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Christianity in Japan: 1549-1650: The Christian Century in Japan

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canvassing the New Testament for incidents that illustrate a particular hypothesis, do not afford an adequate basis for conclusions beginning: "There is no other possible explanation for the fact..." "the only logical conclusion is that he was God" (p. 83 *et passim*). In all justice it must be admitted that there are other possible logical conclusions, at least that of admitting the question goes beyond logic. The author does not take seriously enough the contemporary secularist position, or the new humanism that finds its absolute in man alone.⁴ The assertion, for example, that in Jesus man finds the fulfillment of his being (p. 134) can occasion real scandal for our contemporaries who are most saturated with the very phenomenological approach the author is employing. The other-than-human and utter finality of such a conception of *man's* fulfillment, seems to run counter to their whole *elan*.⁵ Nevertheless, once it is understood that the author has more tricks up his sleeve than phenomenological analysis, no one should complain that he walks out *his* door with a winning hand. He has given us a fine book in the process.

JOSEPH L. ROCHE, S.J.

CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN: 1549-1650

THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY IN JAPAN, 1549-1650, by C. R. Boxer. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967. xv, 535 pp.

The reprinting of this book suggests the continuing demand for a valuable contribution to the study of a century of Japanese history (1549-1650) referred to as the "Christian Century." Although corrections on the original were made by the author, they did not necessitate changes in pagination of the 1951 edition. As reprinted, this volume retains a map of Japan indicating the places where Christians existed or were persecuted within the period covered, fourteen appendices of documents which were first translated into English by the author, as well as fifteen illustrations depicting historical

⁴ The real force of the secularist position is stressed by Langdon Gilkey in his review of S. Ogden's *The Reality of God*, in *Interpretation: Journal of Bible and Theology*, 21 (Oct. 1967), 447-89, esp. 450. *Blackfriars*, 46 (June 1965), 226-33.

⁵ For a calm, reasoned presentation of the new 'naturalistic' humanism, see H. Meynell, "The Humanist: A Dialogue", *New Blackfriars*, 46 (Jan., 1965), 226-33.

scenes and important actors of this historical account, such as Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu—Japan's *unifiers*.

Besides the corrections made, the latest edition differs from the earlier one in another respect: an additional "Addenda to the Bibliography" listing the principal works printed between 1950 and 1966 which are pertinent to the study and printed on the page corresponding to the first edition's containing the following section-title: "Index and Glossary." This list would have been more useful to the readers had Boxer commented on, or annotated each bibliographical entry. For instance, are there important documents he did not find while researching in the British Museum, the Ajuda Library at Lisbon and other depositories of historical sources that might be among those constituting the "Archives of Japan"—part of the Jesuit archives in Macao—transferred from Macao to Manila and then to Madrid? These archival documents were carefully examined and evaluated recently by J. F. Schutte, S.J., and published in his *El Archivo del Japon* . . . (Madrid, 1964), one of the entries in the aforementioned "Addenda to the Bibliography."

Within the span of the "Christian Century," the beginnings of the Christian church in Japan were closely associated with the country's developing contacts with European powers then expanding into Asia. Therefore, this work also throws light on the initial phase of this relationship.

Important to those interested in the background of Modern Japan is the author's coverage of internal political developments, skillfully woven into his narrative, extending from Oda Nobunaga to the first half century of Tokugawa dominance. By stabilizing Japanese society and government during the fifty-year period, the first three Tokugawa *shogun* laid the foundation of more than two centuries of "pax Tokugawa." Relative peace was partly a function of the Tokugawas' "close-door policy" or *sakoku* (described in the last chapter) from mid-seventeenth century to Japan's resumption of her relations with the West during the second half of the nineteenth century.

This work will be of interest to those viewing history within the "challenge and response" frame of reference or to those studying the process and consequences of acculturation. Chapter V entitled "Christian Culture and Missionary Life" is especially recommended for students of acculturation. This volume can also contribute to a better understanding of the early ecclesiastical history of the Philippines as well as the early relations between Japan and the Philippines during Japan's "Christian Century."