Victoria Weston, ed.

Portugal, Jesuits, and Japan. Spiritual Beliefs and Earthly Goods. Chestnut Hill, MA: McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, 2013. Pp. 147. Pb, \$60.00

This volume gathers together a number of scholarly contributions that center around a major exhibit of visual artifacts and printed materials, principally from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The goal of the exhibit at the McMullen Museum at Boston College held from February 16 to June 2, 2013 was to illustrate visually the history of the presence of the Portuguese in Japan as well as the work of the Jesuits, who accompanied the Portuguese traders and diplomats. The encounter and exchange between Japan and Europe continues to fascinate scholars, and this exhibit brings together new artifacts, some never seen before in the United States. Therein lies the major contribution of the exhibit. The volume's subtitle, which combines "spiritual beliefs" with a focus on "earthly goods" expresses this succinctly.

Noteworthy are the objects from private collections and from smaller museums, such as the Peabody Essex, that are often overlooked, even though they are of equal if not even higher quality than objects owned by major collections. This is certainly true of the *nanban byōbu* ("Southern Barbarian [Japanese] folding screen") attributed to Kanō Naizen (Plate 1), which comes from a privately-held collection. The sixty-nine plates at the end of the volume are finely reproduced and are an important reference for scholars. The eight essays also include a number of grey-scale figures included in the body of the text for illustrative purposes.

The introduction by Victoria Weston and the first essay by René B. Javellana retell a story familiar to historians of Japan, but Javellana then goes on to explain the early iconography of Francis Xavier, an important element that explains the appeal of the famous Jesuit missionary as it was expressed through the medium of art. What follows is Angelo Cattaneo's unique essay on cartography. Employing the concept of "emplacement," the author discusses how Europeans situated Japan on the map—literally—and how the Japanese learned to situate themselves and Europe on their own maps. The connections made with the Jesuit school of painting founded in Nagasaki in 1583 as well as the influence of the cartographic work of Matteo Ricci and his Chinese literati colleagues help us to understand better the different genres of maps from this period and how they were produced.

Moura Carvalho then introduces readers to how European and Asian works of art were introduced to Japan. The material culture that resulted from this exchange, which was produced at trade centers including Nagasaki, Macao, Goa, and Malacca, was closely linked to the diplomatic custom of giving gifts.

In Japan this represented a major headache and expense for the Jesuits, who found themselves active participants in this exchange of a wide range of artistic objects. The essay on the lacquered Mughal shield by Ulrike Korber appears to be somewhat out of place in this volume. It is also the most technical of all the essays, as it employs a detailed analysis of a single object; and therefore it is perhaps the most difficult for the layman not familiar with the tools and trade of the art historian to grasp fully. Of particular interest is the author's distinction between Indian-Portuguese and Luso-Asian objects. A further distinction between Southeast Asian and East Asian objects is based on lacquering techniques and materials.

The essay by Prasannan Parthasarathi is a welcome addition, as we often forget the importance of the trade in textiles. The author discusses the silk trade between China and Japan, from which the Portuguese benefited immensely as intermediaries between two countries who were not officially trading with each other at the time. The mention of the Indian silk trade is significant. One only wishes the author had had both the time and space to tell us more about that side of the story. Rory Browne's essay on animal exchange is another highly original contribution and great fun to read. It provides us with a guide to the many illustrations of animals, both printed and painted from this period. The author also tells us the significance of these animals as diplomatic gifts and as representations of the exotic.

Alexandra Curvelo's essay on Nanban Art takes us back to the principal theme of the exhibit and of the volume. It mentions again the Jesuit school of painting and its principal teacher, the Neapolitan Jesuit, Giovanni Niccolò. It also provides a brief typology of Nanban objects and discusses a very rare bedstead that was part of the exhibit. Finally, Weston introduces us to the four Nanban folding screens that were displayed at the McMullen Museum. She notes how the privately owned *byōbu* on display for the first time increases the number of screens by Kanō Naizen known to be extant and brings that number to ninety-two. The detailed analysis of the representation of people and objects on these screens is masterful and helps us to situate them both as works of art and as symbolic expressions of the worldview that the Japanese formed as a result of their encounter with the Portuguese and the foreign Jesuits missionaries—not all of whom were Portuguese.

In conclusion I wish to note that exhibit volumes are notoriously difficult to put together. This is because they tend to concentrate—as they should—on the objects exhibited. But these inevitably represent but a limited selection based on what is available for loan. In such circumstances it is difficult to demand perfect coherence of topics and themes in the exhibit catalog. The essays in this collection are quite diverse in what they discuss, and the

reader may feel a bit lost at first. But the end result will be very helpful to the reader who wishes both to catch a glimpse and to understand the particular significance of the “earthly goods” that were the result of this encounter between Portugal and Japan in the early modern world, as Jesuits expounded their “spiritual beliefs” to the Japanese people.

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