

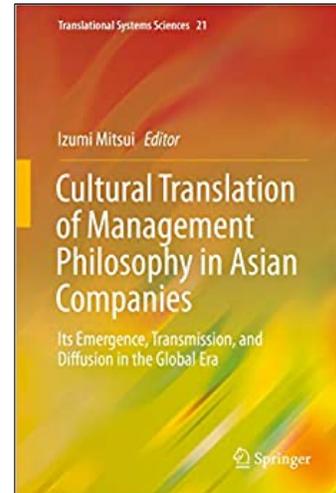
Izumi Mitsui (Ed.), **Cultural Translation of Management Philosophy in Asian Companies: Its Emergence, Transmission, and Diffusion in the Global Era**, Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2020, 155 pp., \$78.65 (hardcover).

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Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an important theme that has drawn wide attention in business administration research and practice in the era of increasing globalization, digitalized society, and deteriorating environment. Linguistic barriers and cultural conflicts also arise in cross-cultural communication between a company's domestic headquarters and overseas subsidiaries that have different social and cultural backgrounds. Against this backdrop, an anthropological approach to business administration and business ethics has been a prevailing topic (Mitsui, 2013; Nakamaki Hioki, Mitsui, & Takeuchi, 2016, Nakamaki, Hioki, Sumihara, & Mitsui, 2019). ***Cultural Translation of Management Philosophy in Asian Companies: Its Emergence, Transmission, and Diffusion in the Global Era*** is a timely investigation of the dynamic process of global transmission of management philosophy from an interdisciplinary perspective of business administration, communication studies, behavior studies, sociology, and translation studies.



The volume consists of nine chapters, or nine papers by 12 Japanese researchers. Chapter 1 proposes a conceptual/analytic framework of cultural translation and lays a theoretical foundation for the subsequent discussion in the rest of the book. Editor Izumi Mitsui holds that “cultural translation” is not simply a transfer of language but also is part of the “language—recognition—action triangle” (p. 3) and that “management philosophy” is a spatial-and-temporal diffusion of the actual condition of the philosophy, including its generation, continuation in a temporal fashion, and transmission in a spatial way (p. 5). There are two methods in the translational process of culture: translation (practical cognition or cognitive practice) and displacement (practical action) (p. 3). The transmission of Panasonic’s management philosophy in its overseas expansion is a process of cultural translation in the interfacing of different cultures, which in turn leads to the creation of a new culture.

Chapters 2, 5, and 6 focus on the transmission of management philosophy of four Japanese companies. Chapter 2 examines the efforts and translations involved in transmitting the management philosophy of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. based on participant observation and interviews. Honda maintains the core of its management philosophy with partial revision and modification so as to adapt to the overseas expansion. It propagates and practices management philosophy through education, training, and personnel

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evaluation so that the transference of management philosophy enables employees to realize the corporate dream. Chapter 5 conducts four case studies on cross-cultural communication between dispatched managers and local employees in Japanese companies. Due to educational peculiarities, young Chinese employees, unlike their middle-aged colleagues, are not affected by the inertia of the former system and accept without resistance Matsushita Electric Industrial's management philosophy. The process of transmitting management philosophy includes not only the manifest function and instruction of local employees but also the latent function--the growth of dispatched managers as international citizens with a broad perspective. Based on a case study of Yakult Group, chapter 6 describes Yakult Lady's evolution from simply selling products to embodying the foundation of corporate philosophy with its overseas expansion. Besides Yakult Group's company philosophy, other ideas like "popularization" and "delivery" are communicated and cherished among those engaged in the Yakult business. In the Yakult Lady Dealer System, a unique sales method deployed by the group, Yakult Lady's role varies with economic, social, and cultural situation in each country, so sales companies need to appoint those ladies as regular employees on a consignment sale contract.

Chapters 3 and 7 explore the creation of corporate philosophy in a transitional period. Rakuten, a Japanese e-commerce company, regards "Five Principles for Success" as a code of conduct for employees in 1999, defines "Brand Concepts" in 2006, and establishes "Rakuten Basic Principles" in 2008 (p. 36). Rakuten changes the sense of time and emphasizes "Speed!! Speed!! Speed!!" as one of its Five Principles for Success. With its new goals of Englishization and globalization, it gradually bases its corporate philosophy on its mission, practices, and two core values of "empowerment" and "merchant first," present through significant environmental changes inside and outside the company. Ningbo Fotile Group, a Chinese family business, develops its Confucianism-based management philosophy during China's shift from a high-growth economy to a low-growth one. After several ups and downs, Fotile stipulates its management philosophy, composed of mission ("to make our home better"), vision ("to be a world-class company respected by everyone"), and core value (*sanpinheyi*, namely, the integration of three characters: character of the people, character of the company, and character of products; pp. 113-115). It practices its management philosophy by having built Confucius Hall and encouraging employees to read Confucian classics. As a representative of Chinese family businesses faced with the challenge of "structural weakness," Fotile attempts to control its excessive pursuit of profits, foster a cooperation-like sense of unity, and fulfill its CSR.

Chapters 4, 8, and 9 expound the penetration of management philosophy into three Asian companies' overseas branches against changing contexts. In chapter 4, Olympus Corporation is proved to be an excellent example of the book's main focus--"cultural translation of the management philosophy." Olympus's corporate philosophy is not regarded as unchangeable and continuous but regularly reviewed in the context of company growth. The evolution of the corporate philosophy is related to and forms the foundation of the five significant stages of the 100-year-old company. Chapter 8 investigates Samsung's management philosophy of "contribution," "human resources," and "the pursuit of rationality" (p. 126) as well as its core values of five elements: people, excellence, change, integrity, and coprosperity (p. 129). The process and mechanism of penetrating and diffusing Samsung's management philosophy is based on the administrators' "message-driven management," suggestive parables, and impressive performances and the employees' correct understanding and flexible application of the messages to their everyday work. Chapter 9 explores the transformation of LG Electronics' management philosophy centering on "value

creation for customers” and “human-centered management.” LG’s management strategy after the Asian financial crisis undergoes a shift to its global strategy, a shift to a high value-added strategy, and a shift from a strategy of business expansion to that of industrial specialization.

The book is characterized by four remarkable features. First, it adds a new frontier chapter to *Springer Nature’s Translational Systems Sciences Series* by providing a conceptual/analytic framework and practical guidance for the application of 21st-century socioeconomic systems in translational, transitional, and transdisciplinary contexts. Second, it is a collaboration between academia and industry. The volume is the aggregation of intercultural participants’ wisdom, as researchers, practitioners, company leaders from Japan, South Korea, and China have joined rounds of in-depth discussions on CSR as a small step toward cross-cultural communication and concerted efforts in the global era. Third, it is a typical interdisciplinary research, because the team is made up of 12 researchers from a wide scope of subject areas like management studies, cultural anthropology, and sociology, and the nine chapters study the emergence, transmission, and diffusion of Asian companies’ management philosophies from various academic aspects. Finally, the research is conducted by multiple methods. By applying an anthropological approach to business philosophy, the nine chapters adopt such methods as literature review, diachronic analysis, interview, field research, and participant observation.

However, the book has room for improvement. In terms of layout, it would be better organized if arranged in the order of introduction (chapter 1), emergency (chapters 3 and 7), transmission (chapters 2, 5 and 6), and diffusion of management philosophy (chapters 4, 8 and 9) rather than in the order of Japanese, South Korean, and Chinese companies. Furthermore, the volume would form an echo with chapter 1 if a concluding chapter were added to summarize common principles and successful strategies of transmitting and diffusing management philosophies based on comparison and contrast between the 15 case studies. In terms of research subject and object, it is necessary to interview more people and conduct more surveys, for example, in the case of the study on Yakult Lady in chapter 6 so as to further the general applicability and repetition of those findings. In terms of key concepts, “cultural translation,” “management philosophy,” and “company/corporate philosophy” need a stricter definition and clearer differentiation.

All in all, the volume is one of the most comprehensive investigations of the emergence, transmission, and diffusion of management philosophy of global companies in East Asian countries. It is theoretically significant for researchers and students in management studies, anthropology, translation studies, etc., and practically valuable for entrepreneurs, employers, and employees in global companies as well as bicultural and multicultural people engaged in cross-cultural communication.

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