

Book Culture and Development: A Brief Overview of Japan's Experience¹

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Introduction

Although books have been accepted by so-called “developed societies” as a key element in the creation, circulation and preservation of knowledge for thousands of years, the function of books as a crucial nexus in using knowledge to fuel and stimulate the economic development of a country has generally been neglected, or even ignored. Yet societies do recognize the importance of books as the primary conveyance for knowledge used in education, science, technological developments and inventions that, in turn, contribute to improving social conditions and expanding economic growth. However, as some researchers have shown society does not go so far as to make a direct connection between the emergence of dynamic economic growth and the role that books play in it. Shigeo Minowa observed that “...book development as a part of social development has been discussed with no relevance at all to ... achievements of [economic development]. [Book] publishing is look upon less often as an economic activity than as an informational or cultural activity.”² Traditional models of economic development generally place emphasis on the functions of production, savings and labor supply. More recent models include innovation and technology. Nevertheless, as Robert A. Carter wrote, “The impact of the book on the civilized world has been incalculable in magnitude. ...Books affect [society] in thousands of ways. Each ...major religion has its sacred writings ...[on] morality and wisdom... . Education systems [are] built on the use of textbooks. ... Political systems depend on books of law, history and geography. Books [also] provide entertainment as well as information and inspiration The book itself ... is a triumph of technology [and] the history of book publishing is also the history of technical innovation accompanied by social change.”³

References

- ¹ This paper draws upon two previous works, a presentation, “Edo Period Print Culture: Influence on Modern Japanese Publishing”, made at the 9th Annual SHARP Conference in July 2001 at William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia, in the United States and a presentation, “Edo kara gendai no Nihon no shoseki bunka: Sore wo ikuseishita shojou ken”, made at the 12th International Forum on Publishing Studies in 2006 at Tokyo University of Economics.
- ² Minowa, Shigeo, “Economics of Book Development: An Introduction”, Unpublished Paper, 1995.
- ³ Carter, Robert A., “History of International Book Publishing”, in in *International Book Publishing: An Encyclopedia* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995), 156 - 163.

However, even with this magnitude of recognition of the importance of books there is no country that has explicitly admitted to a direct link between books and innovation, technology development and improvement of labor capability even though all three of these depend on educational and learning systems, which, in turn, depend heavily on books. This includes certain countries, such as some found in Europe and part of North America and China, Korea and Japan that readily acknowledged the cultural and social role that books have played in strengthening their societies.

Harold Innis conjectured that "Book culture is a communication milieu that contributes to altering the structure of interests (the things thought about) by creating, utilizing, and maintaining symbols (the things thought with), such as books, and by changing the nature of the community (the area in which thought developed)."⁴ Using Innis' argument as a framework, one aim of this paper is to observe some historical conditions that supported and nurtured a book culture to see how books and book culture were major factors in economic development. Also, in order to better understand why some societies could advance economically, and, therefore, to some extent, also socially, faster and more coherently than others, it should be borne in mind that one of the key systematic forces influencing economic behaviors, according to Gregory Clark, is "culture horizontally acquired from society". Such behavior occurs in book cultures where the awareness and utilization of books for knowledge acquisition takes place at all levels of such societies, ranging from the ordinary citizens to those in positions of leadership in government and business. The dynamics of these phenomena are demonstrated in this paper in descriptions of the vital conditions that help to create and maintain Japan's highly successful and extensive printed book culture that is one of the hallmarks of its modern development.

The conditions include a complex mix of factors and environment that combine and coalesce in various configurations of population size, economic conditions, including availability of investment financing and adequate average income, education, especially in terms of literacy, and social conditions. The environment should include awareness of social, economic, and political issues and a cultural atmosphere that helps to engender curiosity, creative thinking and inventiveness.⁵ The effect of the two can play a crucial role in helping to give birth to and nurture a printed book culture, which, in turn, helps modernization, especially industrialization.

⁴ Innis, Harold, Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964.

⁵ Minowa, Shigeo. *Book Publishing in A Societal Context: Japan and the West*. Tokyo: Japan Scientific Societies Press, 1990.

This paper uses Japan as an example of a country whose economic development was unusually rapid, dynamic and successful. There are many reasons for Japan's rise and most of these have been covered in traditional economic development studies. The role of books has not been treated at any length. This paper will try to show briefly that there an important role for books in the country's economic development, although this was not consciously realized. In doing so, the paper will present a brief overview of some of the specific conditions of the economy, politics, education, social development, and culture to observe how they contributed to nurturing Japan's unique, enduring, and highly successful book culture that contributed to the country's economic rise. Most of the paper focuses on the Long Edo Period and the mutually reinforcing effects of political changes and technological enhancement of woodblock printing and book publishing on economic, and social development, as well as the crucial role of a conducive environment for utilizing the book to communicate ideas to foster creativity and invention. The paper also shows how the momentum of the Edo experience carried over into the Meiji period and eventually into the Taisho and Showa periods.

Edo environment, publishing culture and economic expansion

Danger at the gates

The Edo Period began at a time when the entire world was in great flux. Imperial China's domination of what are now called East Asia and Southeast Asia was being challenged. The Mogul Dynasty was consolidating its position in India. Hideyoshi Toyotomi had succeeded in uniting Japan and Tokugawa Ideyasu had been appointed shogun. The Spanish armada had been soundly defeated by the smaller English fleet. Militant Catholic missionaries, working in concert with zealous government-sponsored mercantile explorers eager to plunder the riches of heathen cultures on the "frontiers of civilization", such as India, China, the Aztec Empire, and the small kingdoms that later became the Philippines, had already asserted themselves forcefully and with great success. The time was 1600 or 1635, depending on what measure is used to determine the approximate year. That 1600 should be used at all is an indication of the power of the colonialists and their Christian calendar. Not that the Europeans were the only colonialists or the only cultural marauders of the time. They were simply more successful and more pervasive. If the Chinese calendar would be used to designate the year, it would be approximately 3805, in the twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh year of the Reign of Emperor Kangxi. An Indian calendar might show the year as 4300.

However it is designated, the time itself was significant. It marked the first time in human

history that more cultures and countries knew about the existence cultures and countries hitherto unknown to them. More was not a vast number at this time. While many Europeans knew of or were aware of London, Paris, Venice, Athens, Cairo, and Istanbul, they knew little or nothing of Lhasa, Ayuttaya, Ambong, Manila, Potosi, Kanazawa, or Edo. Similarly, Asians knew little of European cities. This was in spite of the fact that the world of the early 1600s boasted of more than 40 major cities around the world, with about 26 of them in Asia, South America, and Africa.⁶ The increasing movement around the world was beginning to change this. There was also a growing global awareness of far-away cultures due in large part to the records being kept by the European explorer-plunderers, that were dutifully sent back home to lieges or superiors, often to be made into printed material for posterity. It is interesting to note that the Ming Chinese had sailed around what was regarded as the “known world” almost 100 years “before Columbus [reached the area now called] America [and] ... Vasco de Gama found his way around Cape Hope to India... .” Zheng He (or Cheng Ho; ca. 1371 –1434), a Muslim eunuch from the Court of Ming Emperor Yongle (reign: 1403 - 1424), plied the Indian Ocean between 1405 and 1421, reaching as far as the east coast of Africa and the Persian Gulf. His enormous fleet “consisted of 62 large junks or galleons, more than 200 auxiliary vessels, and...nearly 28,000 men.” That few Western historians know of Zheng He can be partially attributed to the preserved and often printed accounts of European voyages that ultimately created the impression that they, and only they, were the discoverers of “unknown”, far-off lands and people.⁷

By 1600, it had been over 100 years since Columbus had reached what later became known as the Americas, Vasco da Gama had arrived in India (somewhat belatedly), the Portuguese had landed in Guangzhou, after seizing Goa and Malaka, and had set up a trading outpost in Macao, a Jesuit named Francis Xavier had reached Japan by way of China, the Spanish had seized the islands they later came to call Las Islas Filipinas, and the Dutch had made they way to Japan. Global commerce was becoming a reality. The Portuguese and Spanish controlled large parts of the trade between Europe and South America, Africa, and parts of Southeast Asia. Of course, Chinese merchants, as well as the imperial government, were still active after hundreds of years in many parts of Asia, as were many others in the region, notably, the Viet-Nameese, Malaysians, Sumatrans, Javanese, Indians, and Persians. The Japanese were also active, particularly in trading silver for artifacts from Southeast Asia. However, the Europeans were becoming increasingly belligerent in their goal to bring all international trade under their control.⁸

⁶ Wills, John E., Jr. *1688: A Global History*. New York; London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001.

⁷ Cohen, Warren I. *East Asia at the Center: Four Thousand Years of Engagement with the World*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

⁸ --- *East Asia at the Center*.

This is the situation in which the Tokugawa Ieyasu, Japan's leader, found his country in the early 1600s. An ever-expanding world in which non-Christian countries without modern methods of defense and a competitive economy were threatened by a formidable mix of European mercantilism, colonialism, and proselytizing. The Japanese were well aware that many cultures had already fallen to European superiority manifested forcefully through large ships, armour, guns and other technologies. Some experts theorize that "prosperity of Europe was made possible by its expansion into "frontiers" abroad...and the accumulation of capital came from the resources that European adventurers and explorers grabbed from unwitting countries."⁹

The Japanese were accustomed to threats from a superior power. Over the centuries they had become familiar with the capriciousness of China's emperors, whose friendliness toward their smaller neighbors depended largely on whether or not the Middle Kingdom was in danger from the outside or not. Nevertheless, as ruthless and arrogant as the Chinese could be, their attitude did not appear to approach the Christo-centric zealotry and ruthlessness of the European in their drive to bring all the world under the banner and benevolence of the Catholic Church.

At the time of the establishment of the Tokugawa Bakufu,¹⁰ Catholic missionaries, who had been preceded by Francis Xavier in 1549, had already gained a firm foothold in Japan. It is estimated that by 1580, only thirty years later, there were approximately one hundred and fifty thousand Christian converts in Japan. The first systematic knowledge about Europe came from Jesuit missionaries who brought Greek and Roman classical learning with the aim of using it together with the mercantile knowledge of Portuguese merchants to promote Christianity.

As the appeal of Christianity, with its emphasis on individualism and personal salvation, spread, leaders in the Bakufu became wary of possible negative consequences similar to what had befallen the "lands of the southern ocean" (a Chinese way of referring to the countries of what is now called Southeast Asia). Militarily, scientifically, economically, and politically, Japan saw itself as behind and weak and anticipated the impending threat of colonization by western powers. Bearing in mind the tragic fate of countries that had succumbed to European colonial pressure and wishing to focus on consolidating its recently won mandate by maintaining peace and creating prosperity within Japan, the Tokugawa Bakufu decided to close the country. Thus began

⁹ Kuwabara, Takeo. *Japan and Western Civilization: Essays on Comparative Culture*. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1983.

¹⁰ Tokugawa Shogunate; this term will be used interchangeably with "Tokugawa Bakufu" and "Tokugawa government" throughout the paper.

one of the most unusual experiences in the reformation of a country and the development of a vibrant print culture.

Closing the gates

The policy of *sakoku*¹, or seclusion of Japan, which ostensibly barred foreigners from entering and trading with Japan and forbade Japanese from traveling outside Japan and engaging in trade with foreigners, was not put in place immediately after the establishment of the Tokugawa Bakufu. In fact, the policy was a series of edicts issued in 1633, 1634, 1635, and 1636. The policy was also not strictly enforced. Although, officially, trade and contacts by Japanese could be undertaken only with Chinese, Koreans, and Dutch, in reality trade and contacts were broader, though somewhat less than previously were allowed to enter the country.

The primary purpose of the policy appears to have been to allow the Bakufu enough breathing space to establish its absolute authority in order carry out reforms to bring peace and prosperity to the country. The policy allowed the government to put aside its concerns about “subversive intrusions of European priests” and the treat of outside control of foreign trade. While seclusion generally has a negative connotation and is thought to engender stagnation and atrophy, it is precisely seclusion that played a major role in allowing Japan “[to become] self-sufficient...and [have] no need to think about the outside world.”¹¹ After Pax Tokugawa was firmly established, it endured until 1868. Although there was rebellious dissent against the Bakufu in some parts of the country, all in all, peace and prosperity prevailed to help create an environment in which books and publishing began to play a major role.

The seclusion that enveloped Japan eventually gave impetus to changes that would later alter the complexion of this sometimes reticent, reclusive country on the edge of the Asian continent under the shadow of its ancient, giant neighbor China. While many of the changes concerned Japan’s transformation from a mainly agrarian economy to a monied, mercantile economy, other modifications were, in many ways, more important because they would affect the fundamental way Japanese think and act. These concerned culture, education, and entertainment as well as the book as the artifact acting as a thread to bind them together.

¹¹ Mannari, Hiroshi, and Harumi Befu. *The Challenge of Japan’s Internationalization: Organization and Culture*. Hyougo and New York: Kwansei Gakuin University and Kodansha International, 1983.

Behind the gates: Impact of national seclusion

In creating the peaceful environment necessary to focus all resources on transforming the economy and the society, the Tokugawa Shogunate inevitably created parallel conditions that would nurture the emergence of a print culture. This was not an intended consequence. It was a serendipitous by-product. The actions undertaken by the Shogunate to stimulate the transformation can be described as consolidating the unified country under a single authority, maintaining peace, developing a monied, commercialized economy, and establishing a suitable role for Japan in an increasingly complex world.

How did national seclusion work specifically to promote the emergence of a print culture? Specific conditions were necessary for the creation, improvement, or nurturing of a print culture, which inevitably involve the intellectual inputs necessary from writers and editors, and the educational institutions to train them and the eventual readers, the production processes necessary to transform manuscripts into printed books, including typesetting, ink making, papermaking, printing and binding, the dissemination processes, including bookselling and libraries, the financial means to support the entire endeavor in all its phases, and, finally, an informed, educated population to utilize the products and provide feedback. These conditions are shown under four headings below.

- a) Favorable political and social environment
- b) Economic improvements
- c) Improved education and literacy
- d) Increased interest in books and expanded personal pursuits

(a) Favorable political and social environment

The creation of favorable political and environments involved (a) unification of competing political entities into one country, (b) creation of a strong administrative base, and (c) growth of urban areas.

By the beginning of the 1600s Tokugawa Ieyasu had used superior military strength, combined with concessions to rival daimyos, to unify all of Japan under his rule. After being appointed shogun by the emperor, he proceeded to divide the country into about 300 provincial domains under a central controlling government. He also maintained a tight rein on power, as well as on thoughts and the arts and all other aspects of society. While this could have lead to the stifling of creativity, it did not happen. Part of the reason was Japan's homogeneity. The country had

evolved as an “organic, kinship-based society. As a result, the authoritarianism was not generally coercive, but benign. The strong state leadership was one of the main reasons for Japan’s rapid rise from being an agrarian society to a modern, industrialized society.¹²

The Tokugawa government also established strong administrative, political, and economic institutions to insure continued stability and peace, as well as increased prosperity for all. Much of the work done at this time drew on the efforts of individual daimyo in the late 1500s on to devise political institutions that would strengthen their control of people and resources from within their territories. In this way, the government could obtain completed rosters of residents, their landholdings, and their tax obligations. ¹³Thus, the *bakuhan* system of social structure and class policy, based on shi-no-ko-sho [warrior-farmer-artisan-merchant] a Chinese concept of occupational classification, was set up with the following four classifications, showing order of importance.

samurai (warriors); noumin (farmers); kounin (artisans); shounin (merchants
(chounin: the kounin and shounin, because they lived in towns, were generally lumped
together as chounin or townspeople)

The household registration was also used as part of a system to protect and control residents of large cities, such as Edo. The system was made up of official constables and patrolmen and unofficial neighborhood guard groups to prevent crime and watch for fires. These were so well organized and rigorous that Edo, which had more than nine hundred guardhouses, became one of the safest cities in the world at the time. A few other cities in the world, such as Beijing, also had a household registration system. Amsterdam and Istanbul had patrol systems. However, no other city had control systems that could match Edo’s.¹⁴ By the early 1600s, Japan had some of the largest cities in the world. Osaka, for example, had 400,000 inhabitants. By comparison, Beijing had 706,000, Constantinople had 700,000, Agra had 500,000 and Cairo had 400,000. By 1688, Edo (old name for Tokyo) had a population of 900,000. Population growth was an important factor for economic and political development.

It is possible to imagine the size and composition of Edo from statistics concerning a fire that destroyed large parts of the city in 1657. Affected were 160 daimyo estates, 350 shrines and

¹² --- *Japan and Western Civilization*.

¹³ --- *1688: A Global History*.

¹⁴ --- *1688: A Global History*.

temples, 750 residential areas of bannermen and housemen, and 50,000 homes of merchants and craftsmen. It is also known that in the aftermath of the large fires of the mid-1600s, house owners in the area of Edobashi (now a commercial section of downtown Tokyo) were required to use part of their land as firebreaks to prevent future catastrophes and provide guards to insure that no swatters would occupy it. To offset the expense, owners often leased the land to seasonal merchants. Among these were used book dealers. Soon there were teahouses, used bookstores, and fortuneteller shops. Edo swarmed with samurai with time of their hands and literate commoners with various degrees of newfound wealth.¹⁵

During the period of seclusion, officially, interaction with foreigners, particularly in connection with Christianity and foreign trade, was strictly controlled. Special exceptions were made for the Chinese, Dutch, and, to some extent, the Koreans.¹⁶ In reality, however, in spite of the rigid regulations, the Japanese appetite for foreign goods remained strong. (This attitude could be likened to that of Christian converts in Japan throughout the seventeenth century who held on to their beliefs even in the face of brutal repression.) Goods from various parts of the world continued to enter the country, although at a reduced rate. A considerable amount of the goods entering the country was smuggled in.

In general, the measures undertaken under seclusion led to domestic tranquility and to some extent a feeling of security within government circles. While some scholars believe that the seclusion led to a sluggish and stagnant attitude, on the contrary, Japan began to develop an extremely sensitive culture that was shared by all Japanese. George Samson wrote of eighteenth century Japan, “perhaps no European society of that day was more civilized or more refined.” Social and political change continued, albeit at a slower rate. The population of Edo had surpassed one million, making it for a time the largest city in the world. In essence, Edo was a “city of one million consumers”¹⁷ that nurtured a unique urban culture that produced ukiyo-e prints, the popular literature of Bakin Takizawa, haiku poetry, and kabuki theatre. Some experts believe that, considering the vast readership of Edo, Bakin may well have been the best-selling author in the world at the time.

(b) Economic improvements

Economic improvements involved (a) developing the country into a monied, commercialized

¹⁵ --- *1688: A Global History*.

¹⁶ “Edo Period”. *Japan: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. Tokyo: Kodansha, Ltd., 1993.

¹⁷ --- *Japan and Western Civilization*.

economy, (b) expanding domestic trade and craft industries, and maintaining some part of overseas trade, and (c) broadening of distribution and marketing networks. It can be demonstrated that the Tokugawa government, in large, was able to carry out these improvements. Between 1570 and 1630 a “great commercial transformation took place in Japan. This was a decisive turning point heralding the start of Japan’s modernity.” “This involved unification, urbanization, the creation of distribution and marketing networks, and the commercialization of attitudes.”¹⁸

The long period of peace and stability had begun to pay off and allowed Japan to prosper modestly, but, steadily, economically and culturally. The changes that took place included increased population, improved housing, greater availability of food and clothing, and greater opportunities for education.

A main factor in the increasing prosperity was the *chounin* (townsmen). The *chounin* did not have the political influence of the samurai, and, to a lesser extent, of the *noumin* (farmers), the producers of food. The *chounin* were generally left alone, and, consequently, were free to accumulate wealth, which they did. “Merchants and craftsmen were given monopoly marketing privileges and grants of land for workshops and warehouses in order to induce them to settle under one daimyo rather than under a rival. More peaceful crafts and commerce were also encouraged to improve the tax base.” “Many daimyo were concerned about the stability of the new order at the beginning of the Tokugawa rule. However, as the peace continued and solidified, the habits of thorough control and constant efforts to maximize wealth and power of each daimyo’s realm became engrained.”¹⁹ By 1688, many new houses and other signs of prosperity in the countryside began to appear. In the cities there was a great bustle of trade and craft production.

Tokugawa Ieyasu favoured foreign trade because it brought large returns that could help him to carry his programs of reform. Much of Japan’s foreign trade took place between 1580 and 1635 with “red seal licensed” Japanese ships taking silver to Southeast Asia in exchange for various goods from Tongking, Cochin China, Champa, Cambodia, Siam, Patani, and the Philippines.²⁰ In part, this was due to the unprecedented commercial expansion taking place in Southeast Asia. This commerce had the effect of fertilizing Asian cities with ideas from elsewhere, strengthening those cities and states that took advantage of them. The officially sanctioned trade with the

¹⁸ Reid, Anthony. *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce: 1450 – 1680, Vol. 2, Expansion and Crisis*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993.

¹⁹ --- *1688: A Global History*.

²⁰ --- *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce: 1450 – 1680, Vol. 2*.

Chinese, the Dutch, and, to a limited extent, the Koreans continued throughout the Edo Period. Unofficially, foreign trade with some Southeast Asian countries also continued.

The greatest surge in the economy took place domestically within Japan. Merchants and craftsmen were encouraged in their work to help expand the economy. Land reclamation and agricultural improvements were undertaken on a large scale. The result was growing prosperity even in the countryside, which necessitated the creation of better distribution and marketing networks to accommodate the increased volume of local trade.

(c) Improved education and literacy

Of all the elements related to how the environment improved to allow greater nurturing of the print culture, the most important were improved education and greater literacy. Important for these were (a) increase number of schools and national education policy and (b) Increase in quality and range of education.

Education, in terms of the ability to read and write, has a relatively long history in Japan going back to the 12th century because of Buddhism. Buddhist temples all around the country and individual priests generally undertook to provide education to the children of samurai and, sometimes, rudimentary education to the children of commoners, including farmers. It cannot be said that education was widespread and literacy was not commonly possessed. During the Edo Period, efforts were undertaken to change this situation. Authorities were aware that to move from an agrarian economy to a commercial one required that large segments of the population would be capable of reading and writing. With this mind, each daimyo's domain began setting up special schools for all samurai children called *hankou* (domain schools) and *terakoya* schools for the children of villagers and townspeople alike. Later in the period, a type of school of higher education, called *shijuku*, was established to provide students with advanced training. Later, universities and colleges would emerge. Ironically, many would be established by Christian missionaries. These efforts ultimately lead to the establishment in 1872 of a compulsory elementary education system. This came two years after a similar system was set up in England in 1870. France followed in 1882, the US in 1918, and Germany in 1919.

Because of the prevailing atmosphere of increasing prosperity, however modest, and the increased availability of schooling, there began to emerge a desire for self improvement, coupled with the idea that by study one could enhance one's productiveness, one's ability to understand and control one's environment, and one's position in society. This gave rise to simple reading and

writing schools for people at all levels of the society.²¹

In regard to the national striving for education, it must be said that “the samurai were unique among the arm-bearing elites of the early modern world. They had no conflict of interest between their tax-collecting functions and land-holding functions, no economic base from which they could challenge their lords.”¹(Wills 147) In the atmosphere of peace, samurai became more literate, cultured, and urbanized. Among others, with more time to study they initiated the recovery of ancient texts, Kojiki, Manyoushu, Tale of Genji. In time, the *chuonin* (townspeople) began to emulate them. Soukichi Hashimoto was an umbrella maker in Osaka who studied the Dutch language. He later helped to found, with like-minded scholars, the Kaitokudou Academy to disseminate their works.

Most of the scholars of Dutch Studies were samurai. As such, they were part of the established ruling system. Thus, they functioned to awaken awareness among the average population of the existence of other lands, other civilizations in the West, some as great as China. Some samurai performed dual roles, as urban entrepreneurs and scholars. Some became publishers.

Despite the ban on Christianity and contact with the West, Western learning developed early in the eighteenth century, led by the great pioneer in Dutch Studies, Arai Hakuseki (1657 – 1725). Under the eighth Shogun, Yoshimune, Dutch Studies were officially encouraged beginning in 1740. A number of distinguished scholars of Dutch studies emerged as a result of this policy. The most prominent are shown below.

Gennai Hiraga	1726 – 1779
Genpaku Sugita	1732 – 1817
Toshiaki Honda	1744 – 1821
Koukan Chiba	1747 – 1818
Gentaku Otsuki	1757 – 1827
Soukichi Hashimoto	1763 – 1836
Kazan Watanabe	1793 – 1841
Chouei Takano	1804 – 1850
Saisuke Yamamura	1820 – 1847

²¹ --- “Edo Period.” *Japan: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*.

One scholar of Dutch studies, Koukan Chiba, wrote, “From the emperor and the Shogun above, to the samurai, peasants, artisans, and merchants and even to the beggars and untouchables below, all alike are human beings.” The suggestion that “all men are equal” was an extremely radical suggestion for the time. Nevertheless, the mood was ripe for such comments. Other comments concerned agrarian socialist thinking.

Many scholars studying the Edo Period tend to focus on social structure and class relations, but literacy is a crucial factor to understand the mentality that swayed both society and the social strata. As the efforts to improve education for broader segments of the population continued, it became apparent that they were effective. By 1870, it was ascertained, as shown in the table below, that literacy levels had risen and were continuing to rise.

Time	Male	Female	Observation
1870	45 – 50%	15 – 20%	considered a pre-requisite level for modern growth
1898	90%	50%	school attendance reached 90%
Present	99.9%	99.9%	school attendance 99.9%

(d) Increased interest in books and expanded personal pursuits

In parallel with increased literacy, interest in and the desire for books also widened, together with the growth and broadening of cultural pursuits for the ordinary citizen and the growth of publishing as business.

With the growth of a money economy, *choumin* (townspeople), merchants, in particular, grew wealthy. Empowered by this wealth, they began to bypass the official social system to become leaders of a new popular culture centered on a popular art form, *ukiyo-e*. In general, *ukiyo-e* encompassed art, literature, music, and drama. With the support of the *chounin* these experienced considerable growth and change during this time.

Before the advent of the money economy, various forms of art, mainly derived from Chinese models, literature, centered primarily on Chinese classics and Chinese styles, music, mainly *gagaku* (court music), with its two primary forms, *tougaku* and *komagaku*, and drama, focusing primarily on *noh* and *bugaku*, had been enjoyed almost exclusively by the court nobility and, to some extent, the samurai. The *chounin* set out to create new vibrant forms such, as a new type of

drama, based on *noh*, called *kabuki*, the *bunraku* puppet theatre, *ukiyo-e* prints, new forms of ancient *tanka* and *waka* poetry, as well as *haiku*, and new literary forms, such as *gesakubon* (light literature) and *yoruri* (ballad drama).²²

The cultural endeavors of the Period did not arise solely out of a desire to emulate the esthetic beauty and refinement of court culture. Released in part from the traditional severe social fetters of the authorities, the *chounin* grabbed their newly acquired “freedom” and proceeded to live for enjoyment. Perhaps they were not confident that the situation of peace and prosperity would last and wanted to enjoy while they could. The ideal enjoyment was sought in Yoshiwara. “The Tokugawa ideal of beauty was personified in the highest ranking courtesans of the Yoshiwara, the extravagant, formal gay quarters of Edo (Tokyo) where pleasure was crystallized into an art. The songs and ballads of the period grew out of the esthetic sense cultivated in Yoshiwara, and, weighted with such an indelible heritage, they had to go.”²³ Commercial playhouses catering to the *chounin*, but patronized also by samurai, arose for *kabuki* and puppet play performances.

The money economy, coupled with the prevailing peace and the revolution in education, also provided a fertile ground for publishing to grow as a business. Books had been an integral part of Japanese society for centuries. Even printed books were part of the social fabric and had a long-established place in Japanese thinking. The influence from China has been never-ending and pervasive, even until the present time, creating a relationship much like that of parent and offspring. Books, in manuscript form and printed form, have been an important part of this influence. The fact and artifact of books that came through lessons from Korea were also crucial, especially as the relationship, although at times tumultuous, has been somewhat like siblings sharing the cultural heritages from parents. Especially strong was the Chinese language influence. The language connection was especially strong, much stronger than the influence of Latin or Greek on European languages. Spoken Chinese had been known by Japanese as far back as 300BC to 300AD. In the sixth century Japan adopted Chinese characters for its own writing system. Through this language connection, the Japanese were able to encounter writing and reading, and eventually Chinese print culture. Thus, the basis for the Japanese written language and printed books was firmly established. The Chinese language and print culture also influenced the development of reading, social thought, spiritual thought, philosophy, and the very approach to and respect for learning.

²² Arboleda, Amadio. "Japan", in *International Book Publishing: An Encyclopedia* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995), 487 - 499.

²³ --- *Japan and Western Civilization*.

Printing and publishing also were already old in Japan at the start of the 17th century. When the Chinese classics began arriving in Japan in the ancient period, their impact was immediate and forceful. Inspired by China's literary achievements, [Japanese] set about to produce their own in the Manyoushu, Tale of Genji, and other masterpieces of early Japanese literature. Japanese continued to study and borrow from the Chinese and apply what they learned. Confucianism became the standard for ethical life among the intelligentsia, and it remained so until the late nineteenth century. Under the Tokugawa Bakufu..., knowledge of the Chinese classics spread. *Kuwen Chenpao*, a collection of poems from the Ch'ing Dynasty (351-394) to the Sung (960 -1279), and *T'ang Shih Hsuan* [Selected Poetry of the T'ang Dynasty] gained as wide a readership as Japanese literary masterpieces.²⁴

It was necessary to have an understanding of the Chinese classics if one wished to understand the Japanese classics. The two were inexorably intertwined. "For centuries, a cultured life required thorough grounding in the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and the ability to appreciate the poetry of Tu Fu and Li Po."²⁵ Among the popular Chinese books and works were Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Shi Chi* [Historical Memoirs], Pan Ku, *Han Shu* [Historical Records of the Former Han], the Analects of Confucius, and the writings of Lao Tzu.

Some experts think that the nurturing of a culture depends to a great extent on harmony and stability. This is the kind of environment created under the Tokugawa rule. It may have provided the necessary catalyst to allow the emergence and growth of a uniquely Japanese style of culture. As indicated earlier, there are critics who think that peace and harmony during the period under the Tokugawa government created an "environment that bordered on stagnation".

In the atmosphere of peace and prosperity, the populace became more interested in improving their education and knowledge. Having seen examples of the extent European intellectual advancement, Tokugawa Ieyasu must have realized the need for a more educated population in order to move the economy to a higher level of performance. Publishing and printing, which had been almost totally under the control of Buddhist temples and Buddhist priests, was thrown open to new entrepreneurs and their collaborators. The merchants, in general, became the publishers because they controlled the funds necessary to run the new businesses. The samurai became the authors and illustrators because they were generally better educated and had some intellectual

²⁴ --- *Japan and Western Civilization*.

²⁵ --- *Japan and Western Civilization*.

background. The artisans became the manufacturers, cutting the blocks and doing the printing and binding. Merchants rounded out the basic publishing chain by providing financial resources and setting up the bookstores or stalls and dispatching itinerant booksellers to the countryside.²⁶

As the publishing industry grew, it came to have three main centers throughout the country shown below, with numbers from a list created by Kazuo Inoue for the period 1596 to 1868. The number of commercial publishers also increased dramatically. Before this time, almost all publishing was done by temples and shrines located in and around the Kyoto area. By 1770 Edo surpassed Kyoto as the publishing center.²⁷

Location	Number of publishers
Kyoto	516
Edo	375
Osaka, Hiroshima, Nagasaki	248
Total	1,139*

***Note:** (a) The actual total is higher because there were publishers in other locations. (b) Most publishers were very small operations.

Commercial publishing grew rapidly, with printed editions of almost all works of Japanese literature that had previously existed only in manuscript format – poetry anthologies, novels, dairies, essays, and short stories. In addition, books on a wide range of subjects began to appear, including natural history, botany, commentaries on Confucian Learning, Kokugaku (national learning), history, economics, science, astronomy, mathematics, agriculture, personal health care, guidebooks, encyclopedias, dictionaries, reference books, travel journals, Dutch Studies (Rangaku), translations of European books, foreign language learning manuals, and criticisms. According to a catalogue of publications from the Edo Period, nearly 7,200 books were published from 1688 to 1702. If the prodigious output of reprints of Chinese classics or Buddhist works and other books not listed in the catalogue are included, the number reached approximately 10,000 books published. Also, not included are the numerous manuscript books (books copied by hand) that were still being produced.²⁸

Since printing and publishing go hand in hand, and since many printers were, at the same time,

²⁶ Chibbett, David. *The History of Japanese Printing and Book Illustration*. Tokyo, New York & San Francisco: Kodansha International, Ltd., 1977.

²⁷ --- Arboleda, "Japan".

²⁸ *Japan: A History in Books*. 1990 Executive Committee of the Frankfurt Book Fair "Japan Year".

their own publishers, a word should be mentioned about the move toward modernizing printing in late Edo. In 1851, Shouzou Motoki, after studying techniques under Dutch and American printers in Japan, created his own typefaces and set up printing factories in Osaka and Tokyo. This move hastened the decline of woodblock printing and help to usher in modern printing in Japan.

Below is a small sampling of books published, showing the broad span of topics. ¹(“Japan Year”)*

Classic of Filial Piety by Xiao Jing (first printed in China in the 1300s and reprinted first in Japan in 1599)

The Analects of Confucius by He Yan (first reprinted in Sakai, in Japan, in 10 volumes in 1533)

Shisi Jing Fa Hui (Theory and Practice of Acupuncture) (first published in China in 1364 and reprinted in Japan first in 1596)

Gekko Wajo Goroku (Analects of Gekko, a Buddhist Priest) (first published in 1395)

Bukka Engoshinkaku Zenji Shin'yo (first published in 1238)

Nanso Satomi Hakkenden (Satomi and the Eight Dogs; historical romance; 98 volumes in 110 books) by Bakin Takizawa (1814 – 1842)

Oku no Hosomichi (The Narrow Road to the Deep North) by Basho Matsuo (1702)

Koshoku Ichidai Otoko (An Amorous Man) by Saikaku Ihara (1682)

Nippon eitai gura (The Japanese Family Storehouse) by Saikaku Ihara (1688)

Seken musuko takagi (Characters of Worldly Young Men) by Keiseki Eijima (1715)

Hokusai Manga (Sketches by Hokusai) by Hokusai Katsushika (1814 - 1834)

Honzo Zufu (illustrated botanical text, 92 volumes in 31 books) by Kannen Iwasaki (1830 – 1844)

Shimpan jinkoki (Newly Revised Treatise on Numbers Great and Small) by Mitsuyoshi Yoshida (1627)

Keizairoku (Treatise on Economics; 10 volumes in 8 books) by Shundai Dazai (1729)

Yojokun (A how-to text for healthy life) by Ekiken Kaibara (1713)

Edo Meishozue (An Edo Guidebook; 7 volumes in 20 books) by Yukio Saito (1834 and 1836)

Nieuw Verzamets Japans en Hollandsch Woordenboek (Dutch-Japanese Dictionary) by Masataka Minamoto (1810)

Note: A number of the titles above are still being published today as reprints or updated versions.

The paper does not include descriptions of the development of individual publishers and booksellers and bookstores of the period. These are topics for other in-depth studies. Also not touched upon is book genre. Again, this is a topic for separate in-depth study.

Forcing open the gates

In 1854 the United States through the instrument of Admiral Matthew Perry decided to force the Tokugawa Shogunate to rescind its seclusion edict and allow Western nations to have access to Japan. America's bullying tactics were by this time well known. It had all but decimated indigenous American Indian nations within its borders with similar tactics and some eight years before in 1846, an American warship, the Constitution, had also shelled the city of Danang. By 1846, Mexico had also fallen victim to American expansionist policy for a second time, following the takeover of the Texas territory ten years before. So after more than 200 years of peace, respectable economic growth, and cultural enhancement, Japan was faced again with the prospect of dealing with Western powers bent on making the world over into their image. The experience of the Kingdom of Hawaii must have been on the minds of Japanese leaders. Led by Christian missionaries, Hawaii's sovereignty was slowly being diminished by a covetous American administration.

Japan's anxiety was real and serious. Nevertheless, as demonstrated above, Japan had undergone a tremendous transformation during the more than 200 years of Tokugawa rule. While the experiment under seclusion had many flaws and had experienced setbacks, overall, Japan emerged into the latter half of the nineteenth century a new nation. In great part, its success could be traced back to the role played by the print culture that nurtured an educated, cultured, informed, curious, and inquiring citizenry. This, in turn, had been made possible by the creation of an environment with all the conditions necessary for the emergence of a print culture, (a) a favorable political and social environment, (b) economic improvements, (c) improved education and literacy, and (d) a culture of profound interest in books and expanded personal pursuits. A literate, informed Japan had emerged with confidence that it would be able to withstand any new onslaught.

One of Japan's most famous and popular writers from the Edo Period, Saikaku Ihara, drawing on his Buddhist teachings, once wrote these words that could apply to the Edo experience and its consequences, "...All things grow bigger in time, and our largest ambitions are not beyond hope of ultimate fulfillment."²⁹

²⁹ --- *1688: A Global History*.

Apres Edo

As the Tokugawa rule and Edo civilization faded into history a new, more enlightened Japan began to emerge and with it came the rapid expansion and diversification of the book culture that found its roots in Edo curiosity, audacity and creativity. In Edo's wake came, in succession, the eruption and change of the Meiji period that shook the country to its core, the fleeting and tantalizing period of Taisho democracy, followed by the chameleon period of a phenomenal rise, a disastrous crash, phoenix-like recovery of Showa experimentation and accomplishment. During all of this time the conditions of a vibrant economy, a responsive educational system, stable social and political circumstances, and an ever-expanding cultural curiosity and creativity that was the hallmark of Edo book culture and the concomitant economic rise continued.

Ushered in with the forced opening of the country in 1859, the Meiji period (from 1868 to 1912) was a more tumultuous time that saw the country go to war with two neighbors, China and Russia, and forcibly annex another neighbor, Korea. In spite of this, it was also a time of relatively stable economic growth averaging 5% per year. Just as improvement in the economy during the Edo period helped to create employment the Meiji period experienced a similar trend. Japan had a large educated population, a highly monetized economy, and competent administrative officials and leaders that reflected a reasonably stable society. All this contributed greatly to the further evolution of a dynamic cultural system in which printed books competed with other printed material as well as other forms of acquiring information to satisfy the desires of the population for more entertainment and more knowledge. The promulgation of a new, more egalitarian school system paved the way for publishers to solidify their financial bases through textbook publishing.³⁰

With the termination of the country's isolation policy and the move toward a more focused approach to modernization under the Emperor Meiji (1852 - 1912), book publishing underwent a number changes, particularly in infrastructure. This was partly due to the increase role that movable metal play printing began to play. However, in contrast to the relatively peaceful Edo period, the Meiji period was a turbulent one where Japan again went to war with other countries (the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War), entered the industrial revolution along with Western nations, initiated the start of a capitalist economy, and had to face various forms of social unrest.

³⁰ --- Arboleda, "Japan"

It was an exciting time for publishing, which, now unshackled from restrictions, began to gear up to respond to the increased demands of government and business for information to satisfy the new direction in which the country was heading and to respond to the desire of the society at large for more and varied entertainment as well as knowledge, particularly about the West. In addition, the promulgation of a new school system for a greater portion of the population paved the way for book publishers to a solid financial base for business because of the increased requirement for textbook for primary schools. At the same time, the market for translations of academic books on a wide range of subjects also expanded, especially with the establishment of new Western-style institutions of higher learning. Thus, publishers began to produce translations of Western books on philosophy, religion, and science, as well as literature, and books about the West. Included were such titles as *On Liberty* by John Stuart Mill, *Rikken Seitai Ryaku (An Introduction to Western Constitutional Governments)* by Hiroyuki Kato, and *Bunmeiron bo Gairyaku (An Opinion on The Civilization of Modern Japan)* by Yukichi Fukuzawa, the founder of Keio University.

The literature of the Meiji period did not keep pace with the progressive direction of other publications of the time because they retained for some time the successful formulas established and proven during the Edo period. Gradually, however, with increasing encounters with western ideas, such as freedom and people's rights, and the rise of popular political movements, new forms of literary expression began to appear. Among the representative works that appeared are *Ukigumo (Floating Cloud, 1877)*, psychological realist novel, by Sigma Futabatei; *Wagahai Wa Neko De Aru (I Am a Cat, 1907)*, a humorous satire about the intelligentsia through the eyes of a cat, by Soeseki Natsume; *Gan (A Wild Goose, 1915)*, a psychological realist romance novel, by Ogai Mori; *Hakai (The Broken Promise, 1906)*, a naturalist novel that deals with prejudice against Japan's hidden underclass, the Burakumin, by Toson Shimazaki; and *Inaka Kyoshi (A Country Teacher, 1909)*, a naturalist novel about the short life of a poor young man who abandons his ambitions, by Katai Tayama. By 1890, the number of new titles published annually had reached 5,000.

The Meiji government also developed an ambitious plan for a new educational system. In 1872, the country was divided into 8 university districts, each with 32 middle school districts subdivided into 210 elementary school districts. This envisioned 8 universities, 256 middle schools, and 53,760 elementary schools. Although this goal was not achieved, elementary school attendance jumped from 50 to 65 per cent for boys by 1890 and from 20 to 30 per cent for girls by 1875. Inevitably, this progress in education had a tremendous effect on the growth of the reading public in Japan.

The relatively brief Taisho Era, beginning in 1912, saw Japan transform itself into a modern nation resembling the major powers of the West and economic growth continuing, reaching between 8% and 9% at its peak.³¹ Education also continued to grow, raising literacy levels and broadening the interests of the population. However, the transformation was not without drawbacks. Drastic changes to the centuries old feudal social structure had begun. Japan had also been involved in two major wars with its neighbors. In addition, the country assumed a colonialist role by forcibly annexing Korea in 1910 and steps were underway to move into Manchuria in northern China. This led to an expanded military forces and, consequently, higher taxes. The population had grown accustomed to less restrictions on speaking out so expressions of dissatisfaction with the direction the government was taking began to grow with parallel calls for democracy through universal suffrage.

Eventually, some of this ferment began to appear in literature. Marxist philosophy and studies on Marxism, along with proletarian literature, became popular among certain political groups and certain intellectual admirers of western thinking and gave rise to the appellation “Taisho Democracy”. Works promoting western views of liberalism, individualism, humanism, and idealism, such as *Kain no matsuei (Descendants of Cain, 1917)* and *Aru onna (A Certain Woman, 1919)* by Takeo Arashima, *Jigoku hen (Hell Screen, 1918)*, *Hana (The Nose, 1916)*, *Rashomon (1915)* and *Yabu no naka (In a Grove, 1922)* by Ryunosuke Akutagawa (namesake of a distinguished literary prize), *Shonen (Youth, 1911)*, *Shisei (The Tattoo, 1910)*, and *Chijin no Ai (A Fool's Love, 1925)* by Junichiro Tanizaki, also gained popularity, particularly as World War I approached. It was also during this period that magazines began to appear in greater numbers and steadily gained acceptance, indicating the widening interests of readers and their continuing financial capacity to support such publications.³² A number of them, such as *Taiyo (The Sun, a general topics magazine established in 1895)*, *Chuo Koron* (a literary criticism journal established in 1899 by the publisher of the same name), *Shufu no Tomo (Housewife's Friend, established in 1916)* and *Bungei Shunju* (a literary criticism journal established in 1923 by the publisher of the same name) influenced the way the general public viewed the social changes taking place and still remain in existence today. In 1932, the Imperial Bureau of Statistics recorded 22,104 books and pamphlets published and recorded. This was an increase of over 800 per cent from the number recorded in 1882, just 50 years before.

The period that began 1926 with the ascension of Emperor Hirohito to the throne of Japan is

³¹ Kodansha Inc. *Japan: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. Tokyo: Kodansha Inc., 1993.

³² --- Arboleda, "Japan".

named Showa in honor of the posthumous name given to him (Emperor Showa) after his death in 1989. The economy remained steady during the Pacific War years, from 1941 to 1945, because of military-related production, but incomes were stagnant and ordinary consumer goods and food became scarce. The atmosphere for purchasing books was at its lowest. Understandably, in the years following the war, the economy was in dire straits. However, it soon recovered and during the Korean war, from 1950 to 1953, had reached 12% growth, surpassing all growth during the pre-war years.³³ The turbulence, mixed with impressive advancements in national development that began in the Meiji period and continued into the Taisho era, progressively worsened as the country moved into the Showa era and became more “international”. The culmination of this complex period was Japan’s involvement in the Second World War and the country’s subsequent defeat.³⁴

The Showa period became a time when Japan’s resolve and endurance as a publishing culture would be severely tested. Japan’s largest ever economic surge of 24% took place in 1937 fueled by increased military spending. Although basic social conditions improved and contributed increased surplus income that could be spent on books, thereby helping publishing to expand, the relative freedoms that began in Taisho began to wane.³⁵

The postwar reading public was starved for information and reading material. As a result, the number of publishing companies increased from 300 in 1945 to over 4,000 in 1948. With steady improvements in the economy, the evolution of lifetime employment and egalitarian incomes, an increasingly highly educated population with a literacy rate of almost 100%, and an expanding interest in greater numbers of topics, Japanese publishers responded. In 1970, the numbers of copies of books sold stood at 471 million, with revenues estimated at 224 billion yen. By 1980, the figures were 746 million and 672 billion, respectively. By 1992, Japan was just behind the United States in book sales.³⁶ Here it should be emphasized that many American books sell all over the world because they are published in English or translated. Japanese books sell mainly in Japan because they are published in Japanese. Thus, book sales in Japan are uniquely impressive.

The present state of the printed book publishing culture in Japan can be summed up in these observations. Andre Schiffrin³⁷, in a July 16, 2004 article in *The Bookseller*, commented that

³³ Kodansha Inc. *Japan: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*.

³⁴ Sakanishi, Shio, “The Publishing Industry of Japan” in *Books Abroad*, Board of the Regents of University of Oklahoma, 1936

³⁵ --- Arboleda, "Japan".

³⁶ --- Arboleda, "Japan".

³⁷ Schiffrin, Andre, “Where Books are Windows to the World”, *The Bookseller*, 16 July 2004.

“Osaka is not even Japan’s second city, but its biggest bookstore dwarfs anything in New York, Los Angeles or...Chicago.” He went on to say, “...Junkudo Bookstore,...contains some 600, 000 titles...[,]”³⁸ a far bigger inventory than the largest Barnes & Noble superstore.” In 1990, Shigeo Minowa pointed out that “Japanese buy twice as many books as Britons”. More specifically, he showed that “Out of every million yen of expenditure, a Japanese [book buyer] spends 6,180 yen on books, while an Englishman spends...3,032 yen....”³⁹ Writer Akira Nagae⁴⁰ used findings of the 2001 Dokusho Yoron Chosa (Public Reading Survey) to show that “...nearly 60% of [Japanese] ...read books.” He went on to say that Japanese publishers released...about 71,000 [new titles] in 2001.

Conclusion

Any society aspiring to reach a high degree of social and economic development must undergo various prerequisite transformations. One of these is the ability to continually create, understand, and utilize a wide range of advanced knowledge. This ability stems from and depends on a highly successful and effective book culture to transfer and share knowledge, which, in turn, depends on a number of supporting conditions to bring it to birth and fruition. As this presentation has shown the necessary historical, political, social, economic, educational, and cultural conditions required for creating and maintaining Japan's printed book publishing culture emerged in the Edo period and continue to the present.

To be sure the role of book culture in economic development is tangential argument to the theories that dominate explanations of national economic accomplishment. Nevertheless, it is an important one that should not be overlooked, especially if a country like Japan is considered where approximately 70,000 new books are published every year and more than 95 of them are sold only in Japan because not many people outside Japan read the Japanese language.

³⁸ --- Schiffrin, “Where Books are Windows to the World”.

³⁹ --- Minowa, *Book Publishing in A Societal Context: Japan and the West*.

⁴⁰ Akira Nagae, “Japan: A Decline in Reading or a Publishing Glut?”, in Honco Net Online Symposium *Book Culture at the Crossroads*, March 2005; <http://www.honco.net>

Book Culture and Development: A Brief Overview of Japan's Experience

Amadio Arboleda

Abstract

The main focus of this paper is to demonstrate how books and book culture function as key elements in the creation, circulation and preservation of knowledge that can be used in the processes of initiating and stimulating the economic development of a country through innovation, technology creation and improvement of labor capacity. The paper points out that few countries explicitly recognize the magnitude of the importance of books in economic growth even though they readily acknowledge the cultural and social role of books in strengthening societies. It also explains how complex conditions must be created and coalesced for an effective book culture to emerge. The experience of Japan as a country whose economic development has been unusually rapid, dynamic and successful is used as an example to demonstrate the link between the environment of a unique, enduring and highly successful book culture and phenomenal economic rise. The paper concentrates primarily on Japan's Long Edo Period with its mutually reinforcing effects of political change and book publishing explosion on economic and social development and the ensuing fostering of creativity and invention that prepared the way for continuing growth and expansion into the Meiji, Taisho and Showa periods.