

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
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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

Christian soldier in Hideyoshi's invading army baptized 200 dying Korean children whose parents had been killed by other Japanese soldiers. Writes Ruiz de Medina: "Theologically speaking it cannot be denied that 1592–1593 was the birthday of the church in Korea—an infant church, if you like, whose hierarchy was overseas, yet a real church, authentic precursor of that born *abroad* in Beijing in 1784, since the 200 children were baptized *inside* Korea" (p.74). It must be kept in mind, however, that these first converts were either victims of war or prisoners of war in a foreign land.

Part four, centered around the theme "A Christian Community in Korea," consisting of chapters 24 through 34, is an account of the Catholic Church in China, Macau and the Philippines and the numerous unsuccessful attempts to enter Korea for the purposes of missionary activity. Aside from three Europeans who entered Korea in 1593 and 1598 in connection with the Hideyoshi invasions, the two other accounts of European contact within Korea are based upon hearsay (1624) and mentioned in a letter (1679). Despite the lack of any hard evidence, there were continuous vague reports in circulation of "a Christian community in Korea." Chapters 35 through 41, on the theme "Renewed Thoughts from Beijing," tell of still other unfulfilled attempts to reach Korea from Beijing. However, there were successful transfers of books and ideas via traders, Korean diplomats and others who traveled between China and Korea. The events chronicled in this part set the stage for the coming of a number of Koreans to Beijing in the late 1770s, culminating in the baptism of Lee Sung-hoon, and the commonly accepted date of the founding of the Catholic Church in Korea in 1784.

Certainly the most valuable section of the book is the English translations of previously unpublished documents relating to missionary efforts toward Korea, the origins and persecutions of the Catholic Church in

Japan and the thinking of the early Jesuit, Dominican and Franciscan missionaries. Each document is catalogued according to author, addressee, the date and place written and the source of the document. Ruiz de Medina intends that these documents support his historical investigations, but they can stand on their own as fascinating accounts of Korean-Japanese relations during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Among the most interesting are documents relating to Hideyoshi's invasions of Korea, the depravity of the Portuguese slave trade in Japanese and Korean children, the persecutions and martyrdom of Christians in Japan and the life and work of Kaun Vicente, the first Korean Jesuit. Accounts of the martyrs serve to remind us twentieth-century Christians of those who gave their lives for the faith and whose names and heroic actions should not be forgotten. Ruiz de Medina has done us all a service by rescuing these men and women from obscurity.

One wishes that the review of *The Catholic Church in Korea: Its Origins 1566–1784* could end on this positive note, but unfortunately one must come to terms with Ruiz de Medina's reason for writing the book. His major thesis is that the Catholic Church in Korea did not begin in 1784, the commonly accepted date by both Korean Catholics and the Vatican, but with the 1592 baptism of the 200 babies who were orphaned by the invading armies of Hideyoshi. Ruiz de Medina further asserts that those ethnic Koreans living in Japan during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were in fact members of the Catholic Church in Korea. There are two problems with this argument. First, while it could be argued that the 200 baptized babies were members of the Catholic Church in Korea sacramentally, it certainly is not enough evidence to support the origin of the Catholic Church in Korea historically. There is little direct evidence that the church survived on Korean soil, and there is no evi-

dence that the church was capable of sustaining and perpetuating itself for the next 192 years. Ruiz de Medina drops hints that there may be Korean documents supporting his thesis, but again, he offers no direct evidence of such documentation other than hearsay on the part of several Korean families "with a Christian tradition of more than three centuries."

The second difficulty with Ruiz de Medina's argument is that the ethnic Koreans in Japan, of whom there were many, were not part of the Catholic Church in Korea but rather Koreans members of the Catholic Church in Japan. This did not make them any less Korean nor any less Catholic, but it does not establish them among the founders and early leaders of the Catholic Church in Korea. One is not certain whether Ruiz de Medina is attempting to assert the role of Japan or the Jesuits or perhaps both in the founding of the Catholic Church in Korea, but virtually all of the historical section of the book concerns activities that take place outside of Korea. While the historical data and supporting documents shed much light on the role of Koreans in the Japanese church and tell a great deal about the Western missionaries and their interest in Korea, the argument for the earlier date of the founding of the Catholic Church in Korea is not sustained.

Ruiz de Medina admits that he does not speak or read Korean and in footnote 22 on page 31 makes the incredible statement that he is unaware of any uniform system for the romanization of the Korean language. Yet the McCune-Reischauer system came into use in 1939, the Yale system in the 1950s and the Korean government Ministry of Education system in 1976. The McCune-Reischauer system of romanization is the standard for most Korean scholars.

This glaring lack of linguistic competency perhaps highlights the area where further research needs to be done if the full story is to be told of Christianity in northeast

Asia in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Someone needs to follow up on Ruiz de Medina's vague hints concerning a Christian community in Korea in the 1600s and those families with a Christian heritage of 300 years. It may very well be the case that the Christian community of the 1600s were members of the crew of the Dutch ship Sparrow Hawk, which ran aground in Korea on August 16, 1653. On September 14, 1666, eight members of the crew escaped in a small fishing boat and made their way to Nagasaki, where word of their exploits almost certainly became known among the Christian community. Hopefully, Korean scholars or Westerners who are as fluent in Korean as Ruiz de Medina is in Japanese will take up the challenge and continue the story that he tells so well in this most controversial and interesting book.

Hamel's Journal and a Description of the Kingdom of Korea 1653-1666

Hendrik Hamel

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In the seventeenth century the Dutch had well-established trade routes between Batavia, present-day Jakarta; Taiwan, which was under Dutch control from 1624 until 1661 as one their East Indian colonies; and the Japanese port of Nagasaki, where the Dutch had a trading post at Deshima. In the summer of 1653 the Dutch ship Sperwer (Sparrow Hawk) set sail from Batavia for Taiwan with a crew of sixty-five and the newly appointed governor of Taiwan on board. After discharging both the governor and cargo in Taiwan, the Sperwer set out for