A Comparison of American and Japanese
Publishing Strategies

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Science in Publishing degree

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INTRODUCTION

Some translated American books become bestsellers in Japan. American publishers receive fees from Japanese publishers, and Japanese publishers get revenue from selling translated books. Well-translated books make money. However, the publishing of translated books is very complicated because of international differences in law, culture and market. Each country lacks information regarding the other country’s publishing methods. If American and Japanese publishers were to acquaint themselves with each other’s publishing industry and market, they would earn more revenue from licensing and/or marketing their books in each other’s country. In addition, in the other country they could discover publications which would have great sales potential in their own countries.

Publishers need effective publishing strategies for selecting and selling translated books in America and Japan. Today, there are certain similarities between America and Japan in terms of their publishing markets and readership. Recently, spiritual and self-help titles have been popular in both America and Japan. Many of these spiritual and self-help titles could overcome cultural differences and conflicts between the two countries because all people are seeking better ways to achieve a happy life. That means there are great opportunities for both American and Japanese publishers to market translated books. These popular titles should be very ‘easy to read’ and have familiar titles as well as good designs. Publishers must concern themselves with the targeted readers’ profiles and pursue well-developed marketing plans.
LEGAL ISSUES

Copyright and the Berne Convention: To be familiar with legal issues especially in copyright is essential in the publishing business. Today, there is no international copyright law. Once an author’s publication passes across the border, the other country’s copyright laws protect that publication rather than his original country’s copyright laws. To protect copyrighted works in the world, the first major international copyright treaty took place in Berne, Switzerland, in 1886. Today, most major industrial countries including the United States, Japan, Canada, Australia and most European countries are involved in the Berne Convention. The recent agreement of the Berne Convention which was held in 1971 is the Paris Act. Before the Berne Convention, according to Paul Goldstein, a professor of law at Stanford University, many countries protected an author’s right by bilateral copyright treaties rather than multilateral copyright treaties. Originally, bilateral copyright treaties were developed because of strong demands from both authors and publishers. Both wanted to avoid reduction of their revenues from piracy of their works in foreign countries as well as from competition with imported cheaper copies in their own counties. However, bilateral treaties had problems in that each treaty was very different depending on the relationship with the other country and its copyright law. As a result, bilateral treaties were very complicated for publishers. Moreover, authors’ works were always faced with the risk of copyright infringement in other countries. To find the solution to these problems, multilateral copyright treaties were developed (16).

The Berne Convention is considered the most important copyright treaty in the world. Publishers and authors, nevertheless, should be concerned about foreign countries’
Copyright laws when licensing their rights to other Berne countries. One of the principles of the Berne Convention is “national treatment.” Because of this treatment, Berne countries must treat any author whose works were created in other Berne countries with their own countries’ copyright laws. According to the Berne Convention, any formality of copyright, such as notice and registration, is not required. However, certain countries encourage registering copyright in case of an infringement action. The Berne Convention requires “minimal protections” including the subject of copyright duration, moral right, and fair use. That means a Berne country’s term of copyright protection endures at least 50 years after the death of the author. Furthermore, the author should have moral rights. Moral rights claim authorship of the work and prevent any modifications, which might be harmful to an author’s reputation. Furthermore, the author cannot sell or transfer the moral rights to a third party. Authors and publishers who publish or hope to publish publications in other Berne countries must consider the other countries’ copyright laws (Fishman 13/2-13/3).

There is a basic difference between the U.S and Japanese copyright laws. In Japan, there are two kinds of copyrights. One is moral rights, and the other is economic rights. As I mentioned before, an author never transfers moral rights to a third party. Economic rights, which of course can be transferred to a third party, are similar to the U.S. copyright. In many European countries, author’s works are beneficiaries of moral rights. According to Stephen Fishman, a full-time legal writer, even though Congress, in 1991, decided to apply certain moral rights to visual artists, the U.S. copyright law has not granted moral rights to an author. He further states, “The courts will have to decide whether moral rights must be granted to writers under American copyright law pursuant to the Berne Convention” (9/8).
Although in the United States there are no moral rights, authorship is protected by “a mix of federal and state laws, including derivative rights, unfair competition, defamation and privacy” (Goldstein 284).

The duration of copyright is different in America and Japan. In the United States, the term of copyright protection is an author’s life plus 70 years, while in Japan it is an author’s life plus 50 years. Since the Berne Convention has a minimal protection requirement, an American author’s work in Japan is protected for an author’s life plus 50 years. The United States, however, does not apply the rule of comparison of copyright terms with some limited exception (Goldstein 239). A Japanese author’s work enjoys the same copyright duration as works published in America. Since the United States extended the terms of copyright from 50 years to 70 years in 1998, and many European countries protect copyright for an author’s life plus 70 years, Japan will be required to expand its copyright duration in the near future.

Neither the United States nor Japan requires formalities of copyright. Once works are created, those works are considered copyrighted works without notice and registration. Authors and publishers in both countries, however, receive important benefits from the use of a copyright notice and the registration of copyright when they try to file a copyright infringement case. For this reason, many professionals strongly recommend copyright notice and registration. Fishman claims that “It is wise to place a valid copyright notice on all published works and to register these works in the U.S. Copyright Office shortly after publication” (2/3). Most publications in America have a copyright notice and are registered. In Japan, it is still a business custom that many authors and publishers do not register their...
works immediately before filing a suit for copyright infringement. As a practical matter, formalities of copyright are beneficial not only to the copyright owner but also to society because people can easily find the copyright owner of a particular publication and the proof of a copyright protection. For this reason, a valid copyright notice and registration are very important.

**Contracts:** In the standard publishing contract between an author and a publisher in America, the author grants certain of his important rights to a publisher. Once the contract is signed, the publisher becomes the owner of those rights instead of licensing them for a limited period of time. The author must consider very carefully which rights he should grant. Publishers must be concerned about which rights they should obtain. Usually, if publishers obtain many subsidiary rights such as ‘Translation Rights’ ‘Electronic Rights’ and ‘Video and Audio Cassette Rights’, they will end up paying a large advance to authors. Moreover, the contract makes clear all other important elements including subsidiary rights, correction of proofs, delivery of manuscript and royalty rate. Since the contract is complicated and extremely important, many authors use an agent to negotiate with publishers. Jonathan Kirsch, an attorney specializing in intellectual property matters, states, “Although there is always a temptation on the part of both publishers and authors to ‘just sign in,’ the book publishing contract ought to be vigorously negotiated, carefully drafted, and meticulously scrutinized by both parties before it is signed” (59).

In Japan, in most cases, there is no agent between an author and a publisher. A standard contract is simpler and shorter than an America contract. Because moral rights can never be transferred, if a publisher wants to change a title or modify an author’s work, he
needs the author’s permission. Many Japanese authors license only their publication rights to publishers for a certain period of time instead of selling or granting the rights. That places Japanese publishers in a weak position. Recently, Japanese publishers have insisted on the necessity of a publisher’s right because in the current standard publishing contract and copyright law, Japanese publishers cannot initiate a legal action when someone illegally reproduces their publications by using a copy machine (Kajino 202). Furthermore, Japanese publishers cannot receive appropriate fees from reproduction of their published titles by a copy machine due to the lack of an appropriate fee distribution system. As far as the publisher is concerned, he should obtain the author’s primarily rights instead of just licensing them for a certain period of time. Thus, the standard publishing contracts and copyright laws in Japan must be revised, and both publishers and authors must vigorously negotiate book contracts.

READERS

Habits: Most American still read books regularly. According to a study from the Gallup Organization, which conducted research on American reading habits in 1999, 84% of Americans read at least one book or part of a book during 1998. These statistics have remained almost the same over the past 20 years. The study also found that 7% of Americans read more than 50 books during the past year. Thirty percent of Americans read between 1 and 5 books, and 16% read between 6 and 10 books during the same time period. However, there were 13% of Americans who didn’t read any books during that year. American readers prefer nonfiction books to fiction books. The study found that 46% of American readers primarily read nonfiction, 35% read mostly fiction, and 17% read both.
genres equally (Carlson 1).

Other research shows that in the United States, elderly people devote more time to reading than do young people. The study conducted by the NPD Group in 1999 found that on average, the 55 to 64 age group spent about 53 minutes a day reading, while the 25 to 29 age group read 24 minutes a day. In addition, the study shows none of the age groups reads as much today as it did in the past. In this research, reading means any type of reading including reading on the computer screen. Today, many U.S. publishers try to attract older readers. The Baby Boomers group is a very important target for U.S. publishers and retailers (Scott 1).

Japan faces a serious social problem in that fewer people read books than before. According to research conducted by Yomiuri Shinbun (a Japanese newspaper) in October 2000, more than 50% of Japanese didn’t read any books in a month, an increase of 5% from 1999. Furthermore, over 60% said that they didn’t consider themselves ‘a bookworm.’ About 50% of the Japanese who didn’t read any books in a month, claimed that they could not read books because of the lack of time. Nearly 30% of them complained about the high price of books, and 19% objected to the small print of books. The 30 to 50 year age group, however, strongly demanded more practical, nonfiction books in order to acquire beneficial education and knowledge for their lives (“Dokusyo” 38). Another investigation conducted by Mainichi Shinbun found that Japanese read books 29 minutes a day on average. The prime age of this book reading group was between 50 and 60 years. They read an average of 32 minutes a day. The late teenage female group, which read 27 minutes a day on average, was second to the 70-year-old male group (“Mainichi” 74-75).
There are similarities in American and Japanese reader’s habits. The readers of both countries prefer to read nonfiction books. Although people do not read as much today as they did in the past in both countries, the Baby Boomer and the middle-aged group still have strong reading habits. These two age groups have grown up with books. The problem is with today’s youth who are surrounded by a great variety of media including TV, the Internet, and the Cellular phone. The world is flooded with information. When today’s children become adults, will they prefer to read books as the middle-aged people now do? In order to pass the joy of reading from generation to generation, the publishing industry must develop the youth market as well as middle-aged book market. Furthermore, publishers must strive to continue meeting to reader’s interests and trends.

**Bestseller Lists:** Comparing current nonfiction bestseller lists in America and Japan is a good way to discern each country’s readership and trends. Since both American and Japanese readers prefer nonfiction books, nonfiction bestseller lists are a good indication of reading habits. In the current nonfiction hardcover bestseller list from *Publishers Weekly*, many genres of books are listed, including religion & spirituality, self-help, general history, and biography. That means American readers’ interests are diverse and independent. This theory is also proved by a study of American readers’ habits that shows that Americans prefer to choose books based on ‘word of mouth.’ Because opinions about a particular book vary among readers, if the book fits the readers’ interests, any kind of book might be included in a bestseller list despite a low advertising and promotion budget.

Japanese readers crave what is relevant to their lives. In the current nonfiction bestseller list from Kinokuniya Bookstore, Japan’s largest bookstore chain, most of the
listed books are related to self-help or spiritual topics. These books are very similar in terms of their contents and targeted readers. At present, because the Japanese economy is facing a terrible depression, people are looking for relief from both economic and personal stress. That is one stimulus for self-help book sales. Before the present depression, Japanese preferred to read fiction. For many Japanese, reading novels was a favorite recreation; however, because of the severe economic situation and the emergence of other entertainment such as the Internet and the Cellular phone, their taste in reading has shifted to material of a more practical and helpful nature. Since Japanese readers are prone to choosing books based on advertisements and reviews, it is possible that many consumers would be eager to purchase a certain title which has very effective advertising and promotion (JPIC 80). In Japan, once a certain book of one publisher becomes a bestseller, other publishers with greater advertising budgets are likely to take advantage of its popularity by publishing similar titles.

**Selection Criteria:** Both in the United States and Japan, the Internet is very popular, and there are many online bookstores. Most American and Japanese readers, however, do not choose books based on perusing the Internet. These readers still prefer to spend time at bookstores to select books. American readers prefer a pleasant atmosphere and helpful and knowledgeable personal attention when they purchase books. According to the study conducted by the Gallup Group in 1999, 27% of American readers chose their books based on a recommendation from someone they knew. The same percentage chose books by an author whose books they like; 26% of readers made their selections by browsing through a bookstore or library; 6% chose based on book reviews; 3% chose based on an
advertisement. Only 1% of Americans selected books by browsing an Internet site (Carlson 2). This trend has definitely increased but is still open to skepticism about how fast it will grow.

Japanese readers usually visit bookstores to obtain information about publications. According to a study conducted by Syoten Sinpukai in December 2000, 41% of Japanese chose publications by browsing a bookstore and 40% chose based on book reviews or an advertisement in newspapers and magazines. Only 5% used the Internet when they selected publications (JPIC 80). While American readers preferred to choose books based on ‘word of mouth,’ the research shows that most Japanese did not select books based on a recommendation from someone they know. A survey conducted by the Japan Booksellers Federation in 1996 shows that 66% of Japanese chose books for reasons other than someone’s recommendations (5).

**Market and Industry**

**Publishing Industry:** Publishing today is a big industry in the United States. According to the Association of American Publishers, in 2000 total U.S. book sales reached $25 billion, a 3.4% increase over 1999 (“2000”). Ten years ago, the total income from the sales was $15 billion, so it expanded $10 billion in 10 years. The American book industry used to be a ‘cottage industry’. Michael Korda, who works for major publishing companies as an editor in chief, states that in the 1950s, most publishing companies were privately owned by a founder and/or his family. Large capital was not required to operate a publishing business. What one needed to establish a business was an office, telephone, smart sales people and marketing sense. Korda insists, “A book-publishing company could be started with not
much more capital than it would take buy a new car” (44). In the 1960s, the consolidation of the U.S. book industry began. From 1960 to 1989, 573 mergers were reported in the book industry. After 1995, mergers and acquisitions have been less frantic and the size of acquisitions has changed. The result is the emergence of gigantic media companies (Greco 45-51).

Today, although a few gigantic companies dominate the general book market in the United States, a large number of small and medium sized-publishers exist in the book industry. According to the Economic Census of 1997, there were 9,020 publishers, including book and periodical publishers in the United States (“1997”). Jason Epstein, a well-known American editor, states that the present American trade book publishing world is dominated by five gigantic corporations. They include two German based companies, two American companies and one English company (11). The positive aspects of these conglomerate corporations is that they can effectively develop global marketing strategies. Furthermore, they are able to make good use of abundant financial resources as well as connections to other media. On the other hand, the negative aspects include problems of cultural conflicts which occur because of different nationalities and corporate cultures. Additionally, the fact that their businesses are owned by foreign corporations is not pleasing to some Americans. The top 5 U.S. publishers, however, covered only 29.6% of the U.S. book market in 1999, according to the research from Euromonitor (“Books”). That means that in the United States there are still many small and medium-sized publishing companies, which concentrate on the niche publishing market.

The Japanese publishing industry has been hit by a long depression. Since 1997,
Japanese publishing industry sales figures have continued to decline. The total income from sales in 2000 was 970 billion yen (approximately $8 billion), a decrease 2.3% from 1999 (“Shuppan” 17). The Japanese publishing industry is still a ‘cottage industry.’ Most existing Japanese publishers were founded after World War II, and they are privately owned and operated by succession. The industry still has not experienced consolidation such as the American publishing industry has experienced. In Japan there are many publishing companies, which operate companies based on small capital. The publishing business in Japan persists in the belief that if a person has some phones, desks and employees, one can easily start up a business. However, to continue managing the company for a long period of time and keep the business profitable is very difficult. Less than 10% of Japanese publishers founded before World War II remain today.

At this time, there are over 4,000 publishers in Japan and many of them publish both books and magazines. While the U.S. publishing market is shared by a great variety of publishers, the Japanese publishing market is an oligopoly. According to Minobu Shiozawa, a Japanese mass communication journalist, in Japan a small number of publishers monopolize the publishing market. Actually, the total market shares of the top 10 Japanese publishers are 4%. The top 20 publishers occupy 5%, and the top 50 occupy 70% of the market. However, most of these publishers in Japan are small and medium-sized. While only 3% of Japanese publishers have more than 200 employees, half of the Japanese publishers hire fewer than 10 employees (19-21). Although the Japanese publishing market is dominated by few publishers, most publishers in Japan are not conglomerate corporations. Recently, however, Japanese publishers have experienced a few mergers and acquisitions
by foreign companies as well as industry consolidation. In the near future, if this terrible depression persists, the Japanese publishing industry will probably experience more consolidation such as American publishers have experienced.

Japanese annual book title production is extremely high. While in 1997 the U.S. annual book title production was 64,711, Japan’s annual book title production was 65,438 during the same year (“Annual”). This data shows that Japanese publishers produce many more publications annually, even though the Japanese population and the number of publishers is approximately half that of the United States. In Japan, new titles come out nearly every month. Japanese publishers don’t produce books seasonally as American publishers do. Usually, American publishers publish books with an advanced publishing plan including editorial, marketing and promotion. The reason the American publishers carefully build a publishing plan is to meet the retail cycle and their market needs. Thomas Woll, the president of Cross River Publishing Consultant, claims that “Seasons directly impact the public’s buying patterns” (11). Actually, the Thanksgiving to Christmas holiday period is the most significant sales period for retailers. For some retailers the sales of this period generate two-thirds of the year’s revenue. Furthermore, other holiday and seasonal events including ‘Valentine’s Day’, ‘Mother’s Day’, ‘Father’s Day’ and ‘Back to School’ bring retailers a large amount of revenue (Woll 12). Thus, it is important for American publishers to build a careful publishing plan and work with retailers to stimulate these strong seasonal sales. Some Japanese publishers produce books almost every month without careful consideration of publishing plan.

The two most significant systems in the Japanese publishing industry are the
consignment sales system and the resale price maintenance system. In the consignment sales system, if a publisher has an account with wholesalers, its publications are distributed to bookstores nationwide. In addition, unsold books can be returned freely within a certain time period, usually six months for newly released books. The system allows small publishers and bookstores to sell and distribute their publications and increases the choices for consumers. However, this system also increases the number of annual titles and the average rate of returns. Once Japanese publishers sign a contract with wholesalers and retailers, their publications must be sold at a fixed price. According to the Japan Book Publishers Association, “The resale price maintenance system, under which a publication must be sold across the country at a fixed price, engenders consumer confidence in the publishing industry” (12). In Japan publishers don’t discount books, nor does there exist a remainder market such as in America.

**Returns:** Both in America and Japan, the risk of a large initial printing is very high because if books are not sold, the publishers must deal with the problem of returns. In the United States, although most American publishers do not distribute books on consignment, retailers can return unsold books to publishers for credit. According to the Association of American Publishers, the industry average for returns is 21% in the United States (qtd. in Woll 116). However, this year the American book publishing industry is facing a serious problem of book returns. According to the Association of American Publishers, in the first four months of 2001 the rate of book returns rose 11% from last year. Also, the return rate of trade paperbacks rose 13% (qtd. in Kirkpatrick). In the next few months from now, American publishers will still continue to receive unsold books which were shipped to
retailers last year. Some large publishers began to reduce the number of new titles they published. HarperCollins, which already took a $270 million charge for unsold titles and unearned advances, began to break contracts with some authors whose works were not finished. In the past few years, American publishers were very optimistic about returns because online bookstores as well as retailers and wholesalers increased the number of their warehouses and the amount of stock to fulfill customer’s needs. However, because of flat sales of online bookstores and a lackluster book sales trend, American publishers have to manage a large number of returns (Kirkpatrick).

In Japan the industry average of returns reaches about 40%. Although American publishers can remainder unsold books at a large discount, the choices of Japanese publishers for unsold books are to recycle them as waste paper, attempt to sell them again, or keep them in their warehouses. Even though Japanese publishers try to lower returns by reducing initial copies of a new title and the number of books sent to wholesalers, the return rate remains at a high level.

**Bookstores & Wholesalers:** The two largest American and Japanese bookstore chains, Barnes & Noble and Kinokuniya Bookstores, have quite different store atmospheres and bookselling strategies. According to the “Business Description” from Marketguide.com, in December 2000, there are 937 Barnes & Nobles’ bookstores in the United States. Each store’s size ranges from 10,000 to 60,000 square feet and with a collection of titles ranging between 60,000 to 175,000. Each store displays books based on local interest and gathers many books from small and independent publishers and university presses. Only 3% of their sales come from bestsellers. Inside the stores, there are wide aisles, comfortable
furnishings and cafes. It is even common to see many customers relaxing on the floor to read. Nearly every day, the stores promote events including author’s book signings, discussions, and readings for children. Involving each bookstore in the local community, Barnes & Noble encourages people to spend more time in their stores and increases the opportunity to read and purchase books. There are some negative aspects. Since customers can read any book as long as they wish and there are fewer displayed titles, sometimes it is difficult to find a particular title.

Kinokuniya Bookstores operates 57 bookstores in principal cities in Japan. According to Masayuki Ito, who works for Kinokuniya, in Japan, the size of each store ranges approximately from 7,700 to 45,000 square feet. The collection of titles of the largest store is 270,000 and the stock of the largest one is 896,000. Kinokuniya also displays books according to local interest, and their inventories contain many different genres of books. In addition, they promote some events including author’s book signings and discussions but not as frequently as Barnes and Noble does. Due to the high cost of real estate, the limited display space, and receiving the large number of books from wholesalers on consignment, Kinokuniya as well as other Japanese bookstores tries to display as many books as possible (Interview). Readers who are looking for a particular title, or who have already decided which title to purchase find this arrangement very helpful. However, it’s not comfortable for readers to browse and read books in the store. Although Barnes & Noble encourages customers to linger in their stores as long as they would like, the selling strategy of Kinokuniya is to efficiently fulfill the customer’s needs by displaying as many titles as possible and promptly processing the sales transaction.
There are 41 wholesale book distributors in Japan. Two major ones are Tohan and Nippan; they handle about 70% of Japanese publications. It is quite rare for Japanese publishers to deal directly with retailers. In the United States, distributors hold books on consignment or act as an agent of publishers and forward returns to responsible publishers. Wholesalers purchase books from both publishers and distributors to sell to retailers. Ingram Book Company and Baker & Taylor are the largest wholesalers in the United States (Woll 9). Although major publishers usually sell directly to retail chains, from small and medium sized publishers’ standpoints, using wholesalers is the best way to reach retailers. In Japan there are still many small and medium-sized publishers as well as bookstores. According to the Japan Book Publishers Association, in 1997 there were nearly 26 thousand bookstores in Japan and most of them were small and independent. The average size of these bookstores is 123 square meters (about 1,360 square feet) (10). The number of independent bookstores has recently continued to decrease because of competition with large chain bookstores. In order to distribute books effectively from small and medium-sized publishers to many independent bookstores, the role of a middleman is still important in Japan. However, if the number of independent bookstores continues to lessen, in the future more direct transactions between publishers and retailers will take place.

**New Technologies:** Recently, major American publishers and some Japanese publishers have begun to deal with E-books and on-demand publishing. By making use of these new technologies, publishers can avoid the risk of returns and reach their readers directly. Publishers, however, face the problem that authors also can reach their readers directly without publishers such as Steven King did on his website. Epstein predicts that in the near
future people will use “ATM machines for books” in their neighborhood stationers, post offices and other convenient places. “Machines that can bind single copies of texts will eventually be common household items, like fax machines today” (Epstein 29).

Publishers as well as other middlemen have to take a step to examine new technologies and involve in the current situation in order to survive in this fierce competition. Major American publishers are all doing digital publishing projects and are working with new services such as iUniverse, Lightning Source and Xlibris. These new services digitalize printed books and disseminate them either as E-books or on-demand books. Random House holds a 49% share of Xlibris. Barnes & Nobles has a 49% share of iUniverse and Lightning Source is a subsidiary of Ingram. The service of ‘publishing on-demand’ adds extra value on the books by putting them on the market swiftly. According to Xlibris founder John Feldcamp, 10% of Xlibris sales will be E-book sales within three years. The print-on-demand business is significant in its operation because 99.5% of all its sold books are in hard cover or trade formats (Letts). Due to this on-demand publishing service, the product life of books is enduring and many publishers’ backlists are reviving. Those new services will reduce many operating costs of publishers and increase an author’s royalty. As a result, consumers can easily purchase books at a reasonable price and convenient locations.

PUBLISHING STRATEGIES

Book Exports and Imports: Many publishing transactions take place between America and Japan. While in the United States book exports are much larger than imports, Japan book imports are much larger than exports. According to the U.S. Commerce
Department, in 2000, book exports were $1.88 billion, an increase of 0.3% from 1999. Japan is the third largest book export market for United States following Canada and the United Kingdom. Exports to Japan during 2000, increased 21.7%, to $123.1 million. (qtd. in Millot). According to Shigeharu Ono, a vice president of Kinokuniya Publications Services of New York, the market of foreign books in Japan is about 33 billion yen (about $300 million) (Interview). America is the largest book export and import market for Japan. In 2000, book exports from Japan to America were valued at 5.4 billion yen (approximately $50 million). Japan imports more than twice as many American books as the United States imports from Japan. Since nearly 40% of Japanese book imports come from the United States, there is a large market for American publishers in Japan (“Shuppanbutsu” 355-356). Yuji Takeda, managing director of Tuttle-Mori Agency, a major foreign rights agency in Japan, states, “Japan has an excess of book imports over book exports. In my company, about 98% of the business between America and Japan is to introduce American books to Japanese publishers. More than 40% of their transactions are related to books from America”(Interview).

**Book Translation Market:** The reason that American book imports from Japan are fewer than book exports to Japan is simple. American readers and publishers have not demanded foreign books. According to Natasha Wimmer from Publishersweekly.com, only 6% of world books are translated from foreign languages into English, while almost 50% are translated from English into other languages. On the U.S. Amazon.com bestseller list, no foreign book is ranked within the top 24 publications in a typical week (Wimmer). Barbara Epler, editor-in-chief of New Directions states, “America is just frighteningly
different from the rest of the world. We’re really Disneylanded beyond belief” (qtd in Wimmer). Tatemi Sakai, president of Sakai Copyright Agency, notes “Americans are not interested in foreign books because the American culture is made up of many foreign cultures” (Interview).

A book translation business is not profitable for American publishers. American readers demand few foreign books. Publishers’ expenditures for translation, in time and money, result in low profits. To find a good foreign book requires more time and expense than to find an English-language book. Even though an editor chooses a good foreign book, finding an appropriate translator is very difficult. Riva Hocherman, an editor at Metropolitan Books, an imprint of Henry Holt and Company, states that producing one translated book is almost as expensive as publishing two English-language books because it requires so much time and labor. Actually, translation has never been the most profitable part of the publishing business in the United States. Since the aim of the American publishing industry is to increase profits as much as possible, American publishers become reluctant to invest in the high-cost, low-return translation business (Wimmer).

Some American publishers, however, are optimistic about the publishing translation business. Morgan Entrekin, publisher of Grove/Atlantic, claims, “If you look at Europe, the bestseller lists and publishing programs of the major houses are all very international, and I believe that’s going to happen here. It’s going to become more and more the norm” (qtd). Hocherman claims, “Editors and publishing houses are so hungry for good material -- maybe they are more open to looking everywhere” (qtd in Wimmer). In the future, more American publishers will embark on producing translated books. According to
Graphic Arts Monthly, in the United States, book imports increase at a faster rate than exports, even though book exports are much larger than book imports. In 1999, book imports increased 7.3% and 8% in 1998, while book exports slightly decreased over the three-year period (“Book”). Although the book translation business is very difficult and not profitable in many cases, translated books diversify a publisher’s book titles. Japanese publishers expand their book inventories by adding translated books. As a result, Japanese readers have many choices when selecting books. Since American readers’ interests are diverse and independent, American publishers should provide more choices for them by importing more foreign books, and vigorously enter the book translation business.

In Japan, although the book translation business is difficult and complicated, translated books are frequently included in a bestseller list. According to Seiichiro Simono, a director of Japan Uni Agency, some successfully translated books are written by foreign authors who are not famous in Japan. Thus, even small and medium-sized publishers can produce a bestseller without paying a high advance to foreign publishers (“Honyaku” 6). During 1999, nearly 600 Japanese publishers produced 4,462 translated books, an increase of 103.7% from 1994. In 1999, approximately 10% of the new books in Japan were translated books. The major translated book genre in Japan is still the novel; nevertheless, self-help and business titles have recently generated remarkable revenues. More than 90% of translated business books come from America, and they are well accepted by Japanese readers (“Honyaku” 4-8). For example, two business books translated from America, “Rich Dad, Poor Dad” by Robert T. Kiyosaki and “Who Moved My Cheese?” by Spencer Johnson, became million-sellers in Japan. According to Yuji Takeda, “Today, many Japanese
publishers are crazy about obtaining translation rights especially in self-help, although about two years ago, they were not interested in those kinds of books at all. This trend will definitely continue for a while” (Interview).

**English-Language Book Market:** In addition to the book translation market in Japan, the English-language book market is also profitable for American publishers. Popular English-language titles in Japan are academic and ESL (English as a Second Language) books. According to Edward Barry, a former president of Oxford University Press, “The first prime market in Japan is ESL, which is a very profitable business” (Interview). Oxford UPS supplies their ESL titles to many Japanese private schools and English-language institutes. The second prime market is English-language technical books for professionals, libraries and some individuals. There is a constant demand from professionals purchasing medical and professional English-language books. In addition to those books, religious books and journals for professionals are also large market items. Since Oxford UPS has its subsidiary in Japan, they don’t need an agent to export books to Japan. Because of this advantage, Oxford can easily find appropriate distributors and can pursue a more focused marketing plan. Barry states, “Oxford UPS has a low book return rate in Japan because their market is stable, and they develop careful publishing plans.” Oxford UPS employs different publishing strategies from Japanese publishers in terms of their publishing plans. They devote more time to produce one title than do Japanese publishers. Barry also claims, “The college textbook market in Japan is very hard to enter. Because the market has already been established, and plenty of Japanese publishers exist, it is almost impossible for American publishers to compete in this market.” However, for American publishing
companies, which publish ESL titles and/or professional books, Japan is a very attractive market.

**Translated Japanese Books:** In the United States, the market for translated Japanese books is very small. Actually, few Japanese publications are translated into English and distributed in the United States. According to Jim Nichols, a former sales director in Kodansha America, niche genres and special books sell well in the United States. These include Japanese language learning, martial arts, and Japanese cuisine. In March 2001, Kodansha released *Tariki* written by Hiroyuki Itsuki and translated by Joseph Robert. *Tariki* is a ‘spiritual and religious book’ about Buddhism, which was a bestseller a few years ago in Japan. Nichols expects that *Tariki* will sell at least 30 thousand copies within the first six to eight months in the United States. He states, “Reviews and publicity are very important marketing tools here in the United States. In addition, if Japanese publishers want to distribute their books on the American market, they need appropriate sales reps” (Interview). Kodansha uses Oxford UPS as their sales rep.

Kodansha published *No One’s Perfect* written by Hirotada Ototake and translated by Gerry Harcourt. This book, which became a million-seller in Japan a few years ago, is memoirs of a young Japanese student who was born without arms and legs. As he grew up, he went to public school, participated in sports activities alongside normal children. In the book, he describes the encouragement of his friends and family as well as his teachers. Nichols states, “There are some reasons that *No One’s perfect* didn’t sell well in the United States. I think one of the significant reasons must be the lack of publicity. We couldn’t make many publicity plans because the author didn’t come to the United States.” Because a
memoir or biography is all about the author, publicity including author tours and public appearances is essential to promoting a book especially in the United States. While it seems nearly impossible that translated Japanese books might become bestsellers in the United States, a certain niche market exists for them. Developing this niche market will contribute to the cultural exchange between America and Japan.

**Book Translation Strategies:** By Licensing foreign rights to Japanese publishers, American publishers and authors increase opportunities to generate additional revenues from one publication. However, the translation business is not easy. A large number of American best-selling titles have not been bestsellers in Japan. The majority of translated-book readers used to be professionals and students in Japan. Today, the targeted readership of those translated books has shifted to a general readership (“Honyaku” 6). Recently, American business books have been well received by Japanese readers, and they frequently become bestsellers and/or remain on the market for a long time. The content of these successful books includes not only general topics but also professional information.

According to Barry, “The combination of trade and professional genres is very important for selling books to the Japanese market. If this combination goes well, publishers and authors can be successful and receive substantial revenues from the translation business in Japan.”

When American publishers want to license books to Japanese publishers or Japanese publishers want to obtain foreign rights from American publishers, Japanese and/or American agents are usually involved. When American books are translated into Japanese through an agent, the agent receives a 10% royalty commission from American
publishers and authors. According to Hiroshi Hayakawa, a president of Hayakawa Publishing Corporation, almost 95% of Japanese publishers find books with potential for translation at international book fairs; sometimes, agents submit books for consideration (Interview). He also states, “It’s too late to start negotiating with American publishers after reviews have appeared in Publishers Weekly. The timing for obtaining foreign rights is very critical. Publishers should always seek the latest information” (Hayakawa).

The advantage of using agents for American publishers is to license their foreign rights to appropriate Japanese publishers. In addition, Japanese publishers can lessen many complicated procedures related to the translation business including the negotiation of a contract in English. If American publishers, however, directly negotiate with Japanese publishers, they don’t have to pay a 10% commission. Moreover, both publishers can develop a close relationship. They can communicate regularly by phone and E-mail rather than meeting at international book fairs once or twice a year. That relationship helps to exchange up-to-date information about each country’s publishing trends. Furthermore, the relationship encourages cooperation in solving their common problems such as book returns, copyright infringements and electronic publishing. Hayakawa states, “In the book translation business, building continual relationship with foreign publishers, authors and agents is very important. The connection will generate the most valuable resources for publishers.” An on-going relationship develops reliable connections, and those connections bring publishers important resources.
CASE STUDY

Needs: Recently some Japanese teenagers have committed terrible acts. In Japan, 17 year-old boys are considered very dangerous because it is this age group that has recently committed many terrible crimes. Authorities are seeking the best way to prevent such crimes. Parenting is a very important factor to consider in teen problems. Because many teenagers live with their parents, the parents have a strong influence on their behavior. Most parents want to raise their children to be responsible adults. Such concepts as independence and responsibility are not usually taught in school, young people have to develop them through life experience and parental guidance. Parenting teens, however, is not easy. It is clear that adolescence is one of the most difficult periods in life. Many conflicts occur between parents and their children at this time. Young people begin to express their independence, while parents continue to treat them as small children. How to raise teenagers to become responsible and mature adults is a universal problem. *Parenting Teens With Love & Logic*, written by Foster Cline and Jim Fay, is the book that helps people solve the problem of parenting teens. Although in Japan there are some books written about parenting teens, most of them are written about how to build a better relationship with children. They don’t focus on teens, nor do they discuss raising teens to be responsible adults. Publishing the Japanese version of *Parenting Teens With Love & Logic* should encourage Japanese parents to learn one of the successful parenting methods used in the United States.

The study of parenting teens in the United States is more sophisticated than in Japan. The United States dealt with this issue long before it became a serious concern in

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Japan. The two authors of *Parenting Teens With Love & Logic*, Foster W. Cline and Jim Fay, are both professionals in the field of a parenting and education. Cline is a consultant for mental health organizations, schools, and parents’ groups in North America. Fay is also an eminent educational consultant. The aim of this book is to educate parents to raise their children to be responsible adults by providing many practical materials. *Parenting Teens With Love & Logic* is divided into two main parts. In the first part, the two authors provide fundamental parenting ideas by explaining methods of ‘Love & Logic.’ Then, in the second part, they suggest approaches for parents by providing actual parenting cases on subjects such as dating, drugs, sex, video games, and friends.

**Publishing Strategy:** Japanese publishers, who will publish the Japanese version of *Parenting Teens With Love & Logic*, will need to develop a careful publishing plan. Although many issues discussed in the book are common parenting problems in both America and Japan, the Japanese publisher must carefully choose an appropriate translator. Because parenting is closely related to culture, the translator must be familiar with both American and Japanese culture. Furthermore, choosing the best Japanese title and jacket design is essential. The person who makes the decision must be familiar with Japanese readers in order to deliver the aim of the book. To convince customers that the book is very practical and ‘easy to read’ is also very important to attract Japanese readers.

The Japanese publisher must find the copyright holder of *Parenting Teens With Love & Logic* and make a contract with him or her to obtain sanction of the author to translate the book. Since the person who possesses and manages the copyright varies depending on the book, it is wise to contact a publisher who is publishing an original book.
Because NavPress is the publisher of *Parenting Teens With Love & Logic*, the Japanese publisher should first contact NavPress to obtain information about the book. Using a Japanese agent to make an arrangement with NavPress would be helpful for Japanese publishers who are not familiar with the translation business. However, direct communication with NavPress would be very important for the Japanese publisher in order to build an effective publishing plan. The Japanese publisher should negotiate the advance, royalty rate and the term of the license with NavPress. Since standard contracts between an author and publisher as well as copyright laws are different in the two countries, good communication between the two publishers is essential.

The main target of the Japanese version of *Parenting Teens With Love & Logic* will be middle-aged parents who have teenage children. Although in Japan the most popular genre of translated books is fiction, the middle-aged group demands nonfiction which are very practical for their lives. That means if the publisher successfully focuses on the market, he might generate a stable and continued revenue source. To attract the middle-aged group, the Japanese publisher must strive to obtain good reviews as well as to put advertisements in major Japanese newspapers such as *Yomiuri, Asahi, Mainichi, and Nikkei Shinbun*. Furthermore, the publisher should promote the book at parents’ groups, schools, and education research organizations. Sending direct mail to middle-aged parents would also be an effective promotional activity. Since the book will target a niche market, the publisher might easily create competitive advantages before other publisher produce similar titles. To create this competitive advantage, the publisher must devise sophisticated marketing and promotion plans that reach the parents of teenagers.
CONCLUSION

In analyzing both American and Japanese publishing industries in terms of their laws, cultures and markets, it was found that both industries face the same problems regarding book returns, copyright laws, and decrease in reading habits. Although certain cultural and legal differences exist between America and Japan, the publishers in both countries could invaluably from an exchange of ideas related to the solution of their mutual problems. In as much as many book translations take place between America and Japan, this dialogue is essential. Furthermore, to develop effective publishing strategies for translated books, good communication between American and Japanese publishers is essential. Based on this communication, a publisher who produces a translated version must carefully build a publishing strategy along with sophisticated marketing and promotion plans. Because of the Internet and E-books, book exports and imports will definitely increase between America and Japan in the near future. Both industries should give more consideration to copyright issues, readership, and market structure. As a growing number of American and Japanese publishers initiate close relationships, they will realize greater opportunities to increase revenues from the translation business and will as well, solve a substantial number of their common publishing problems.
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First, the Japanese concept of self is very different from the American view. In Japan, each person is believed to possess a unique spirit, soul, mind and heart, but the self concept is considered an impediment to growth. Japanese accounting and control systems are subservient to corporate strategy and are essentially used to influence behavior. In the U.S., on the other hand, accounting and control systems have been used mainly to inform management about the company's performance. The comparison of the U.S. and Japanese workers and management attitudes and policies paints a rather bleak picture of America's position and potential in the global economy. Table 1 shows the comparison of American and Japanese cultures' values for each variable. 1A version of this paper was presented at the Association for Global Business National Conference of 1996, and appeared in the proceedings. Global Business Languages (1997). Business negotiations. 23. negotiation process and strategies reflect this. However, these principles are not the first priorities of the Japanese. Americans also think that the Japanese do not clarify details at the negotiation table, and that they leave an opportunity for behind-the-scenes negotiation. Creative strategies in American and Japanese TV commercials: A comparison. Article. Full-text available. Japanese companies are recognized as world class marketers. Yet, sources of information in English about the development of Japanese marketing and marketing management decisions, strategies, and operations are relatively sparse. This article, the result of Japanese/American collaboration based on the deliberations of a Japanese study team, is designed to help fill this gap. Four main topics are addressed: Stages in the growth of the marketing discipline, the nature of government/marketing relationships, marketing decisions and strategies, and selected practices.