Book Trade in The Tudor Period

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A book is a written or printed communication, recorded on the light, durable portable media mainly for a public circulation. Its first aim is to express,teach,entertain, preserve, and transmit the informations (knowledge or system) to people in literate communities. In Europe, before and a lilltle after a press machine was invented by Johannes Gutenburg(1397-1468), a variety of manuscripts written by scribes or human hands were circulated in any countries, but there was not a profitable market for them. On the other hand, when the indulgences or the famous Bible were pressed against parchment or vellum efficiently and rapidly,they gave him a lot of profits. After Gutenburg the father of modern printing died, his inventions and mainstays remained more than 500 years later, and the system of his press gradually contributed to the book market in western Europe.

The idea of multiplication, which means the technique of duplicating the texts based on the mechanical principle, results in the printing press. Excluding the parchment or vellum, the texts were printed on paper, which came into being in the middle of the 12 century in Europe. Printing on paper began from a textile printing, stimulated by the use of paper from the Orient. Soon after the paper was made first in 1151, at Xativa, Spain, it was manufactured in France, Germany and Italy. Unlike the printwork of goldsmiths, new materials, methods, and machines heralded the beginning of the new market in London. While the various books were recorded on the clay tablets in Babylonia, the papyrus rolls in Egypt,and the medieval vellum or parchment, the primitive books in China were made of wood or bamboo strips bound together with cords. In the ancient times some records were curved on the hard materials such as stones, metals, or carapaces,but they were difficult to write or carry. Neccesity was the mother of papers,which led to the main history of the books.

New industries－silk weaving, the production of glass, majolica pottery－and the livery companies (successors of the craft guilds), thrived under the various restrictive regulations. The book trade also saw its growth despite of the majority of unliteracy, which lessened slowly with both education and the social, political, and economical system. Since the end of the 15th century it had multiplied the publication of

books, superseding the professional and traditional scriptoria or workshops. The printed books could more easily and voluminously meet the need and demand of the public. Education and literacy also promoted the growing demand for books and reading. This resulted in the mass production of books and the spread of book markets, spurred on by the mechanical printing innovated by Gutenberg.

The first press in 1436 by Gutenburg was one of the the social and industrial revolutions. Before his invention, most books were manufactured by and for the Churches and monasteries applying the process of wood engraving. Printers produced many early books, pamphlets, booklets or other volumes of a religious nature,meeting greater demand from the Church. In England the first printing press was completed in 1476, which stimulated other presses to publish various kinds of books not only for the Church but also for the literate. By the end of the 15th century in major cities of western Europe the presses were working. The nature of books varied little in the transition from manuscript to printed book, though the market was greatly altered. For example, many scribes were not longer needed for book copying and some became printers. The ancient press men followed the current demand for books, producing far more copies than could be sold, which caused, in fact, their prices to go down. On the contrary, the cost of a printed book was about 20% less than that of an equivalent manuscript. The book market grew speculative and capitalistic because mass book production kept increasing.It was not surprising that printers, publishers, booksellers or stationers gathered in every big city, commercial center－Venice, Paris, Lyon, London, etc.They attracted the community and people, and the books printed and published in these cities were circulated and marketed throughout Europe by every trade route.Likewise, other smaller provincial cities and towns, little commercial centers,prospered as regional centers for book production, but, on the other hand, the printers naturally found their markets limited.

In Tudor period the printers, publishers or bookellers of London, a large commercial center, were helped financially if they made use of the press invented by Gutenburg and printed their books repeatedly. The form and content of printing, publication or selling varied widely in London but the books became printed for the readers who could read, buy or collect the printed texts in place of the traditional manuscripts. Once the books were speedily printed, published and easily transported for circulation, cheap or attractive to the consumer, they could dominate the public as well as the plays could. The art of printing expanded rapidly in the latter years of the 15th century and more widely known in the 16th century. In the following two centuries the book market came to a prosperity in Europe, because of the reading public and the increasing literacy of people. New markets expanded for the guild, but from the present point of view reading and

literacy still did not progressed rapidly, in part because numerous printed books were of religeous nature.

In these centuries the new industry and market system became secure and strong, although the number of presses were restricted or few could print more than five books a year. Those days, however, most printers came to an anchor in London while those in the province rarely existed long because of a secondary market. And indeed the book trade well developped in the 16th century in London as well as in the Continental cities. In 1563 the Artificers Act ordered workers to stay in the native parish, unless the local parson gave them a written permission, as the authorities intended to prevent political turmoil, social hardship, excesses of inflation, or decline in most industries. The following revolutionary progress in printing was the type styles, that is, the change from those of earlier Gothic to readable Roman throughout most of western Europe. It kept with the working qualities of steel, and was imported to England by John Day in 1572.

In Lodon the Stationers' Company and its Register, the old guild which goes as far back as 1404, made a monopoly of the book trade in Tudor England (1485-1603),except those printed by the university presses(1478). This oranization was incorporated in 1557 by the Royal charter. On the other hand, the vocation of all members belonging to the guild were not so clearly distinct among booksellers,printers, and publishers as in the 20th century. Publishers or booksellers were printers in London, and vice versa. There were enrolled ninety-three freemen of the Company in the charter of 1557, who entered their copies in the Stationers' Register, payed fourpence and secured the right of printing or selling their books. They published a lot of plays or other texts, but did not register them at times. While all the London stationers or printers held the monopoly of printing all over England, in the market they tried their best only to be controlled frequently by the population in London, the number of literate public,and the import. It was a new challenge after the technique of printing expanded rapidly with the big demand for the books since the latter half of the fifteenth century.

The City of London, the largest city in Europe north of the Alps, and its suburbs involved a jurisdiction covering 680 acres (about 275 hectares). In the Middle Ages London played its role as a centre of trade, and contained the population of some 10,000 or 15,000 in 1085, less than two percent of Britain's population. By 1200 A.D. there lived 30,000 inhabitants in the official limit of the City of London, where a few of the literate people enjoyed their lives.In London also lived the foreign people such as Danish merchants, other trading groups, Germans, northern Italians, Normans, the Gascons, Flemish, the Jews, and so on, who assimilated easily into London's population. In 1300 London had about 80,000 citizens, but a few of them were literate. After the decay caused by the Black Death Tudor London recovered again by 1520 with 41

halls of craft guilds.Trade and market grew in the middle of the 16th century, because they were pushed forward by the establishment of monopolies such as those held by the Muscovy Company in 1555, the Turkey (or Levant) Company in 1581, and the East India Company in 1600. London also increased its inhabitants from over 100,000 in 1550 to about 200,000 in 1600, the literacy of whom were almost the same.The population of the City and its surroundings reached 220,000 by the early years of the 17th century.

The City of London was a narrow, crammed and commercial center, where there were some trade on The Thames, lots of entertainments and plays. In front of St. Paul's books or pamphlets, folio(folded once making 4 pages, largest-sized) or quartos(folded twice making 8 pages) editions, were waiting for the customers as soon as the printers in Fleet Street completed them. The literates in Elizabethan Era (1558-1603) were about 20% and those in the period of Puritan Revolution (English Civil War. 1642-49) were about 30%(male) and 10%(female), on the average of England. All of them would not always purchase the printed books, but book lovers, monasteries, libraries or collectors might buy them. In London and outside its boudaries about 500,000 people lived their lives by 1700, and 1,110,000 lived there in 1800, while the metropolis and Great Britain continued to attract the merchants who built their Bank of England at the end of the century, along with the greater activities of imports, exports, commerce or finance. Thus in a couple of the centuries, London became the center of the kingdom or that of the world economy poltically, socially, commercially, and financially.

Book market was also relevant to both of the factors and the conditions such as population, literacy, libraries and establishments. Educated citizens increased steadily from 1300 and 1500 according to the changing system of aristocracy,secular agents, lawyers, clerks, production of religeous manuscripts, printed texts,and so on. Laymen in the next centuries were too educated mainly upon teaching or schooling. Schooling and literacy have been much the same in most comunities.The spread of literacy and its level depend on the society or the policy of governments. The book market and the increased production of materials developed with the public who could read, write and call on the book stores before St.Paul's in London. They were rich merchants, students, scholars, teachers or clergymen who were able to be literate throughout English educational program in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Booksellers, stationeries, printers, and publishers were originally from associations or guilds of craftsmen or merchants, who gathered for mutual protection,help and professional interests. At times guilds flourished and decayed between the11th and 17th centuries, but performed an important function in economy, finance and society. The craft guild and merchant guild, two types from the Middle Ages onward,dealt in or

manufactured various kinds of goods. For example, the former were traders, retail or wholesale sellers; the latter were artisans, craftsmen, weavers,dyers, fullers, masons, architects, painters, metalsmiths, blacksmiths, bakers,butchers, leather workers, soap makers, and so on. As time goes by, they had a monopoly of trade, commerce, or industry in each profession. They were included in the companies or guilds which were chartered by the sovereign authority under certain rights, privileges, obligations or regulations. The Merchant Adventurers and the Merchant Staplers were chartered as the earliest companies in England, but their trading activities were regulated within narrow limits. The earliest overseas trading companies in England were the Muscovy Company(1555) and the Turkey Company(1583), and other English companies were also granted charters in this period.

On the other hand, some of the craft and merchant guilds survived in the home market through the ages with monopoly and restriction, where printed books grew into a big industry and exerted a great influence on civilization. Publishing or printing not only experienced a mechanical innovation and a social mutation but also depended upon three important inventions (writing, paper, and printing) and the expansion of literacy. As smart guilds knew, it had the possibilities for mass production and vast industry, not for a mere means of avoiding copying errors by hand. At first book market was small but later prospered, because the literacy of wealthy middle classes and citizens had increased outside the clergy. The press was welcomed too by the public, the churches, the states, universities, libraries,collectors, and so on. The means of producing and distributing books varied widely in the history, but in general they were used for communication and inheritance of knoledge. Following a progress in book production with the rise of the universities or libraries, printers—publishers, stationers or booksellers—in England, were organized in craft and merchant guilds whereas other trades were also organized.The Stationers' Company of London expected in 1403 the City to permit their own ordinances. Book trade was not so large before the invention of printing as, for instance, the number of text manuscripts would be thousands in all western Europe. By 1500, after only 50 years of printing, there were more than 9,000,000 books. The books were also multiplied after 1500 while printing or publishing began to settle down only after about 1550. The book trade were dominated by printers in the following 100 years, who were usually publishers, stationers, type founders,editors, or masters in the guild. In London they saw a lot of changes along with the late arrival of the press(1476), the early and difficult days of printing,the prohibition of five foreign printers(1500) working in London. They still imported their types from the Continent until about 1567, and papers until about1589, but, under the royal acts(1523, 1529,1534) for British domestic industries,they prospered exclusively observing the free importation of books.

In Tudor period the book trade grew an enormous variety and activity. Some of them were rivals one another. Advertisements for books were completely different from the present time and were familiar in the form of handbills or broadsheets from about 1466 onward, including one of Caxton's of 1477. There exist printer's or publisher's lists and catalogues in the early days. Circulation of printed books was in a sense effective along the trade routes, often with rapid services.Another distribution of books was trade fairs, especially at Stourbridge in West Midlands, England, where many kinds of traders joined, including the stationers who sometimes functioned as wholesalers, retailers or "book-carriers", etc.

Controls over printing books were in the hand of the church, who welcomed at first the mass production of Bibles and ecclesiastical texts. When the books of humanity or non-ecclesiastical increased gradually, the church always tried to censor them since the 15 century onward. The Royal State and the church each exercised censorship over written matters, against which the people appealed with anger to the authorities to control the press. After about 1525, endless proclamations were issued against heretical, political, or seditious books.The most important was that of 1538, which ordered them a license from the Privy Council or other royal nominees for the printing or distribution of any book in English. These decrees, however, gave the merit to the Stationers' Company formed in 1403, and other craft and merchant guilds－the old fraternities of scriveners, limners, bookbinders, and so on. Royal charters were granted in 1542,and in 1557 which gave it a virtual monopoly to the English book trade.

Thus printers or publishers sometimes held the sole right to print, publish,and sell most books for long years. Moreover, regulations and licences were in the guild of the Stationers' Company, after which all of them should enter the Stationers' Register in order to print any books on payment of a small fee, fourpence in the early times. The first stationer to enter this book gained the copyright, which he could sell to any other comrade. On the other hand, some printers in London published texts or manuscripts without registry, copyright,and author's consent. From the half of 16th to the 18th century the trade changed a little the function, in which printers, publishers, and booksellers had their own profession and right. Nevertheless, they resisted the increasing and hard censors by the authorities, whereas literacy expanded steadily and the market for books brought them a greater income. It was because Queen Elizabeth protected them through her charters in 1559 and 1586(Star Chamber). The latter decree granted their printing only in London, except for one press each in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The Stationers' Company did every possible policy to keep its monopoly and support the Queen. The booksellers, guild of the Stationers' Company, found themselves over the craftsmen as other London companies did. Printers and publishers slowly declined and worked under the directions of stationers or booksellers, whose guild itself became a

publishing organization, occupied advantages, and bought up more copies of the books on its own account.They regulated most of the printing houses in London through their leasing patents by 1640, but their monopoly with no foreign stimulus caused British book trade to follow the Continent in production. In the 17 century they thrived and declined with the time, while printers, publishers, and booksellers separated finally their occupation from one another.

The next item to discuss is the population, which is relative, except for literacy, to the book market. The total population is estimated as follows in Tudor England, including Wales.

1524---230,000

1541---270,000

1550---290,000

1569---320,000

1599---400,000

and

in 1520 6% of the population lived in urban areas (towns of over 4,000 people).

in 1520 3% of the population lived in London.

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