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The History of the Book
in Edo and Paris

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The history of books offers particularly fertile ground for comparison between the capital cities of early-modern France and Japan. The widely heralded accomplishments of the French *histoire du livre*, which has come to constitute an academic subdiscipline in its own right, offer a rich variety of methodological and analytical guideposts that may be applied to the case of Japan, where research in the history of the culture of print remains rudimentary by comparison.¹ In particular, the synthetic work of the 1980s, epitomized by the four-volume *Histoire de l'édition française*, provides a lucid framework for thinking about print culture in long historical perspective, from its medieval manuscript origins to the mid-twentieth century.²

At the same time, the Japanese case offers the opportunity to place the entire concept of print culture in much broader comparative perspective. To be sure, the French *histoire du livre* has enjoyed an international leavening from its early stages, notably through the work of such North American scholars as Marshall McLuhan, Elizabeth Eisenstein, and Robert Darnton. It has also served as stimulus for research in neighboring cultures across the Channel, the Rhine, and the Atlantic. Calls have come forth for specifically comparative work,³ yet all such proposals seem to be limited to the familiar world of Western Europe and North America.

The case of Japan, together with those of China and Korea, enables a radical broadening of the comparative context of the early-modern history of

the book.⁴ At the very least, it will force scholars of the "West" to recognize the existence of cultures at the other end of the Eurasian continent, where printing by the eighteenth century was as diverse, as widespread, and as influential as in early-modern Europe. Such recognition has been virtually absent from all that I have so far read. More important, the case of Japan suggests certain variations from Western Europe that can help sort out what is universal in the early-modern culture of print and what is dependent on specific configurations of technology, sociopolitical environment, and international context. In particular, Japan offers crucial variants in the technologies of both writing and printing.

THE BASIC SIMILARITIES

The National Unit

Both France and Japan in the period under question were national units with effective central governments (despite various centrifugal forces at work in each case). Moreover, those central regimes shared a keen interest in controlling the content of printed matter through censorship and systems of permission. The concern and influence of the state over print culture was in both cases reflected in the organization of printing and publishing monopolies that relied on state patronage and sanction. The key contrast was the coexistence in Japan of three wholly separate centers of primary book production—Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo—in contrast to the monolithic role of Paris from the late seventeenth century.

The Role of Church and Religion

Printing in both France and Japan was dominated at the start by religious production, and the subsequent story of the book in both nations is one of gradual secularization. Notable differences exist, to be sure. Buddhism for various reasons relied less than Christianity on printed works to spread its religious message to the common people, and this tendency became more noticeable in various new popular sects of the Edo period. Nor were Buddhist denominations beset by the theological rivalries that found their battlegrounds on the printed page in early-modern France. Hence religious publication seems to have accounted for less of the total in Japan than in France.

Timing and Scale

Japan's "print revolution" occurred a century and a half later than that of Europe, beginning with the introduction (or, more accurately, theft) of the technology of movable type from Korea in the 1590s. The 300-odd titles that

4. The only scholar I have encountered who has insistently called for comparative work across a broad range of cultures is Konta Yōzō, for example in his "Edo no shuppan shihon," in Nishiyama Matsunosuke, ed., *Edo chōnin no kenkyū*, vol. 3 (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1974), p. 111.

1. For one recent survey of *l'histoire du livre*, see Roger Chartier, "Frenchness in the History of the Book: From the History of Publishing to the History of Reading," *American Antiquarian Society Proceedings* 97:2 (1987), pp. 299–329. On the Japanese side, the judgment "rudimentary" should not be allowed to obscure the important work in recent years by such scholars as Konta Yōzō and Nagatomo Chiyoji.

2. Roger Chartier et al., eds., *Histoire de l'édition française*, 4 vols. (Paris: Promodis, 1983–1986).

3. See, for example, Chartier, "Frenchness in the History of the Book," p. 326; and Robert Darnton, "Histoire du livre, Geschichte des Buchwesens: An Agenda for Comparative History," *Publishing History* 22 (1987), pp. 33–41.

were printed in movable type (first metal, then wood) over the next three decades constitute Japan's incunabula. The break with scribal culture, however, was less sharp than in Europe. Religious texts had been block-printed in Japan since the eleventh century, and movable type offered no radical technological advantage over blocks. Rather, it seems, the cultural situation in Japan was simply ripe for a new burst of printing activity at the time when Hideyoshi's minions brought the new technology back from Korea.

From about 1626, the emergence of commercial publishers in Kyoto dictated a shift from movable type back to the older block technology. The implications of this change were immense, and the reasons for the change are still debated. Some investigators argue, persuasively, that the Japanese writing system favored block composition, both linguistically and aesthetically. Others claim, less convincingly, that block technology was better suited to large editions than movable type.⁵ The most important consideration, however, was surely the reduction of the risks involved in estimating the market, since blocks could be stored indefinitely and used at any time to satisfy further demand. A publisher could keep movable-type books in print only by tying up valuable stocks of type.

Commercial publishing grew rapidly in seventeenth-century Japan, first in Kyoto from the 1630s and then in Osaka from the 1660s. Edo was little more than a market for books produced in the Kyoto-Osaka region at that time, but publishing expanded so dramatically there in the mid-eighteenth century that Edo surpassed both Kyoto and Osaka as a publishing center by 1800. The first half of the nineteenth century saw the continued growth of publishing in Edo and the beginnings of publishing in a variety of provincial cities, although the "three great metropolises" of Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo remained dominant.

How does the total volume of printed books in Tokugawa Japan compare with that in France under the ancient régime? The case of France is summarized by Roger Chartier as "between 500 and 1,000 [titles per year] in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and only 2,000 at the end of the Ancient Regime."⁶ It is much more difficult to estimate the numbers of titles in Japan, where the surviving primary materials are far less plentiful and where quantitative research on books has been minimal. A booksellers' catalogue of 1692 lists 7,200 titles, from which Konta Yōzō estimates a total production over the previous century of 10,000 titles, or some 100 per year.⁷ Statistics for the period 1731–1814 from the publishing guilds in Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo

5. Konta Yōzō, *Edo no hon'ya-san*, NHK bukkusu 299 (Nippon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1977), p. 25, offers the typical opinion that movable type restricted editions to about one hundred copies. This conventional view is dismissed as a "myth" by Watanabe Morikuni, "Hanmen o yomu—kokatsujiban no insatsu to shuppan," *Bungaku* 45:12 (1981), p. 44. Note also the claim of Tsien Tsuen-hsuin, "Paper and Printing," in Joseph Needham, ed., *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 5, pt. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 221, that movable type was advantageous in China precisely for large editions.

6. Chartier, "Frenchness in the History of the Book," p. 302.

7. Konta, *Edo no hon'ya-san*, p. ii.

show combined annual totals rising from 360 to over 600 titles.⁸ These figures include, however, only the serious academic and religious books known as *mononohon*, excluding the important categories of light fiction and illustrated books (*ezōshi*).

A completely different approach to estimating Tokugawa book production is offered by the *Kokusho sōmoku-roku*, the massive bibliography of pre-modern books first published by Iwanami Shoten from 1963 to 1976 and more recently reissued in a supplemental edition.⁹ I have encountered, however, only one effort to use this source as a basis for calculating annual book production, that published by Raymond Nunn in 1969.¹⁰ Using the four volumes that had appeared until that point, Nunn extracted a sample of 669 titles (excluding manuscript sources). Making allowance for the four unpublished volumes of the bibliography, Nunn arrived at an estimated total of 195,000 printed publications for the period 1600–1868. That figure, however, includes later editions of single titles: If such multiple editions are excluded, the total is reduced to just over 100,000, about 30,000 before 1730 and 70,000 after, for annual averages of 236 titles before 1730 and 510 thereafter.

Nunn realized, of course, that many titles did not survive to be listed in the *Kokusho sōmoku-roku*, and he attempted to establish a "rate of survival" on the basis of comparison with booksellers' lists. That effort was severely flawed in method, however, and his resulting calculation of 3,172 titles per year (including later editions) for 1600–1730 and 3,235 for 1730–1868 cannot be taken seriously.¹¹ His effort nevertheless showed a shrewd awareness of the problems involved and provides a starting point for a new estimate based on the same source—an effort that would be greatly facilitated by the computerization of the *Kokusho sōmoku-roku*. For the moment, all that can be said is that the estimates obtained by both methods described above, each of which gives about 500 to 600 titles per year for the later Tokugawa period, must fall well short of the actual numbers.

What of the comparison with France? To simplify matters, let us take as comparable periods the 1770s for France and the 1840s for Japan, when the anciens régimes of both nations were on the verge of their final periods of crisis. We may dispense with any correction for per capita differences, since the total population of each nation was in the range of 25 to 30 million persons. Nor, it may be hypothesized, did the average sizes of printed editions differ much—about 500 to 1,000 in both cases. Hence we may

8. See the chart, *ibid.*, p. 93.

9. Iwanami Shoten, ed., *Kokusho sōmoku-roku*, 8 vols., rev. ed. (Iwanami Shoten, 1989–1991), supplemented by Kokubungaku Kenkyū Shiryōkan, ed., *Kotenseki sōgō moku-roku*, 3 vols. (Iwanami Shoten, 1990).

10. G. Raymond Nunn, "On the Number of Books Published in Japan from 1600 to 1868," in Harry J. Lamley, ed., *East Asian Occasional Papers*, vol. 1 (Honolulu: Asian Studies Program, University of Hawaii, May 1969), pp. 110–19.

11. For a critical review of Nunn's method, see Robert W. Leutner, "The Japanese Book Publishing Industry—Before and After the Meiji Restoration of 1868" (M.A. essay, Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, August 1970), pp. 4–7.

use the number of titles per year for direct comparison: about 1,500 in France and perhaps 1,000 in Japan. Although it seems likely that the French produced more books than the Japanese, the excess was not so very large.

The crucial similarity, in any event, was not the precise number of books produced but rather the fact that in both nations by the end of the early-modern era printed books had become daily-life commodities. In the administrative capitals of Paris and Edo in particular, every citizen down to the most humble lived in a world saturated with the products of print technology and transformed by their effects.

The Expansion of Readership

In both countries literacy grew steadily, particularly in the last decades of the anciens régimes, thanks to the increase of formal education and to the sheer multiplication of the volume and forms of printed communication. Unfortunately, it is impossible to give comparable estimates of literacy. To begin with, the very notion of literacy necessarily varies because of the contrasting writing systems, and with them the means available to measure literacy. Signatures were not used on legal documents in Japan, nor did the Japanese prepare inventories of wills, so that neither of the critical bodies of evidence used for the study of French literacy are available.

The only attempts at quantifying Edo-period literacy in Western scholarship date back to the 1960s. Ronald P. Dore indulged in some statistical speculation and concluded that by 1868 school attendance (and presumably basic literacy, although he did not claim so) had reached 43 percent for boys and 10 percent for girls.¹² This was a national average, however, so that urban literacy must have been much higher. Herbert Passin gave estimates of breakdown by class that for Edo would work out to about 80 percent literacy for men and 50 percent for women.¹³ In Paris, by comparison, 85 percent of men and 60 percent of women were able to sign wills in the late seventeenth century; the proportions rose to 90 and 80 percent, respectively, by the eve of the Revolution.¹⁴ It seems clear that Paris's literacy rate was higher than Edo's at the end of the early-modern period, but they at least remain comparable.

Here, as with the total numbers of books produced, not only are precise numbers unobtainable but they tend to miss the point. As much recent French scholarship has emphasized, people unable to read can still be constantly exposed to printed matter when it is read to them by others—a form of communication that would have been particularly common in such densely settled capitals as Paris and Edo.

12. Ronald P. Dore, *Education in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), p. 321.

13. Herbert Passin, *Society and Education in Japan* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1965), p. 57.

14. Daniel Roche, *The People of Paris: An Essay on Popular Culture in the 18th Century* (New York: Berg, 1987), p. 199.

THE FUNDAMENTAL CONTRASTS

The Technology of Writing

The Japanese writing system as it had evolved by the time that printing began to proliferate in the seventeenth century is a distinctive variant of the logographic system that Japan borrowed from China in the sixth century.¹⁵ In the intervening millennium, the Japanese had devised a system of phonetic writing in syllabic units known as *kana* that could be used alone for pure Japanese or in conjunction with Chinese characters to indicate pronunciation and to provide the particles and inflections of the Japanese language. This system may sound complicated, but in fact it was even more complex in actual practice. The Japanese devised, for example, two entirely different systems of *kana*, the uses of which were distinguished in elaborate and never clearly formulated ways.¹⁶ And within the more widely used *hiragana* system, variant symbols for given sounds (what are now known as *hentaigana*) were numerous.

Perhaps the reason for this "astonishingly complicated method of making language visible"¹⁷ can be explained, as Roy Andrew Miller has argued, by the fact that the ancient Japanese aristocracy "had in fact little else to do with its time, and so quite naturally it delighted in any device that would make the process as time-consuming as possible."¹⁸ In fact, all writing systems have proved immensely conservative, and the Japanese system as well built up such a weight of traditional attachment that only limited adjustments were made in the interests of readability in the early-modern period. Even books intended for the most popular audiences continued to be written in cursive script, filled with variant characters and making full use of the expressive potential of the writing system itself.¹⁹

The contrast with France or any other nation of early-modern Europe can be expressed quite simply: Whereas an ordinary modern reader can make immediate and near-perfect sense of any French book of the ancien régime, only a tiny group of highly trained scholars can read cursive printed texts of the Tokugawa period without difficulty; for everyone else, they are virtually illegible. Not all texts were cursive, to be sure: those written in Chinese (or "Sino-Japanese," the Japanese idiom of the Chinese written language) were typically in formal script and can be read today. Or rather, the script can be recognized today, but the meaning will remain obscure for most persons

15. For qualifications of the description of the Chinese writing system as "logographic," see John DeFrancis, *Visible Speech: The Diverse Oneness of Writing Systems* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), pp. 220–26.

16. For a provocative discussion of this issue, see Amino Yoshihiko, "Nihon no moji shakai no tokushitsu o megutte," *Retto no bunkashi* 5 (1988), pp. 19–57.

17. Geoffrey Sampson, *Writing Systems: A Linguistic Introduction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 172.

18. Roy Andrew Miller, *The Japanese Language* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 99.

19. For a revealing discussion of one such technique, the use of parallel glosses, see Chieko Ariga, "The Playful Gloss," *Monumenta Nipponica* 44:3 (1989), pp. 309–35.

because the classical Chinese language in which the texts are written is even more distant from modern Japanese than is Latin from modern French.

Because of this fundamental contrast, the very act of reading in early-modern Japan took on meanings it did not have in Europe—or in China, where the writing system was far more straightforward and printed books were uniformly legible. It is not simply that reading was more “difficult” in Japan, although there can be no doubt that mastery required far more time and concentration there than elsewhere; the act of reading Japanese was as much a pictorial experience as a linguistic one. The implications of this contrast for the very concept of literature—a notion that etymologically is bound to the idea of the alphabet—are immense and still inadequately explored by literary scholars.

The political implications of the Japanese writing system are ambiguous, and remain so today despite the substantial simplification it has undergone since Tokugawa times. The complexity of the system encourages reliance on set forms and higher authorities that might provide standards in a sea of tremendous potential variation in writing. Amino Yoshihiko, a scholar of medieval Japan, has argued precisely along these lines, claiming that the writing system imposed by the central elite dictated a uniformity of documentary style in all parts of Japan, thus serving as an instrument of political control.²⁰ By the same token, however, one might argue that in the Edo period the complexity of the writing system offered a variety of creative modes of expression, a number of them critical of the state. In this as in so many other ways, writing has the contradictory power both to constrain and to liberate.

The Technology of Printing

The use of blocks rather than type for printing in Japan was closely linked to the technology of writing, since the carving of an original block for each page gave complete flexibility of form and hence could perfectly preserve the complexity of the writing system. Formal conventions in the appearance of the printed page evolved, of course, many of them derived from the form of Chinese printed books. But particularly in cursive texts, one can find little that corresponds to Western “typography,” since after all there was no type.

Block printing in the East Asian manner and European printing in movable type also involved completely different deployments of capital and systems of labor. Gutenberg’s system dictated a primary investment in type fonts and printing presses, with a separate craft required for the manufacture of each. Once this initial equipment was acquired, the entire business of both composition (in effect, the very design of the book) and printing was in the hands of the printing shop (even if the two functions were carried out by different artisans). In Japan, by contrast, virtually no investment in capital equipment was required: the key demand was for skill, acquired only through years of experience. The first skill was that of the calligrapher, who

20. Amino, “Nihon no moji.”

drew the image of the page to be reproduced. This was not, however, a specialized craft skill, but rather a talent that was expected of anyone properly trained in writing, requiring only a conventional brush and ink. As such, it was a sector of the printing process that, however crucial, was wholly unorganized and largely anonymous.²¹

The pivotal skill in block printing was that of carving, which required special training over a long period of time (although one does find more and more amateur carvers appearing in the late Tokugawa period, easily spotted by their clumsy work). The carvers were known as *hangiya* (literally, “wood-block workers”), and their enterprise, like that of printers in Europe, involved various skills, with one artisan to prepare the blocks, others to carve different kinds of writing, and others to do the pictures. The carvers were well organized as a separate trade from early in the seventeenth century, although large publishing establishments sometimes maintained their own in-house carvers. In respect to their role in the entire production process, the carver in Japan corresponded most closely to the printer in Europe.

By contrast, the actual printing process was considerably less preeminent in Japan than in Europe. To be sure, it demanded skill, probably more dexterity than the operator of a printing press required, but it needed almost no equipment—just a special tool known as a *baren*, which was used to rub (rather than press) the back of a moistened sheet of paper laid over an inked block. Although a tool of remarkable sophistication in its final stage of development, the *baren* was merely a parcel of the printer’s skill, since the printer fabricated it himself, just as the carver made his own knives. As for binding, the final stage of book production, the far more architectonic design of the European book made binding a trade of special importance. In Japan, binding was a relatively simple operation of cutting, pasting, and stitching that could easily be performed in-house by the publisher, typically with female labor.

It is difficult to capsule the comparative implications of two such widely differing technologies of printing. One commonality deserves emphasis: neither technology changed much at all after its initial establishment, in the sixteenth century in France and the seventeenth century in Japan. The key changes, as Roger Chartier has emphasized for France, were rather in the ways in which labor was organized. At a broader level, however, I propose that the task of comparison can be reduced to two essentials: the calculation of investment risk and the ratio of manual skill to mechanical advantage. Japanese block printing was on both counts relatively more conservative than Western type printing. Given the greater expense of producing a specific book and the added cost of long-term storage, Japanese publishers must have been marginally more disposed than their French counterparts to insist

21. The importance of the copyist, known in Japanese as *hanshitagaki*, is emphasized in the round table discussion involving Konta Yūzō, Nakano Mitsutoshi, Munemasa Isao, and Ogata Tsutomu, and published as “[Zadankai] Kinsei no shuppan,” *Bungaku* 49:11 (1981), p. 13.

on books that would be sure to sell, and likely to keep on selling over an extended period of time.

Because of the skill required, the process of production, particularly at the critical stage of block carving, was in the hands of a well-organized band of craftsmen whose training required many years under the supervision of masters. These demands may have made it somewhat more difficult in Japan to disseminate printing skills to the provinces. In France, anyone with access to a printing press and a case of type could produce of a book without a long period of training. Printing in France was thus well adapted to clandestine work, since presses could easily be moved from one place to another. In Japan, by contrast, the technology was centered not in type and machines but in the skill of the workers. Conversely, woodblock printing of crude quality could be fairly easily performed by amateurs, as it often was in the case of illegal handbills.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES: EDO AND PARIS

The International Book Environment

The book, Robert Darnton has argued, "is international in nature. Despite linguistic differences, customs barriers and ideological policing, books spill over national boundaries and spread the word with profligate abandon."²² In the early-modern period, this dictum applies more aptly to France than to Japan. From well before Gutenberg, the book in Europe was an international phenomenon, and under the ancien régime, the supply of books from abroad continued to be a critical factor in the circulation of books within France. In particular, books published in French in such neighboring havens as the Low Countries and Switzerland provided a large part of the stock for the clandestine book trade, as Darnton's research has amply demonstrated.²³

Tokugawa Japan was far more isolated than France, both geographically and politically. We should not imagine, however, that Japan was such a "closed country" that only Japanese-produced books circulated in Edo. On the contrary, Japan enjoyed a steady supply of books from abroad, most of them from China. In 1722, the lifting of the ban on the import of Western books (as long as they did not deal with Christianity) and—more important—of Chinese translations of such books resulted in a steady increase in Japanese contact with books from outside. The impact of these books has been well chronicled in the history of the "Dutch Studies" movement of the late Tokugawa period. Although linguistically accessible only to a small number of scholars and not politically subversive in any direct way, these books had an intellectual impact on Japan that may be compared to the role of books in purveying the Enlightenment in France.

22. Darnton, "Histoire du livre," p. 33.

23. See especially Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

Still, it is crucial to remember that international trade in books was far more limited in Japan than in France, for the simple reason that readers in the Japanese language were to be found only in Japan. Thus very few Japanese books were exported, whereas many French books found their way abroad. Similarly, no books in the Japanese language were produced outside of Japan, an effect ensured by the ban on travel abroad. This situation contrasts strongly with the ability of a neighboring French-speaking city such as Neuchâtel to play an important role in the book trade and intellectual life of eighteenth-century France.

Centralization of Publishing Activity

The French pattern of book production differed from that of Japan. For almost two centuries after Gutenberg, printing in France was conducted at a variety of dispersed provincial centers that competed vigorously with one another. Under Colbert in the 1660s, however, decisive measures were taken to end a trade war that severely disadvantaged provincial printers and established virtual monopoly control by the Parisian guild. A small group of master printer-booksellers was able to dominate legal publishing up until the Revolution. Challenges did come from the clandestine market, of course, and there is growing evidence that provincial publishing flourished in the eighteenth century in spite of legal restrictions, but Paris was firmly established as the capital of French book production.²⁴

In Japan, the production of books moved rather from the center outward, beginning at Kyoto in the first half of the seventeenth century, then spreading to Osaka and Edo in the second half. With the cultural maturation of Edo in the course of the eighteenth century, the city's share of national book production grew steadily until it finally surpassed the combined production (in titles) of Kyoto and Osaka in the 1790s. Even so, publishing was never so completely centralized in Edo as it was in Paris, nor did the state make any particular efforts to favor Edo publishers over those in other cities. Rather there emerged a kind of functional differentiation that replicated the historical evolution of the publishing industry. Kyoto continued to be the major center for "hard" books, particularly Buddhist and Confucian works, both of which were in Chinese. The Osaka trade focused on practical works, such as home encyclopedias, while the Edo market was more heavily oriented to "soft" books, notably the diverse forms of popular fiction that emerged in the course of the eighteenth century. Much overlap occurred, of course, and the three cities were often in heated competition. Indeed, some of the fiercest interregional rivalries were fought out within Edo, where local publishers competed with the branches of the great Kyoto firms.²⁵

Near the end of the Tokugawa period, book production began to grow in provincial cities as well. The largest such center was Nagoya, which by the

24. Robert Darnton, "Reading, Writing, and Publishing in Eighteenth-Century France: A Case Study in the Sociology of Literature," *Daedalus* 100 (1971), p. 228.

25. Konta, "Edo no shuppan shihon," pp. 109–95.

end of the Edo period had nearly thirty bookseller-publishers,²⁶ but active publishing was also to be found in Ise, Wakayama, Hiroshima, Sendai, Kanazawa, and Nagasaki—all except the first and last of which were castle cities under direct control of daimyo.²⁷ This provincial activity did not compare in total volume, however, to the production of the three great urban printing centers. Nor should it be imagined that the production of books in Japan was a free market, for one finds here the same pattern as in France: domination by well-established guilds that enjoyed official patronage.

The key commonality in France and Japan was that the production of books was largely in the hands of commercial capital rather than the state. In this respect Japan differed from its East Asian neighbors; in China the imperial government engaged in substantial printing activity, and in Korea almost all printing was under direct state control. The Tokugawa shogunate did engage in some limited printing, but not as a matter of routine: all edicts, for example, were issued in manuscript. The French state, by contrast, directly printed a variety of government documents. Still, in both countries the principal publishing activity was carried on by commercial houses—although typically in close collusion with the state to ensure patronage and to protect their interests. In Edo, for example, certain publishers were given exclusive rights to the printing of calendars, daimyo directories (*bukan*), and maps of the city—perquisites that were essential to long-term survival.

The Organization of Publishing

The study of Edo publishing history remains in its infancy, despite the important work of Konta Yōzō. Part of the problem lies in the paucity of materials: because of the frequent destruction of Edo by fire and of Tokyo by earthquake and war, very few primary materials have survived to document the inner workings of the Edo publishing industry—in contrast, for example, to that of Kyoto, where materials are far more plentiful. It is clear that no amount of research will ever be able to offer the amount of rich detail that we have about publishing in early-modern Paris.

Here only some general observations are possible. In neither country was publishing an autonomous activity; it was always linked with the busi-

26. For a study of Nagoya publishing see Matthi Forrer, *Eirakuya Tōshirō, Publisher at Nagoya: A Contribution to the History of Publishing in 19th-Century Japan* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1985).

27. Inoue Takaaki, *Kinsei shorin hanmoto sōran*, *Nihon shoshigaku taikei* 14 (Seishōdō Shoten, 1981), p. 6, provides statistics by period on the founding dates of all known early-modern publishers, which give a rough indication of the relative scale of publishing in the various cities. The total numbers of publishing houses in each city for the entire Edo period are: Kyoto, 1,733; Edo, 1,652; Osaka, 1,253; Nagoya, 104; Ise, 49; Wakayama, 24; Sendai, 27; Kanazawa, 24; Nagasaki, 21; other provincial, 312. The overall percentage accounted for by the three great cities of Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka is 89 percent. For an interesting case study of one of these provincial centers, see Peter F. Kornicki, "Chihō shuppan ni tsuite no shiron: Nihonkoku Wakayama no baai," in Yoshida Mitsukuni, ed., *Jūkyū seiki Nihon no jōhō to shakai hendō* (Kyoto: Kyōto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo, 1985), pp. 449–66.

ness of selling books. In this sense, both the Parisian *librairie* and the Edo *hon'ya* must alike be translated into English as "bookseller-publisher." Only after the Revolution in France and the Restoration in Japan does one find the emergence of the publisher as an entrepreneur independent of the tasks of physical production and commercial distribution. The bookseller-publishers in both countries were also obliged to deal with the primary craft guilds, those of the printers in Paris and the carvers in Edo.

As suggested earlier, the capital requirements of the publishing enterprise differed in the two nations. In France, the need for capital was divided between the printer, who required such equipment as presses and type fonts, and the publisher, who had to pay both printer and author. In Japan, the capital requirements fell largely on the publisher alone, who commissioned the carving of the blocks, which then became his own capital. In the later Edo period, one does find printers dealing directly with individuals, such as teachers of the arts, who ordered private editions for distribution to students and colleagues.²⁸ The bulk of publishing, however, remained in commercial hands.

One important calculation for a publisher is always the size of an edition. In France, Roger Chartier notes, printings were usually between one thousand and two thousand copies.²⁹ The evidence for Japan is far more anecdotal and contradictory, but printings seem to fall into about the same range.³⁰ Wooden blocks eventually wore down, to be sure, but it seems clear that several thousand decent copies could be obtained from a set of blocks—more than could ever be sold for all but the most popular books.³¹ One further imponderable in the Japanese case is the size and number of later printings, which could always be issued as long as the blocks were kept (not always the case: it cost valuable space to store blocks, and there was economic incentive to recycle the wood by planing it for recarving).³²

Piracy, Copyright, and Author's Rights

Piracy was a common threat to publishers in both France and Japan, and every device was mobilized by the guilds to control it. In the Japanese case, however, virtually no legal protection was offered: it was only under the Meiji state that the concept of copyright was introduced. The forerunner of copyright in Japan was rather the notion of "possession of blocks" (*zōhan*), which came to mean not necessarily physical possession but rather legal

28. This trend is discussed in "[Zadankai] Kinsei no shuppan," p. 14.

29. Chartier, "Frenchness in the History of the Book," p. 315.

30. The evidence is summarized in Nagatomo Chiyoji, "Kinsei: Gyōshō hon'ya, kashihon'ya, dokusha," *Kokubungaku: Kaishaku to kanshū* 45:10 (1980), p. 94. Note also Konta's assumption in *Edo no hon'ya-san*, p. ii, that the average number of copies of each title was one thousand.

31. Forrer, *Eirakuya Tōshirō*, p. 74, deals with the problem of block capacity, dismissing reports of a limit of 250 to 300 copies per block.

32. Nakano Mitsutoshi in "[Zadankai] Kinsei no shuppan," p. 11, notes a report from a Nagoya publisher that whatever the size of the first printing, subsequent print runs were small, about thirty copies, to minimize inventories.

title.³³ It is unclear, however, whether piracy was in fact any more common in Japan than in France, where even in spite of legal copyright protection by the mid-eighteenth century, the illegal reproduction of books was widely practiced.

A related issue is the rights of authors. Here as well, France was far ahead of Japan, as a result of a 1777 law that gave more specific privileges to authors. In Japan, the very concept of the rights of an author was unheard of until the Meiji period. In practice, however, it may be surmised that the actual treatment of authors was not much better in France than in Japan. Roger Chartier notes, for example, that publishers closely controlled authors, and tended more often to pay them in copies of a book than in cash.³⁴ Robert Darnton, meanwhile, has written of his suspicion that "only a tiny minority of the writers in each country [i.e., Germany and France] could live from their pens."³⁵ The situation was much the same in Japan, where until late in the Edo period only playwrights were paid for their work. The popular and prolific Santō Kyōden (1761–1816) is often said to have been the first Japanese writer of fiction who was able to make a living by writing.³⁶

Censorship and the Guilds

The state in both France and Japan exercised strict and sustained control over publishing from about the same era. In France, a system of close supervision and active prosecution was instituted from the 1660s and continued until the Revolution. In Japan, general control over publishing was first decreed in the Kanbun period (1661–1673), and during the Genroku period (1688–1704) various incidents of the suppression of publication occurred. It was only in 1722, however, as part of the Kyōhō reforms, that a complete system of surveillance and censorship was established.

In both regimes, the biggest threat from printed matter was seen to consist of attacks on the nation's supreme political figure—the monarch in France, the shogun in Japan. The second great concern was heterodox thinking, which in France was conceived in theological terms as doctrines that opposed the Catholic Counter-Reformation, and which in Japan was seen as ideas opposing neo-Confucian orthodoxy—although enforcement of neo-Confucianism did not come until after the Kansei reforms of the late eighteenth century.

The greatest difference in the actual operation of censorship in the two countries was that the shogunate in Japan imposed the responsibility on the publishing guild, whereas in France special government offices were instituted to control the book trade, both through prepublication censorship and

33. "[Zadankai] Kinsei no shuppan," p. 18. In Japanese terminology, a distinction was made between facsimile reproduction (*jūhan*, done by use of actual pages from the book to be copied as the *hanshita* for carving) and approximate reproduction (*ruihan*, done from a new copy of the original made for carving).

34. Chartier, "Frenchness in the History of the Book," p. 315.

35. Darnton, "Histoire du livre," p. 36.

36. Aeba Kōson, "Mukashi no sakusha no sakuryō oyobi shuppan busū," *Aoi* 4 (1910), pp. 1–3.

through police control over illicit publishing. The Japanese system reflects a general preference for indirect control based on the principle of mutual responsibility. In France the guild was involved in the operation of the censorship system, but not to the extent of total autonomy as in Japan.

According to the analysis of Daniel Roche, in France the concern for ideological deviation was balanced by a reluctance to jeopardize the economic interests of the official publishers' monopoly, a reflection of the mercantilist policy of the French state from Colbert on.³⁷ The Japanese state seems similarly to have always had the interests of the powerful, privileged publishers in mind when it established its control system, but there is little evidence of such explicit financial preoccupation as in France.

It is difficult to compare the precise effects of censorship in the two regimes. Although Japanese scholarship has devoted considerable attention to this particular issue, most of the information comes from government control edicts and from scattered reports of actual works that were banned and authors who were punished; quantitative material is virtually nonexistent.³⁸ Konta Yōzō has suggested impressionistically that Japan was in general fairly lax in its control of books, particularly in comparison with China, where the mere ownership of proscribed books was punished. Punishment for violation of the publication edicts in Japan, he notes, was never systematic, but rather a matter of simply setting an example now and then (as the shogunate did more than once with Santō Kyōden).³⁹ It may simply be the case, however, that the system of self-censorship in Japan was in fact effective. It certainly seems to have worked to prevent the publication of any literature that involved outright attacks on the regime. The general absence of seditious publications in Japan, in all but the most indirect and parodic forms, is in striking contrast to the situation in France.

As for France, Daniel Roche has argued, the system of censorship was shot through with ambivalence on the part of the enforcers, particularly in the decades just before the Revolution. In part, this approach reflected a commitment to the prosperity of the publishing industry itself, and in part it was a product of an "ideology of compromise, half-philosophical and half-absolutist," on the part of the censors, who were "men of some education and talent."⁴⁰ Yet the number of prisoners sent to the Bastille for book crimes—a total of 941 over the period 1659–1789, he says, for an average of 18 percent of all Bastille inmates—seems vastly in excess of those who suffered for publication-related crimes in Tokugawa Japan.

37. Daniel Roche, "Censorship and the Publishing Industry," in Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche, eds., *Revolution in Print: The Press in France, 1775–1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

38. See Konta, "Edo no shuppan shihon," pp. 109–95; Yoshiwara Ken'ichirō, "Edo hangiya nakama to ihō insatsu: Kasei-ki o chūshin ni," *Bungaku* 49:11 (1981), pp. 138–48.

39. Konta Yōzō in "[Zadankai] Kinsei no shuppan," p. 30.

40. Roche, "Censorship and the Publishing Industry," p. 13. On French censorship see also Raymond Birn, "Book Production and Censorship in France, 1700–1715," in Kenneth E. Carpenter, ed., *Books and Society in History* (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1983), pp. 145–71.

Illicit Publishing

In both France and Japan, the illegal publication of literature that had no chance of approval under the formal censorship system was widespread. The greatest contrasts lay in the locus of such publications and in their content. Many illicit books were shipped to France by publishers outside of the national borders, particularly in Switzerland during the age of the Enlightenment. Japan had no such overseas havens, and illicit publishing had to be carried out virtually under the noses of the men who sought to control publication. That underground publishers were as successful as they were suggests that Konta's hypothesis about the general laxity of publication control in Japan may be correct in this regard as well.

In content, the bulk of illicit literature in the later decades of the anciens régimes appears to have been political in France and pornographic in Japan—although each country seems to have had a good amount of both sorts. Political protest in Japan tended to be expressed in parody rather than outright attack, and was more commonly circulated in manuscript than in printed form. Perhaps the most striking reflection of this contrast was the absence in Japan of any periodical literature, which was of central importance in early-modern France. Comment on current events of any sort, social as well as political, was prohibited under the publishing edicts, so by its very definition "news" was illegal. Simple unlicensed broadsides known as *kawaraban* did appear to announce major scandals and disasters, but they were irregular and ephemeral. The curiosity of the Japanese public for fuller details about political scandals seems to have been satisfied primarily by the semifictionalized accounts known as *jitsuroku* ("true records"), which circulated in manuscript form through rental libraries.

Common Reading Facilities

The cities of Paris and Edo offered networks for the shared reading of books, but with spatial and organizational differences. Such facilities were crucial in spreading the influence of print, both through the multiplication of the uses to which single copies of books could be put and through the economic advantages offered to that large majority of the urban population who could not afford the regular purchase of books.

In the early stages of the commercial distribution of books in any culture, lending coexists with selling.⁴¹ At a further stage of development, book lending becomes a specialized service. This stage was reached in Japan about the same time as in Western Europe, in the early eighteenth century. The extensive research of Nagatomo Chiyoji shows the term *kashihon'ya* (book lender) appearing as early as 1713,⁴² and the number of such enterprises in

41. For a good comparative study of lending institutions in a variety of early-modern societies, including China and Japan, see Peter Kornicki, "Kashihon bunka hikakukō," *jinbun gaku* 57 (1984), pp. 37–57. For book lending in early-modern Europe, see Paul Kaufman, "Some Community Libraries in Eighteenth-Century Europe: A Reconnaissance," *Libri* 22:1 (1972), pp. 1–57.

42. Nagatomo, "Kinsei," p. 97.

Edo alone had increased to over six hundred a century later, and to eight hundred by the 1840s.⁴³ One calculation has suggested that the customers of a single book lender would number 150 to 200 households,⁴⁴ which when multiplied by several hundred would account for about half of the population of Edo. Studies by Peter Kornicki and others have demonstrated the importance of the late Edo book lender in supplying the readership for certain genres of literature, notably the *yomihon* novels of Takizawa Bakin and others and the *jitsuroku* manuscripts.

However important the book lenders of Edo may have been in spreading the culture of print, they seem to have been lacking in one key element that was conspicuous in Paris: the provision of a common reading space. As Roger Chartier has shown, Paris in the later eighteenth century was provided with a wide variety of facilities for the collective reading of books.⁴⁵ In 1784, for example, Paris boasted fully eighteen public libraries (although some were restricted to "men of letters"). Equally important were the *cabinets de lecture*, establishments where for a subscription fee one could go to read journals and books in a pleasant setting. Some of these places were close in atmosphere to literary salons, and many engaged in the lending of books as well. In addition, a large number of bookstalls engaged only in lending.

The *kashihon'ya* in Edo seem to have been purely lending institutions, sometimes at a fixed location but more often, it seems, on a delivery basis. The delivery service was particularly well developed in the daimyo quarters of the city, where large numbers of idle samurai and servants provided a substantial share of the book-lending market. Doubtless customers might read a bit as they browsed at the fixed shops, but the idea of providing a hospitable reading environment was lacking in Japan.

The critical factor behind this spatial contrast probably lies in the absence in Edo of periodical journals dealing with current events, which seem to have been the largest single reason for the *cabinets de lecture* of Paris. Since the appeal of a journal's content faded quickly, it made more sense to go somewhere to read periodicals than to invest in their purchase. It is revealing that when newspapers began to spread in Tokyo in the early Meiji period, there soon appeared public reading rooms of a sort that provide a close parallel to French *cabinets de lecture*.⁴⁶ It was also only in the Meiji period that the very idea of public libraries appeared in Japan, an import from the West. The absence of any communal reading spaces in Edo, whether for free public use or for rental, is a revealing mark of the far more privatized nature of the city in Japan than in Western Europe.

43. Peter Kornicki, "The Publisher's Go-Between: *Kashihon'ya* in the Meiji Period," *Modern Asian Studies* 14:2 (1980), p. 331.

44. Kornicki, "Kashihon bunka hikakukō," p. 48, citing a study by Nakamura Yukihiro.

45. Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 204–15.

46. Kornicki, "Publisher's Go-Between," pp. 333–34.

Reading Habits

An issue closely related to book lending is the content of popular reading. The Edo book lenders, according to the conventional image, dealt largely in fiction, although Kornicki has mustered evidence to prove that in Japan as in Europe lending institutions circulated a considerable variety of other types of books as well.⁴⁷ No studies have been made to show exactly what types of books members of Edo's commoner population owned, and evidence on this score is very sparse. One can only speculate that religious works were less common in Edo than in France, except among members of the various religious movements that emerged in the later Tokugawa period. Not that urban Japanese were irreligious, but at the popular level adherence to religious precepts depended less on the written word.⁴⁸

Another important issue concerning reading habits that emerges from French scholarship is the degree to which books were read aloud or silently.⁴⁹ It has been proposed that the way for Gutenberg's invention was paved by a medieval "revolution in reading," in the course of which silent reading gained steady ground at the expense of the "mumbled" (*ruminatio*) style of oral reading. This gradual shift represents the emergence, it is argued, of a freer and more private relationship with the book.

What about Japan? The issue has been addressed for the Meiji period in a perceptive essay by Maeda Ai titled "From Reading Aloud to Silent Reading."⁵⁰ Maeda observed that even at the time he was writing, in the early 1960s, one could still hear older people reading newspapers in a "strange singsong" (*iyō no fushimawashi*), and he speculated that the general practice of silent reading may be no more than one to three generations old. He offered various evidence for the pervasive practice of reading aloud in the Meiji period, and noted the clear links between late Meiji fiction (in particular the romances of Tamenaga Shunsui) and such popular arts of oral performance as *rakugo* and *kōshaku*. He contended, along lines proposed by Lafcadio Hearn, that the solidarity of the Japanese household made solitary reading an antisocial act, and suggested that reading aloud to groups helped overcome low rates of literacy.

More broadly, it may be observed that the reading of Japanese tradi-

47. Kornicki, "Kashihon bunka hikakukō," p. 54.

48. A related phenomenon is the decrease in the proportion of Japanese books published in Chinese (that is, *kambun*). Of early movable-type books, about two-thirds were in Chinese. Statistics provided in Nunn, "On the Number of Books Published in Japan," p. 115, indicate a decrease in the categories "Buddhism" and "Chinese Literature and Thought" from a combined 20 percent in 1600-1730 to 14 percent in 1730-1868. Compare this decline with the decrease in the percentage of French books published in Latin, from 25 percent in 1650 to only 10 percent by the 1660s; a slower rate of decline in Germany provides a better parallel to the Japanese case in the survival of older humanistic learning. See Roger Chartier and Daniel Roche, "New Approaches to the History of the Book," in Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora, eds., *Constructing the Past: Essays in Historical Methodology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 198-214.

49. I rely here on Chartier's summary in "Frenchness in the History of the Book," p. 312, where further citations are provided.

50. Maeda Ai, "Ondoku kara mokudoku e: Kindai dokusha no seiritsu," in his *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu* (Yūseidō, 1973), pp. 132-67.

tionally involved a pronounced level of orality, typically in sociable settings, along with the strongly visual component imposed by the writing system. Japanese *waka* poetry, for example, was more often recited than read, and was often composed during poetry contests or in linked-verse groups. In the Edo period, printed librettos from the puppet theater served as much as texts for amateur chanters as for enjoyment as silently read literature. Even the reading of Chinese was mastered orally in the chanting of the classics in Edo-period schools. And as Maeda stressed, late Edo popular fiction, with its increasingly vernacular qualities, must have made for good reading aloud in a group. Although none of these observations can be quantified, one does sense that the orality of communication by print was stronger in Edo than in Paris.

The Forms of Print

As a physical presence, the book in early-modern Japan was far less assertive than its European counterpart. The covers were merely extra paper pages, with only subtle decoration and extra thickness for durability. Nothing could contrast more strongly with the architectonic assertiveness of a Western tome, designed like a small piece of furniture and bound in the gilded hide of an animal. The book in Japan was rarely used for display, except for the kind of temporary exhibit that had emerged in the medieval period, in which a precious manuscript would be placed in a decorative alcove or on a special shelf. When not in use, books were laid flat in boxes, which were closed up and put away, in contrast to the European tradition of permanent display in cases.

Inside the covers, Japanese books, particularly in their popular forms, were far more likely to be illustrated than those in France. The wide use of illustrations reflects the ease with which woodblock technology permitted the inclusion of pictures, and it may also be a mark of the high level of visibility of the writing system itself. The invention of multicolor block printing in 1764 led to the steady proliferation of color images in late Edo printed objects, both books and single-sheet prints. The same effect could be obtained in France only by the hand-coloring of each individual page, a process too costly for all but the most luxurious publications. The precise effect of the element of color in the popular print culture of Edo remains a matter for speculation, but at the sensual level it seems to provide a clear contrast to the sober black-and-white pages of French books.

As printing spread in Japan, the opportunities for private publishing multiplied; presumably the same was true of France. Yoshiwara Ken'ichirō provides valuable evidence for such commissioned printing in his account of control edicts in the Bunka-Bunsei period (1804-1830), when the shogunate endeavored to restrict the more flamboyant forms of printing, particularly the use of gilt and large numbers of colors.⁵¹ This period saw a tremendous growth in private orders for printed items on the occasions of all sorts of

51. Yoshiwara, "Edo hangiya nakama to ihō insatsu," pp. 141-48. See also "[Zadankai] Kinsei no shuppan," p. 14.

celebrations and parties, whether as invitations or as gifts for the guests. Men of letters would send specially printed *surimono* as New Year's greetings, *haikai* teachers would commission printed collections of their students' poems, practitioners of the musical and performing arts would print announcements when they conferred an art name on a pupil, and merchants would send out printed placards announcing the opening of a shop. Most of these practices began in the eighteenth century, but they proliferated during the early nineteenth.

At a broader level, late Edo society was flooded with printed ephemera, as was Paris of the ancien régime. The forms varied in accord with customs and technology. Posters were rare in Edo, for example, but placards were legion. It is difficult to offer much in the way of comparison at this stage, except to suggest that Chartier's notion of the "appropriation" and resultant transformation of the forms of elite culture by popular culture offers a persuasive model for the study of printed ephemera in Edo.⁵²

One final proviso that may apply to Edo even more than to Paris: as Chartier stresses, the spread of print culture by no means meant the end of scribal culture. Skill in calligraphy was so revered in Japan that writing by hand was an essential accomplishment for anyone with pretensions to literacy. In the very form of printed matter, the distinction between manuscript and book was negligible: block-printed books, after all, are merely facsimiles of handwritten pages. This highly fluid intercourse between manuscript and book helps to explain why few historians in Japan have been able to see the print revolution of the early seventeenth century for the revolution that it surely was.

City versus Country in the Culture of Print

Printing and publishing began in cities and have remained concentrated there to this day. These urban products, however, began to spread to the countryside from an early point. In the case of France, Natalie Davis has argued that the impact was minimal during the first century and a quarter of print: peasants of the sixteenth century had little immediate need for printed books, and oral tradition remained dominant.⁵³ By the end of the ancien régime, however, things had clearly changed as elite urban culture worked its way down and out. Here again it is useful to borrow Chartier's notion of "appropriation" and to conceive of this process less as the conquest of rural culture by urban print than as the turning of printed matter from the cities to specifically rural ends.

It can only be proposed that the dynamics were similar in Japan: a close study of the process remains for the future. On the one hand, Kornicki has emphasized the importance of late Edo popular fiction in spreading the customs and the dialect of Edo to the provinces, and thus in starting a process that in the modern period might be called the "Tokyoization" of

Japan, which continues apace to this very day.⁵⁴ On the other hand, the work of Anne Walthall on rural culture demonstrates the many ways in which peasants could indeed "appropriate" urban cultural forms to their own uses, imbuing them with their own meanings.⁵⁵

CONCLUSION

It seems appropriate in conclusion to turn once again to the writings of Roger Chartier, whose thinking has done so much to inspire both the conceptual framework and, on the French side, the particular detail of this chapter. In September 1987 Professor Chartier presented a lecture, "Frenchness in the History of the Book," at the American Antiquarian Society. It is an eloquent plea for the broadening of *l'histoire du livre*, for the use of "Frenchness" as the basis for a new universality and interdisciplinarity in the study of the culture of print. However broad this gesture may have appeared to Professor Chartier's American hosts, the frame of reference remained explicitly and insistently Western. Note, for example, the guarded phrasing of the proposal that "the circulation of printed matter and the practices of reading . . . are at the core of all the major evolutions that transformed European and even Occidental civilization between the end of the Middle Ages and the present day."

We certainly have a long way to go before we can consider dropping the phrase "European and even Occidental" from this sentence. Ultimately, however, we must seek ways to move beyond the explicit and wholly admirable ethnocentrism of Chartier. As the tentative character of all that I have written until now should demonstrate, this is not an easy task. By way of conclusion, then, let me simply turn to the final pages of "Frenchness in the History of the Book" and see what might happen if we dared to add "even in Japanese civilization" to his proposal that "the questions that the history of the book, of publishing, and of reading may reformulate are not themselves enclosed within national territories."

Chartier specifies three "major evolutions" of Western civilization in which print was implicated. The first draws on Norbert Elias's notion of civilization as "the inculcation of new constraints that rein in the emotions, censure impulses, and raise the threshold of modesty." The whole notion of civilization as a system of manners and etiquette will seem immediately relevant to any student of early-modern Japanese culture and its formal obsessions. The linkage with print, however, remains to be probed. It appears on the surface that the tremendous discipline and formalism involved in the mastery of the Japanese writing system imply a case for which Elias's theory works even better than the civilization for which that theory was designed.

54. Kornicki, "Kashihon bunka hikakukō," p. 55.

55. Anne Walthall, *Social Protest and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Japan* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986).

52. Chartier, *Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, p. 6.

53. Natalie Davis, "Printing and the People," in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), pp. 194-209.

Second, Chartier proposes, print helps create a *private* sphere of existence, separate from communal controls and state authority. Indeed, Philippe Ariès has argued, print supplies all the necessary conditions for the very notion of privacy, in the "intimate and secret relationship between the reader and his book."⁵⁶ This formulation directs our attention to the complex and much-debated issue of privacy in Japan, and urges us to reconsider it in terms of print. One answer may lie in the hypothesis that Japanese culture retained higher levels of residual orality in the face of growing literacy than did European cultures.

Third and last, reading practices are seen as deeply implicated in the creation of a new public political sphere, a space for debate and criticism. This development began in institutionalized forms of sociability in the salons and cafés of the Enlightenment and was made possible by the circulation of the printed word. The case of Japan offers a clear challenge to the universality of this notion, at least in the early-modern period. The Tokugawa polity, in the highly private way in which it defined itself, denied the very possibility of a public political sphere. This definition was challenged by print, to be sure, but in the end the culture of print in Edo shared in the essential privacy of the larger political culture. We are still left with the possibility, however, that the experience with print culture in Tokugawa Japan offered fertile ground for the dramatic emergence of a truly public political sphere in the Meiji period, when suddenly newspapers, journals, and places of public discussion emerged as forums for lively debate over national issues.

The Japanese case thus reminds us that the political impact of print is profoundly ambiguous: it serves both as a device by which the state can control its subjects and as a channel through which the state can be opposed and even toppled. The former effect was more evident in the Meiji Restoration and the latter more obvious in the French Revolution. The line between the two is nevertheless a fine one, and it will require much further thought to decide whether "civilization" in general prefers one side of the line or the other.

56. The words are Chartier's, in "Frenchness in the History of the Book," p. 327.