



Xavier's Legacies: Catholicism in Modern Japanese Culture (Asian Religions and Society Series)

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Japan has had three Catholic prime ministers, and its current empress was raised and educated in the faith. How did a non-Christian nation come to foster more Catholic leaders than the United States, particularly when Protestantism is said to define Christianity in Japan and Catholicism is believed to be but a fleeting element of the country's so-called Christian century?

Far from being a relic of the past -- something brought to Japan by sixteenth-century missionaries such as Francis Xavier and then forgotten -- Catholicism offered, and continues to provide, an authentic way for Japanese to shape their own cultural identities. This volume documents the appeal of Catholicism not only among farmers and fishers but also among scientists, diplomats, novelists, and members of the imperial household who have answered the challenge of Christianity and found inspiration in Catholicism since the late nineteenth century. Associated with the past, Catholicism has offered many Japanese an alternative way to maintain tradition and negotiate modernity.

This path-breaking exploration of Catholicism's long-term influence on Japan challenges the deep-seated tendency to juxtapose the traditional, non-Christian East with the modern and Christian West.

Contributors: James R. Bartholomew, Kevin M. Doak, Ann M. Harrington, Mariko Ikehara, Mark R. Mullins, Toshiko Sunami, Mark Williams, Yoshihisa Yamamoto, and Yoshimitsu Yoshihiko (with Charles C. Campbell)

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