

World Religions

by *Benson Y. Landis*

New York: E. P. Dutton Company, Inc., 1957

Glossary, index, 157 pp., \$2.95.

This "Brief Guide to the Principal Beliefs and Teachings of the World and to the Statistics of Organized Religion" is packed with much useful information, most of which—that is, the material dealing with the Western religious denominations and sects—is presumably accurate.

A reputable publisher would hardly risk putting out anything very unreliable about religion in the United States, for example, and run the risk of the onslaught of protests which would follow from sectarian headquarters. This volume, therefore, will be useful for orientals who want a handy guide through the denominational maze of the West, primarily America.

But for the Western reader who wants a handy volume on the

world's religions, primarily oriental, this volume is not recommended. Consider, for example, the two pages (116—118) devoted to "Shintoism." The attempt to describe the nature of Sectarian Shinto and Shrine Shinto is so confused and misleading that it would take more space to explain and correct the errors than is given to the original material. On the statistical side, the author states that there are "probably about 25 million followers" of this faith, but the official statistics of the Ministry of Education state that they total some 66 million! The statistical tables on American denominations, if used with discretion, will be found useful, as will also the sections on "Developments in Religious Bodies," and the glossary. (WPW)