Accessing the Japanese Publishing Industry
PUBLISHERS’ ASSOCIATION FOR CULTURAL EXCHANGE, JAPAN

Founded in 1953, the Publishers Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE) is a non-profit organization whose members are drawn from representative publishing houses and related industries in Japan. The purpose of PACE is to contribute to the enhancement and development of publishing culture in Japan and in other countries of the world, through the exchange of all types publications which serve to deepen and promote mutual friendship between Japan and overseas countries.

With the aim of achieving this objective, PACE shall:
(1) Investigate the actual state of publishing and of the publications issued in overseas countries and present the results to its members and to the general public.
(2) Inform overseas countries of the actual state of publishing and publications issued in Japan.
(3) Act as mediator, in all matters concerned with the writing of publications, translation, printing, copying, and so on, in accordance with the expressed wishes of the Japanese government or private companies.
Accessing the Japanese Publishing Industry

Publishers’ Association for Cultural Exchange, Japan
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The Japanese Publishing Industry

1-1 Overview

According to Shuppan Nenkan (Publishing Yearbook) 2015, there are 3,534 publishers in Japan most of which are concentrated in Tokyo (76.5%). Of all of these publishers, 1,928 are small-scale operations with less than 10 employees, and only 27 companies have more than 1,000 employees. The top 500 publishers account for 90.8 percent of total sales.

In general, publication is distributed through wholesalers and bookstores.

The most distinctive characteristic, for distribution and sales, is distinguished by the resale price maintenance system and consignment sales system. According to the provisions of the Antimonopoly Law (Article 24.2), a contract under this system is established between the publisher and the wholesaler, and between the wholesaler and the bookstore. The resale price maintenance system stipulates that the publisher fixes the retail price of its own newly published books and magazines, and the wholesalers, and bookstores, kiosks, convenience stores, and other retail outlets must sell them at that price. Under the consignment system publications are distributed to the bookstores under the condition that the unsold copies may be returned to the publishers through wholesalers within a set period of time (usually 6 months for new books). Thus, bookstores are able to distribute a large selection of books at no risk.

The distribution system in Japan is shown in Figure 1.

1-2 Statistics of the Japanese Publishing Industry

According to figures issued by the Research Institute for Publications, the All Japan Magazine and Book Publisher’s and Editor’s Association, the total sales figure for Japanese publications (books and magazines combined) showed a continuing decline every year, with the exception of 2004, from the peak sales figure of ¥2.6564 trillion in 1996 to ¥1.6065 trillion in 2014.

Table 1 shows the major state of the Japanese publishing industry.

Also noteworthy are the import and export figures shown in Figure 2.
#### Table 1

1. Number of publishing companies: 3,534  
2. Number of wholesalers: 25  
   (Japanese Publication Wholesalers Association members) *  
3. Number of bookstores: 4,140 (Japan Booksellers Federation members)  
   14,200 (total number estimated)*  
4. Number of libraries: 3,246  

Source: Shuppan Nenkan 2015, Shuppan News Co., Ltd.(except *)

5. Book and magazine sales in 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Books</th>
<th>Magazines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Titles Issued</td>
<td>76,465</td>
<td>3,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies Distributed</td>
<td>1.084 billion cps.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Copies Issued</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2.668 billion cps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount Distributed</td>
<td>¥1.209 trillion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount Issued</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>¥1.419 trillion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Price per Title/Copy</td>
<td>¥1,116</td>
<td>¥532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies Sold</td>
<td>644.6 million cps.</td>
<td>1.651 billion cps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Sales</td>
<td>¥754.4 billion</td>
<td>¥852.0 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return Rate</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Shuppan Shihyo Nenpo 2015, The Research Institute for Publications

#### Figure 2 Import and export of publications 1992-2014
1-3 Issues in the Japanese Publishing Industry

Along with the global spread of internet, the need for a measure to counteract against e-book copyright piracy had been much discussed and, on April 25, 2014, a Revised Copyright Act was established where publishing rights, traditionally recognized only on paper-medium publications, were extended to include e-book publications. The Revised Copyright Act is now enforced since January 1, 2015.

The e-book market in Japan was just over 100 billion yen in 2013. Although the figure is still modest as equivalent to 6% of the total publication sales in Japan, with its 30% annual growth rate (2014), e-books are now creating a new market in the Japanese publishing sector. Comics account for 80% of the e-book market share.

With regard to the imposition of consumption tax on e-books, a new problem emerged in 2013. When enterprises that are based overseas sell e-books in Japan, consumption tax is not imposed, but domestic companies must pay consumption tax when exactly the same e-books are sold in Japan. A movement has started with the aim of reforming the tax law, claiming that this situation is inequitable and contravenes fair competition.

There has been a continuing increase in the number of books lent out by public libraries. Given the ongoing decline in the sale of publications, it is reasonable to presume that instead of buying books, more people are making use of public libraries.

A recent phenomenon is that people who get information about the content of books by going to bookstores, but who then, instead of buying the books in the store, return home and buy the same books through the internet.

The Japanese publishing community is continuing to provide assistance given after the occurrence of the Great East Japan Earthquake and accompanying tsunami on March 11, 2011.

The 22nd Tokyo International Book Fair (TIBF) 2015 was held at the Big Sight Exhibition Center, Ariake, Tokyo from July 1 to July 4, managed by Reed Exhibitions Japan, and the organization Committee of TIBF. Number of exhibitors were 470 from 24 countries and the number of visitors were 67,570 (62,855 in 2014).
### Table 2  Import

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Books</th>
<th>Magazines</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>7,211,118</td>
<td>2,667,462</td>
<td>9,878,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHINA</td>
<td>6,799,401</td>
<td>84,091</td>
<td>6,883,492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>5,480,204</td>
<td>1,149,856</td>
<td>6,630,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GERMANY</td>
<td>1,876,511</td>
<td>27,262</td>
<td>1,903,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HONG KONG</td>
<td>999,598</td>
<td>93,647</td>
<td>1,093,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R KOREA</td>
<td>892,638</td>
<td>166,320</td>
<td>1,058,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NETHERLANDS</td>
<td>91,403</td>
<td>885,399</td>
<td>976,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRANCE</td>
<td>752,976</td>
<td>126,872</td>
<td>879,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SINGAPORE</td>
<td>473,454</td>
<td>266,504</td>
<td>739,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALAYSIA</td>
<td>342,465</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>342,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITALY</td>
<td>174,299</td>
<td>116,330</td>
<td>290,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAIWAN</td>
<td>232,257</td>
<td>22,193</td>
<td>254,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAZIL</td>
<td>139,069</td>
<td>20,502</td>
<td>159,571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWITZERLAND</td>
<td>112,007</td>
<td>1,879</td>
<td>113,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THAILAND</td>
<td>110,496</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>110,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANADA</td>
<td>62,781</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIA</td>
<td>40,415</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>40,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIETNAM</td>
<td>25,627</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWEDEN</td>
<td>19,539</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>20,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER COUNTRIES</td>
<td>339,154</td>
<td>5,789</td>
<td>344,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>26,175,412</td>
<td>5,635,062</td>
<td>31,810,474</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Customs and Tariff Bureau, Ministry of Finance

### Table 3  Export

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Books</th>
<th>Magazines</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>2,904,064</td>
<td>296,016</td>
<td>3,200,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAIWAN</td>
<td>1,172,589</td>
<td>854,660</td>
<td>2,027,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R KOREA</td>
<td>1,100,099</td>
<td>440,140</td>
<td>1,540,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHINA</td>
<td>912,302</td>
<td>199,602</td>
<td>1,111,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HONG KONG</td>
<td>438,619</td>
<td>566,865</td>
<td>1,005,484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THAILAND</td>
<td>544,261</td>
<td>104,720</td>
<td>648,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>606,701</td>
<td>6,883</td>
<td>613,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILIPPINE</td>
<td>434,568</td>
<td>131,520</td>
<td>566,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>387,844</td>
<td>8,778</td>
<td>396,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANADA</td>
<td>374,327</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>374,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SINGAPORE</td>
<td>255,043</td>
<td>107,961</td>
<td>363,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAZIL</td>
<td>284,981</td>
<td>28,199</td>
<td>313,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIGERIA</td>
<td>224,615</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>224,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALAYSIA</td>
<td>185,629</td>
<td>26,463</td>
<td>212,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH AFRICA</td>
<td>202,130</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>202,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRANCE</td>
<td>177,327</td>
<td>9,775</td>
<td>187,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEXICO</td>
<td>138,309</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>138,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GERMANY</td>
<td>111,802</td>
<td>19,411</td>
<td>131,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TURKEY</td>
<td>110,155</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>110,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER COUNTRIES</td>
<td>742,878</td>
<td>89,150</td>
<td>832,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>11,308,243</td>
<td>2,890,514</td>
<td>14,198,757</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Customs and Tariff Bureau, Ministry of Finance
2 Accessing the Japanese Publishing Industry

2-1 Buying Japanese Publications

Please check the list starting from page 17 to find out if there is a bookstore in your country that may handle Japanese books. If there is no store in your country, try to enquire at the store closest to you on this list whether they are able to handle your order.

One option is to place an order directly with the publication, but this method is not recommended, because of a complicated procedure that must be gone through.

Some Japanese bookshops have opened virtual bookstores on the Internet. As of February 2014, the main online bookstores in Japan are Amazon Japan, Book Service, honto, Kinokuniya Web Store, and Maruzen & Junkudo of which addresses can be found on the back cover of this booklet.

2-2 Selling Foreign Books in Japan

In Japan, foreign books and magazines can be bought in major cities at specialty bookshops, the foreign book and magazine departments of large bookstores, and bookstores in large hotels. Most Western books and magazines are distributed by importers to these outlets. Book and magazine importers are listed on page 23.

For the import origin and export destinations and sales figures refer to Tables 2 and 3 on page 8.

2-3 Buying Translation Rights of Japanese Publications

In Japan, the copyright holder is, in most cases, the author of the publication. However, when it comes to illustrated books, including children’s picture books, the publisher signs a contract on behalf of the copyright owners, e.g., the author, illustrator, photographer, editor, and/or supervisor. There are, of course, some exceptions, depending on how the book was first published.

Publications can be divided into four categories: general fiction/non-fiction, academic books, illustrated books for adults, and children’s books.
1. Fiction/non-fiction without illustrations
Authors and publishers seldom respond to direct inquiries. They are often too busy or forget to answer, even if they can understand your letter. It is best to contact one of the Japanese agencies from the list on page 24.

When compiling an anthology, it is practical to ask one of the Japanese agencies to act as your agent to negotiate with the various authors and their agents. In most cases, authors will accept a flat fee and one or two gratis copies at least for the first printing.

To the translator
If you would like to translate a work by a Japanese author, one option is to contact a Japanese agency. If the agency does not know what the situation is, they will suggest that it is wise for the author to be contacted to let him/her know of your desire to translate the work so as to avoid having the same work translated by different persons. Sometimes authors give permission to whoever wishes to translate his/her work. However, even getting the author’s permission does not mean that you have the translation rights. The translation rights are owned by the publisher who has entered into a license agreement with the proprietor. The publisher is responsible for the quality of the translation. Even if you are a friend of the author, and the author has given you the translation rights, you do not possess them legally.

FICTION: The quality of the translation, including expression, style of writing, and accuracy, especially for literature, is of the utmost importance. Ideally, it is best to complete the translation before submitting it, but there is no guarantee that it will be published. In these circumstances, a recommended procedure is to translate one or two chapters and submit them with a synopsis of the book to a potential publisher or agency. Some publishers may require biographical information in the case of lesser-known authors.

NON-FICTION: You should prepare a table of contents and a description of the book with some pages of sample translation. It may be wiser to approach potential publishers through an agency. You should be prepared to add some background information to the original Japanese edition for the benefit of foreign readers.

2. Academic books
In this case, although of course, you can contact one of the agencies first, you should feel free to contact the author or publisher directly, and if they need assistance, they may approach a Japanese agency. What happens on
some occasions is that the author translates the work and arrangements are made, with the mutual consent of both the author and the publisher, for the manuscript to be checked by a native-speaking expert.

3. Illustrated books for adults
In most cases, the publisher owns the publication rights and if they have a foreign rights or international division, you will be able to make direct contact. If they do not have a person handling such matters, your best action will be to contact one of the Japanese agencies to assist with co-production, royalty negotiations, etc. Some printers in Japan also promote heavily illustrated titles of Japanese editions they have printed.

4. Children’s books
Children’s book publishers hold the publication rights in most cases, including juvenile literature. A few publishers have their own division to handle foreign rights but others rely on the services of Japanese agencies.

Japanese children’s book publishers prefer to negotiate subsidiary rights after consulting the author/illustrator when such inquiries are made.

To the translator
Before you start translating, you are strongly advised to contact the publisher, author, or a Japanese agency in order to avoid duplications and complications.

2-4 Selling Japanese Translation Rights of Your Publications
Some of the Japanese literary agencies have exclusive agreements with a number of major American and British publishers. Overseas publishers and literary agencies generally find that it is to their advantage to deal through a Japanese agency rather than directly with a Japanese publishing company. They are usually able to get better terms for the translation rights to their publications this way, and most overseas publishers and agencies prefer to leave negotiations in the hands of Japanese agencies.

These Japanese agencies differ from American literary agencies in that they handle original publication rights on behalf of the author in addition to translation rights and the subsidiary rights. Japanese agencies are always asking foreign publishers and literary agencies to send books, information on new titles, and sometimes even galley proofs from which they select promising books to send on to the appropriate Japanese publisher.

Publishers of translated works usually have their own direct channels for matters concerning foreign publications, particularly those in English. But
while a few of these Japanese publishers negotiate directly with the foreign publisher when a candidate for translation comes through a direct route, others go to one of the agencies to find out if the translation rights have already been purchased by another publisher and to get an option on the particular book in question. The agency checks first to see if another agency has an exclusive agreement with the book’s publisher or the copyright holder. If not, it contacts the appropriate parties, gets permission to handle the rights, and negotiates a contract between the Japanese publisher and the copyright holder.

In the case of specialty publications and professional books, it is not uncommon for the translator to recommend a particular book to the Japanese publisher first. Since the translator usually does not have the Japanese translation rights, the Japanese publisher negotiates for the rights with the copyright holder, either directly or through one of the Japanese agencies.

**Procedures**

There are two procedures that can be followed by the overseas publisher or copyright holder who wants to sell the translation rights of a work to a Japanese publisher. One is to have a Japanese agency search for an interested Japanese publisher, and the other, to contact a Japanese publisher directly.

Unfortunately, you must be prepared for the fact that the Japanese publisher may never respond to your letters of inquiry.

There are only a handful of people in the Japanese publishing industry who can read and write one or more foreign languages other than English. Furthermore, there are few translators specializing in languages other than English. It follows that when a book written in a foreign language other than English is sent to a Japanese agency or publisher for consideration, there may be no one available to read it and the book will be ignored. This is generally the case, except for works of world-famous authors and illustrated or children’s picture books that are already well known. One way to get around this is to include an English translation or English-language synopsis of the work when sending a book for consideration to a Japanese agency or publisher.
2-5 How to Get Information on Japanese Publications and Publishers

In Japanese

Books.or.jp
The internet version of Japanese “Books in Print” is available at http://www.books.or.jp.

Korekara Deru Hon
A semi-monthly list of forthcoming books for bookstores. Published by the Japan Book Publishers Association.

Shuppan Nenkan
An annual report on the publishing industry. Published every July by Shuppan News Co., Ltd. 2015 ed. 2 vols. ¥32,400.

Shuppan Shihyo Nenpo 2015

In English

Japanese Book News
Quarterly publication issued by the Japan Foundation containing information on the latest trends in Japanese publishing, and introduces selected new titles on a wide variety of subjects with brief descriptions of the content. Visit the Japan Foundation website for more information.

Japanese Literature in Foreign Languages 1945-1995
A list of Japanese literature translated into Western languages. Compiled and published in 1997 by the Japan P.E.N. Club. ¥5,250.

Japanese Literature in Translation Search
This database provided by the Japan Foundation covers Japanese literary works translated into other languages, mostly after World War II(http://www.jpf.go.jp/e/culture/media/exchange/index.html).

An Introduction to Publishing in Japan 2014-2015
Published by the Japan Book Publishers Association. 87 pages. Contains the list of 430 members. ¥1,575.
3 Support and Subsidies

Financial support and subsidies for translations and publications may be granted by the following foundations according to their programs as described below.

3-1 The Japan Foundation

Support Program for Translation and Publication on Japan

The division in charge is: Planning and Coordination Section, Arts and Culture Department.

To promote Japanese studies and a better understanding of Japan abroad, the Japan Foundation provides support to projects relating to translating and/or publishing Japanese works on Humanities, Social Sciences and the Arts.

This program’s objectives are to enable foreign publishers to publish Japan-related books with financial difficulty on a commercial basis, to lower the selling price, and thus to make the books accessible to wider readers.

The Japan Foundation shall provide financial support for a portion of the translators’ fee and/or a portion of production costs (paper, plate-making, printing, binding, etc.)

Application

As the program year runs from April through March, the program will be announced worldwide in the autumn of the previous calendar year through the Japan Foundation overseas offices and Japanese diplomatic missions for publication projects to be completed within the following program year. Applications may only be submitted by the publisher of the target materials no later than November 19 to the nearest local Japan Foundation office (refer to page 30 for contact), or to the Japanese diplomatic mission, if the Japan Foundation is not directly represented. Applications from individuals will not be accepted. The website (http://www.jpf.go.jp/e/program/culture.html) is also available.
Result of Application
The results of the application will be notified to each applicant in April through the local Japan Foundation office/Japanese diplomatic mission to which the relevant application was originally submitted. Successful applicants will be obliged to release the target materials onto the market and submit a report of their release to the Japan Foundation no later than the end of February. The grant will not actually be paid until such a report has been submitted. If the applicant fails to complete the project in due time, the award will be cancelled.

For previous grants, please refer to the Japan Foundation website. http://www.jpf.go.jp/e/culture/media/publish/index.html

Remarks
Please note that the Japan Foundation will prioritize the titles in the “List of Recommended Works” in determining the amount of grant. The titles in this list are introduced in the publication “Worth Sharing -A Selection of Japanese Books Recommended for Translation”, which is available in the Japan Foundation’s website (http://www.jpf.go.jp/e/project/culture/media/supportlist_publish/worth_sharing/index.html).

3-2 The Suntory Foundation
Suntory Annex 9F., 2-1-5 Dojima, Kita-ku, Osaka 530-8204, Japan
Tel: +81-6-6342-6221  Fax: +81-6- 6342-6220
sfnd@suntory-foundation.or.jp
http://www.suntory.co.jp/sfnd/publication

This Foundation offers “overseas publishing assistance” for the high-quality translation of books from Japanese into foreign languages as well as for the publication of such works overseas. The books targeted for support are in principle works of academic research, contemporary criticism and literature, which it is difficult to get translated and published, in the social sciences and humanities as well as in fine art.

The total amount available for support is ¥5 million, and every year, 10 works or so receive a support grant. Applications are received every year between September and the end of November, and the decision on which applications will be supported is announced in March of the following year.

It is a condition of a decision to make an award that subsequent publication must be limited to the work for which an application is made. It is also a precondition that at the application stage, such matters as negotiations and an agreement on high-quality translation and publication
by a reputable publisher are already guaranteed.

3-3 **International Research Center for Japanese Studies**

3-2 Oeyama-cho, Goryo, Nishikyo-ku, Kyoto 610-1192, Japan
Tel: +81-75-335-2222
http://www.nichibun.ac.jp/

This Center offers fellowship programs for overseas researchers in Japanese studies as well as providing support for the translation of basic documents in the area of Japanese studies. Further information can be obtained from the above website.
4 Related Addresses

4-1 Bookshops and Distributors

Note: A company having a (D) after its name is a distributor.

Outside Japan

[AUSTRALIA]
Melbourne
Intext Book (D)
Tel: 3-9857-0030

Sydney
Kinokuniya Bookstores of Australia Pty Ltd.
Tel: 2-9262-7996

[EGYPT]
Dar El Shorouk
Tel: 2287389
E-mail: hbadr@shorouk.com

[FRANCE]
Paris
Junku
Tel: 4260-8912
www.junku.fr

[BELGIUM]
Brussels
Aoki Shoten
Tel: 2-675-1352

Culture Japon S.A.S. (D)
Tel: 4579-0200

[BRAZIL]
São Paulo
Livraria Fonomag
Tel: 11-3104-3329

Livraria Takano
Tel: 11-3209-3313

Sol S.A. Importacao Exportacao
Industria e Comercio
Tel: 011-3208-6588

Casa Ono
Tel: 813-6522
www.casaono.com.br

[GERMANY]
Düsseldorf
BOOKstore NIPPON
Tel: 211-360738

München
K. Press Bookshop
Tel: 89-2730290

[HONG KONG]
Apollo Book Company
Tel: 2367-8482

Asahiya Bookstore Sogo Branch
Tel: 2893-6083
Nippon International Publication Service (HK) Co., Ltd. (D)
Tel: 2568-5755

Himawari Publishing Company
Tel: 2529-2259
www.himawari.com.hk

Swindon Book Co., Ltd.
Tel: 2366-8001
www.swindonbooks.com

Page One the Designer’s Bookshop (HK) Ltd. (D)
Tel: 2806-1028
www.pageonegroup.com

[SURABAYA]
Bintang Palapa (D)
Tel: 31-472153

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## 4-4 Associations, Organizations, and Governmental Offices

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<th>Address</th>
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<th>Website</th>
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Publishers’ Association for Cultural Exchange
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