

they might prefer some other path, that as individual human beings they might have the right to choose their own path.

This leads to the final assumption. Although these writers speak much about the importance of “the people” speaking for themselves, these same writers assume that they can speak for the people. There would seem to be no possibility that at least some of “the people” might have different opinions or points of view. One writer even speaks for the entire Third World.

While it is not likely that many of the readers of *The Japan Christian Review* will be persuaded by the writers of these essays, this is a volume well worth reading. These writers reveal the very deep sense of hurt of many Asian Christians resulting from the experience of European colonialism and imperialism in their countries, hurt inflicted by people among whom are many who called themselves Christian. This collection is clearly a reaction to that hurt.

In reaction to that hurt, these writers are seeking to recover a sense of pride in what they perceive to be their own cultural roots. While some of us might wish they had gone about this differently and feel that in response to European cultural chauvinism they have developed their own cultural chauvinism, this book should help us all be a bit more humble about our own traditions, including our own cultural understandings of the Christian faith.

Finally, this book deserves to be widely read simply because it represents a significant group of Christian intellectuals whose views are influential in the churches where they live and work. We need to know how they perceive the Christian faith, try to understand their views and be prepared to respond to them.

Japan's “Guest Workers”: Issues and Public Policies

Shimada Haruo

Translated by Roger Northridge

Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1994.

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The presence of Japan's “guest workers”—the large and ethnically heterogeneous population of foreign workers who now occupy the smaller towns as well as the large urban conurbations—has in the last few years become an issue of public debate within the country. The strong yen, high wage levels, job opportunities and the high visibility of Japan economically and culturally throughout Asia and beyond have made the country a magnet not only for relatively small numbers of professionals, businessmen and language teachers but also for a very large number of individuals who enter the country as tourists from neighboring Asian countries, South Asia and as far away as the Middle East.

Overstaying the period of their visas, they often remain in Japan as illegal residents for many months or even years until they are caught or voluntarily give themselves up for repatriation. The males among them labor at the building sites, scrap-metal yards, rubber works, auto parts factories, docksides and dry cleaning establishments of Japan; the females staff the bars, nightclubs and massage parlors of the cities.

The sheer size of this community (estimated as high as half a million), their visibility (quite literally in the railway stations, parks and other locations where they gather for fellowship and information sharing) and related problems (provision of health care for uninsured workers who most often do not speak Japanese and of human rights, housing and potentially even education)

have forced the question of their existence and status into the consciousness of the government, press and general public.

Despite its quite visible heterogeneity, the Japanese self-image is still that of a homogeneous society. This being the case, the presence of large numbers of mostly unassimilated foreigners raises both policy questions and longer term questions of identity, including the question of whether Japan should or can assimilate a large non-Japanese community into its society. So far the problem has been approached from a number of angles: by academics concerned with problems of identity and the "uniqueness" of Japanese society and culture, by migration specialists interested either in its demographic impact or in comparative patterns of immigration, such as the Japanese and the German guest worker experience, or by human rights activists concerned both about the status of workers in Japanese society and about the overall responsibilities of Japan in the world economy.

The book under review is by a labor economist whose approach to the issue is by way of policy recommendations and consideration of desirable institutional reforms. By taking such an approach Shimada not only opens up some fresh lines of analysis but also closes off others. On the one hand, he very successfully brings out the possible policy options and confronts the reader with a well argued rationale for his own favored solution, which he locates within a macroeconomic model of probable developments in Japanese society and its place in the world economy. On the other hand, as a comprehensive guide to the foreign worker problem in all its complexity, the book has serious shortcomings. It contains very inadequate analyses of the sociological characteristics of the foreign community, including its ethnic and gender profile, sources and networks of recruitment, patterns of employment, life-style and cultural problems, access to housing and other social

resources, its involvement with the Japanese underworld, its place in the total urban ecology of Japanese towns and cities. It also insufficiently addresses questions that greatly exercise the local Japanese community, including the ascription of rising urban crime rates to foreigners, the fear of AIDS among foreign entertainers and anxiety over coping with non-Japanese neighbors in residential locations.

Stylistically, the book as a whole reads much like a report to some unspecified government committee; and if it is regarded as a policy analysis rather than as a comprehensive account of the foreign worker community in Japan, then its solutions and recommendations are thought-provoking and even provocative. At the core of the book are the details of Shimada's "Work and Learn" proposal for legalizing and regulating the import of foreign labor into Japan. Recent changes in the Immigration Control Law (1990) have permitted businesses to introduce unskilled foreign workers as "trainees." Shimada correctly surmises that in its present form this simply allows industry to bring in workers to do low-grade manual labor while supposedly gaining "work experience" and, in many cases, being paid less than the full wage because they are technically in a learning situation. Nevertheless, he admits that this revision of the law does establish the principle of regulating admission of unskilled labor; hitherto the only legally permitted unskilled laborers were South Americans of Japanese descent, mostly from Brazil and Peru.

Shimada's own recommendations build on this now admitted principle: the creation of a new category of residence status that he terms "work and learn." He outlines in detail how such a scheme might work. His proposals are aimed at regulating the flow of workers, who would acquire intermediate level skills and basic Japanese language while being provided with a fair wage, accommodations and a career path, guid-

ance and support during their stay in Japan as well as with a mechanism for their orderly repatriation at the end of the work training period. In Shimada's view this scheme would overcome the abuses of the present illegal system, provide proper support for workers while in Japan, regulate numbers and substantially contribute to their home countries when these workers return with new skills and experience. The central part of the book (the first part being an overview of the foreign worker situation in Japan) is devoted to a detailed presentation of these recommendations and how they might apply to different industries, the question of bilateral agreements with sending countries, the institutional framework and bureaucratic responsibilities and the relationship of the scheme to Japan's ODA (foreign aid) policies.

It is in the final part of the book that the most theoretically interesting questions are raised. Here Shimada deals with three key questions that the foreign worker issue provokes. The first is that of human rights. Unlike many other Japanese commentators, Shimada interestingly recognizes that international migration is now a global and irreversible movement and that Japan, with its huge economy and immense presence in the international system, is bound to become involved in it. Some workers will even settle permanently in Japan, and in Shimada's view this fact should be squarely faced and, given Japan's aging population and the certainty of future labor shortages, even welcomed. But to accept foreign workers, even on a temporary basis, means guaranteeing their human rights, including legal protection, accident compensation, voting, housing, pension and income support. At the moment, these are far-reaching and radical proposals, despite their rationality and obvious social justice.

The second key question is that of the structural reform of the Japanese economy. A declining and aging population, possibil-

ities of improved efficiency in industry, rationalization of the domestic economy, institutional reform in business, corporations and the public bureaucracy will all force major changes in the way in which the economy functions. In pressing for a system that takes diversity for granted, Shimada is both realistically anticipating the future and providing a manifesto for rallying support for changes that should be occurring even if history were not forcing them on Japan.

The third key question is that of the identity of Japanese society, or as Shimada puts it, "What Kind of Nation Do We Want to Be." Here he argues cogently that Japan has a responsibility to the world in proportion to the benefits that it has gained from that world—markets, raw materials, expansion of Japanese cultural influence. To be or to be perceived in the wider world as a discriminatory nation is hardly desirable. For Shimada, the foreign worker issue is the acid test of how Japanese society will respond: close its doors, practice a refined form of hypocrisy in admitted needed workers while simultaneously discriminating against them or move toward a more open society in which foreigners would enjoy the same rights as Japanese.

The presence of large numbers of foreign workers has irrevocably changed the look of Japan's cities and even parts of the countryside. And the subject is not just an academic one but also requires substantial policy responses. Shimada's book certainly reviews the policy options, and while his own recommendations may be only one possibility among many other potential solutions, he certainly makes a well argued and documented case, if not for his own solution then certainly for something very like it. The foreign worker issue is not just a problem for Japan but also a responsibility and potentially a chance to rethink some deep-seated social attitudes and their embodiment in law and social practices. Shimada's

book is important as a Japanese view of the question; it is quite informative, with comparative perspectives that well reflect the moral vision of restoring dignity to one of Japan's most important human resources, and by extension to Japan itself, as the country formulates its response to a reality that forces it to confront the meaning and authenticity of its much vaunted policy of "internationalization."

The Catholic Church in Korea: Its Origins 1566–1784

Juan Ruiz de Medina, SJ
Translated by John Bridges, SJ
Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society/Seoul Computer Press, 1994. 380pp. Hardcover
US\$24.95.

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The origins of the Catholic Church in Korea and the interaction between Korean, Japanese and Chinese Christians in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries is a story that has yet to be told in its entirety. Juan Ruiz de Medina attempts to tell at least part of this story in *The Catholic Church in Korea: Its Origins 1566–1784*. Originally published in Spanish and Japanese in 1987 and in Korean in 1988, John Bridges and the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society are to be commended for making this important work available to the English reader. Ruiz de Medina is well-qualified to write on this subject, having spent twenty-seven years in Asia and having served since 1981 as chair of the Far East Section of the Jesuit Historical Institute in Rome. This latter position has given Ruiz de Medina access to the mission archives of the Jesuits and he has drawn extensively from this source in his work.

The book is divided into two main sections: the first is a historical account, and the second is a collection of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century documents related to missionary efforts directed toward Korea and the role of Korean Christians in Japan during this time. Helpful notes are provided for both sections. Also included is a bibliography of European and Japanese sources, plus a few selected Korean sources in Western languages and a helpful index.

Ruiz de Medina organizes his historical account in chronological order around five general themes. Chapters 1 through 5 set the stage with the theme "A Look at Myths and Previous History." He shows that Korean-Japanese contacts go back to at least 300 BCE and that the beginning of a lengthy relationship between the two countries can be traced to the Mongolian invasion of Korea in 1294. The first Western knowledge of Korea came by way of the Portuguese who heard reports of its existence in 1513. Chapters 6 through 14 focus on the theme "The Way to Evangelization." News concerning Korea reached both Lisbon and Rome in 1549, and between 1550 and 1556 the Jesuits in Japan heard of Korea while staying in Yamaguchi. The first Jesuit to set foot on Korean soil was the Spaniard Gregorio de Cespedes, who came with Hideyoshi's invasion fleet on December 28, 1593. Thus the way to evangelization in Korea was by means of invasion and war.

Perhaps the heart of Ruiz de Medina's book is the third theme "First Fruits," which comprises chapters 15 through 23. He gives considerable attention to early Korean converts among the prisoners of war who were taken from Korea to Japan by Hideyoshi's armies. Particular attention is given to the life of Kaun Vicente (Korean name: Kwon), who was baptized in Japan, joined the Jesuits and finally died as a martyr. Ruiz de Medina asserts that the actual date of the founding of the Catholic Church in Korea is December 1592, when a