

Japanese Publishing Industry

Japanese Economy Division

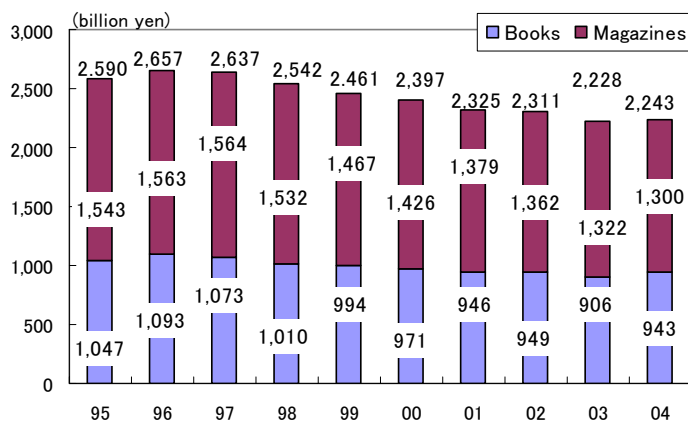
Summary

In 2004, Japan's publishing industry reversed course to show an increase in book sales due to the release of several million-sellers. The aggressive use of a marketing technique known as "media-mix" along with comprehensive publicity and advertising programs are credited with this development. While Japan's publishing industry has traditionally consisted of publishing firms, distribution agencies and retail stores, the emergence of the Internet has spawned new forms and channels of publishing. Other significant developments in the publishing industry include the increased popularity of Japanese comic books and magazines overseas.

1. Market Overview

The All Japan Magazine and Book Publishers' and Editors' Association estimates publication sales in 2004 at 2,242.8 billion yen, a 0.7% increase over the previous year and the first such increase in eight years. Books accounted for 942.9 billion yen, a 4.1% increase over last year, while magazines only registered 1,299.8 billion yen, a decrease of 1.7% (Fig. 1). Several million-sellers created a bright spot in the 2004 sales figures although the weeklies led the slide in magazine figures.

Fig. 1 Estimated Value of Publication Sales



Sources: Figs 1-3, 5 and 6 were compiled from the Research Institute for Publications' "Annual Report of Publishing Indicators"

The estimated number of publications sold was 3,720.7 billion, 1.9% less than the previous year, the ninth consecutive year of decline. Book sales rose 4.7% to 749.15 million, and magazines declined 3.4% to 2,971.5 billion. Although books did well, they could not check the overall continuing decline of magazines.

Despite these declines, new book issues increased 2.7% from a year earlier to 74,587, and the number of magazine titles being published grew to 3,624 or a 2.0% increase. There is a sustained trend of responding to the diversification of readers' needs with small issues of multiple titles (Fig. 2).

The returned unsold books declined 2.1 points from the previous year to 36.7%, but magazines recorded their highest rate ever rising 0.7 points to 31.7% (Fig. 3).

Fig. 2 Number of Magazine and New Book Titles Published

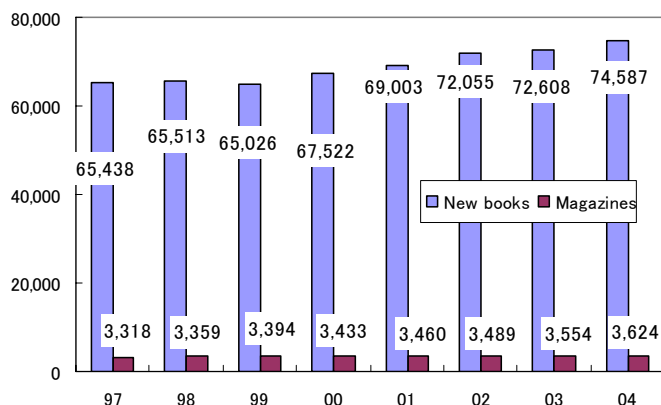


Fig. 3 Rate of Return of Unsold Books and Magazines



2. Industry Structure and Trends

(1) Industry structure

Close to 4,000 publishing firms edit and issue publications. After being printed and bound by a printer, the publications are distributed by more than 70 wholesalers, known as distribution agencies, and sold in over 20,000 bookstores and other retail outlets (Fig. 4).

According to the Establishment and Enterprise Census released by the Statistics Bureau at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, publishers numbered 5,420 in 2004, employing 97,796 people. This was a decrease from 2001, but there was a 3.0% increase in the number of employees. The publishing industry is overwhelmingly made up of small and medium-sized enterprises or sole proprietorships with just under 50% of all companies having five or fewer workers according to the 2001 census.

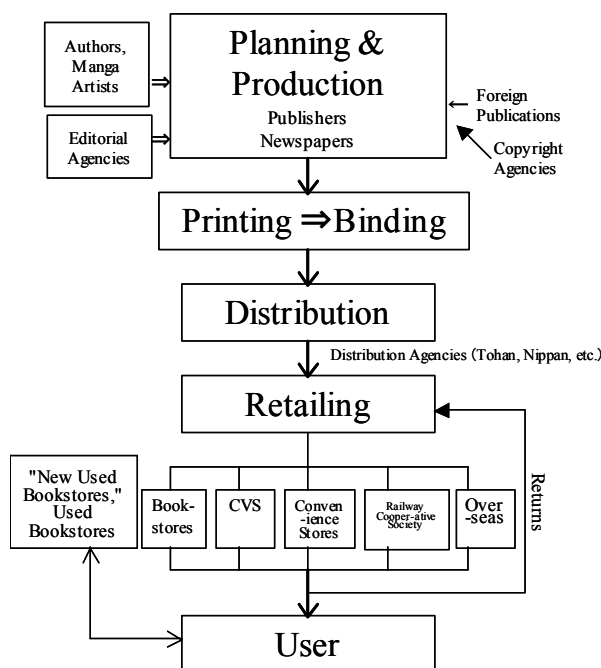
Books and magazines bound and readied for sale are delivered by the distribution agencies to retail outlets around the country. There are approximately 70 distributors, but two, Tohan and Nippon Shuppan Hanbai, together hold close to 90% of the total market share.

The distribution system is distinctive for its fixed-price and consignment sales system. Publishers are allowed to set the list price for publications and conclude resale contracts with distribution agents, bookstores and others, and to require them to sell at list price. This practice is permitted under an exemption in the Antimonopoly Law.

Publications in Japan are generally sold through the consignment sales system. Bookstores benefit from this low risk system in which unsold inventory may be returned to the publisher after a certain time period. This has given rise, however, to extensive returns of unsold publications.

Publications usually find their way to consumer bookshelves through bookstores and cooperatives. According to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry's Census of Commerce, the

Fig. 4 Publishing Industry Structure



number of book and magazine retailers (including stationers) ¹ in 2004 was 34,241, a decline of 4,409 from the 2002 census. Employees totaled 208,458 with over 80% of establishments retaining less than 10 people. Those with two employees or less accounted for 40% of all establishments. Even while these establishments are decreasing, the margin of decline for those with less than 10 employees is especially wide. A shakeup of small and medium-sized enterprises is underway as new bookstores with retail area exceeding 500 *tsubo* (approximately 1,650 m²) are on the rise, intensifying the industry's consolidation toward large-scale retail stores.

Although magazine sales at convenience stores contribute to revenue, the estimated sales volume of weekly magazines sold mainly at such establishments fell a significant 4.9% in 2004 from the previous year, blunting revenue.

(2) New trends

Since 1997, publication sales have steadily declined. Although 2004 saw the first upturn in eight years, it has become difficult for publishers to expand sales by conventional means. Behind this is the spread of entertainment media and the rapid expansion of "new used bookstores," which sell new releases at a discount almost immediately after they are published.

Trends which undermine the fixed-price system and the established distribution network continue to emerge. Online book sales are one example. Increasing numbers of publishers, distribution agencies and bookstores are setting up an online presence just as the tools for selling directly to consumers are diversifying, with online sellers such as Amazon.com and Rakuten proving very successful. The new-used bookstore, Book-Off, has launched an online service called E-Book-Off to further drive its sales. Electronic publishing, where content is distributed directly over the Internet, has also moved into high gear. Business start-ups from outside the industry and self-publishing by authors over the Internet are growing. Cellular phones take electronic publishing even one step further with the creation of a genre known as "mobile phone novels."

Bookstores are taking a generally cautious stance and are avoiding electronic distribution ahead of new book or magazine releases. One publishing and digital media business, Impress, distributes the digital versions of its books ahead of new book releases, the first to do so in the publishing industry. Since electronic distribution costs two-thirds less than paper books, the company is planning advance online distribution of close to 200 new books and magazines in the coming year.

Media mixing is also gaining currency. New releases are thoroughly publicized in several mediums in an attempt to achieve synergy, by linking up with television programs and movies in addition to using whole page advertisements in newspapers, or by selling related games and character products. This began with Kadokawa Shoten's cinematizing of novels in the eighties, and more recently, Gentosha has been successful with developing media mixes.

Since the start of this year, there has been a growing trend in creating books generated from material such as blogs on the Internet. Shinchosha's comic book and cinematic versions of *Densha Otoko* ("Train Man") have made effective use of this new marketing style. This story first came to public attention as message board postings which were subsequently published in book-form.

3. Product Trends

(1) A stream of million-sellers

In 2004, seven million-sellers including *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, *Sekai no Chushin de Ai o Sakebu* (Crying Out for Love at the Heart of the World), and *Baka no Kabe* (The Walls of Fools) emerged. Book sales in 2004 fell just short of 943 billion yen, a 4.1% increase from the year before, with several block busters contributing to an overall rise in sales volume. New books increased 2.7% to 74,587. Media mixes made effective use of television dramas, movies and music

¹ The 2004 Census was a sample survey, so the industrial classifications differ from those in 2002. Retail book & magazine and paper & stationery businesses were calculated as one classification.

as vehicles for growth. Additionally, the attention given to winners of the Akutagawa Prize, a prestigious literary award, as well as recipients of the Naoki Sanjugo Award for entertainment pieces also bolstered growth in sales volume.

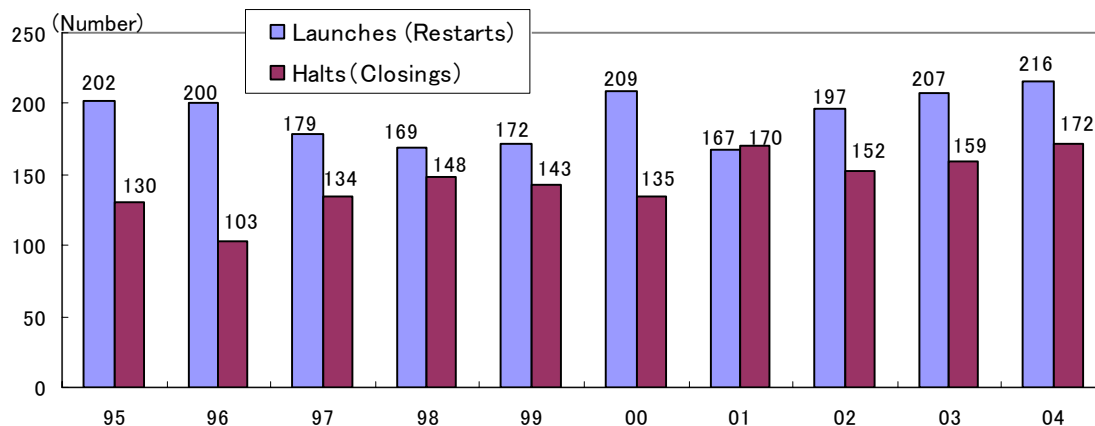
Fig. 5 Best Sellers in 2004

Ranking	Title	Author	Publisher	Remarks
1	Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix	J.K. Rowling	Say-zan-sha Publications Ltd.	Fifth book in the series
2	Sekai no Chushin de Ai o Sakebu	Kyoichi Katayama	Shogakukan	Made into a movie and television drama. The book was a best seller in 2003.
3	Baka no Kabe	Takeshi Yoro	Shinchosha	The author is an anatomist. This book was a best seller in 2003.
4	Good Luck	Alex Rovira et al., translated by Simon Tauchi	Poplar Publishing	The author is an economist.
5	Keritai Senaka (The Back One Wants to Kick)	Risa Wataya	Kawade Shinbo Shinsha	Recipient of the Akutagawa Prize
6	A 13 Year Old's Unemployment Office	Ryu Murakami	Gentosha	Essays
7	Professor Ryuta Kawashima's Reading Drills for Adults to Sharpen the Mind Series: 60 Days of Reading Masterpieces and Transcribing Kanji; and 60 Days of Simple Calculation	Ryuta Kawashima	Kumon Publishing	The author has a doctorate of medical science, and has done research on the recovery of brain function in patients with dementia.
8	Kippari! (Decisively!)	Tome Kamiooka	Gentosha	A self-empowerment book
9	Ima Aini Ikimasu (I'm Coming to See You Now)	Takuji Ichikawa	Shogakukan	Made into a movie as well as a television drama.
10	The New Human Revolution (12), (13)	Daisaku Ikeda	Seikyo Shimbun	A religious corporation
11	Ko-fuku no Hou (The Laws of Happiness)	Ryuhō Okawa	IRH Press	A religious corporation
12	Shi no Kabe (The Walls of Death)	Takeshi Yoro	Shinchosha	The author is an anatomist.
13	Another Winter Sonata	Kim Yun Hee	Wanibooks	Book associated with "Winter Sonata"
14	Hebi ni Pierce (Snakes and Earrings)	Hitomi Kanehara	Shueisha Inc.	Recipient of the Akutagawa Prize
15	Atama no Yoi Hito, Warui Hito no Hanashi Kata (The Way Smart and Stupid People Talk)	Yuichi Higuchi	PHP Research Institute	A practical guide
16	Winter Sonata (first and second volumes)	Kim Yun Hee, Yun Eun Kyung	Japan Broadcast Publishing Co., Ltd.	A novel based on the hit television drama
17	A Book to Make A Lot of Good Things Happen Around You	Mayumi Harada	Seishun Publishing Co., Ltd.	A self-empowerment book
18	Densha Otoko	Hitori Nakano	Shinchosha	A book compiled from the Internet
19	The Da Vinci Code (first and second volumes)	Dan Brown	Kadokawa Shoten	Translation of original
20	Tatta Hitotsu no Takaramono (Just One Treasure)	Hiromi Kato	Bungeishunju	Book based on a television commercial, and made into a television drama

(2) Gradual decrease in both the number and sales value of magazines

As magazines are mainly purchased by subscription, a downward trend in the number of issues sold and sales volume continues without a boost from a best seller, such as book figures have enjoyed.

Fig. 6 Number of Magazine Launches (Restarts) and Halts (Closings)



The 2004 sales value for magazines dropped 1.7% from a year earlier to 1,299.8 billion yen, the seventh consecutive yearly decline. Magazines are facing a shrinkage in the population of young people, its main customers, as well as competition from the Internet, and this situation is expected to become even harsher in the future.

As the number of copies sold decreases, the number of new periodicals is on the rise. According to the Research Institute for Publications, the number of new magazines launched in 2004 was 216, the highest in 10 years. The categories with the most magazine starts were general interest (76), hobbies (31), and women's (18). Reflecting the diversity of preferences, small issues of multiple titles are being seen more frequently.

Magazines for men made a splash in 2004. Most noticeable was the success of *Leon* (published by Shufu-to-Seikatsusha), a magazine launched in 2001 which proved incredibly popular in 2003 and 2004. Magazines targeting both men and women in the 30 to 40 age group with high disposable income are becoming a promising source of revenue.

Discontinued publications also rose to 172 from 159 in 2003. By category, they were: general interest (68), hobbies (23), and weekly magazines (23).

(3) The shrinking manga book market

Sales of manga in book and magazine form fell in 2004 below the previous year's levels with both the sales volume decreasing 2.1% to 504.7 billion yen, and the number of issues falling 3.5% to 1,384.2 million. A breakdown of the sales volume shows that there were declines of both books and magazines with manga books down 2.0% to 249.8 billion yen, and manga magazines declining 2.3% to 254.9 billion yen. Manga magazines in particular have been declining since 1996, and have fallen 20% when compared with 1994 levels.

One reason for the drop in sales is the rise of new-used bookstores and rental shops. Consumers may avail themselves of new issues at a lower price several days after they go on sale. This trend has had a negative impact on sales of comic books and magazines. Additionally, fewer consumers purchasing comics due to the rise in manga coffee shops has also had a considerable effect.

Just as with books, in 2004 the manga popularity was increased through media mixing. A synergistic effect was achieved through coverage in a variety of mediums. Noteworthy examples include *Nana* which expanded its readership by releasing an accompanying CD, the movie *Hagane*

no Renkin-jutsu-shi (The Full Metal Alchemist), which was subsequently made into a cartoon series for television as well as *Hachimitsu to Clover* (Honey and Clover), a movie adaptation of a popular manga.

(4) The expanding electronic publishing market

Current electronic publishing is divided into a) packages, including CD-ROMs and DVDs, and b) online downloads. On top of this, there is also an on-demand system for printing small-issue out-of-print products.

According to Shuppan News, there were 17,112 packaged electronic book titles sold in 2003, an increase of approximately 7,000 titles over the previous year. In the future, language learning materials are expected to increase.

4. Import-Export Trends

(1) Import-export trends

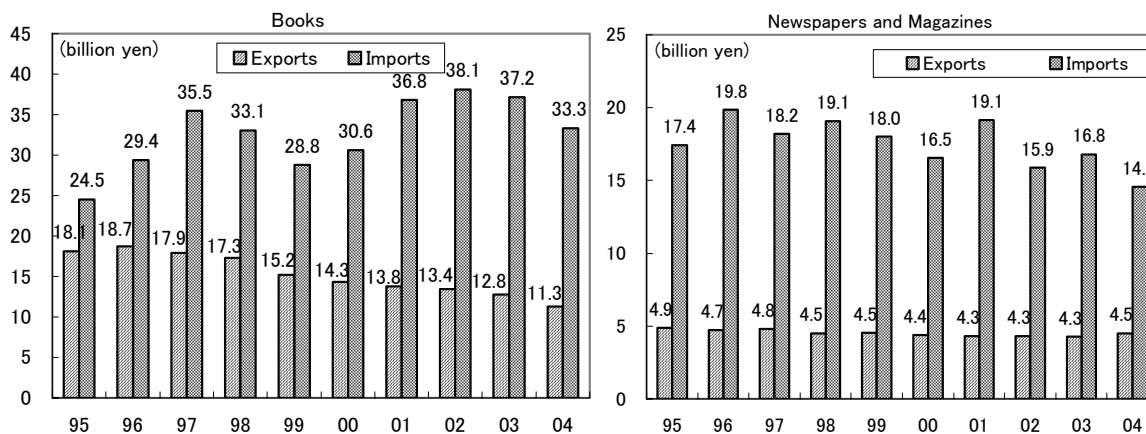
Ministry of Finance trade statistics reveal that the value of both exports and imports of books and other printed materials declined in 2004 with exports at 11,218 million yen or a 12.1% decline from 2003, and imports equaling 33.33 billion yen, were down 10.4%. The value of book exports has continued to decrease since 1996. The value of newspaper and magazine exports rose 4.9% to 4,492 million yen from the previous year, and imports fell 13.0% to 14,575 million yen.

The bulk of publications exported are Japanese books and magazines to be sold at Japanese bookstores overseas (mostly in the U.S. and Southeast Asian countries); European language publications edited and published in Japan (academic publications and publications for research and introducing Japan); as well as newspapers, magazines and similar publications published in Japan. The trend toward scaling back overseas offices and lackluster sales at Japanese bookstores in those countries are thought to also be contributing to the decrease in the value of exports from Japan.

It is presumed that academic books and magazines (high-priced specialized scientific, engineering and medical publications), language learning textbooks, popular foreign books as well as dictionaries and encyclopedias make up the core of what is imported. These imports generally go through distribution agencies or wholesalers that specialize in foreign books. Imports are also forecast to shrink due to improvements in electronic media as well as cut backs in the purchasing budgets of libraries, research institutions and universities, which receive most of these imports.

Transactions where translation rights and copyrights are provided to an overseas publisher are unknown and not indicated statistically. However, the export and import of translation rights for the most part involve paperbacks and it is surmised that they create a substantial import surplus.

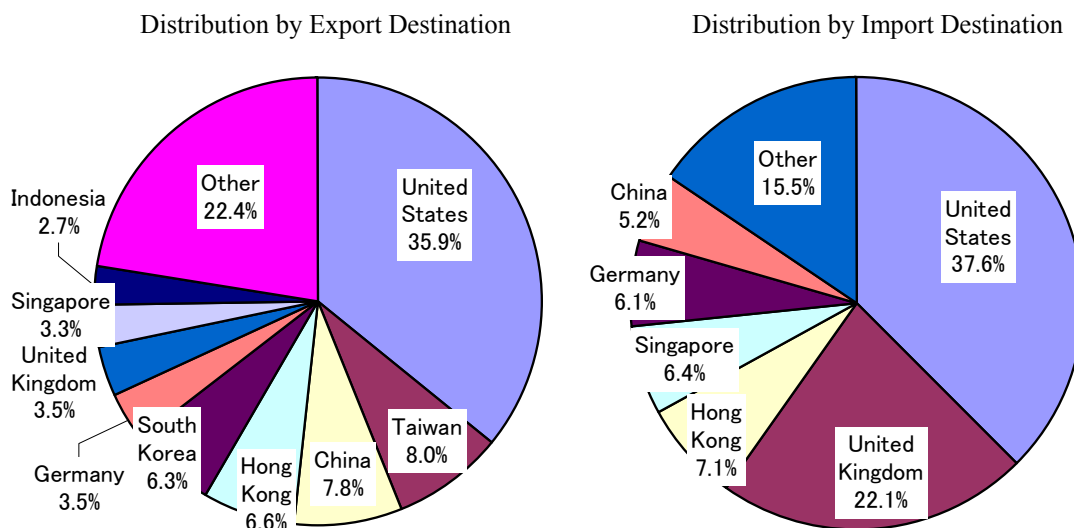
Fig. 7 Export-Import Trends of Books, Newspapers and Magazines



Sources: Figs. 7, 8 were compiled from the Ministry of Finance's Trade Statistics

When viewed by country, the U.S. accounts for the overwhelming share of both exports and imports. After that, the largest share of exports is sent to Southeast Asia, with imports from the U.K. and Southeast Asia increasing. However, in recent years, besides the increasing domestic demand for language learning materials and publications in a variety of Asian languages, the U.S. and European nations have established Singapore and Hong Kong as their distribution centers in Asia. The trend toward increasing imports from Asia is also due to such factors as Japan's foreign book importers' utilization of these distributions centers.

Fig. 8 Book Exports and Imports by Country or Region (2004)



(2) Publishing overseas

Japanese comic books are very popular overseas and the global market continues to grow.

Until recently, Shogakukan, Shueisha and other publishing companies each separately granted overseas licenses for manga sold in 20 to 30 foreign countries. Since November 2002, Shogakukan and Shueisha have published an English version of the manga magazine *Shonen Jump* through their joint venture, Viz LLC (San Francisco). This is the first such publication of its type. In the U.S. also, Tokyopop (Los Angeles) has released over 80 different Japanese manga book titles. In January 2005, a merger between Viz and ShoPro Entertainment Production Inc. (a joint venture of Shogakukan and Shogakukan Production Co., Inc.) illustrates their aim to further popularize Japanese manga and animation in North America.

In Europe, where there are few Japanese bookstores and demand is low for Japanese books and magazines, the market for comic books is steadily continuing to grow. In October 2004, *Shonen Jump* started selling a monthly magazine in Sweden, which also then went on sale in Norway beginning in March 2005. The circle of Japanese comic book fans is widening with several titles published in *Shonen Jump* being sold as a monthly magazine *Banzai!* in Germany.

While readership is expanding on the one hand, it is difficult to escape the problem of sluggish sales figures. Raijin Comics, launched in the U.S. in 2002, discontinued publication as of June 2004. The number of *Shonen Jump* printed monthly is 350,000, but actual sales have remained at 150,000. Increasing actual sales has become the important task at hand. It is hoped that popularity will be improved through synergy with a mature animation market.

In China and South Korea, the emergence of Japanese magazines has become noticeable. Other than comics, women's fashion magazines are being published one after another through local alliances. Shufunotomo's fashion magazine *Ray*, which was a forerunner, publishes 400,000 copies in China, surpassing the number of copies for Japan. In most of the alliances with local publishers, the Japanese publisher receives a license fee amounting to 7 or 8% of general revenue and a portion of the advertising income.

In China, where it is said that the number of copies issued can be counted on to be three times that of Japan even just in coastal areas such as Shanghai, European and American fashion magazines including *Cosmopolitan*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Elle*, are also popular. However, Chinese women seem to find it easier to relate to Japanese magazines than European and American ones when it comes to fashion and other topics. In the Chinese market alone, publishing companies are launching a variety of magazines targeting different demographic groups.

Fig. 9 Examples of Japanese Magazines with an Overseas Presence

Type	Publisher	Magazine Title in Japan	Country	Title Abroad	Year Launched
Fashion	Shufunotomo	Ray	China	瑞麗 服飾美容	1995
		Cawaii! and others	China	瑞麗 伊人風尚、瑞麗 可愛先鋒 他	
	Kodansha	ViVi	China	昕薇	2000
		with	China	秀	2002
	Shogakukan	Oggi	China	今日風采	2001
	Hachette Fujingaho	25 ans	South Korea		2002
Comics	Fusosha	Luci	China	露茜	2004
	Coamix	Comic Punch	South Korea		2002
	Shogakukan & Shueisha	Shonen Jump	United States	SHONEN JUMP	2003
		Walker series	South Korea		2001
Information	Kadokawa Shoten	Newtype	United States, Canada	Newtype USA	2002
		JTB	Rurubu Johoban	South Korea	

Source: Compiled using various sources

Popular acclaim has welcomed remakes of movies based on Japanese novels such as "Ring," mainly in the U.S. and Europe. In the past, works that have been translated for overseas readers were principally those of authors already well-known overseas, such as the classic *The Tale of Genji*, or works by Yukio Mishima and Yasunori Kawabata. Few contemporary authors other than Haruki Murakami and Banana Yoshimoto have attracted much attention. In recent years however, modern writers and even entertainment publications are being translated.

There are quite a few works capable of competing in foreign markets. The Japan Foundation, an organization affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote cultural exchanges with other countries, has translated and published many works with the objective of conveying Japanese contemporary literature to other nations. The Agency for Cultural Affairs has invested 300 million yen since 2002 to translate the works of 27 Japanese writers into English. These include highly entertaining works by Soji Shimada, Go Osaka, Amy Yamada and Kyusaku Yumeno. In addition, the Suntory Foundation, in an effort to introduce academic achievements related to Japanese culture overseas, supports overseas publication of 10 works annually from publications in the social science and humanities fields.

Random House Kodansha Co., Ltd. was established in May 2003 by Kodansha through the formation of a business alliance with the U.S. firm of Random House for the purpose of marketing paperbacks and other books overseas. The firm translates the works of Japanese authors and manga artists, and sells them through Random House's overseas outlets in the U.S., the U.K., Australia, Germany and other countries. In February 2004, Natsuo Kirino's mystery novel *Out*, which the company translated and published, was nominated for the Edgar Allen Poe Award for the best mystery in the U.S., and did much to boost the marketing of Japanese works overseas.

Additionally, Vertical Inc., founded in 2001, obtains exclusive translation rights for popular Japanese authors, then translates and publishes them in English. By 2004, it had released 14 titles including Koji Suzuki's *Ring* and *Dark Water*, Osamu Tezuka's *Buddha*, Kaori Ekuni's *Twinkle Twinkle*, and Keigo Higashino's *Naoko*; with plans to release Kenjiro Haitani's *A Rabbit's Eyes*, Hideaki Sena's *Parasite Eve* and others in 2005.

Increasing numbers of magazines are expanding overseas by subcontracting with a local business to edit and publish the magazines. Some major publishers have formed groups of companies which function like trading firms (such as Kodansha International and others). In some

instances, companies expand overseas by allying themselves with trading firms. Shufunotomo, has formed an alliance with a Chinese company to provide licensing of the content of its magazines such as *Ray* and *ef* and has founded Soko Information Technology Co., Ltd., a joint venture with Mitsubishi Corporation. In addition to providing content to Chinese publishing companies, it will launch new businesses for distributing publications, mail order and projects to disseminate digital content.

Nippon Shuppan Hanbai Inc. (Nippan), a leading literary agency in Japan, established Beijing Shujinyuan Zixun Co., Ltd., a Chinese corporation, which commenced publication of Japanese books in June 2005. The company manages copyrights, translations, editing, publication and sales, and assists Japanese publishing companies in their expansion into China. Based on its agreement when it became a member of the WTO (December 2001), China plans to lift all restrictions on the distribution of books, magazines and newspapers beginning in 2006, thus generating much preparatory activity.

International book fairs are held regularly around the world and provide a forum for marketing Japanese publications. International book fairs attract much interest from Japanese as well as foreign traders, and are gradually being established as a forum for detailed negotiations. At the Frankfurt Book Fair, which boasts more than 250,000 entrants annually, 15 publishers from Japan held individual exhibitions in the Japan section and several others set up collective booths or exhibited their products in the Comic Center in 2004.

At the 2005 Tokyo International Book Fair held at Tokyo Big Sight in July, a total of 650 companies from 25 countries exhibited. Major publishers from Europe and the U.S. participated as well as many exhibitors from Asian countries. The number of visitors approached 50,000 for the four day event.

5. Industry Topics

Launch of girl's manga "Shojo Beat" in North America

Shojo Beat, an anthology magazine, was launched in North America in June 2005. A joint venture of Viz and ShoPro Entertainment Production puts out the publication. It started in response to the increase in female readers of *Shonen Jump*, a popular Viz anthology. There are currently few works in the category of girl's manga, which is attracting attention as a new market in the U.S. publishing industry (New York Times, December 28, 2004 edition).

Hit-making strategies

When the novel, *Sekai no Chushin de Ai o Sakebu* was released in April 2001, sales rose steadily and set a record of 3.1 million copies sold by the end of 2004. After the movie version of *Sekai no Chushin de Ai o Sakebu* was released to acclaim in 2004, the book and the movie's theme song were also big hits. With box office sales at 8.5 billion yen and the movie's theme song reaching number one on the annual hit music charts, a multimedia strategy using the book, movie and music created a significant synergistic effect.

Ima Aini Ikimasu, which was the number nine best-seller in 2004, increased revenue using a similar multimedia strategy. In the future, multimedia strategies are expected to incorporate this technique even more frequently.

Fair Trade Commission's view of the fixed-price sales and point systems

The Fair Trade Commission decided in March 2003 to continue the current fixed-price sales system for publications. In 2004, publishing industry organizations demanded that the point systems implemented by volume retailers and large bookstores be rectified because: "The point system is a discount and problematic under the fixed-price contracts." The Fair Trade Commission set up a consultative meeting and is studying the issue.

Partial amendment of the Copyright Law

Amendments to the Copyright Law came into effect on January 1, 2005. Following the growth of book and magazine rental businesses such as manga and Internet cafes, protecting the rights of authors became an issue, and an amendment to the law was worked out. In cases where books and magazines are lent to the public for profit, they are subject to lending rights (the right not to be lent without permission), and the author's authorization is necessary.

Before the law's revision in May 2003, the Japan Complex Cafe Association reached an agreement with the holders of manga copyrights concerning the payment of royalties. The organizations that forged an agreement were the Society for the Consideration of Comic Writers' Copyrights in the 21st Century with 285 manga artists as members, the Japan Complex Cafe Association with 450 manga and Internet cafe members, and the Japan Magazine Publishers Association, an industry organization for publishers of manga and other magazines. The interim agreement, which was brokered by METI, calls for the operators of manga cafes to pay a portion of their sales to the authors and for the authors to delegate the publishers' association to favor manga cafes with measures like giving them priority in receiving missing volumes from manga series. It is generally difficult to collect copyright-use fees for books except as part of the original sales price, but in this case the parties reached an agreement based on their shared recognition of the importance of protecting author's rights.

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Note: This article is a revised version of the July 2004 report, "Japan's Publishing Industry" (translated title). It was compiled by JETRO from research done by Yano Research Institute.