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From the Editor-in-Chief

It is commonly said that the printing press was invented by Gutenberg and modern printing derived from it. This is partly true, as until then, there was no printing method available in Europe, but if you look at Asia, printing of books existed hundreds of years before in China. They even invented the movable type, but it was replaced by the woodblock printing which was much more practical for them then.

Of course the method developed by Gutenberg should be given due credit as it endured almost unchanged for five centuries. We must also note, however, that the success of Gutenberg's press might not have been accomplished if other factors in society had not ripened, such as literacy, people's desire for information and economic development.

As such, the success of publishing cannot be accomplished with printing technology alone. It requires a constant supply of materials, basic infrastructure and above all, the reading environment of the society. With the progress of technology, various forms of "printing" are appearing, which may answer present needs. But at the same time, it is essential to know the most practical method in your own environment. Take, for instance, the situations in urban and

remote areas. Remember that woodblock printing was the most effective method for centuries in East Asia, and because it flourished, they were able to nurture the reading culture that enabled the successful utilization of "modern printing".

The articles carried in this issue will give some ideas of the state of printing in two countries and a look at future possibilities. I hope these articles will enhance exchange of information and discussions for the future of publishing.

ACCU is presently conducting a "book study" of Asian and Pacific countries, which will serve as the basis for the development of a strategic framework for improving the situation of books and reading. Utilizing reference materials and network developed in the last three decades, we should be able to draw practical recommendations which will benefit people in the region.

Lastly, I thank all you readers who replied to the questionnaires enclosed in the last issue. They will be analysed and utilized for further improvement of ABD.



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