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A History of the Catholic Church in Japan From its Beginnings to the Early Meiji Era (1549-1873): A Short Handbook (revised, enlarged edition)

*By Joseph Jennes, C.I.C.M. Tokyo: Oriens
Institute for Religious Research, 1973. xii,
233 pp. + appendices (pp.235-246), biblio-
graphy (pp. 247-253), index (pp. 255-273),
and maps (pp. 274-277). ¥2,000 in Japan.*

Since the appearance in 1959 of this long out-of-print book, it has enjoyed a well-deserved reputation as a brief but excellent historical study of the Catholic Church during its first 225 years in Japan. The present edition differs from its predecessor in form and, to some extent, in content.

With reference to form, the book has been completely reset in type much more pleasant to read than that of the first edition. Fortunately, the new edition retains the helpful practice of giving ideographs for Japanese names and titles both in the bibliography and index.

As regards content, the new

edition is substantially the same as the old but has been enlarged to include the following features: (1) a two-page addition to chapter one entitled "Results and Religious Influence," essentially a discussion of the reliability of statistics available for the year 1570 and an assessment of the initial impact of Christianity on late sixteenth-century Japan, (2) a nine-page excursus at the end of chapter five entitled "Japanese Christians in Exile," tracing what happened to Japanese Christians exiled to Luzon, Cochin China, Cambodia, Siam, and Burma, (3) a five-page addition to chapter six on the "Influence of Chinese Christian

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Literature," (4) an eleven-page addition to the same chapter entitled "Foreign Relations and Christianity," dealing essentially with Dutch and Chinese acquiescence in Japanese demands to trample on Christian images at Nagasaki and with attempts to reopen the country by the Russians, English, Americans, and French, and (5) an enlarged, up-to-date bibliography.

In this reviewer's opinion this little book is a gem of historical scholarship. It is clearly the result of years of assiduous study of primary and secondary sources in many languages, but the scholarship is never thrust upon the reader. Jennes tells his story in direct, vivid language, singling out issues and themes and discussing them so clearly that one almost fails to notice the author's erudition and perceptivity. Moreover, the book is written not from a so-called "neutral" or "presuppositionless" stance. The author writes

from a definite point of view—and therefore without hidden biases.

If I could make one change in the book, it would be in the construction of the bibliography. The author notes that the bibliography is selective, listing only general works, while "books and articles concerning more specific problems are referred to in the notes." The problem is that unless one keeps careful track of the first footnote reference to a source not listed in the bibliography, he gets so tangled up in "ibid."s and "op. cit."s that it is extremely difficult to run it down. If the book ever goes through a third edition, I hope the bibliography can be expanded to include *all* footnoted sources.

Meanwhile, one can only be grateful for the appearance of this second edition. By all means, order it while it is still available! (D.R.)