say that Mestre was a charlatan.”⁹⁵

[Sidebar: Because so many of the afro-indigenous religious traditions were subject to so much discrimination and even persecution, Mestre Irineu’s black skin color (and the black skins of most of his old followers) was problematic. His followers were at times accused of creating a “cult of adoration of a burnt chestnut tree” (a mocking allusion to Mestre’s height and color).⁹⁶ It is perhaps not surprising therefore that certain participants in the Santo Daime sought to “whiten up” the image of Mestre Irineu.⁹⁷ *Eu Venho de Longe* contains some pictures that were produced within the community in which his skin has been lightened, and his hair straightened, in order to make Mestre appear to be less black.]

As was noted earlier, there was a law from 1890 that was often enforced against other Afro-Brazilian religions such as Candomblé and Umbanda [articles 156, 157, 158 in the Penal Code] that made the practice of spiritual healing [“curandeirismo”], magic, and the use of “poisonous substances” illegal.⁹⁸ As Lourdes Carioca points out, “There were those who spoke very poorly of Mestre. Out of ignorance or evil. But they spoke without knowing [what was true], because Mestre was the goodness in people, a man who never did wrong to anyone, only wanting to help those who needed it, those who knocked on his door. . . . Because when he spoke, everyone would stop to listen. And what he would say, the people would follow, because they knew that it was correct guidance.”⁹⁹

After a St. Peter festival work in June of 1942 or 1943, when Mestre was resting, the community was surprised by a police siege, under the command of a man named Lieutenant Costa who had been trying to bring down Mestre Irineu for quite a while. Mestre’s home in Vila Ivonete was encircled by forty strongly armed men. The lieutenant burst into the residence and woke Mestre up, pointing a revolver at his head. Dona Percília describes this tense encounter: “It was Lieutenant Costa, who didn’t like Mestre, and who lived to invent things to persecute Mestre. . . . Then he sent a contingent, more than thirty men, to arrest Mestre! Imagine this! . . . Undisciplined people, entering, knocking down things . . . At that point, Mestre was resting, without knowing anything . . . They arrived, invading, with that Lieutenant Costa right in front. . . Invading, without consideration . . . entering into his room, stirring up the chest of drawers of his wife . . . a lack of respect! . . . When Mestre awoke, they had a revolver to his head. And the lieutenant told him, ‘Don’t move a muscle.’ . . . They went down [to the floor below]. It was then that they said that they had a complaint against Mestre, and that they wanted to arrest him. . . . They were saying that Mestre was hiding Zé das Neves . . . Because Zé das Neves was always

involved with women . . . And they were saying that [Zé] had stolen a woman, a prostitute, and that he had hidden the woman in Mestre's house, and that Mestre was going to marry the two of them . . . Mestre didn't know anything about any of this and also didn't know where Zé das Neves was. . . They were going to arrest Mestre, but then an order arrived from Colonel Fontenele – he already knew what was happening – saying that if they even touched a hair on Mestre's head that they would have to deal with him.”¹⁰⁰ Paulo Serra, Mestre's adopted son, offers a slightly different version of this encounter: “They would say that Mestre did whatever . . . [for example, they would say that] he would grab the women of others and he would take them into his parlor. . . all of which he didn't do. [This continued until] it arrived at the point of persecution . . . I was about five or six years old. . . Daddy [Zé das Neves] was in the middle of this mess also. They say that they [the police] grabbed Mestre on the night of St. Peter. During that time, Mestre drank *cachaça* (rum). The festival ended at dawn. The house had two floors and we would sleep in the top. Sometime in the afternoon, the house was surrounded by 40 policemen under the order of Lieutenant Costa. They grabbed [Mestre] and handcuffed him. During this time, Daddy [Zé das Neves] was the person who sold charcoal to Colonel Fontenelle who was the commander of the Territorial Guard [the *Força Policial*] in that time. Then they grabbed him [Mestre], brought him, and put him in the jail there at the barracks. Then Mommy [Cecília Gomes] told Daddy [Zé das Neves], who then ran and told Colonel Fontenelle. Colonel Fontenelle went there to the barracks and ordered them to treat him really well. He ordered them to take him out and to put him in a special cell, with all of his rights. He [Mestre] spent the night there, but he was well treated. Colonel Fontenelle then went after a lawyer. At 8:00am, there was an audience [with a judge] and by 10:00 they let him go and he went home.”¹⁰¹ (Notice that dona Percília's account has everything resolving at Mestre's house, and says nothing about him

going to prison. The authors think that she was just ignoring this difficult fact in Mestre's life "perhaps to preserve the mythical image of the leader.")¹⁰²

Apparently, this incident powerfully impacted Mestre Irineu's community. It appears that it was one factor in Mestre's decision to sell the property of Vila Ivonete in 1945 and to move to Colônia Custódio Freire [Alto Santo], as a way to seek a better life for himself and his community.

Another contributing factor that during this time was the fact that many quarrels were arising among his followers, often prompted by alcoholism and jealousy. Alcoholism was a recurring theme among rubber-tappers, with rum playing an especially prominent role. Mestre himself at times appears to have struggled at times with an over-consumption of rum. Matthew Myer, while looking over the Alto Santo archives, says that he "found a record of Irineu Serra's military service, which noted that he had been disciplined in the 1920s, once for arriving to the barracks 'a bit inebriated,' and another time for disturbing the peace and fighting with his companions who tried to take him home.'"¹⁰³ Apparently, he continued to drink during birthdays, weddings, marriages, and some Christian festivals (such as St. Peter's), or on business trips to Rio Branco to sell agricultural products, when he frequented bars there. However, the incompatibility of drinking rum with the consumption of the Daime appears to have eventually become clear to him, perhaps in large part due to the number of people who sought out his community as a way to free themselves from alcoholic dependence.¹⁰⁴ Even though Mestre's drinking was sporadic, there were several instances in which some of the boldest of his followers

justified their rudeness and lack of respect while intoxicated by saying that they were simply following Mestre's example.¹⁰⁵

One of the most prominent members of the community who suffered from alcoholism (and all of the problems that come from this affliction) was Mestre's mother-in-law, dona Maria Franco. Her problems with drinking provoked many conflicts not only between Mestre, her, and Raimunda, but also with others in the community, Marie Damião in particular. Hymns such as #48, "*A Rainha da Floresta*" / "The Queen of the Forest" and #81, "*Professor*" / "Teacher" give voice to this conflict, expressing Mestre's indignation at dona Raimunda's and dona Maria Franco's lack of respect for his teachings (the hymns also, of course, have more universal meanings that are applicable to all of Mestre's followers).¹⁰⁶ Apparently, after a memorable clash with dona Maria during the wedding reception of Leôncio Gomes, Mestre decided to change his position regarding drinking alcohol during festivities. (A short time later he received hymn #72, "*Silencioso*" / "Silent" in which he asks for forgiveness from the Virgin Mother.) Nonetheless, although alcoholic beverages were no longer served during festive occasions in the Santo Daime community, many of his followers continued to struggle with alcoholism. But over time, fewer people began to drink alcohol in his community. (Some say that this was the time period in which Mestre himself stopped drinking, while others say it wasn't until the beginning of the 1950s, and others yet say that this change didn't take place until 1957.)¹⁰⁷

Daniel Pereira de Mattos

Another prominent member of Mestre's community who suffered from alcoholism was Daniel Pereira de Mattos, or *Frei* (Brother/Friar) Daniel as he was later known after becoming the

founder of the ayahuasca religion known as “*Barquinha*,” (Little Boat). Mestre and Daniel (who was some years older than Mestre, and also black) were old friends from Maranhão when Irineu Serra worked as a longshoreman in São Luis. They re-met in the 1920s in Rio Branco when Irineu was in the Força Policial and Daniel (most likely) worked as a barber and as a cobbler. (Other sources say that they re-met in Rio Branco in the final years of the 1930s, when Daniel arrived as an officer in the Merchant Marine reserves, with Daniel soon discovering that his old friend was leading Santo Daime works in the Vila Ivonete neighborhood).

At some point, Daniel became a neighbor of Mestre’s, but he didn’t take part in the Santo Daime ceremonies, in part because he was married to a *mãe-de-santo* (a priestess in the Candomblé religious tradition – a mediumistic religion with strong roots in Africa) who would do Candomblé rituals in their home. When their relationship ended, his wife is said to have cursed Daniel, and he became completely addicted to alcohol, so much so that he could not even take care of his basic personal needs. In 1937, Mestre Irineu began to treat Daniel with Daime for his complete dependence upon alcohol.¹⁰⁸ It is said that Mestre gave one of his disciples (who lived close to Daniel) the responsibility of giving Daniel a drink of Daime every day as part of a spiritual treatment to cure his alcoholism.¹⁰⁹ At the conclusion of this treatment, when Daniel was cured and was attending a Santo Daime work on June 24th, 1945 during the night of St. John, it is said that Mestre, walking back to the church from his house, received hymn #69, “*Passarinho*”/ “Little Bird,” a hymn which is connected to Daniel. (Other sources say that this hymn was received in 1946.)

Daniel became an influential member of the Santo Daime community. He worked as a carpenter; he loved to study, and he was also Mestre's barber. Using his carpentry skills, he started to build his own musical instruments, and he also began to compose music. For a while, Mestre even created "musical works" that centered around Daniel's compositions, in that at certain points during Concentration works, Mestre would ask Daniel to play his waltzes and people would meditate listening to his music.

Around 1945, after Mestre Irineu had moved to Alto Santo, Daniel continued to do Santo Daime works in the cleared yard of his house in Vila Ivonete. In this way, Daniel was able to attend to the fellowship that remained in that region.¹¹⁰ For about a year, Mestre supplied him with shipments of Daime. However, at the end of this time period, Daniel started to receive revelations that led him to create new rituals during which the incorporation of healing spirits took place, similar to the line of Umbanda. Mestre, while maintaining his close friendship with Daniel, proposed that Daniel should follow his own path, separate from the Santo Daime. After beginning to make his own Daime, Daniel officially inaugurated a new ayahuasca religion that came to be known as "*Barquinha*," the "Little Boat." During the next twelve years he followed this mission, one that was devoted to St. Francis ("*das Chagas*," / "of the Wounds/Stigmata"). Daniel died on September 8th, 1958, in the arms of a follower, within the small house in which they stored the Daime, and for over eighteen hours they held a wake in the church, with him on the central table in the form of a cross. A few days before Daniel's death, Mestre Irineu, received hymn #107, "*Chamei Lá Nas Alturas*" / "I Called There in the Heights," which came with a presentiment of Daniel's death. Three days after the hymn was received, Mestre's

community learned of Daniel's death, and according to dona Percília Ribeiro, they went to the wake (and back) singing that hymn again and again.¹¹¹

Alto Santo

Around 1942, due to the influx of ex-rubber tappers into Rio Branco, land from the old serengais was made available for sale with the hope that this would increase agricultural production in the area. The sale of this land ended up helping Mestre Irineu who, after the episode of his imprisonment, and keenly aware of the population increase in Vila Ivonete, was looking to purchase a plot of land that was more removed from the municipal center of Rio Branco.¹¹²

Mestre ended up buying close to 500 hectares of land, purchasing a section of an old seringa called Colocação Espalhado that was located in a rural area on the outskirts of Rio Branco (the section of land was called Colônia Custódio Freire). There are many conflicting accounts among his old followers about how Mestre acquired this land. Some, for example, claim that the land was given to him as a kind of payment for his work with the army.¹¹³ Others say that the land was a donation from Major Guiomard dos Santos – an important politician who eventually became governor of the territory Acre. But this account seems unlikely, since when Mestre moved to the new location in 1945, Guiomard dos Santos wasn't the governor, and his colonization initiative was only signed into law in 1947. The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* offer another scenario based on their research. It appears that Mestre Irineu, three years after buying the land, asked for a loan from the Bank of Brazil in order to increase his agricultural production. However, when it became clear that he would not be able to re-pay his debt in the given time period, Mestre Irineu asked Fontenele to intercede with the Bank of Brazil. Fontenele

then went to the governor who by that time *was* Major Guiomard dos Santos, who promptly gave Mestre the money as a loan. When Mestre was able to raise enough money to repay his debt to Guiomard, the governor (according to Paulo Serra) told him “Irineu, I didn’t lend you the money. It was the bank that lent you the money. I just helped out.”¹¹⁴

[Sidebar: Mestre and Guiomard dos Santos met in 1946, shortly after Guiomard had become the governor of the territory of Acre, and they quickly became good friends. Guiomard soon began to visit Mestre for brief visits (typically coming on horseback since cars could not get to that location), discretely taking Daimé (saying that it was part of his health treatment), and watching the festival/dance works, but not participating. Due to their friendship, Mestre began to support Guiomard’s political party and Alto Santo was the site of many political rallies, with Mestre appearing by Guiomard’s side in rallies in other locations as well.¹¹⁵ Guiomard, in turn, often helped Mestre and his community from receiving unwanted attention from the local police force. As the years passed, Mestre was asked by many high-level politicians to join their political rallies. He might not have been very close to them, but they wanted to be allied with his friends, Fontenele de Castro and Guiomard dos Santos. These alliances helped to create a peaceful situation for Mestre and his followers, even though his religion was so strange to many of the Acrean people. He was also able to get favors for his community. For instance, as the authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* point out, “as well as getting agricultural subsidies from the government, he was also able to allocate land to close to 40 families in the Alto Santo property, even though he had to remind them that they had only been given the land to plant, not the title.”]¹¹⁶

Mestre's departure from Vila Ivonete in 1945 to this more remote location was timely. Vila Ivonete was becoming densely populated due to the influx of ex-rubber tappers, and having 500 hectares of land (which was informally divided between Mestre and more than 40 families, and worked under a cooperative system known as "*multirão*," that was common in the region at the time) not only enabled some of his followers who previously did not have land the ability to grow crops, but also gave his community some much-needed privacy to do their "works" in peace.¹¹⁷

Mestre re-located to Colônia Custódio Freire on May 15, 1945, soon changing the name to Alto da Santa Cruz, which (in turn) was eventually shortened to "Alto Santo." There he built a small house and lived with his wife Raimunda and the informally-adopted son that they raised, Paulo Serra. Because most of his followers at that time still lived in Vila Ivonete, in order to participate in works they would walk many miles (approximately seven kilometers) to the new location. Since there was not sufficient time to build an indoor *salão* in which to hold the works, the first official work in Alto da Santo Cruz, the festival work of the Night of St. John, took place on June 23rd in an orange grove next to Mestre's house (it seems that Mestre's 60th hymn: "*Laranjeira*" / "Orange Tree," was received during this time period).¹¹⁸ Soon after this work, Mestre began work on a place to hold the works – an open-sided pavilion with a thatched straw roof.

[FDD: During this time, changes were also made in the *farda*, with the men wearing a linen or cotton white jacket, shirt, and pants (with no tie) for festival works, and the women wearing a long-sleeved white blouse with a green sash running from the left shoulder, front and back, to the

waist. (For the young girls, it ran from right shoulder to left hip.) He also had the rankings of the members consolidated, so that higher-ranking people (e.g., Zé das Neves, Germano Guilherme, João Pereira, Antônio Gomes, dona Raimunda, dona Maria Damião, dona Maria Gomes, and dona Percília) were part of the “*Estado Maior*,” the “Greater State,” who helped newcomers.^{119]}

Suspension of Works; Deaths of Major Followers; and a Serious Accident

Approximately one year after the move to Alto Santo, after working hard (often alone) in the fields in which he and members of his community had planted rice, corn, beans, and manioc, Mestre Irineu decided in the middle of May, 1946, to suspend the works of the Santo Daime. Even today, old time followers of Mestre refuse to talk about this subject, but it appears that at least one of the triggers for the suspension was an insult that he received from his mother-in-law, Maria Franco, during the wedding of Leôncio Gomes and his bride Madalena Brandão.¹²⁰ The suspension of works lasted for several months, and the works only resumed after the death of Antônio Gomes (Leôncio’s father) in August 14th, 1946. Antônio Gomez had gone from house to house on horseback, trying to convince the fellowship to humble themselves and to ask Mestre to open the works again, but Mestre did not change his mind, saddened and upset by the inappropriate attitudes and constant discord among some of his followers.¹²¹

[FDD: Antônio Gomes received a hymn during this period which commented on this situation -- #38, “*A Minha Mãe Me Mandou*”/ “My Mother Sent Me.”]

A short time after his attempt to get Mestre to change his mind about re-opening the works, Antônio Gomez was gored in the ribs by a bull, leaving him bedridden and in great pain for

many months. And unfortunately, instead of getting better, he got worse. Fearing that he was about to die, he shared his fears of dying and asked “Padrinho Irineu” for comfort. According to Gomes’ grandson, Walcívrio Gomes da Silva, Mestre told him: “Stay calm. I’m going to give you an answer, but not right now.” Mestre then went to his house; drank some Daime, and received hymn #74, “*Só Eu Cantei Na Barra*”/ “Only I Sang on the Sandbar.” Mestre returned to Antônio Gomes and told him, “I’m bringing you the answer that I owed you.” When Mestre sang the hymn to Gomes, Gomes felt comforted, understanding the message of the hymn (the hymn deals explicitly with the topic of death: it compares death to being born, and says that after death, if God gives permission, we will be reincarnated.)¹²² Three days after this hymn was received, Antônio Gomes died, surrounded by his family and the Santo Daime fellowship. Apparently, those gathered around him were praying the Our Father and Hail Mary, and Gomes, hearing some people not praying, reprimanded them. They then prayed with increased vigor as he died, calm and serene.¹²³

[FDD: Bomfim notes that the “barra” referred to in “*Só Eu Cantei Na Barra*” can be seen not only as a sandbar, but also as the entrance to a port; or as where a line of waves crash against the coast; or as the mouth of a river; or as a dark cloud which arises on the horizon – whatever carries the idea of a limit, or a frontier (such as the boundary between life and death). He suggests that the barra here has a dreamlike or metaphysical meaning, that it is about the voyage to the sacred sea, in the boat of disincarnated ones, the personal voyage to the other side. Bomfim also says that Bayer Neto says that the passage “*volta a outra encarnação*” in the hymn can be read either as “return to another incarnation,” or as “come to [remember] another incarnation [in the past.]”¹²⁴ According to the oral tradition, at one time, Mestre obliquely alluded

to reincarnation. He was sitting on his rocking chair on the veranda of his house in Alto Santo, looking out at people passing on the street, and he said, “Many of these people passing by lived during the time of the Christ and none of them know [this.]”^{125]}

[Sidebar: The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* point out that the hymns of Antônio Gomes, unlike the hinários of other key followers (i.e., Germano Guilherme, João Pereira, and Maria Damião), “reinforce the idea that Mestre Irineu was a type of redeemer, chosen by God.”¹²⁶ Some of the terms that Gomes uses to refer to Mestre (e.g., “My Imperial Prince,”) are ambiguous, in that they can be interpreted to simply mean a similarity between Mestre and Jesus, but other hymns (e.g., 9, 11, 14, 17, 23, and 30) seem to suggest that Mestre Irineu was in fact the very incarnation of Jesus Christ. In this way, Gomes initiated a tradition of hymns divinizing Mestre Irineu. But not everyone in Mestre’s community agreed with the divinization of their leader, knowing the human difficulties that he struggled with (i.e., his personal and familial problems and his occasional challenges with alcohol.) Some of his followers received hymns that spoke of Mestre as illuminated and given divine power, but they did not make claims that he was equivalent to Jesus Christ. Although this charged issue (often “encoded” within the words of received hymns) was at times the source of conflicts within certain sectors of the community, nonetheless, as the authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* emphasize, “the enormous respect that everyone had for Mestre Irineu kept these misunderstandings from becoming more serious.”^{127]}

[FDD: Hymn #111: “*Eu Estou Aqui*”/ “I am Here” was received at the end of around 1959. This is the only hymn in which Mestre Irineu refers to himself as “*Juramidã*” (typically spelled “Juramidam” in English).¹²⁸ Bomfim points out that this term appeared for the first time many

years earlier when Antônio Gomes received the hymn “General Juramidam.”¹²⁹ Bomfim goes on to note that Mestre can be thought about from two perspectives: as a human being, and as transcendental being. When Mestre was alive he was the founder of a religion; he cured the sick; he consoled the afflicted; he sheltered the homeless. However, he was also understood as the locus of the Sacred, so it is not surprising that he and his work in the world became divinized. As such, he was also called “King Juramidam,” “Master Emperor,” “The Imperial Leader,” “General,” “Master Teacher,” “Old Juramidam,” “Owner of all the Empire,” and “Owner of the Greatest Power.” Daniel Serra, Mestre’s nephew, says that Juramidam “is his name. Here he was Irineu, but there [in the Astral] his name was [Juramidam], it was the name given to him there by divinity itself. His rank, his spirit, there in eternity; no one arrives there calling Irineu because there no one knows who Irineu is, since there he is Juramidam. Therefore, when we do our prayers, our requests, we have to ask Juramidam. You’re going to see Christ speaking with you, pure, pure, pure, it is God himself in truth.”¹³⁰ Bomfim confirms this understanding of Juramidam, writing about a dialogue between a young (seven-year old) relative of Mestre’s with a daimista leader. The boy asked: “Who is Juramidam?” And the answer was concise: “Juramidam is Mestre in the Superior Astral.”¹³¹ Bomfim himself links Juramidam to the Transfiguration of Christ on Mt. Tabor (in essence, claiming that Juramidam is the Christic “light body” of Mestre in the Astral.) He also claims that for many daimistas, Juramidam is the completion of the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the Consoler promised by Jesus. As Padrinho Sebastião says: “Now is the time of the Holy Spirit . . . First was the life of God the Father, his world. Second, the world of Jesus Christ. And Third, the world of the Holy Spirit.” According to Padrinho Sebastião, “The Son is Midam and the chief [the divine Father] is Jura. Therefore the last name is Midam. Whoever takes Daime is one of the ‘Midams.’”¹³² Seen from this

perspective, everyone who drinks Daime is, therefore, consciously and overtly, a Son or Daughter of God the Father (and the Divine Mother), even as everyone (even those who do not drink Daime) also is a Son or Daughter of God, although normally they are unaware of that fact. (It is not clear whether Padrinho Sebastião had ever heard of Joachim of Fiore, an Italian monk and theologian, who was the person most responsible for the theory of the three ages. According to Joachim of Fiore, there was the Age of the Father, corresponding to the Old Testament, characterized by obedience to the rules of God; the Age of the Son, corresponding to the New Testament; and the Age of the Holy Spirit, which was yet to come, when human beings were to come into direct contact with God, and would attain complete freedom brought about by a new dispensation of universal Love – this would emerge from the Gospel of Christ, but would transcend any literal reading of it. In this age, a new order of spiritual human beings would arise, making the Church structure almost unnecessary.) Bomfim also notes that there are numerous other interpretations of the term “Juramidam.” For example, Professor Clodomir Monteiro makes the (seemingly rather strained) suggestion that the term Juramidam is linked to an Afro-Brazilian Fon group (from Benin) that worships a mythic serpent Dã. [And since the term “*jura*” in Portuguese literally means “oath,” the term “Juramidam” could be loosely translated as “My oath to Dã”.¹³³ Bomfim is (perhaps rightly) skeptical about this interpretation of “Juramidam,” even if it cannot be doubted that for many indigenous ayahuasca practitioners, a mythic serpent opens the realms that are revealed in visionary/mystical states of consciousness.]

At the end of the 1940s, the Santo Daime community lost another close companion of Mestre’s: Maria Damião. She had been making charcoal, a physically demanding task that involves working with rustic “ovens” (made of logs piled on top of each other) at high temperatures in the

open air, and while doing so, a sudden and extreme drop in temperature took place. She almost immediately felt the impact and had to be taken home – her face began to swell and she was bedridden for three days. On the third day, she reached out to Mestre Irineu, who immediately sent dona Percília, but when she arrived, there was nothing that could be done and Maria Damião died on April 2nd, 1949.¹³⁴ Her seven children, now orphans, began to live with Mestre in Alto Santo, staying there for almost nine years (although there were numerous fights with dona Raimunda.¹³⁵) For many years it was said that Maria Damião died in 1942 (this was the date that was written on her tombstone.) But this date is not plausible since her own children said that she died when Guomard was governor (1946-1950). And dona Percília, an old close friend of hers, and the caretaker of Maria Damião’s hinário after her death, affirms that she died in 1949.

[FDD: Mestre’s hymn #91, *Choro Muito/I Cry a Lot* is linked to the death of Maria Damião. The hymn appears to have been a premonition of her death, and the hymn itself seems to be “speaking” in the “voice” of Maria Damião, who was going to live among the flowers with the Virgin Mother. Maria Damião also talks of her passage to the spiritual life in her last hymn, “*Despedida*”/ “Farewell”.]

Three years after the death of Maria Damião, another close companion of Mestre Irineu died: João Pereira. He had been in the Santo Daime for close to 20 years. He died in 1952, but we do not know the day, or even the month. One day he suddenly developed a really horrible skin disease (it is not known which one), but it was so bad that for a long period of time João Pereira had to sleep naked on a bed of banana leaves, suffering tremendously from the skin disease until he finally died. Mestre Irineu’s community was strongly impacted by João Pereira’s death, so

much so that they did not sing his hinário for three years. And because he did not leave a “caretaker” of his hinário (i.e., the person responsible for remembering the words and melody of the hymns), no one was able to remember one of his hymns, so although his hinário contained 45 hymns, at this point, they only sing 44.¹³⁶

[FDD: Regarding Hymn #75, “*As Estrelas*”/ “The Stars”, Luis Mendes do Nascimento relates a story in which Chico Grangeiro asked Mestre about this hymn. He asked: “what are the thorns and sharp points?” Mestre replied, “Chico, they are the tongues (of people saying negative things).”¹³⁷ It is also said that the “stars” in this hymn refer to *caboclos* (spirits of Native Americans).]

[FDD: Regarding Hymn #80, “*Chamo a Força*”/ “I Call the Force.” The English translation of the last two lines of this hymn in some hinários is problematic. To say, “But no one remembers, that they called the Master a liar, slowly they are arriving, and who called is who’s staying behind” really doesn’t make a lot of sense in English, even it’s a literally correct translation of the Portuguese. Less literally, the translation should be something like this: “Slowly it is coming to the surface that those who called him a liar are themselves becoming liars.”]

Around this same period of time, Mestre Irineu, with the help of his followers (who were increasing in numbers), built a new house, which also became the headquarters of the Santo Daime. It had a big living room at the entrance, rooms on either side and a kitchen at the rear, and it was well known for its large table and for the solid wooden stools that were made by Mestre himself. He also constructed an office where the bottles of Daime were stored and which

served also as a place where Mestre would spend hours talking to his followers and giving them advice.¹³⁸ An interview with João Lima, an old follower of Mestre's, gives a sense of the tone of many of these conversations: "In the time of Mestre, I would go there on Sunday afternoon and his house would be full. No one went there to talk with him, he is the one who talked with us, because no one knew what to say to him and he was the one with all of those beautiful stories to tell. No one had anything to tell him, so we just listened to him. It was fun, it was really good, Mestre was fun, he told lots of stories. He thought it was funny to tell those stories of his, and it was fun. We all kept quiet and just listened."¹³⁹

In 1954, Mestre Irineu had a serious accident with an axe. Paulo Serra, Mestre's adoptive son, says that Mestre had asked a young man named Chico Martins to come with him to clear some trees in the forest near his house. Chico told Mestre, "Compadre, I'll come because I promised you that I'd come, but I had such a strange dream this past night. I dreamed that I cut myself with an axe." Mestre told him, "It's nothing Chico, at times we just pick up the impressions of people." Chico replied, "I think that it's better that we don't go." But Mestre said, "No young man, let's go." The accident happened while Mestre was cutting a vine. The axe hit his right foot, cutting the toes completely off and even cutting the nerve. (A doctor came and sewed him up.) It was such a deep cut that it took Mestre Irineu close to six months to recuperate fully, but during that time he read and re-read the Bible, the *Book of Prayers of the Cross of Caravaca*, as well as magazines of the *Circulo Esoterico da Comunhao do Pensamento/* the Esoteric Circle of the Communion of Thought/Mind.¹⁴⁰ (It is also said that Mestre was only exposed to the *Book of Prayers of the Cross of Caravaca* several years later, when he, unofficially, became a member of the Esoteric Circle.)

It seems that during this period of recuperation Mestre also began to consider creating what later became known as the Table Work (a ritual to remove negative thoughts or bad spirits – also known in the CERFLURIS line as the Crosses work) and began to think about becoming a member of the Esoteric Circle. According the Vera Fróes, Mestre Irineu became a member of the Esoteric Circle in 1955 (as well as the Rosacruicians), both of which were represented in Rio Branco.¹⁴¹ (The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* argue that this affiliation only happened in the early 1960s.) It is quite possible that Mestre already knew about the Esoteric Circle from the time when he participated in the Circle of Regeneration and Faith (CRF) in Brasileia in the middle of the 1910's. Mestre probably began to become reacquainted with its teaching when Daniel Pereira de Matos began to attend Santo Daime sessions and brought the magazines of the Esoteric Circle for him to read.

Around 1953, Mestre Irineu and dona Raimunda had a child, who (sadly) only lived three months. After the death of the child, dona Raimunda asked Mestre to adopt a young girl, Marta. She lived with dona Raimunda for about four years, and was around five years old when Mestre and dona Raimunda separated.¹⁴² The separation between the two happened in March of 1955, with dona Raimunda asking for the separation. It is not clear what led her to do this. According to most accounts, Maria Franco (the mother-in-law) was the primary source of the conflicts between the two. She wanted her daughter to leave with her to São Paulo, a departure which took place in March of that year, after Mestre slaughtered three pigs and two oxen and sold the meat in order to give some money to Raimunda.¹⁴³ After their departure, Mestre adopted a young man, Paulo Serra (named after Mestre's uncle from Maranhão, the one who had a decisive

role on his coming to Acre). Paulo Serra was a son of the marriage between Zé das Neves and Cecília Gomes. Paulo came to live with Mestre Irineu and Marta Serra, along with Percília Rebeiro. Percília acted as a type of governess to the children and took care of the house. She also assumed many of the spiritual functions of dona Raimunda – being in charge of the female section of the church, copying down/memorizing Mestre’s hymns, etc.

[FDD: Regarding Hymn #81, “*Professor*”/ “The Teacher.” According to dona Percília, when Mestre received this hymn, as well as the following two hymns (“*Campineiro*”/”Countryman”; “*O Divino Pai Eterno*”/”The Divine Eternal Father”), he was warning that he was going to leave his role as leader/teacher of the Santo Daime. She said that “these hymns were received during a time period when he was very upset with the family of dona Raimunda, his previous wife. Mestre’s mother-in-law drank a lot of rum and created lots of problems. . . . She wouldn’t give up. She insisted so much that she ended up taking his wife from him. She decided to leave and she took her daughter. They went to San Paulo.”¹⁴⁴ Also, a small comment of the translation of some of the verses of this hymn: “*Todos mandam em sua casa*” is translated in some hinários as “Everyone gives orders in their houses.” The translation is fine, but this is actually an expression that means, more accurately, “everyone is in charge of their own house.” In this way, the next line “*Eu também mando na minha*” is also better translated as “I’m also in charge of mine.”]

[FDD: Regarding Hymn #82, “*Campineiro*”/”Countryman”. Bomfim notes that Mestre really liked to work in the fields. Dona Peregrina Gomes Serra, Mestre’s widow, said that he would work preparing the fields, more or less alone, cultivating the fields, cutting down bushes and so

on. She said that one day, Guiomar dos Santos, (the governor of Acre at the time) would often come to Mestre's house to talk casually with him. She said that "One day he arrived and the Old One [Mestre] was in the field. He [Guiomar] then sent someone to call for him, and [when Mestre arrived Guiomar] said to him, 'Hey Irineu, I come here to pass some time with you and you're working in the fields. You can be done with that. You don't have to work like that.' Then the Old One replied, 'I have to work so that I don't have to get anything from anyone.' Guiomar then said, 'I'm going to retire you as a veteran. Do you want me to do that?' But he [Mestre] replied, 'No, I don't want that, because I don't want to be a liar.'" This episode is a bit mysterious, since Mestre did work for the Military Police. But perhaps he thought that he wasn't in the military for enough time or that he didn't have a high enough rank, and/or he responded in this way because he left the military on his own accord and therefore it wasn't appropriate for him to get a pension, just because he was friends with a powerful person.¹⁴⁵ Another couple of small translation issues in reference to this hymn as well. First, "*Campineiro*" is more accurately, "someone from the plains or prairies," rather than "countryman." Second, "*Fazer gosto a quem não tem, Na esperança de um dia*" is, in some hinários, translated as "Of trying to please the ungrateful in the hope of one day." Again, that doesn't make a lot of sense in English. Less literally, but more accurately, these verses are saying "What I care about, others do not. But I have the hope that one day this might change."]

Marriage to Peregrina Gomes do Nascimento and Journey to Maranhão

Mestre Irineu remained single from March 1955 until September 16 of 1956, raising his two children, Paulo and Marta (with the help of Percília Ribeiro). He began looking for a new wife in the beginning of 1956, and finally approached dona Zulmira Gomes, the daughter of Antônio

Gomes, about the possibility of marrying her daughter, Peregrina Gomes do Nascimento. Peregrina (with her mother acting as an intermediary) initially refused the proposal of marriage, saying that she didn't want to have that much responsibility, noting that she didn't cook and didn't know how to take care of a house, more less a house such as Mestre's that was almost constantly filled with people, including important politicians, throughout the day.¹⁴⁶ But two weeks later, she accepted, apparently making Mestre a very happy man (it is said that if he heard any lively music playing on the radio he'd jump into the room and say, "Here comes a woman of gold to dance with a cowboy of silver."¹⁴⁷ They were married in a civil ceremony on September 15th, 1956. (They couldn't marry in the Catholic church again, because he had already married Raimunda there.) The two of them had only been together two or three times before the wedding, only meeting in order to go over details of the party that followed, in which Mestre's community participated in three days of festivities in Alto Santo.¹⁴⁸ Mestre Irineu was 66 years old, and Peregrina was 20 years old.¹⁴⁹

[FDD: Regarding Hymn #86, "*Eu Vim da Minha Armada*" / "I Came from My Armada," Dona Percília said, "the Armada is just as I already said. We are a battalion, of a barracks, the divine barracks of the always Virgin Mary and of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is what the Armada is."¹⁵⁰ Luiz Mendes do Nascimento also tells a story about the time period in which Mestre received this hymn. He says that "Granjeiro told us that he was talking with Mestre, and Mestre told him that he [Mestre] also went through ups and downs, just like him. . . . because of people's lack of understanding. When he received "I Came from my Armada," he was going through one of these periods of discontent, and he even wanted to close the session/work. Then the hymn arrived, saying, "I came from my armada, to bring faith and love," and he

contemplated that stanza. It was the Queen saying [the hymn] to him. He says “I came from my armada, to bring faith and love” and then she says later to him, “Don’t neglect/despise your brothers, show your Light of Love.”^{151]}

[FDD: Regarding Hymn #104, “*Sexta-Feira Santa*”/ “Good Friday.” In this hymn it says, “Good Friday. Let’s observe it with obedience, Three (days) before and three after, To ward off sickness.” This is the only place in the hinário that speaks about a commonly held (but only informally discussed) daimista injunction that daimistas should refrain from sexual activity for three days before and after a work. (Literally, of course, the hymn only refers to the three days before and after Good Friday.) Bomfim notes that before we think that this requirement comes from a type of moralistic zeal, it’s good to remember that many indigenous ayahuasca traditions practiced a similar, or more extreme, “diet.” Bomfim believes that this prohibition is intended to help daimistas to transmute sexual energy for the purpose of spiritual awakening, and (as the hymn states) for good health.^{152]}

A little more than a year after his wedding, on November 13th, 1957, Mestre left Alto Santo, traveling to his birthplace in São Vicente Férrer, in Maranhão. (It had been 45 years since he had left Maranhão). He was hoping to see his mother, Joana, once again, but unfortunately, she had already died on June 12th, 1945. (Mestre’s nephew, Daniel Serra, who had lived with Mestre’s mother, was nine years old when she died. He frequently heard her say how much she missed the ‘black one,’ – i.e., Irineu – and longed to see him before she died.)¹⁵³

Mestre was able to get his airline ticket to Belém, as well as his passage on the ship journeying from Belém to Rio Branco on the return home, due to his long-term friendship with Manoel Fontenele de Castro, as well as his more recent friendship with Valério Caldas Magalhães, who became governor of the Territory of Acre in 1956. (As Mestre's status grew in the region, he was often courted by politicians in search of votes.)¹⁵⁴ After the plane ride from Rio Branco to Manaus, and from there to Belém, Mestre took a boat to São Luis in Maranhão, and then another boat to Raposa. Dona Peregrina said that during these two boat trips along the coast of Maranhão, "one section of the sea was really stirred up and there was a time when the boat became filled with water . . . He traveled perhaps two days and one night on the sea. And he was having miraçoes the whole time, seeing the most beautiful things. And it was during that trip that he saw the changes in the farda that needed to happen. They were shown to him, all perfectly clear, by the Queen, who accompanied him the whole time."¹⁵⁵

[Sidebar: The authors of *Eu Venho do Longe* note another, more prosaic, possible source of inspiration for the changes in the fardas. They point out that "the style of fardas proposed by Mestre Irineu upon his return from Maranhão resembles the style of fardas used in the Maranhense festival of *São Gonçalo da Baixada*, which takes place in the region of São Vicente Férrer [Mestre's birthplace] . . . The similarity between this celebration and Santo Daime rituals is rather striking and has already been pointed out by many researchers."¹⁵⁶ They point out that the men in both ceremonies wear white suits, and that the women in both wear white skirts and put crowns on their heads. Similarly, both groups wear colored ribbons, and sashes crossing the chest, as well as flowers made of paper or plastic. Because of these numerous similarities, they posit that it makes sense to suggest that the dance of São Gonçalo was a possible source of

Mestre's inspiration to initiate various changes in the Santo Daime fardas.¹⁵⁷ Speaking personally, I do not see any problem with understanding that the inspiration for the change in the farda came both from Mestre's exposure to the uniforms that were worn during the dance of São Gonçalo, *and* from the Queen.]

Mestre had brought a lot of money on this journey that he used to help his family, as well as two large suitcases that contained documents from the authorities in Rio Branco that described his work in Acre and the lands that he had acquired. In São Vicente Férrer, Mestre Irineu was able to meet his uncle Paulo again, and Mestre let him know that he was grateful for the blows from his whip, since through them, he became a man, a true man, in the kingdom of the Forest.¹⁵⁸ Some stories say that Mestre Irineu did not offer any Daime to his uncle, and only sang his hymns to him, whereas others say that his uncle Paulo did indeed drink Daime with Mestre.¹⁵⁹ During his time there, Mestre Irineu extended an invitation to many of his relatives, asking them if they wanted to go back to Rio Branco with him. Finally, after staying in São Vicente Férrer for close to month, he returned to Acre, taking with him two nephews (one of which was Daniel Serra), as well as the son of a niece.¹⁶⁰

When Mestre Irineu had left for Maranhão in November, he had put Zé das Neves and Raimundo Gomes (Peregrina's uncle) in charge of the spiritual works of the community. Due to the lack of news from Mestre during his three-month long absence, some in his community began to get worried. Raimundo Gomes even held Concentration works with the goal of determining whether Mestre Irineu was still alive.¹⁶¹ When Mestre finally returned to Acre on February 13th, 1958, after an arduous journey by ox-cart from the house of Guilherme Gomes in Rio Branco back to

Alto Santo, he was greeted by his community who sang his hymn “*Centenario*”/ “One Hundred.” Afterwards everyone took part in two days of parties and a Concentration work. Mestre’s two nephews and the son of his niece fit into the community quite easily, and began to participate in the Santo Daime works, with Daniel Serra becoming something close to a right-hand man of Mestre Irineu, so much so that he eventually was the person who was responsible for the command of the salão during the rituals.¹⁶²

[FDD: The initial sounds of the hymn “*Centenario*,” that is, “Traí, traí, traí, tra” were sung by dona Percília on Mestre’s arrival, which is why, after this time, the first stanza is always sung by one person alone. These sounds refer to the sound of trumpets/bugles playing in a way that is similar to how Mestre heard them playing when he received this hymn, many years before. They are not, as some believe, an invocation to caboclos. In addition, according to dona Percília, the “centenario” of the hymn refers to how many hymns Mestre had received at the time. Although the hymn is listed as #97, she says that three of his hymns that “were not in the line” were taken out of the list, hence the reference to 100.¹⁶³ We don’t know which hymns dona Percília is referring to, or anything about them. But there are many different ideas floating around. One is that they are the two opening hymns (“Sol, Lua, Estrela” and “Eu Devo Amar”) plus the hymn without lyrics that follows “Flor das Aguás” and that is played musically, but which is not listed numerically in the hinário.]

After Mestre returned to Alto Santo, he did not immediately re-assume the command of the works that he had transferred to Raimundo Gomes and Zé das Neves. He did this only in December of 1958 when he instituted a number of changes in the community. For example, he

introduced musical instruments into the Santo Daime works, (e.g., the guitar, banjo, mandolin and tambourine). He also, (as mentioned above), made changes in the fardas.¹⁶⁴ In 1960, Mestre and his followers also constructed a new structure in which to have the works – it was inaugurated on June 23rd, in celebration of the night of St. John.

[FDD: Before these changes, the women had worn a white skirt and long-sleeved white blouse with a green sash running from the left shoulder, front and back, to the waist. (For young girls, it ran from the left shoulder). After Mestre’s return from Maranhão, the white skirt became pleated, and an extra sash was added in front, forming a ‘Y’ in front of the blouse. He also added two “roses” of cloth (green and white) attached to the sashes on either side – the rose on the right was larger than the rose on the left side. He also added seven ribbons of various colors (excluding black) attached to, and hanging from the left shoulder. The women in the “*Estado Maior*” also had the sashes forming a ‘Y’ in the back of the blouse and they used twelve ribbons. The women also began to wear a sequined crown (in various forms).¹⁶⁵ For the young girls, besides the ‘Y’ of the sashes in front, Mestre also substituted a “garland,” (looking like a small branch of a plant, made from sequins) for the rose the women wore on the right side of the sash, but he kept the smaller rose the women wore on the left. (As a sign of their status, dona Peregrina and dona Percília Ribeiro had their sashes form an ‘X’ in front, and a ‘Y’ in back.) “The men, in this new phase, began to use a white jacket with a black or dark-colored tie. They had a green sash crossing over the jacket, from the left shoulder to the right hip. They also attached a large ‘rose’ (green and yellow, made of cloth) on the sash at the left shoulder. They also attached ribbons of various colors hanging from the shoulder, 12 ribbons for the *Estado Maior* and seven for everyone else.¹⁶⁶ The young men had their sashes with the directions reversed, similar to the

young women. And the youngest of them didn't wear a black tie. [I'm not sure when this tie, at least in the CEFLURIS line, became dark blue.] And both Mestre Irineu and Zé das Neves wore a "palm" (a type of white and green "rose" with three cardboard points on top, with each point sporting a five-pointed star, made of lustrous grey glue).¹⁶⁷ This type of farda lasted from 1958-1960. Then Mestre proposed some minor changes to the farda of the Estado Maior (all the men in that group began to wear the "palmas" like those that he and Zé das Neves wore), with these changes lasting until 1968.^{168]}

FDD: Regarding Hymn #115, "*Batalha*"/ "The Battle": In 1962, the political party that Mestre Irineu and his people (the PSD) supported suffered an electoral defeat. Mestre Irineu received the hymn during this time. According to Luis Mendes do Nascimento, soon after the defeat, when the PSD daimista supporters came to Alto Santo to mourn their loss, he sang the hymn for them. Others, however, such as Jair Facundes, have a different understanding of the origin of this hymn. According to Facundes, the hymn was received during an outbreak of the flu, an outbreak which was perceived as a great threat.¹⁶⁹ Regardless of the situation in which it was originally received, from then on, Mestre liked to sing it to energize his people when they were facing difficulties. It was originally a "*xote*," a musical genre of the Northeastern states of Brazil, that was adapted to be danced as a march. It is said that at one point Mestre became "transparent" with contentment at singing this hymn and called his wife, the very young dona Peregrina, to dance with the group to the sound of *Batalha*, a "*xote*," which "was beautiful."¹⁷⁰ Whenever Mestre Irineu's hinário is sung, this hymn is sung three times.

The Affiliation of the Santo Daime with the “Esoteric Circle of the Communion of Thought”

As was mentioned above, it appears that Mestre Irineu began to consider the possibility of partnering with the Esoteric Circle of the Communion of Thought in the middle of the 1950s. Then, towards the end of that decade, a man named Francisco Ferreira (also known as “Chicão,”) began to take part in Santo Daime ceremonies. Ferreira was a member of the Esoteric Circle and when Mestre became his friend, Mestre’s interest in that esoteric organization grew.¹⁷¹ The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* speculate that Mestre Irineu hoped that an affiliation with the Esoteric Circle would introduce explicit esoteric theoretical principles to the Santo Daime (principles that up until that point were only experienced individually within daimistas as a result of drinking the Daime). They also suggest that Mestre Irineu hoped that a partnership with this large national organization would give his center increased social legitimacy.¹⁷² (Mestre had earlier become a Rosicrucian, but not much is said about this affiliation.) Regardless of his motivations, in 1961 Mestre asked many of his closest followers to become members of the Esoteric Circle, and they officially registered on May 25th of that year.¹⁷³ Nonetheless, although most of the literature written about Mestre Irineu affirms that he was a member of the Esoteric Circle, the authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* carefully examined the registry of the national headquarters of the Esoteric Circle in São Paulo from the years between 1914 and 1928, and 1937-1967 (going through a list of more than 100,000 names) and although the registry lists many of the names of his followers, they did not find any evidence of Mestre’s membership. Mestre Irineu did have a diploma listing him as the “Honorary President of the Center of Mental Irradiation – Tattwa Divine Light” (this was the name of the local center of the Esoteric Circle in Rio Branco, founded in 1963), but it seems likely that this diploma was not issued by the national organization but instead, came from the local center itself.¹⁷⁴ (The term “tattwa” –

usually spelled as “tattva” in English – is a Sanskrit word for “metaphysical level,” and this term was typically part of the names of the centers that were affiliated with the national organization of the Esoteric Circle. “Tattwa” can therefore, more informally, be translated as “local center.”)

Mestre Irineu had already formalized the Concentration works in 1960, and as part of this restructuring, he had begun to have “instructions” from the Esoteric Circle read at a specified moment during the works. Then, little by little, as more followers of Mestre Irineu became members of the Esoteric Circle, Mestre’s Santo Daime center itself became officially affiliated with the national organization of the Esoteric Circle on May 27th, 1963. Mestre initially proposed the name “*Centro Livre*”/ “Free Center” to the headquarters in São Paulo (this was the second informal name that Mestre Irineu had given to his Santo Daime center in Rio Branco – the first had been “*Centro Rainha da Floresta*”/ “Center of the Queen of the Forest”). However, the name “Centro Livre” was rejected by the national headquarters and the name “*Centro de Irradiação Mental Tattwa Luz Divina*”/ “Center of Mental Irradiation Tattwa Divine Light” was adopted instead. In this way, from 1963 until 1970, the Santo Daime center of Mestre Irineu (“Centro Livre”) officially transformed itself into an affiliate of the Esoteric Circle.¹⁷⁵ This institutional linkage eventually led to various shifts in the structure of the Santo Daime that remain until this day, such as scheduling the Concentration works on the 15th and the 30th of each month, as well as adopting the principles of Harmony, Love, Truth, and Justice as the “motto” of the Santo Daime.¹⁷⁶ (It is also said that Mestre – with the invaluable help of Percília Rebeiro – learned how to read, and eventually to write, by reading the magazines that were sent to him each month by the Esoteric Circle.)

While daimistas were at times exposed to esoteric ideas from the spontaneous lectures that were occasionally given by Mestre Irineu and other high-ranking daimistas during works, and while they were able to gain numerous esoteric insights from the visionary/mystical revelations that arose within them a result of drinking the Daime, nonetheless, before the affiliation of the Santo Daime center with the Esoteric Circle, the primary source of spiritual study for daimistas had been learning the hymns. But during the close to seven years in which the Santo Daime was affiliated with the Esoteric Circle, daimistas (most of whom were unable to read or write) were regularly exposed to a wide variety of rather erudite spiritual literature, culled from the yogic philosophy of Swami Vivekananda, the occult perspective of Theosophy (founded by a Russian woman, Madame Blavatsky), as well as various Spiritist/Kardecist influences – all of which combined to create a hybrid set of beliefs that can still be found in Santo Daime, e.g., the tacit endorsement of metaphysical notions such as karma, reincarnation, spiritual evolution, and the presence of God within as one’s deepest divine Self.¹⁷⁷ (The publications of the Esoteric Circle also drew upon ideas from numerology, astrology, Buddhism, and the Kabbalah, but these influences were, arguably, more peripheral.)

These esoteric philosophical ideas were discussed and meditated upon every Monday at the home of the President of the local center, Francisco Ferreira. During these “Exoteric” sessions, members of the Tattwa (both daimistas and non-daimistas) would recite various prayers and meditate together; they would read the Book of Instructions of the Esoteric Circle; and they would read passages from the “Thought” magazines that were published by the Esoteric Circle. Then, on the 27th of every month, a larger number of members would gather at the headquarters

of the Tattwa (i.e., the Santo Daime headquarters) for the “Esoteric” sessions, where, again under the leadership of Francisco Ferreira, they would take part in sessions that were similar to Concentration works. Although the members did not wear fardas, they *would* drink Daime (eventually they also began to drink Daime on Mondays as well); they would meditate together for an hour and a half (with Ferreira and others giving “instructions” from the Esoteric Circle); then Luis Mendes do Nascimento would read the “Consecration of the Space” and “The Key of Harmony” out loud (texts that are still recited in Santo Daime Concentration works); followed by Lourdes Carioca singing two hymns from the Esoteric Circle: the “Esoteric Hymn” and the “Spiritist Hymn.”¹⁷⁸

The lyrics of these two hymns are given in *Eu Venho de Longe*.¹⁷⁹ Even a quick glance at these two hymns gives a clear sense of the sort of esoteric teachings that were imbedded within them. For example, a line from the first hymn goes: “We are forming a supreme ‘*egregora*,’ capable of illuminating Humanity.” (According to esotericism, an “*egregora*” – a Greek term – is a collective thought-form or energy matrix that is created when, over time, people gather to pray and meditate in a specified space.) And the beginning line of the second hymn goes: “We are children of Supreme Brahma.” (“Brahma” in this case probably does not refer to the Hindu god Brahma – a relatively unimportant god who, interestingly, is understood to be the creator of the universe. More likely the term is an abbreviated reference to “Brahman,” the yogic philosophical understanding of a supreme Reality that forms both the substance of everything and yet which also transcends everything.) Similarly, even after the Santo Daime split from the Esoteric Circle (a breakup that happened around 1970 and is described in more detail below), while esoteric themes were much less often explicitly discussed during Santo Daime works, there

continued to be moments during the works when esoteric ideas were expounded upon by various leaders. For example, in the verses of Saturnino Brito (the son of Luis Mendes) we get a glimpse of the recommendations that Mestre would give while conducting the ceremonies: “Everyone look, when you drink the Daime, seek then to go within, within your own selves. And don’t desire to travel, searching outside of yourself, because you’re not going to find what you seek. Dive deep within yourself, on the inner path, correcting your defects, encountering your value, recognizing within yourself the presence of the Creator.”¹⁸⁰

As was mentioned above, the affiliation of the Santo Daime with the Esoteric Circle terminated at the very end of the 1960s. Allegedly, Francisco Ferreira began to claim that he was the leader of the Tattwa, instead of Mestre Irineu. With this rivalry brewing, he went to São Paulo, where he spoke with the president of the Esoteric Circle, Matilde Preiswerk Cândido, about the use of the Daime during the sessions of the Rio Branco affiliate. She waited until Ferreira returned to Rio Branco and then sent a letter to the fellowship of the Tattwa in Acre, stating the incompatibility of the Daime with the ideals of the Esoteric Circle. Mestre Irineu’s answer was immediate and decisive: “If they don’t want my Daime, they also don’t want me. I am the Daime and the Daime is me.”¹⁸¹

After severing the connection with the Esoteric Circle of the Communion of Thought, Mestre Irineu changed the name of his center from the “Center of Mental Irradiation Tattwa Divine Light” (the name that they had used for close to seven years), choosing instead to adopt another name which had previously been proposed (interestingly, by the national leadership of the Esoteric Circle) as an alternative name for the Center: “*Centro de Iluminação Cristã Luz*

Universal”/ “Center of Christian Illumination Universal Light” (CICLU).¹⁸² This would become the name that was adopted when the institution was officially registered in 1971.¹⁸³

[FDD: Regarding Hymn #125, *Aqui Estou Dizendo/Here I am Saying*. It is said that this hymn marks the end of Mestre’s connection with the Esoteric Circle of the Communion of Thought.¹⁸⁴]

The Table Work

Although, as was noted above, it appears that Mestre Irineu began to formulate the “*Trabalho de Mesa*”/ “Table Work” in the mid-1950s during the time while he was recuperating from a bad accident, nonetheless this powerful ritual was only fully implemented after 1963. This work was designed to help people who were suffering from negative thoughts, or were thought to be experiencing an “*encosto*,” that is, a negative spirit who was close by (literally “leaning” on) the person and influencing her or him (this phenomenon was also called “obsession.”) The Table work could also be done if it was thought that someone was a victim of “negative visualizations,” i.e., sorcery. It seems that the Table work was inspired by Mestre Irineu’s exposure to the *Book of Prayers of the Cross of Caravaca*, which he had gotten to know through the Esoteric Circle.¹⁸⁵ The Table work was rooted in the belief that individuals could become possessed by negative entities, but unlike in Kardecism/Spiritism (or in several of the Spiritist-influenced Santo Daime rituals of the CEFLURIS line of Padrinho Sebastião) there was no attempt to “indoctrinate” the spirits (that is, to transform them into positive entities through divine grace), nor was there any desire to develop mediumship, as is found in Umbanda, Candomblé, Tambor de Mina or the CEFLURIS line of the Santo Daime. Instead, the Table

work most closely resembles the exorcisms designed to expel demons that are found in the Catholic Church or in Pentecostal Christianity.¹⁸⁶

Mestre Irineu initially taught the Table work to dona Percília Ribeiro, who then, by the end of the 1960's, passed it on to Lourdes Carioca. This work required the participation of an odd number of people – three, five, seven, or nine – each one carrying a cross. Ideally the person who required this work would be physically present, but the ceremony could also take place in her or his absence. The work would begin with the recitation of a “*Salve Rainha*”/ “Hail Holy Queen,” followed by the “Table Prayer” (also known in the *Book of Prayers of the Cross of Caravaca* as the “Prayer to command/control the malice of the bad spirits and the infernal demons.”¹⁸⁷ In the middle of this prayer, the participants would recite three “Our Fathers.” They would then sing hymn #108, “*Linha do Tucum*”/ “The Line of Tucum” three times, and end with another “Hail Holy Queen.”¹⁸⁸ Dona Percília said that during this ritual, “You pray three ‘Our Fathers’ until it is said, ‘And free us from all evil.’ Then you ask permission from Mestre Juramidam to call ‘Mr.’ Tucum. Then you call [him, via the hymn] three times in a row, and then you close with a Hail Holy Queen. After the Hail Holy Queen you make your [prayer] offerings. You offer to Mestre and to the always Virgin Mary those prayers you make at that moment, and to Mr. Tucum, in order for him to help. You don’t just have to pray for the person present, you can also offer prayers for others. The person leading the prayer can also pray for those who aren’t there but need help.”¹⁸⁹

[FDD: Regarding Hymn 108: “*Linha do Tucum*”/ “The Line of Tucum.” This hymn appears to have been received during the early 1960s. Tucum refers to a type of palm tree found in

Maranhão that is filled with thorns. It can grow up to 12 meters in height (approximately 36 feet). From its large leaves people would extract a strong and useful fiber, and its nuts have a seed that contains a lot of edible oil within it. Labate and Pacheco, having researched the roots of the doctrine of the Santo Daime in Maranhão (Mestre's birthplace), point out that this type of palm tree is also linked with the afro-indigenous culture of Maranhão and is associated with at least two large groups of spiritual entities: the *Légua Boji* and the *Currupiras*.¹⁹⁰ These two groups of entities are violent spiritual beings with "trickster" characteristics who punish those people who, for whatever reason, have displeased them. One of their favorite punishments is to cause their victims to enter into a tight grouping of Tucum palms where they become imprisoned in the thorns.¹⁹¹ The Tucum tree was also said to be the dwelling place of the *Currupiras*, and among the "*pajes*" (shamans) who lived in Maranhão, the Tucum, besides being used in medicines, also functioned as a type of spiritual "purifier," in the sense that it was used as the place where the shamans would deposit the spells and malignant substances taken from the bodies of the sick. In this way, for the afro-indigenous peoples who lived in Maranhão, the tucum tree was highly symbolic, intimately intertwined with practices and ideas related to supernatural power and magic.¹⁹² Hymn #108, "The Line of Tucum" is aligned with this symbolic universe. It is considered by daimistas to be a "hymn of power," or a "hymn for driving away bad spirits."¹⁹³ Bomfim notes that this hymn is similar to indigenous ayahuasqueiro traditions where they make "*chamados*" (calls/invocations) to beings of the spiritual world to come and work among/within human beings. In the Santo Daime, Tucum is, according to dona Percília Rebeiro, the name of a caboclo, an "entity of a lot of force, a lot of power" that can be called upon, three times, in moments of need, in order for him to come to give comfort and to protect those who call upon him from negative people and situations,

especially from the “*malfezejos*,” the “evildoers,” who are astral spiritual entities who seek to create problems for people and who “darken the mind” so that we “can never be happy.”¹⁹⁴ As Bomfim notes, for those in the line of Padrinho Sebastião, during curing works, “The Line of Tucum” is sung three times. However, Bomfim claims that this hymn should *not* be sung three times during the *hinário*.¹⁹⁵

There appears to be some ambiguity in regards to Mestre Irineu’s thoughts about sorcery or “*macumba*.” Luiz Mendes said that at one point Mestre told him that sorcery did not exist, saying “I already checked out this business and I never found it.” He also said that Mestre Irineu did not like the ideas of sorcery to be spread about among his people, telling Mendes that “in order to avoid [such things] just put God in your heart and that will put the devil in his place. Whoever does *macumba* ends up bewitching himself. And when someone puts something bad in their heads, he ends up attracting that bad thing to himself. Weakness in the thoughts.”¹⁹⁶ But one of Mestre’s old-time followers, João Rodriguez (“Nica”) said that Mestre Irineu shared a different perspective on sorcery with him, saying, “It’s ok if you don’t believe in it, but also don’t disdain [such beliefs]. You don’t know what is around us; there are negative forces. I don’t say this to everyone because what I want is for them to believe in God. But there are negative forces on the outskirts of our lives. One of these days they’ll grab you!”¹⁹⁷

Rodrigues went on to say that Mestre Irineu did not believe that most people who claim to be incorporating a positive spirit (as in the afro-brazilian religions of Umbanda, Candomblé, Tambor de Mina) are actually doing so. According to Rodrigues, “He [Mestre] said one time, ‘I asked the Queen, my mother, about this and she said this: “Of perhaps a thousand, perhaps out of

three thousand, one will be real. But where that one that is actually true is, no one knows. All the rest are fantasies or people after money.””””¹⁹⁸ Rodrigues also shared a story of Mestre Irineu’s own exposure to an afro-brazilian ritual. Apparently, during the journey in which Mestre Irineu returned to Maranhão, he stopped in Belém. A man named Fabiano, a brother of Zé das Neves, asked Mestre to go to one of the places in which these sorts of rituals took place (in which individuals would claim to be possessed by various positive spiritual entities) and Mestre went. Rodrigues says that during the ceremony, a person called Mestre over in order to give him a “pass” (a way of clearing the energy field of a person that takes place in Umbanda, Spiritism, etc.), and afterwards, Mestre “felt the ground disappearing under his feet” (that is, he seemed to have become rather light-headed). He then asked for permission to go outside, where he walked some on the ground in order to feel his feet on the earth and also looked up at the sky. After doing this (apparently in order to ground and center himself) he returned and asked them to continue. However, they didn’t want to continue working with him, saying that his body was all closed up and that therefore their work with him wouldn’t be effective.¹⁹⁹

[Sidebar: Apparently, when Mestre Irineu was in Maranhão, he met his cousin Elpídio, who was a famous master drummer of the *Tambor de Crioula*, (literally: the Drum of the Creoles/blacks), an afro-brazilian ritual that was done in devotion to St. Benedict in Maranhão. It is said that Mestre, together with his nephews and the son of his niece, during the time that he was in São Luis (before his return to Acre), went to the Tambor de Crioula where Elpídio played. The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* suggest that Mestre’s friendship with Elpídio was one of the sources of his connection to the afro-brazilian traditions of Maranhão.²⁰⁰]

Rodrigues went on to say that Mestre would say that “if a person gives too much of a chance for something like that [i.e., incorporation] to happen, there’s a negative force that can seize the person. It isn’t that a person incorporates a spirit. The person already has within them, given by God, their own spirit. But if a person removes himself in order to allow another to enter, the negative forces can enter . . . There really are negative influences. If a person isn’t prepared, like it says in the hymns, they can ‘become a vagabond spirit.’ . . . A person doesn’t know how to defend themselves, and they become bewildered, doing foolish, stupid things. This [Table] work itself exists just to remove these entities. It is for that person who isn’t capable of fighting against them.”²⁰¹

Lourdes Carioca in an interview said that “the ‘encosto’ is when a person is influenced by inferior ‘lines’ of spirits. . . A person suddenly changes, he becomes quiet, as if he is in another world, disconnected from everything, from his life, cut off from things . . . Depending upon the situation . . . there are some who go crazy . . . they scream, run around, swear . . . horrible! I have seen many ugly cases myself . . . There are inferior beings that incorporate themselves in some people . . . The table work is what we do for these cases, to frighten away these bad things, these malignant spirits.”²⁰² Apparently during the 1960s, there were many cases of “encosto” that Mestre needed to cure, often brought by families who were not part of the Santo Daime community.

[Sidebar: These negative “obsessing” spirits were also at times referred to as “*caboclos*” in Mestre Irineu’s community.²⁰³ I remember being surprised by this terminology, since the term “caboclos” is typically used to refer either to the mixed-race people who live in the Amazon river

region, or (for those within Umbanda or the CEFLURIS line of the Santo Daime), it can refer to the spirits of native Americans who incorporate themselves in ritual settings in order to heal those who are participating in the ceremony. Mestre Irineu has a hymn (#75, “*As Estrelas*”/ “The Stars”) in which he appears to use the term caboclos in this latter sense, in that in the hymn he says “The caboclos already arrived, with bare arms and bare feet, they bring good remedies, to heal the Christians.” João Rodrigues himself seems to have been puzzled by this way of interpreting this hymn, since at one point he asked Mestre Irineu about the hymn: “Padrinho, you have a hymn which says that ‘the caboclos are arriving with bare arms and bare feet’? He said, ‘Yes, those are my caboclos.’” Rodriguez goes on to say that he then realized that in the hymn Mestre was actually referring to the Amazon-dwelling “caboclos” within his own community, saying, “Then I realized that we are the caboclos, it’s us. This Mestre at times liked to play with our minds. And he was so close to us. But about that subject he wouldn’t speak clearly.”²⁰⁴]

When Mestre Irineu worked with people who were seen as having been possessed by negative spirits, he would often designate his nephew Daniel Serra to restrain the people who were the most agitated. In an interview, Serra said, “He would treat ‘caboclos,’ people who would begin to buck . . . but they’d only be worked up until they arrived here. When they arrived here, we’d tame them. There was one time, one morning, when a little short woman arrived, she came there breaking everything. She had four people fighting with her and they couldn’t stand up to her. She was in a bad mood, then some men arrived at the gate with her, they fought and fought. Then he told me to help her. I was already holding her by the hand, right at the beginning of the work. I had to hold her by the shoulder, because she was short and I didn’t want her to stomp her feet on the ground. Comadre [i.e., someone who has the same godparent] Percília was

praying, in order to do a healing work . . . [the woman was] bucking and I was holding her. I held her until the end; when it finished she slept in my arms.”²⁰⁵

While there was little space in Mestre Irineu’s community for positive forms of incorporation of spirits, there *was* an openness to “*irradiação*”/ “irradiation.” This term, which most likely emerged during Mestre’s time with the Esoteric Circle (or perhaps even from his participation in the mediumistic practices of the Circle of Regeneration and Faith in the middle of the 1910s) referred to a certain type of trance in which the individual does not completely lose her/his sense of self or the memory of what happened during its duration – and during this altered state of consciousness the person would receive the positive energy of the higher being – he/she would be “irradiated” by that energy.²⁰⁶ “Irradiation” in this way can be seen as part of a spectrum of mediumistic phenomena, a spiritual continuum with “encosto” located at the negative end, and “irradiation” located at the positive end. And all of these phenomena can be understood as differing ways for a person to communicate with the “Astral.”²⁰⁷ It appears that the “Astral” for Mestre Irineu was primarily about a person’s moods, or their positive and negative thoughts. However, it is also clear that Mestre believed in the reality of negative and positive forces or spirits who existed “outside” of the individual. Possession or “encosto” therefore was a communication with the inferior Astral, in which a person was understood to be under the influence of negative forces/spirits and/or negative memories, whereas irradiation referred to moments of contact between the person and divine/ “enchanted” beings, or the souls of spiritually-evolved disincarnate human beings, as well as when the person was filled with positive personal memories and ideas.²⁰⁸ João Rodrigues notes that he asked Mestre Irineu about irradiation. Mestre told him, ““The guardian angels of the home . . . are always there waiting for

us. We don't utilize them, we don't call on them. That then is a case of irradiation.” Rodrigues went on to say that there is also another form of irradiation, “the irradiation of beings like Princess Soloína for example. I talked with him about this, but I think that this is a thing that you have to be worthy to hear, it's really subtle, it depends a lot on the merit of the person . . . If you deserve it she will irradiate you, she will give the needed assistance.” Continuing with the topic of irradiation, Rodrigues also noted that Mestre Irineu suggested to him that he could, for example, spiritually call João Pereira or Germano or Maria Damião before singing their hinários in order for them to come and assist him.²⁰⁹

Political Affiliations

From 1964 to 1982, Acre was governed by politicians who were affiliated with the political party ran by the generals of the army who had, via a coup in 1964, taken over the government. But Mestre Irineu's friendship with the military authorities meant that the political situation continued to be favorable for his community.²¹⁰ For example, on May 21st of 1966, the Secretary of Health and Social Services sent a sample of *jagube* and *rainha* (the vine and leaves used to make Daime) to the President of the National Commission of the Supervision of Narcotics. He responded that from 1962-1966 he had not observed a single case of intoxication due to the use of daime; he also had not received a single objection to its use in spiritual rituals. This [telegram] was of great importance to Mestre Irineu and his community in that it meant that they could continue their normal works with the Daime during the military dictatorship without having to fear any governmental interference.²¹¹ Through his network of political friendships, Mestre Irineu worked hard to defend the interests of his religious group which before had been subject to innumerable prejudices and stigmas. Mestre Irineu's prestige was so strong during

that time that Wanderlei Dantas, the governor of Acre from 1971-1975 (a man who was also linked with the military dictatorship) accepted Mestre's request to be able to be buried in land in front of his house in Alto Santo. (The governor also named a street after him.)

Jorge Viana, who was the governor of Acre from 1998- 2006 (and who was affiliated with a political party on the other side of the political spectrum from the dictatorship) gives a sense of what it was like in Alto Santo during this time: "You would arrive there [at Alto Santo] and you would see the highest authorities of the State revering him, bowing before Mestre Irineu . . . Who was that huge man, black, with large hands, enormous, who would take and swallow our hands [with his], who the greatest authorities of the State would bow before? That is the memory that I have of him, seated on a chair and the politicians, some of them kissing his hand, asking for his blessing, and kissing his hand."²¹²

Mestre was not someone to protest against the system. As Jair Facundes notes, "he never promoted the work of rubber tappers or farmers who were seeking to pressure the government to improve the conditions of work or life . . . These are the brute facts. There is nothing more to discover."²¹³ Nonetheless, although Mestre stood on the side of the government, he did not let that allegiance prevent him from giving counsel to those who opposed the dictatorship. For example, during this time period he supported a man named Regino (the leader of the branch of the Santo Daime in Porto Velho) who was tortured by the military for being a leftist militant.²¹⁴

[Sidebar: With the eventual re-democratization of Brazil, beginning in the late 1970s and culminating in the return to civilian rule in 1985, Alto Santo – under the leadership of Mestre

Irineu's widow, known in Alto Santo as *Madrinha* ("Godmother") Peregrina – shifted allegiance from the party that Mestre had supported (a party that was linked to the military coup), to a newly formed left-leaning Workers' Party.^{215]}

Communal Tensions and Final Changes in the Farda

It appears that tensions and rivalries among various groups in the Santo Daime community began to increase after the middle of the 1960s.²¹⁶ Most of these disputes had to do with how to interpret the Doctrine and to practice the rituals of the Santo Daime, and these disagreements seemed to be linked with the creation of various extensions of Mestre's center, known during that time as "*Pronto-Socorros*" / "Emergency Rooms." The first "Emergency Room" was that of Daniel Pereira de Matos, the founder of Barquinha, in the middle of the 1940s. The next was run by Raimundo Gomes, the son of Antônio Gomes, who after separating from dona Percília Ribeiro and remarrying, moved away from Alto Santo in 1961. Mestre told Raimundo Gomes that while he could make his own Daime, he should only do Concentrations and healing works in the location where he lived, and during the official festivals of the Daime, he and all of the daimistas of that region should come to the principal headquarters in Alto Santo in their white fardas. Similar instructions were given to other Daime groups which began to emerge in different regions of Rio Branco during the 1960s, perhaps most importantly, the "Emergency Room" that was started in "*Colônia Cinco Mil*" / "Five Thousand Colony" in 1968 by Sebastião Mota de Melo.²¹⁷ (The Porto Velho "Emergency Room," however, did not produce its own Daime but instead, was given regular shipments of Daime by a person who carried it to them from Mestre's center. Then, in 1968, Mestre Irineu sent a group of instructors to Porto Velho to teach them how to make their own Daime.) To a certain extent, the various "lines" of the Santo

Daima that emerged after the death of Mestre Irineu had their beginnings in these different extensions of Mestre Irineu's center.²¹⁸

Mestre Irineu also had to deal with discord arising within his own community. Sometime around 1970, due to disputes among his followers having to do with the different decorations on the fardas that indicated the "ranks" of his followers, Mestre decided to do away with most of the indications of hierarchy that were on the fardas. Raimundo Gomez da Silva says that "The star was what stood out. A colonel had six stars. A lieutenant colonel had five stars. And the low-ranking soldiers only had one star. Then people began to get puffed up. Someone with six stars would begin to boss around someone with five stars. Then Padrinho went and changed it. It became only one [six-pointed] star for everyone, to show that we're all equal."²¹⁹

[FDD: Mestre also took away the large roses and the crossed green sashes of the women (although a green rose remained on the right side of the chest of women, while the girls wore a green lily). He also removed the "*ramalhete*" (the bouquet symbolizing virginity and purity) of the young girls, which (like the roses for the women) was exchanged for the six-pointed star used by everyone. But the women in the Estado Maior continued to have 12 ribbons and the "Y" of distinction down their backs. He also removed the ribbons and the "palms" worn by the men, and he exchanged his large "palm" for a star of five points (along with Zé das Neves and Leôncio Gomes – the counselor and president, respectively).²²⁰ The other last change that Mestre Irineu made was the institutionalization of the use of fardas in Concentrations, creating the typical "blue farda" that is worn today by male and female daimistas, (although, interesting, the tie for the men was said to be black) with the women wearing a blouse with a Star of David

stitched on it, with the initials C.F.R., which, as was mentioned earlier, most likely stands for “Centro da Rainha da Floresta”/ “Center of the Queen of the Forest,” the first name of Mestre’s Santo Daime center. Percília Ribeiro says that “before dying he systematized everything [about the Concentration farda]. But it was only regularized after he died. Until then, there wasn’t any time to organize things. But everything was systematized before then.”²²¹ Mestre also left instructions with dona Percília for the last change that was made in the women’s farda: the pleated green short skirt that is placed on top of the white pleated skirt worn during festival works.]²²²

Mestre proposed that in the center of the six-pointed stars there should be an eagle, looking like it was just getting ready to fly, perched on top of a new moon (and the size of the new moon should be the size of the moon on the third day – symbolic of the day in which, traditionally, the jagube vine would be cut). And, as was mentioned earlier, Mestre Irineu, by adopting the symbol of the eagle (*águia*) was making a subtle reference to “the guide” (*à guia*): Clara/the Queen of the Forest/the Virgin of Conception.²²³

The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* suggest that it is possible that Mestre Irineu was inspired by the central symbol of the Esoteric Circle of the Communion of Thought when he chose the six-pointed star. The symbol of the Esoteric Circle is composed of a six-pointed star with a cross in its center, and over the star there are four letters in Hebrew, symbolizing the four letters of the name of God – IOD-HÊ-VÔ- HÊ. (Daniel Pereira de Matos at some point used those same letters in the façade of his Barquinha church). In addition to the Hebrew letters and the star, the symbol contains a pair of wings on either side of the star. For the Esoteric Circle, the symbol expresses different esoteric understandings. For example, the two crossed triangles that form the six-

pointed star signify the equilibrium between faith and reason, the feminine and the masculine, and the physical and the astral, while the wings on either side of the star signify the vibration of thoughts in God, specifically the vibrations linked to the letters of God's name.²²⁴ The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* go on to suggest that perhaps the wings that are on the sides of the Esoteric Circle symbol were transformed into the eagle that Mestre put within the star, while the cross within the star of the Esoteric Circle was exchanged for the moon that is present within the Santo Daime star.²²⁵

The "New Hymns"

Beginning in 1963, Mestre Irineu stopped receiving hymns. He only began to receive hymns again in 1968. These hymns were called the "*Hinos Novos*" / "New Hymns," and were later referred to (especially in the CEFLURIS line) as the "*Cruzeirinho*" / "Little Cross," in that for many people the "Little Cross" was a summation and synthesis of the Doctrine that was revealed in-and-through "*O Cruzeiro*" / "The Cross," i.e., Mestre's hinário. These last hymns (from 117 to 129) were received from 1968-1970, and began with hymn #117, "*Dou Viva a Deus nas Alturas*" / "I Give Viva to God in the Heights," which was received after Mestre drank from a (now legendary) batch of Daime made by his "*feitor*" (the head of the ritual process of making the Daime), Seu (Mr.) Loredó.

[FDD: Bomfim says that the doctrine of Christian illumination discussed in "I Give Viva to God in the Heights," focuses on the divine spark that lives within each daimista. This divine spark corresponds to the illumination that we receive when we return to our Father's house, which the parable of the Prodigal Son describes. This parable (put simply) describes the conscious descent

of the Logos (the divine Word, the Christ) to the material plane, to embodiment, and his eventual return to his origin, the house of the Father, duly enriched by these embodied experiences, as symbolized by the welcome bestowed by the Father to His Son.²²⁶

[FDD: According to the authors of *Eu Venho de Longe*, from 1965 to 1967, when daimistas sang Mestre's hinário during the celebrations of St. John and Nossa Senhora/Our Lady, they would sing the first half without any musical instruments. Then after hymn #66, after the interval, they would just play instrumental music, along with the maraca. They'd only sing during the "hymns of power," i.e., they would only sing during hymns #86: "*Eu Vim da Minha Armada*"; #87: "*Deus Divino Deus*"; #95: "*Mensageiro*"; #104: "*Sexta-Feira Santo*"; #108: "*Linha do Tucum*"; #111: "*Eu Estou Aqui*"; and #116: "*Sou Filho do Poder.*"²²⁷ There were also apparently some disputes over when Mestre's last hymn should be sung. Dona Percília said that Mestre told her that it shouldn't be sung during festival works, but only during the masses. And João Rodrigues Facundes, in an interview about this dispute, said: "It wasn't just sung on the Day of Kings. If the Cruzeiro was sung, I would sing that hymn as well. That hymn, during that time, we'd sing in the dance works . . . But after he died people created all of [these ideas about not singing the last hymn, as well as other changes.]"²²⁸

[FDD: Regarding Hymn #128, "*Eu Cheguei Nesta Casa*" / "I Arrived in this House":

This is a hymn of thanks to those who, during a three-day time period when Mestre was in a coma, prayed for his return, prayed for him to remain in his body with his fellowship.

Final Months: The Decree of Service

In the middle of 1970, Mestre Irineu began to suffer from serious health problems, primarily having to do with his heart and kidneys. He lost weight rapidly and with the passing of the months, it appeared that the end was near. After emerging from the three-day coma that is obliquely referred to in hymn #128, “*Eu Cheguei Nesta Casa*”/ “I Arrived in this House,” Mestre (for the most part) stopped going to the Concentration sessions, as well as to the official hinários, putting Leôncio Gomes da Silva in charge of these works.

And with the aggravation of his health problems, Mestre Irineu began to feel the necessity to leave written instructions to his followers. In this way, probably in the middle of 1970, he asked dona Percília to write down these instructions in a document entitled “*Decreto de Serviço*”/ “Decree of Service.”²²⁹ This is the only text known to be written by Mestre. (In it, Mestre still refers to his center as the “*Centro de Irradiação Luz Divina*” / “Center of the Irradiation of Divine Light,” the [only slightly abbreviated] name by which it was registered in the Esoteric Circle of the Communion of Thought.) The Decree of Service began to be read in two moments during the Concentration works: first, after having taken Daime at the beginning of the work, and then, second, after a period of meditative silence before the “New Hymns” were sung.²³⁰

Hand-in-hand with composing the Decree of Service, approximately a year before his death, Mestre Irineu created a new format for the Concentration works. From 6:30-7:00pm the Daime would be served. The director of the works would then select the “*mesários*,” that is, the six people, including the commander/director, who were seen as firm enough to stay in their place at the central table/altar for the entire work. One of these individuals was designated to read the

Decree of Service. Then there would be a period of silent meditation lasting for an hour or hour and ½ (depending upon the director of the work). After this, the Decree would be read again. Then either 10 pre-selected women, or all the women, would stand and sing the New Hymns, along with the seated men. And finally, there would be the final prayers and closing words.²³¹

[FDD: According to Pedro Matos (the widower of dona Percília), at the end of the period of silent meditation, someone – either the leader of the work, or someone else – would formally ask if there were still people who were “*mirando*” a lot (i.e., having lots of visions). If everyone was finished having visions, then the New Hymns would be sung.²³² Mr. Matos said that everyone stood for the last two hymns of the New Hymns, whereas João Rodrigues said that everyone would only stand for the last hymn.²³³]

My translation of the Decree of Service is included below. While it is as faithful as possible to the original meaning conveyed by the Portuguese words, nonetheless I have chosen to make the translation as intelligible as possible for English-speakers rather than providing a word-for-word (and hence at times extremely obscure) translation. (The Decree of Service is also available on this website – liquidlightbook.com – as a free-standing document.)

"DECREE OF SERVICE"

(Center of Mental Irradiation, Divine Light)

Decree of Service, written in the year 1970.

The President of the "Center of Mental Irradiation, Divine Light," later known as the "Center of Christian Illumination, Universal Light," Mr. Raimundo, Mestre Irineu Serra, using his legal rights decrees:

It is mandatory for the members of this House [i.e., this Center] to keep peace within the House, maintaining sincerity and respect for each other. It is obvious that, in whatever career, art, or profession that we choose in life, we only achieve our ultimate goal if we give ourselves to it with our whole body and soul. This is the way that the Divine Science also works.

All of the heads of the households should create, within their own households, a center of peace and harmony; husband and wife treating each other with dignity and respect, [offering to each other] the petals of love, with the powerful goal of a happy future together.

Each head of the family should be an exemplary role model for their children within their own home; they should never use words that could harm the minds and hearts of their children; they should teach their children the rights of a Brazilian citizen: to treat each other well, from the highest to the most humble; they should teach them their religious duties; that they should

respect God above all things, [that they should] pray every day, in order to keep away evil things, sickness, hardships, etc.

Within this House, there must not be intrigue, hate, misunderstandings – even the most insignificant ones; all who drink this Holy Beverage should not only try to see beautiful things, splendors, and so on; [but they should also] correct their imperfections, creating in this way the betterment of their personality, in order to join in this battalion and to follow this line. If they act in this way, then they will be able to say: I am a brother/sister. Within this equality, everyone has the same rights; in cases of illness, a team will be expressly designated to help the brother or sister in need. On the days of works, all of those who come to seek physical, moral, and spiritual assistance, should always bring with them a healthy mind, full of hope, imploring the infinite eternal spirit of the Good, and the Virgin Sovereign Mother Creator, that their wishes come true according to their merit. In order to begin our meditation, after serving the Daime, everyone should go to their respective places, with the exception of the women who have children – they should wrap them up first.

Continuing our meditation: when the time of the interval has passed, when the first call is given, everyone should line up, both the men's and women's battalion, because all have the same duty. The truth is that the Center is free, but the leaders who have the responsibility to take care of others need to demonstrate that they are up to the task; nobody lives without a duty and the person who has a duty, should always fulfill it.

Discipline is a goal, it cannot be learned in books – everything depends upon ourselves. Realization only comes through experience. In the same way, the Power of Divine existence shows us how our individual evolution on the earthly plane is related to the superior plane. Besides this, we need to learn that in our minds there are both superior and inferior attractions. This foundational knowledge leads us to a complete change of all of our values, habits and to an understanding of one another – all of this happening by the examination of our conscience. There exists in our mind a set of attractions; superior and inferior; [aligning ourselves with the superior] attraction, practiced daily, will bring about an inner development that can produce the most altruistic results. Everything depends upon our own conscience. If we practice what is good, that good will carry us forward. If we practice what is bad, clearly, we will only be defeated.

If we act in this way, we will be walking on the path of perfection and in search of new achievements. Let it be declared in this way: henceforth, the brother or sister who, because of a lack of understanding, does not faithfully fulfill the duties cited above, and decides to go down contrary paths, at the first time that they go astray, they will be given a warning; with their second wrong decision, they will be suspended for thirty days, and if they continue, they will be removed for good.

Signed, Raimundo, Mestre Irineu Serra, (President)

The Last Months: Speech on Harmony; Final Hymn; and a Formal Statute

On November 15th, 1970, Mestre Irineu gave a memorable speech during a Concentration work in which he criticized the disharmony that he had been observing in the community. The speech was recorded, but sadly it is almost inaudible due to the sound of the gasoline generator that was used for the lights in the headquarters. In this speech Mestre expressed his disappointment with the quarrels that had been taking place between various married couples. He also said that some of his followers were not respecting the property of others, and were taking produce from the fields of others without asking permission. He repeatedly said that these people had learned nothing while in the Santo Daime, that he never taught people in the Center how to be thieves. Nonetheless, even though he chastised some of his followers, his underlying kindness and gentleness can be seen in these words from that speech: “Pardon me, forgive me, because I don’t want to call attention to anyone. But as the leader, as the commander of the work, as the leader of this doctrine, I have to speak up.”²³⁴ The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* also note that some people say that during this same occasion Mestre spoke in “Tupi,” an indigenous language. The authors, however, point out that although we can find fragments of the Tupi language in Mestre Irineu’s first hymns, it is not likely that he was fluent in Tupi. Therefore, they believe that this part of the speech was possibly something closer to a manifestation of glossolalia [i.e., speaking in tongues.]²³⁵

A little more than a month later, on December 17th or 18th, 1970, Mestre Irineu received what became his final hymn, “*Pisei Na Terra Fria*”/ “I Stepped on the Cold Earth.”²³⁶ It is said that in the months before his death, Mestre had been receiving communications from his spiritual guide, the Queen of the Forest, advising him that the day of his “passage” was near. His

followers had been noticing that his health was getting worse and when they heard this hymn (which explicitly discusses dying) they became profoundly sad, many of them sobbing, fearing the worst.²³⁷ His adopted son, Paulo Serra, after hearing “I Stepped on the Cold Earth” went to see his father and the following conversation took place: “Dad, this hymn isn’t saying that you’re going to die, is it?” “No, if it were, then this wouldn’t be the time.” I said, “No, no, dad, if you say anything like that then I’m leaving.” And he said, “No my child, no, I’m going to live a lot more. God willing, I’m going to reach 100.” Then I calmed down.²³⁸ Many of Mestre Irineu’s followers were similarly distraught, and therefore, some days after receiving the hymn, Mestre called a meeting in order to ease their suffering. According to Wilson Carneiro, Mestre emphasized that “this hymn isn’t only about me, it is for everyone, everyone who is born has to die.”²³⁹

[FDD: In Bomfim’s text, the last lines of “I Stepped on the Cold Earth,” – i.e., “Someone speaks of my name, Sometimes, in thought” ends with a question mark. When I was working with my Portuguese tutor on this section of Bomfim’s book, I asked her about the question mark and she said that she also thought that Bomfim was correct. Speaking personally, adding that question mark creates an extra layer of plaintiveness and poignancy to a verse that is already deeply moving.]

Sometime soon after receiving “I Stepped on the Cold Earth,” Mestre Irineu asked José Viera, a member of the Santo Daime “extension” in Porto Velho to write a legal document, (i.e., a “statute”) to formally institutionalize the Santo Daime. After the split with the Esoteric Circle of the Communion of Thought, Mestre wanted to legitimate his Doctrine in order to make it

acceptable to civil authorities as well as to Catholics and Protestants. Viera was a clerk of the civil police and (with relatively little participation from Mestre) he began to write in a style that was, at least to many readers, excessively affected, formal, and pedantic. It is also said that in order to write the document (a process which took several months) Viera ended up drinking five liters of Daime.²⁴⁰

On January 7th, 1971, after Mestre Irineu received a rough draft of the statute, it was registered in the minutes of the constitution of the center.²⁴¹ Mestre called a meeting of the members of the newly formed board of directors, as well as other important figures in his community, in order to have a first reading of the statute. The reception of this document was somewhat less than enthusiastic. According to João Rodrigues: “We arrived there around ten o’clock at night, after a feitiço of the Daime and he [Mestre] had a draft. He asked Luis Mendes to read it. Luis Mendes spent two hours reading this statute. At one moment we’d be sleeping, then we would wake up, then we’d sleep, then we’d wake up and when it was finished Mestre asked us: ‘What do we think? Is it good?’ Our response was, ‘Who are we to think, to judge?’ He said, ‘It isn’t good?’ We said, ‘Everyone thinks it’s good.’ That’s when he gave it to me to be officially registered and I did that.”²⁴² Mestre Irineu told Rodrigues to keep the statute with him until it was needed.

Rodrigues ended up presenting the document to Mestre on July 5th, 1971, the evening before he died, and Mestre told him, “Compadre, I am happy, I have given a name to what didn’t have one before [i.e., now it’s official].”²⁴³

The statute was a formal document that was written to institutionalize the Doctrine. However, it did not emerge from a consensual discussion with the community or with the board of

directors.²⁴⁴ In this way, as well as being boring and difficult to read, it also did not reflect the fundamental presuppositions of the Santo Daime (for example, it imposed penalties not only on those who broke the rules, but also on their relatives.) The statute also included copious citations from the Bible, even though Mestre Irineu, while respecting the Bible, never quoted from it and did not place it on the central altar.²⁴⁵ As João Rodrigues points out, “Mestre Irineu wasn’t someone who read and memorized the chapter and verse of the Bible, but one thing that he emphasized to us and never tired of repeating was: ‘From the Bible I extract two commandments: for us to love God above all things and to love our neighbors as ourselves. That says it all. If we do this, then we’re giving everything to Him.’... He never said bad things about the religion of anyone, especially of the Bible, because he’d say, ‘My *Cruzeiro* is biblical from beginning to end – see for yourself.’ He never belittled the Bible, but he also never put the Bible on top of the mesa.”²⁴⁶

It seems that there were some people in the community who said that Mestre had been unhappy with this statute and that he had told Francisco Granjeiro that this statute was like an “axe blow to his neck,” that is, that it didn’t represent his positions.²⁴⁷ It’s not clear which part of the statute displeased him, but one of the key features of the statute that caused tremendous strain among his followers was the creation of a board of directors. Having a board of directors upset many of his followers not only because this form of bureaucratic authority was so incongruous with the charismatic leadership of Mestre Irineu, but also because some people felt passed over/ignored. They had a personal relationship with Mestre and they did not feel ready to accept a lower position in relation to other followers. But perhaps the most contentious issue surrounding the creation of a board of directors was that the board needed to have a treasurer,

and having a treasurer seemed (at least to some) to conflict with the command of the Queen in the beginning of Mestre's mission that he should not make money from the Daime.²⁴⁸

ValcÍrio Granjeiro describes how Mestre and his followers tried various ways to help to pay for the costs of making the Daime without actually making any money (i.e., any profit) from the sacrament: "First . . . they had a cloth bag that was passed among people for them to make contributions . . . Then padrinho Mestre Irineu saw this guy who pretended to put money in the bag, but really took money out of it. Then padrinho Irineu said that he wasn't creating a school for robbers or thieves, so he stopped that . . . Then they came up with the idea of making tokens/cards, and each person who went to drink daime would buy a token . . . [Mestre] didn't believe in doing that, but in order to not be against it, since there wasn't another way to collect funds, Mestre Irineu let it be. He himself would buy a token to drink daime. He was the first one to buy the token . . . At times many people would arrive and they wouldn't have money to buy a token and he'd buy them and give them to those people [or he'd give money from his pocket to them so that they could buy the tokens.] . . . Before both of these systems, he'd tell people just to give what they could. One person would bring some meat, another some meat jerky, another would have money to bring. Then afterwards came this business of becoming members, where people would pay monthly dues, but this was after padrinho Mestre Irineu died. It was something that they made up; he was against such things. . . He preferred that people would donate without needing to be asked to do so, but not everyone would be willing to arrive there and give something in order to help out; at times, even when asked, people didn't want to give anything."²⁴⁹

In the end, it appears that Mestre Irineu was divided. On the one hand he was happy to have a statute that legitimized his religion. But on the other hand, he was displeased with the bureaucratization it created. And not surprisingly, given the statute's almost total unawareness of the actual practices and beliefs of the community, it was never effectively implemented. In later years, after the creation of several new centers, as well as a series of internal quarrels that almost fragmented the original group, the document was abandoned and was replaced by new, more adequate, statutes.²⁵⁰

Premonitions of the End

In the second half of June, 1971, after the festival of St. John (the last official hinário which Mestre Irineu participated) a priest, Father Pacífico, appeared at the gate of Mestre Irineu's center, accompanied by two nuns. This visit was seen as a portent of Mestre's upcoming death, since according the Júlio Carioca: "One day Mestre Irineu called me and said that his teacher [the Queen of the Forest] had told him that one of the warnings that he would have when he was close to his death was the presence of a priest in the headquarters."²⁵¹ Júlio Carioca was there when the priest arrived and he heard Mestre Irineu exclaim: "I could never imagine this happening. My mother!" and Carioca immediately remembered the warning that Mestre Irineu had given to him. Nonetheless, Mestre graciously received the priest and the two nuns – he talked to the priest while dona Peregrina and Lourdes Carioca spent time with the nuns. The priest asked Mestre's permission to attend a ritual of the Santo Daime and Mestre immediately accepted, choosing July 14th, dona Peregrina's birthday, for the occasion. Mestre's final words to Júlio Carioca were "Receive them with all honors." Carioca was later convinced that by

phrasing it in this way (i.e., saying in essence “you receive them” rather than “let’s receive them”) Mestre was subtly indicating that he would not be alive for the priest’s second visit.

For several months, Mestre Irineu had been having difficulty with his kidneys and with his heart; he was getting weaker, and he was losing weight. Dona Percília Ribeiro said that, not long before he died, Mestre discussed his condition with her, saying, “I don’t feel pain. I’m not hungry. I’m not bothered by anything. The only thing that bothers me is that I don’t have anyone to deliver my work [my Doctrine] to. And I’m missing you all. I feel such a sense of sadness at the thought of not being with you all – that’s what is really beating me down.”²⁵² She went on to say, “He without a doubt knew that his death was coming and knew that most people weren’t ready. And that wasn’t from any lack of teaching. Everyone knew that if they needed anything, they only had to run to Mestre and ask. Everyone thought that they would never be without him.”²⁵³ She also said that Mestre “was really beaten down, beaten down . . . He didn’t eat meat any longer. He said that his body wouldn’t accept such things anymore. And everyone was seeing him weakening. So close to the 30th of June, 1971, I asked him, ‘Wouldn’t you like a Concentration to improve your health?’ And he said, ‘Good idea. So, let’s do it. Call the people who are most close to me.’”²⁵⁴

And so, they had a Concentration work on the night of June 30th, 1971, a few days before his death, dedicated to improving his health, a type of healing work, but done in silence, in meditation. It is said that at the end of that Concentration, he asked everyone present, “Who saw my burial?” No one answered. (Although everyone stayed silent, Valcívrio Genésio da Silva – Mestre’s son with Emília Rosa Amorim, having recently arrived in Rio Branco in 1970, only to

immediately become a follower of his father – said that he had seen his father in a coffin, but remained quiet.) Mestre then continued, describing his own inner experience: “I came to a salão that was very organized, [with] everything properly ordered, with the chairs in their place. There was only one chair vacant, at the head of the table.” He went on to say that then the Virgin Sovereign Mother arrived by his side and said: “From this day forward you are the overall leader [*chefe geral*] of this mission. You are the one in charge, in the heavens, on the earth, and in the sea, for all intents and purposes. All those who remember you and call you from their hearts will receive the Light.”²⁵⁵ It is said that it was at this moment, after 50 years of work, that Mestre finally received the “command in the Astral.”

During this same Concentration work, a little before receiving the command in the Astral, Mestre Irineu said that he had discovered his remedy/medicine. He also said that he would become well and that his remedy is “in every corner/everywhere.” Dona Percília Ribeiro claimed afterwards that the remedy/medicine that he spoke about was the earth, and that phrasing it like this was Mestre’s way to subtly allude to his upcoming death, i.e., his burial in the earth.²⁵⁶

Mestre Irineu apparently made other subtle allusions to his “passage” (the most common way that daimistas refer to death). For example, João Rodrigues said that “One day he told me that he was going to remain [almost like he was immortal.] I believed that so much that when the news arrived that he had died, I thought the person who told me was a liar. But in reality, it was true. Afterwards I ‘dotted the i’s’ [i.e., he put the pieces of the puzzle together]. He in reality had told me that he was going to die [literally: “going on a journey”], but . . . I didn’t really get it. I asked him the day before the Concentration how his health was. He said, ‘I am well compadre.’

‘Really well padrinho?’ ‘I am.’ ‘But are you really well padrinho?’ I was insisting a bit. He said, ‘Well compadre, it’s only that this cold is bothering me a bit. But my healing is in my hands. My Mother said that she put it in my hands. The time that I want to die, I’ll do it. It’s not going to take long.’”²⁵⁷

A few days before the June 30th Concentration work, Mestre Irineu had called Leôncio Gomes and had made him the president of the Center. But according to dona Percília, Mestre told Gomes, “You are not going to be the [real] leader – the leadership is going to remain with me. But stay here to receive people, to teach the Doctrine, and [if you do this], everything will be fine. Listen to what I am saying: do not do anything more than what I’m giving to you. If you do [anything more than this] you won’t be able to handle it.”²⁵⁸ An anonymous follower of Mestre Irineu described the way in which Mestre prepared Leôncio Gomes to become the president of the Center via an intense (and apparently initiatory) work with the Daime that he “supervised” in the Astral. This follower said that “the old one [Mestre] . . . already knew that he was soon going to die. Leôncio was [going through an intense process with the daime] from nine at night until three in the morning after having taken a ½ cup of the daime, spending that time saying that he was no one, and [crying out] ‘*pei, pei.*’ [Probably referring to “*peia*,” the suffering that is at times brought on by the daime.] And Mestre was there in [his own] house, preparing Leôncio [astrally], bringing him to the point to which he had to arrive. When it was 3:00am, he [Mestre] said, ‘He is now ready. Bring him from there to here.’ He [Leôncio] was in the barn, on the floor there, and the gang was working with him; the helpers there were not letting him weaken any more. Then they brought Leôncio like they were bringing someone who was paralyzed, some grabbing him on one side and others grabbing him on the other, dragging him until he was in the

presence of Mestre sitting in that chair of his, in the armchair of his, sitting there and looking. As Leôncio came there, he threw himself at Mestre's feet saying, 'Help me my chief!' Mestre put his hand on his [Leôncio's] head and said, 'Stand up!' Leôncio stood up, looking like he had never in his life drank daime before. . . Mestre said, 'Stand up, what weakness is this?' . . . [Mestre said] 'Stand up!' and Leôncio stood up, for all intents and purposes prepared [to become the president of the Center]."²⁵⁹

Mestre Irineu's Death

On Monday morning, July 5th, 1971, dona Percília Ribeiro passed by Mestre Irineu's house like she always did. She could tell that Mestre was happy and in good spirits, and after they had spent some time chatting, he was enjoying her company so much that he asked dona Percília if she would stay with him a bit longer. She said yes and stayed there until almost three in the afternoon. It appeared that he was doing really well and so she finally decided to say goodbye, asking for his blessing. As she was leaving, Mestre told her (in a way that Percília later thought was atypical of him): "Do your best to be happy."²⁶⁰ Then, in the evening of that same day, around 7:30, João Rodrigues also went to Mestre's home to deliver the documentation of the center, which had been officially registered.²⁶¹ As was noted above, Mestre told him, "Compadre, I am happy, I have given a name to what didn't have one before [i.e., now it's official]."²⁶² That same evening, his adoptive son Paulo Serra also went to visit Mestre, asking him if he was doing well, and Mestre said that he was.

On Tuesday, July 6th, a little before 9:00am, everything was tranquil. But then, suddenly, Otilia (the wife of Daniel Serra, Mestre's nephew) and Maria Zacarias, heard a lot of noise in Mestre

Irineu's room. He was in agony, going through a urinary crisis. Dona Peregrina had earlier gotten up and had left the room. But Chico Martins was close by and ran to help.²⁶³

It is at this point in the story that there are two significantly different versions of the events that happened next. Here is Paulo Serra's account: "I was putting together the motor of my jeep. . . . Then Maria Lourdinha [Zacharias] arrived and said, 'Compadre, the padrinho, the padrinho, oh compadre, the padrinho.' I was only wearing my shorts; I went and grabbed a shirt and threw it over my shoulder. When I was almost through putting on my shirt, I was there in his bedroom. He got up from the hammock and went to the bed, from the bed to the hammock, and that didn't feel right, so he went to the bed. When he went to the hammock . . . I held him on my shoulder . . . I looked in his eyes and they looked different. I looked in his chest of drawers for a candle and I put it in his hand. Chico Martin arrived and held him, and then he took his last breath. Then I went to look for uncle Leôncio and Zé das Neves [Paulo Serra's biological father] to tell them the news. After looking for Zé das Neves, I went to the palace to give the news to 'Dantinha' ["little Dantas," a diminutive for Wanderley Dantas] who was the governor. They didn't want to let me enter, since I was in my shorts. Then I pushed one [guard/soldier] to one side, and the other to the other side. The soldier grabbed my arm, and I pulled him to the front, I don't know where I found the strength. I finally found myself in front of Dantinha. Then he said, 'Let the man enter, the man is in a desperate state. What is happening my son?' I said, 'Your excellency, I have come to let you know that Raimundo Irineu Serra died.' He said then, 'Have they already got his coffin?' I said, 'No sir, it happened just now, now, now, it's only been about 10 minutes. I want you to put the announcement on the radio, see what you can do.' He said, 'I'll bring the

coffin.' I said, 'Then you get it because I'm going back to look for Mr. Leôncio.' I went to look for him . . . and I found him . . . and I went to look for Zé das Neves."²⁶⁴

Jair Fucundes, the son of João Rodrigues Facundes, however is rather skeptical of this story, especially Paulo Serra's account of going to the governor's palace after Mestre Irineu's death. As he put it, "It isn't credible that a citizen arrives . . . in the palace of the governor and 'pulls' the guards from one side to the another and forcefully opens the door of the cabinet and informs them. The person who let the governor know . . . bureaucratically and without force . . . was my father, in his role as the secretary [of the board of directors of the center]. He was also the one who took care of the bureaucratic side of things, as is written in the death certificate."²⁶⁵

Several other people who were there when Mestre Irineu died also present a different version of events. According to this account, Mestre Irineu was lying on a hammock when he went through a urinary crisis, followed by a heart attack. As this was happening, Mestre Irineu got out of the hammock, stood up, and soon afterwards died in the arms of Chico Martins, who put him in the hammock again. It is said that he was sweating a lot, and that he had a big smile, and that tears were falling down his face. It did not take them long to tell that Mestre had died.²⁶⁶ In this version, it was only after all of this took place that Maria Zacarias sent a message to Paulo Serra to tell him about the death of his father.

Regardless of which account of Mestre's death is more accurate, it is clear that the news spread rapidly (the radio announcer Mota de Oliveira, one of the last people who had been cured by Mestre Irineu, announced his death on the airwaves of the Capital Radio, and soon afterwards,

the governor, Wanderley Dantas, sent out an official notice of Mestre's death). Very quickly his community, and the people in the surrounding area, were overcome with profound sadness.²⁶⁷

On that morning (July 6th), dona Percília Ribeiro had gone directly from Alto Santo to downtown Rio Branco as she had told Mestre Irineu that she would do the day before. She only received the news of his death when she was in front of the palace of the governor and met the wife of someone she knew. This woman, as dona Percília says, "was pale and had wild hair and was saying, 'Oh Mestre, my God! Mestre died!' [Percília then said] 'Girl, what are you saying!' But God gave me a comfort at the time and I didn't believe her. I thought that perhaps he had [simply] gone through a period of intense pain . . . I had left from there and he was well. He couldn't have died!"²⁶⁸ Dona Percília still did not want to believe that Mestre had died, but when she arrived at the market, lots of people were milling about, arranging cars to go to the center. She grabbed one as well and joined the procession. She says, "I only believed it when I arrived. He was still in the bed. The sweat was pouring down him like he had been working a lot."²⁶⁹

Arrangements began right away for Mestre Irineu's funeral. His body remained in his home until it was dressed in the official white farda. In the headquarters, the men arranged the benches and the central table/altar for the funeral ritual, while in the location that had been previously chosen for the burial (just across the street from the center) they began the first stages of building the tomb so that it would be ready the following day. All of Mestre's followers were instructed to wear their white farda. In addition, all of the men decided to honor the leader by putting the "palm," the old ornament that had recently been retired, on their farda. Daniel Serra (the commander of the salão during that time) suggested to Leôncio (the new President) that they

create an Honor Guard, and Leôncio approved. In this way, according to Daniel Serra, a group of men received the body of Mestre Irineu, lined up in the shape of a 'V' for victory. The coffin was placed in the center, covered by the Brazilian flag.²⁷⁰

During the funeral, everyone in the headquarters took part in a mass and they then sang the hinário *O Cruzeiro* with Mestre's body present. The mass began at four in the afternoon. *O Cruzeiro* was done seated and was sung *acapella* – without musical instruments and without maracás. (According to João Rodrigues, the hymns were sung alternating with Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Hail Holy Queens.)²⁷¹ Many of those who were present described the enormous sadness and pain that was felt by all who attended, especially during the singing of Mestre's hinário.²⁷²

It is said that during the early morning hours, the men of the honor guard were exhausted, and were struggling to remain standing, but Daniel Serra insisted that they remain in their places.²⁷³ Then, on the morning of July 7th, 1971, after long hours spent singing *O Cruzeiro* and having listened to the talks given by the authorities and the orators of the center (the pomp of the funeral of Mestre Irineu resembled the funeral of military officers or political authorities), the people in charge began to organize the procession which would take the coffin of Mestre Irineu to the location he had previously chosen for his tomb.²⁷⁴ Years before, while he was still married to dona Raimunda, Mestre Irineu had chosen the site, which was approximately 200 meters in front of his house. Paulo Serra had asked the Governor, Wanderley Dantas, to authorize the burial of his father in this location. The governor was already aware of Mestre's previous request and

quickly authorized his burial in that spot. The governor also sent a Military Police band to honor Mestre by playing in the procession.²⁷⁵

Finally, in the middle of the morning, after the makeshift tomb had been hastily constructed during the funeral ceremony, the men who had been lined up in front of the coffin left their places.²⁷⁶ Then, towards the end of the morning, after Mestre's followers had given their final farewells in the headquarters, the coffin was closed and covered with the flag of Brazil. After this, those who were present formed two rows, with the male fardados on one side and the female fardados (fardadas) on the other side. The coffin was in front of the two lines, carried by six fardados. The non-fardado visitors gathered around the rows, not bothering to maintain the separation between men and women, since this way of doing things only applied to fardados.

The coffin was carried from the headquarters to the plot of land that had been chosen by Mestre Irineu, a distance of around 800 meters. All the way, the men carrying the coffin, and the rest of the procession, were accompanied by the Military Police Band which followed right behind the coffin playing funeral marches. One after the other, Mestre's followers took turns holding the handles of the coffin. Mestre Irineu was approximately 6'6", and at the time of his death he weighted around 242 pounds.²⁷⁷ As such, his coffin was enormous and heavy. His nephew Daniel Serra held the handle of the coffin from the beginning to the end of the path, but this was not possible for Leôncio Gomes, since his physique was not capable of supporting that amount of weight for that length of time. It is estimated that around 300 people accompanied the body of Mestre Irineu in the funeral procession.²⁷⁸

At the conclusion of the funeral marches, Mestre Irineu's fardados sang the New Hymns, accompanied (it is said) by the Military Police Band. When the coffin arrived and was finally closed, and while Dona Peregrina Gomes Serra, accompanied by her mother and brothers and sisters, received the condolences of the authorities, friends, and admirers of her husband, there was so much commotion and intense feeling that Luiz Mendes do Nascimento fainted over the coffin. Dona Peregrina became a widow at 33 years old – Mestre Irineu had lived by her side for 13 years.²⁷⁹

The coffin was put in the tomb, wrapped in the national flag, and the following day, João Rodrigues went to the courthouse of the city of Rio Branco to register the obituary of Mestre Irineu. However, as was noted above, even before his death, a series of rivalries had already emerged among his followers. And once the drawer of the tomb was sealed, the disagreements became even worse.²⁸⁰ The authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* note that one of the ways in which the rivalry and discord manifested itself was through different interpretations about the true wishes and intentions of Mestre Irineu for his burial. Some of his followers pointed to the lyrics of his last hymn, where he spoke of the “cold earth” and also noted that Mestre had said to his disciples that his “medicine was everywhere, it was the earth.” These followers made these statements as a way to point out that Mestre's own words indicated that he should have been buried in the earth, instead of placing his body above the ground, in a very rustic tomb, hastily constructed of bricks, in the form of a drawer.²⁸¹

In the years that followed, the communal tensions only intensified, resulting in the emergence of profound personal animosities between old key members of the Daime. Eventually many

members left the original group and formed their own centers. Nonetheless, as the authors of *Eu Venho de Longe* note, at this point in time, while it is occasionally still possible to perceive tensions between different factions, nonetheless, the growing legitimacy and official prestige that has been attained by the religion left by Mestre Irineu has contributed to an easing of many of the old disagreements.²⁸² In Rio Branco, a neighborhood, a museum collection, an avenue, a street, a protected environmental area, and a bus line have all been named after Mestre Irineu.²⁸³ And even more importantly, Mestre continues to be deeply honored and revered around the world by the numerous members of the thriving religion that he left behind.

Viva Mestre Irineu!

¹ Paulo Moreira and Edward MacRae, *Eu Venho de Longe: Mestre Irineu e Seus Companheiros* (Salvador, Bahia: EDUFA-UFMA-ABESUP, 2011), 401.

² *Eu Venho de Longe*, 30.

³ Interview with Francisco Granjeiro. *Revista do 1st Centenário do Mestre Imperador Raimundo Irineu Serra*. Rio De Janeiro: Beija Flor, 1992, p. 18. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 76.

⁴ Aprígio Angtero Serra. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 77.

⁵ From an interview by Eduardo Bayer Neto (1992, p. 3) with Marciano Bonifácio Siqueira, the nephew of Fernanda, Irineu's old girlfriend in São Vicente Férrer. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 77.

⁶ Bayer Neto, Eduardo. Século XIX: no Maranhão, a Aurora da Vida do Mestre. *Jornal O Rio Branco*, Rio Branco, p. 3, Dec. 15, 1992, p.3. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 77.

⁷ Interview with Luís Mendes do Nascimento, *Revista do 1st Centenário*, 1992, p. 14. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 88.

⁸ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 90-91.

⁹ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 89-90, and 101.

¹⁰ Interview with João Rodrigues, *Revista do 1st Centenário*, 1992, p. 21. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 102-103.

¹¹ Interview with Luís Mendes do Nascimento, *Revista do 1st Centenário*, 1992, p. 14. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 91-92.

¹² For more information on the dieta, see: Stephan V. Beyer, *Singing with the Plants* (Albuquerque, NM, University of New Mexico Press, 2009), 56-60.

¹³ Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 95.

¹⁴ Interview with Luis Mendes do Nascimento, *Revista do 1st Centenário*, 1992, p. 14. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 93.

¹⁵ From <http://afamiliajuramidam.org/English>; quoting from Florestan J. Maia Neto, *Contos da Lua Branca*, V. 1. Rio Branco: Fundação Elias Mansur, 2003.

¹⁶ Couto, Fernando da La Rocque, *Santos e xamãs*. 1989. Dissertação (Mestrado em Antropologia) – Universidade de Brasília 1989, p. 52.

¹⁷ *Santos e xamãs* p. 52.

¹⁸ Interview with Percília Ribeiro, in Goulart, Sandra. *Contrastes e continuidades em uma tradição amazônica: as*

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- religiões da Ayahuasca*. (Thesis: Doctorate in Anthropology, University of São Paulo, São Paulo), 2004, p. 34-35. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 101.
- ¹⁹ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 95.
- ²⁰ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 96.
- ²¹ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 103.
- ²² *Santos e xamãs*, p. 44.
- ²³ Edward MacRae, *Guided by the Moon: Shamanism and the Ritual Use of Ayahuasca in the Santo Daime Religion in Brazil*. 1992. www.neip.info. 48.
- ²⁴ Andrew Dawson says that it was also known as *Centro da Rainha da Floresta* (Queen of the Forest Center). Other sources name this organization as the *Círculo de Regeneração de Fé* (Circle of Faith's Regeneration), or even the *Centro de Regeneração e Fé* – (Center of Regeneration and Faith). Andrew Dawson, *Santo Daime: A New World Religion*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 10.
- ²⁵ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 103.
- ²⁶ *Guided by the Moon*, p. 65.
- ²⁷ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 105.
- ²⁸ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 110.
- ²⁹ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 112.
- ³⁰ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 106.
- ³¹ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 108.
- ³² Freitas, Luis Carlos Teixeira de. *Rainha da Floresta. A Missão Daimista de Evangelização*, 2001, p. 40 Available in http://juramidam.jor.br/rainha/00_a.html; cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 111.
- ³³ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 117-118.
- ³⁴ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 131.
- ³⁵ *Eu Venho de Longe*, Footnote 1, p. 200.
- ³⁶ Interview with Percília Matos da Silva {ne Rebeiro}. Available at <http://www.mestreirineu.org/percilia.htm>.
- ³⁷ Luis Mendes do Nascimento, interviewed by Beatriz Labate in February, 2002; cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 132.
- ³⁸ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 132.
- ³⁹ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 139.
- ⁴⁰ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 137.
- ⁴¹ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 133.
- ⁴² Teixeira de Freitas, Luis Carlos. *O Mensageiro*. Available at <http://www.juramidam.jor.br/>; quoted in *O Jardim das Belas Flores*, 10. [Internet publication.]
- ⁴³ Maia Neto, Florestan J, *Contos da Lua Branca*. V. 1. Rio Branco: Fundação Elias Mansur, 2003, p. 22. Also: Bayer Neto, Eduardo. *A relíquia do Yagé*.
- ⁴⁴ Percília Matos da Silva, interviewed by Maia Neto, Florestan J. *Contos da Lua Branca*, p. 22.
- ⁴⁵ *O Jardim*, 13.
- ⁴⁶ Labate, Beatriz Caiuby Labate; Pacheco, Gustavo. “*As matrizes maranhenses do Santo Daime.*” *O uso ritual da ayahuasca* 2nd ed. São Paulo: Mercado de Letras, 2004.
- ⁴⁷ Interview of Percília Matos da Silva. Available at <http://www.mestreirineu.org/percilia.htm>; *O Jardim*, 15.
- ⁴⁸ Interview with Percília Matos da Silva. <http://www.mestreirineu.org/percilia.htm> . Cited in *O Jardim*, 19.
- ⁴⁹ “*As matrizes maranhenses do Santo Daime.*”
- ⁵⁰ Percília Matos da Silva, in *Contos da Lua Branca*, p. 24. Cited in *O Jardim*, 21.
- ⁵¹ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 139.
- ⁵² Luna, Luis Eduardo, “Bibliografía sobre el ayahuasca.” *América indígena*, México, v. 46, n. 1, p. 101-106, Jan./Mar., 1986a. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 139.
- ⁵³ Dobkin de Rios, M. *Visionary Vine: Psychedelic Healing in the Peruvian Amazon*. (San Francisco: Chandler, 1972). Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 139.
- ⁵⁴ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 139.
- ⁵⁵ Labate, Beatriz and Pacheco, Gustavo. “Hinos e chamadas: abrindo as portas do céu.” Texto apresentado na *XIV Jornada Sobre Alternativas Religiosas na América Latina*, Buenos Aires, Universidade de San Martín, 25 a 28 de setembro de 2007, p. 28. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 139-140.

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- ⁵⁶ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 140.
- ⁵⁷ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 141-142.
- ⁵⁸ Interview with Luis Mendes do Nascimento, *Revista do 1st Centenário*, 1992, p. 14-15. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 150.
- ⁵⁹ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 146.
- ⁶⁰ Overjero, F. C. *Relatos del Santo Daime*. (Madrid: Amica, 1996), p. 55-57. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 245-246.
- ⁶¹ Interview of Percília Ribeiro with Jair Facundes, 2003. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 317-318.
- ⁶² *Eu Venho de Longe*, 159.
- ⁶³ Interview of Luiz Mendes do Nascimento. Available at <http://www.mestreirineu.org/luiz.htm>
- ⁶⁴ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 165.
- ⁶⁵ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 165.
- ⁶⁶ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 166.
- ⁶⁷ Saturnino interview, July 13, 2013.
- ⁶⁸ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 182-183.
- ⁶⁹ Interview with Zé Dantas. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 185.
- ⁷⁰ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 183-184.
- ⁷¹ Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 185.
- ⁷² Luna, "Bibliografia sobre el ayahuasca," 1986; Taussig, Michael. *Xamanismo, colonialism e o homem selvagem: um estudo sobre or terror e a cura*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1993. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 180.
- ⁷³ *O Jardim*, 47.
- ⁷⁴ *O Jardim*, 47.
- ⁷⁵ I have lost the reference to this information. My apologies.
- ⁷⁶ Freitas, Luis C. Teixeira de. *O Mensageiro: replantia daimista da doutrina Cristã* (São Paulo, 2004). Available at <http://www.luzcom/mensageiro>. Cited in *O Jardim*, p. 50.
- ⁷⁷ Information given by Daniel Acelino Serra. Cited in *O Jardim*, p. 50.
- ⁷⁸ Froes, Vera. *Santo Daime: Cultura Amazonica, História do povo Juramidã*. Manaus: SUFRAMA, 1986, p. 101. Cited in *O Jardim*, 52.
- ⁷⁹ Available in http://www.juramidam.jor.br/10_sol-princesa.html. Cited in *O Jardim*, 52.
- ⁸⁰ Mestre Virgílio, interviewed by Arneide Bandeira Cemin, in Porto Velho. Available at <http://www.geocities.com/estreladesalomao/sol-lua-estrela.html>. Cited in *O Jardim*, 52.
- ⁸¹ Interview of Percília Matos da Silva available at www.mestreirineu.hpg.com.br. Cited in *O Jardim*, 66.
- ⁸² *O Jardim*, 72-73.
- ⁸³ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 175.
- ⁸⁴ Maia Neto, *Contos da Lua Branca*, 2003, p. 24. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 176.
- ⁸⁵ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 178.
- ⁸⁶ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 222.
- ⁸⁷ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 222.
- ⁸⁸ *O Jardim*, 78-79.
- ⁸⁹ Maia Neto, *Contos da Lua Branca*, p. 35; *O Jardim*, 81-82.
- ⁹⁰ *O Jardim*, 84-85.
- ⁹¹ *O Jardim*, 87-88.
- ⁹² Gomes, Zulmira, "Alguém fala em meu nome alguma vez em pensamento?" *Jornal o Rio Branco*, n. 2,299, p. 4, July 11, 1984. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 214.
- ⁹³ Percília Matos da Silva, cited in *Contos da Lua Branca*, p. 22.
- ⁹⁴ *O Jardim*, 74-75.
- ⁹⁵ Sandra Goulart, *Contrastes e continuidades em uma tradição amazônica*, 2004, p. 47. Cited in *Eu Venho de Longe*, 216-217.
- ⁹⁶ Cemin, Arneide Bandeira. *Ordem, xamanismo e dádiva: o poder do Santo Daime*. São Paulo: Terceira Margem, 2001, p. 39.
- ⁹⁷ *Eu Venho de Longe*, 370.
- ⁹⁸ *Guided by the Moon*, p. 65.
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