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Japanese Business Law in Western Languages.

An Annotated Selective Bibliography

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The proliferation of transnational commercial interaction and expansion of globalization over the past half-century has given rise to an increased interest in Japan. During this period, Japan has cemented itself as a global leader in terms of economics, politics, societal order, education, technology, and law. Despite Japan's recent economic and political challenges, the majority of the world continues to admire Japan for its stability, drive, innovation, and overall quality of life. Japan stands as a world economic power and functions as significant player in the world's most dynamic region.

As foreign entities have looked to tap into the third biggest economy in the world, the interest in Japan's legal system and its laws has grown exponentially. Externally, foreign businesspeople and their legal advisors have sought comprehensive information regarding the country and its laws as a precursor to potential or continuing economic engagement with Japanese trading partners or consumers. Also, comparative scholars have expanded their analysis of Japanese law in Western languages to the point that an outsider can now acquire a solid understanding of Japan's legal system and various aspects of its law. Additionally, other countries have studied and even modeled their economic and legal systems after Japan as they look to its ideas, economic prowess, and incorporation of foreign influences. In fact, the socio-economic crisis that ensnared Japan immediately before the turn of the century fueled significant internal reforms in established laws, policies, and legal institutions. To retool itself and prepare for the future, Japan decided to revamp its laws and bring the legal system closer to the people. This has led to a renewed interest in Japan and its laws.

Against this backdrop, the second edition of *Japanese Business Law in Western Languages: An Annotated Selective Bibliography* is extremely timely and very well done. The pronounced intention of the Bibliography is to make the "growing literature on Japanese law in English more readily accessible" (p. 5). Fortunately, the Bibliography achieves this goal. For those whose Japanese reading skills are limited or non-existent, the Bibliography is a vital tool to gain a greater understanding about Japan and its laws. Even for those who can read legal source materials in Japanese, however, this compendium of sources is incredibly valuable. In a world saturated with information, it is often difficult to sift through databases, libraries, and the Internet to locate all of the pertinent, authoritative, useful resources related to any area of the law. This is particularly true as it relates to source materials that address Japan's legal system and Japanese business law.

Over the past several decades, an increasingly rich body of materials on Japanese law has emerged from a host of experts, scholars, and authorities from various regions around the world. In Japan itself, a growing body of literature on Japanese law in English has also appeared. This includes both secondary materials and primary legal materials translated into English. In an effort to make Japanese law more transparent to the international business community and the world as a whole, the Japanese government and academic communities have also made a concerted effort to translate primary source materials into English.

The Bibliography is rich in content and detail. It is a useful tool both for novices and experts in Japanese law including legal practitioners, foreign observers, researchers, teachers, students, and others interested in delving into the world of Japanese law, business, politics, and even society. The Bibliography serves many functions and purposes.

First, in Part II, it provides an annotated guide to print and online resources published in Western languages that focus on Japanese law. These resources include translated statutes, dictionaries, periodicals, bibliographies, edited works as well as general works on Japanese law and Japanese business law. The authors offer useful descriptions for each important historical and modern work included in this comprehensive section.

Second, in Part III, the Bibliography dives even deeper into the field by presenting a selective compendium of books, book chapters, substantive articles, and papers published between 1970 and 2012. The authors catalog these each work into seventeen general topic areas and fifty-seven subareas. To the credit of the authors, the publications list extends well beyond Japanese business law and directs the reader to Japanese legal materials in a broader context. More specifically, the authors lay the foundation for their Japanese business law listings with a description of works addressing Japan's legal philosophy, legal history, governance, courts, legal profession, constitution, and attitude towards international and comparative law. Upon this foundation, the Bibliography sets forth an exhaustive list of legal works that capture the interplay between the law and business in Japan. Listings include source material about civil law, trade, investment, company law, commercial law, labor law, social security, financial markets, intellectual property rights, competition, tax, and other matters. Understandably, the Bibliography does not reference works that do not intersect with Japanese business law.

Finally, legal systems and the law influence all segments of society. The law defines the important social norms, establishes priorities, and settles the boundaries of acceptable behavior. It also influences relationships, politics, and economic activity. In this light, the Bibliography successfully sets out to further an "interdisciplinary approach to Japanese law" that is often "more rewarding, both theoretically and in practice, than one exclusively restricted to law journals in a narrow sense" (p. 8). As such, anyone interested in interdisciplinary matters, including economics and sociology, would be wise to take advantage of this work.

In the decade from 1996 through 2005, Japanese policymakers adopted a constant stream of revisionary legislation that targeted companies, financial institutions, the legal

system, and citizenry as a whole. Given the ramifications and effects of Japan's recent wholesale reevaluation of its political, economic, and legal structure, the updated second edition of the Bibliography is a welcome addition to the library of anyone interested Japan and Japanese business law.

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