Lives in History, History in Lives: Shibusawa Keizo and His Vision of "Jitsugyô-shi" Museum[1]

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I. Introduction

This paper deals with two strata of memory: one stratum is the memory of common people and a particular time in history that one individual tried to capture through material culture, and the other is the memory of that individual that seems curiously obscure in public discourse today. That individual's name is Shibusawa Keizo (1896-1963), who served as governor of the Bank of Japan in 1944 and as Minister of Finance in 1945 right after WWII. He was also a family successor to his renowned grandfather, Shibusawa Ei'ichi (1840-1931), the so-called "father of Japanese capitalism." When Keizo passed away in 1963 at the age of 67, he was on the board of more than thirty companies, and his son, Masahide, writes, "Indeed, my father's social role was in the financial world, and he had a (business) career respectable enough for a grandson of Shibusawa Ei'ichi" (Shibusawa 1966:26).

The focus of this paper, however, is not Keizo's career as a financier. He also had a substantial career in academe, and that is what this presentation deals with. Keizo is most always listed as one of the giants in the Folklore Studies of Japan (*minzokugaku*), along with Yanagita Kunio (1872-1962), Orikuchi Shinobu (1887-1957), and Minakata Kumagusu (1867-1941). Yet, when asked what constitutes Keizo's reputation as a giant in Folklore, most people would not know the answer. Even to those interested in *minzokugaku* or anthropology, Keizo is probably best known for his role as a patron of researchers and field workers, such as Miyamoto Tsuneichi (1907-1981).

One reason why it is rather difficult to identify the essence of Keizo's academic career could be that it spanned a wide spectrum of activities. He founded and led a private research institution called the Attic Museum, was a publisher of ethnographic reports, monographs and research papers, coordinated many field trips, collected tens of thousands of folk artifacts

[1] This is a working paper. Please do not quote without permission.

(*mingu*) most of which are now housed in the National Museum of Ethnology and the National Institute of Japanese Literature, laid the groundwork for many resource centers, and wrote about various subject matters including the history of the Japanese fishing industry. As a patron, he mentored anthropologists, folklorists and historians among others and funded a number of intellectual endeavors. Oka Shigeo, the older brother of a Japanese anthropologist, Oka Masao, and a publisher who specialized in folklore and anthropology wrote that Keizo supported struggling scholars on the condition that the name of the sponsor not be revealed (Oka 1974).

Keizo's career and life trajectories are unique in a sense that it is hard to pinpoint exactly what or who he was. Keizo originally hoped to become a biologist—he had nurtured love for animals since childhood and was going to major in science. Unfortunately, however, his father, Tokuji, the oldest son of Ei'ichi, was more interested in arts than in business. He did not follow Ei'ichi's footsteps and, moreover, left his family for his mistress. This stirred up quite a scandal for Shibusawa family in those days. Ei'ichi disowned Tokuji in 1913 when Keizo was 17.

When Keizo was 19, Ei'ichi, who was 75, came to him in formal attire and asked to enter the bank business, saying, "Would you please listen to me. I beg you" (Sano 1998:187). Young Keizo, who had been suffering poor health caused by the family trouble, did not have a heart to say "No" to his grandfather. Years later, he recounted the episode of giving up his childhood dream, saying to his son, "It was so sad—I couldn't help but feel terribly sad" (Shibusawa 1966:31). As mentioned earlier, Keizo did have a successful career in the business world. However, after his death at the age of 67, his son, Masahide, discovered a handwritten letter in his desk entitled, "My Wishes" (*Kibôsho*). In it, Keizo wrote, "Because of some fate, I put myself in the business world […] but what I considered as my foremost life was, after all, the life of scholarship" (Shibusawa 1966:86-7).

Keizo had worn two hats throughout his adult life—one as a financier/banker, the other as a devotee to academe. However, as I mentioned earlier, despite his commitment and generosity toward helping researchers and promoting scholarship, Keizo's fame has not become as wide-spread as that of the other *minzokugaku* giant, Yanagita Kunio. This has led several Japanese writers to characterize Keizo as a "forgotten" great man (Iijima 2005; Sano 1996).

His academic reputation is even more obscure abroad. During my training in cultural anthropology in the US, I rarely ran into an American anthropologist specializing in Japan who knew of Shibusawa Keizo. This was a surprise, as I had imagined folklore and anthropology to

be close cousins. More recently, I attended for the first time a JAWS (Japan Anthropology Workshop) Meeting in Hong Kong, and I had several people, looking at my affiliation listed on the nametag, asked me who Shibusawa Ei'ichi was. When I said, "Shibusawa Ei'ichi is called the father of Japanese capitalism. Have you heard of the name, Shibusawa Keizo? Ei'ichi is Keizo's grandfather," it only added confusion. I did not meet anyone who knew Keizo at an Anthropology of Japan conference.

For someone who has been thinking about the issue of borders in academia—disciplinary and national borders—Keizo is an interesting figure to examine. He strikes me as an example of a border-crossing scholar who went beyond the prevalent image of Japanese academics (or bankers for that matter), and I have been wondering whether or not his border-crossing-ness was the reason why he has been rather overlooked by the general public. Examining his academic career might reveal the unknown aspects of the academic culture/tradition of Japan and show us the new ways to understand the history of social science in Japan.

In order to show the uniqueness of Keizo's methodology and vision, I am focusing on one particular project of his, the *Jitsugyô-shi* Museum, roughly translated as the "Museum of Business History.[2]" Despite a great amount of time, energy and money invested in the planning process, the museum was never realized due to WWII. After the plan of building the museum collapsed, the *jitsugyô-shi* collection had existed quietly in the storage of the National Institute of Japanese Literature (NIJL) for half a century, utilized occasionally by those who knew of its existence. In the next section, I will delineate the life trajectory of the *jitsugyô-shi* collection.

II. The Life Trajectory of the *Jitsugyô-shi* Collection

After graduating from the University of Tokyo with a degree in economics, Keizo was employed by Yokohama Shôkin Bank. Soon, he was sent to London and stayed there for three years (1922-1925). Traveling around Europe allowed him to visit various museums, which led him to become a strong advocate for creating museums and resource centers in Japan; he believed that museums were a way to gauge how cultured the nation and its people were (Shibusawa, undated ms.[3]). After returning to Tokyo in 1925, he resumed the activities of the Attic Museum and began collecting toys and folk artifacts seriously with the help from many

[2] How to translate *Jistugyô-shi* Museum is an essential question. I will discuss this later in the paper.
[3] This manuscript is entitled "Hitotsu no Teian" (A Proposal) in which Keizo states the reasons why he wished to build the museum and lays out the plans for it. It is assumed to be composed for the purpose of fund raising.

colleagues, friends, family members and relatives. From this point on, the Attic Museum began transforming itself into an active private research institution.

In 1931, Ei'ichi died at the age of 91 and, thereby, Keizo, at age 34, succeeded the peerage and became a viscount. Several years later, Keizo drafted an idea to build a museum that was to elucidate the process of the economic development of modern Japan. This museum in the original proposal was named, *"Shibusawa Sei'en-ô Kinen Jitsugyô Hakubutsukan (Kinsei Keizaishi Hakubutsukan)"* [Museum in Commemoration of Shibusawa Ei'ichi (Museum of the History of Modern Economics)] (Shibusawa, undated ms.). As indicated in the name, it was going to be a museum that would illuminate the legacy of Ei'ichi (Shibusawa Museum 2001:3; Tsuchiya 1979:265).

The plan was to build the museum at Asukayama where the Shibusawa residence stood. The three-story concrete building was to have a section for commemorating Ei'ichi[4], a section for overviewing the history of Japanese economy from the Bunka-Bunsei era (1793-1841) through the end of the Meiji era (1868-1912)[5], and another section for displaying the portraits of those who contributed to the development of Japanese business and economy[6] (Shibusawa, undated ms.).

On May 13, 1939, as a part of the centennial cerebration for Shibusawa Ei'ichi, they held a *jichin-sai*, a Shinto ceremony to purify the building site. Around this time, with a man named Endo Takeshi on board, the collection of the materials had gained momentum. Keizo paid for every purchase (Tsuchiya ibid.) and, although he consulted others regarding what items to collect, it was eventually his decision what to buy (Aoki, personal communication 2005; see also Endo 1979). The collection consisted of documents, photographs, objects, and pictorial art including *nishiki-e* (woodblock prints) and maps, all of which shared one theme: they were related to or indicated some kind of business activities during Japan's modernization process.[7]

Today, the collection counts more than 35,000 items—an amazing feat to accomplish during wartime. According to Prof. Aoki at the NIJL, records show that nearly half of the collection was purchased between 1937 and 39 (Aoki, personal communication 2005). Endo

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[4] "青淵翁記念室"
[5] "近世経済史展観室"
[6] "肖像室"
[7] The collection is categorized in the following eleven groups by the NIJL (the numbers are as of May 20, 2005): (1) 絵画 (1629 pieces); (2) 地図 (348 pieces); (3) 番付 (261 pieces); (4) 竹森文庫 (2493 pieces); (5)古紙幣 (7496 pieces); (6) 器物資料 (9765 pieces); (7)文書 & (8) 書籍 (11117 pieces— still in the process of counting); (9) 広告 (572 pieces); (10) 写真 (2506 pieces); (11) 博物館準備室アーカイブズ (1251 pieces).

himself wrote that, with the war rapidly exacerbating, Keizo and he had invested more energy than ever to collect items from 1939 until 1941 when Endo was called up for service. They were very concerned that things would be lost forever, unless they collected them then (Endo 1979:297). Economic control was underway, and the construction of the museum had to be postponed but, nevertheless, Keizo requested that Endo continue to build the collection.

In 1942, Keizo resigned from the position at Dai'ichi Bank and became vice-president of the Bank of Japan. This meant that he had to move the *jitsugyô-shi* collection from a room in the Dai'ichi Bank building. After some deliberation, Keizo purchased a residence of the late Sakatani Yoshiro (1863-1941), the husband of his aunt, the former mayor of Tokyo and Finance Minister, and moved the entire collection there in December 1944. The following year in March, Tokyo was bombed and destroyed. As fire surrounded the Sakatani house, Endo, who had been released from the military duty, was up all night, fighting flames. He writes, "There was no way to express my joy when dawn broke and (the house) remained there without being consumed by fire. The other side of the street was all burned down while I watched helplessly, totally exhausted" (Endo 1979:298).

Five months later, Japan surrendered. In October 1945, Keizo was appointed to be the Finance Minister of the Shidehara Cabinet, and he took up, among others, the task of dissolving the zaibatsu system including his own Shibusawa zaibatsu. More than ever before, Keizo was buried under his public duties; besides, in the chaos of the postwar days, it was impossible to realize the plan of constructing the museum. In 1951, the collection was entrusted to what was then called the Ministry of Education Archives (文部省大学学術局史料館, currently NIJL)[8] and, in June 1962, it was officially donated to them (Kokubungaku Kenkyû Shiryô-kan Shiryô-kan[9] 1991:82-5). Accompanying the collection, Endo became a researcher at the museum (Endo 1979:299). The Attic Museum collection was also donated to the Archives, but they were moved to the National Museum of Ethnology ("Minpaku") in November 1975 (Kokubungaku Kenkyû Shiryô-kan Shiryô-kan 1991:89).

Today, the *jitsugyô-shi* collection is still stored in the backrooms of the NIJL. The collection is not on display, but people can request to see it if accompanied by staff members. The materials have been digitized, and the *nishiki-e* are viewable on their website.[10] Their plan is to eventually make most of the items in the collection accessible on their website. Along

[8] According to Endo, it was April of 1949 that they donated the entire collection to NIJL (Endo 1979:299).
[9] 国文学研究資料館史料館
[10] http://archives2.nijl.ac.jp/jkdb-index.htm (August 27, 2005)

with their effort to organize and digitize the collection, the NIJL has launched a project to analyze it from various angles. One of the things they are currently examining is the ledger in which details of purchase—what, from whom, and how much—is recorded. Their efforts continue to understand the process by which the collection was built.

A recent turn of events for the *jitsugyô-shi* collection is that the Shibusawa Ei'ichi Memorial Foundation, currently headed by Keizo's son, Masahide, has taken up the concept of *jitsugyô-shi* as a new theme for its Research Department, Museum, and the Resource Center for the History of Entrepreneurship.

Masahide became aware of the existence of the *jitsugyô-shi* collection for the first time in May 2003 (Shibusawa, personal communication 2004). There was an opening ceremony in Misawa, Aomori, for an exhibition about Shibusawa Keizo and the Attic Museum, to which Masahide was invited along with Prof. Yamada of the NIJL. The NIJL happened to be busy at the time putting together a list of assets to submit to the Ministry of Education[11]. There, Yamada presented a partial list of the assets to Masahide, who came to realize that there existed such a collection built by his father (Aoki, personal communication 2005; Yamada, personal communication 2005). In retrospect, Masahide says, while he had known about the activities of the Attic Museum, he was not cognizant of his father's activities regarding the *jitsugyô-shi* collection (personal communication 2004, 2005). He attributes this to the fact that, while the Attic Museum was attached to the family residence, the *Jitsugyô-shi* Museum's Preparatory Room was away from home, housed in his father's bank.

The knowledge about the *jitsugyô-shi* collection prompted Masahide to pursue, as a theme for the Shibusawa Foundation, his father's idea of *jitsugyô-shi*. One example of utilizing the concept is the exhibition held at the St, Louis Mercantile Library at the University of Missouri – St. Louis in the summer of 2004. Jointly organized by the Shibusawa Museum and the Mercantile Library, it was entitled, "*Nichibei Jitsugyô-shi Kurabe:* Different Lands/Shared Experiences: The Emergence of Modern Industrial Society in Japan and the United States." I will leave the task to discuss the exhibition to the next presenters of this panel—my final task for this presentation is to explore what Keizo meant by "*jitsugyô-shi*."

III. What is *"Jitsugyô-shi"*?

While Shibusawa Foundation currently uses *jitsugyô-shi* as its guiding theme for its future projects, each member of the Foundation would perhaps have his or her unique interpretation if

[11] To be precise, it was the "Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology."

asked what exactly *jitsugyô-shi* means.

"What is "*jitsugyô-shi*?" is an interesting and important question. I thought about this question first when I was deliberating last year how to translate the term into English. If you remember, earlier in this presentation, I have translated "*Jitsugyô-shi* Museum" as the "Museum of Business History." But it is only a tentative—and, in my opinion, somewhat inadequate—translation. To those of us who have seen the content of Keizo's *jitsugyô-shi* collection, it is much more than the English word, "business," connotes.

I've had discussions with several US scholars in cultural anthropology, art history, and history, trying to come up with a better translation, and we always ended up trying to figure out what *jitsugyô* really meant. It was a word not unfamiliar to us, yet what exactly it meant was rather ambiguous. According to the Kôjien dictionary, the definition of "*jitsugyô*" is the "business related to production and economy such as agriculture, manufacturing, trade, and fishery[12]," but in today's vocabulary, we would only use it in words such as "*jitsugyô-ka*" (business man; entrepreneur), "*jitsugyô-kai*" (business world) or maybe "*jitsugyô-dan yakyû*" (baseball team of the corporate league).

As mentioned earlier, Keizo proposed to collect materials from the Bunka-Bunsei era through the Meiji era, because, in his own words, that was "The period during which there were more epoch-making changes than any other time[13]" (Shibusawa, undated ms.). When we are looking at the *jitsugyô-shi* collection, 'people' are tangible as an active agent, living through the "epoch-making" period. In the collection, there are shop signs and the advertisements of new products and services; workers' tools; *nishiki-e* portraying people with the new technologies such as electricity, locomotives, western-style factories, multi-story buildings, and world expos; black and white photographs taken on the streets or at workplaces. We feel the presence of ordinary people who lived and worked as well as they could, adapting to external changes, trying to make sense of their world.

Eventually, it dawned on me that *jitsugyô* could mean "*jitsu no waza*,[14]" i.e., "actual practices of people." The Chinese character, "*jitsu*," means "substantial" and "real"; "*waza*" means "practice" (like "action" and "doing"), "job," and even "techniques" and "skills." "*Jitsu no waza*," or "*makoto no waza*," lead us to think about the actual, 'real' work that people do in order to survive everyday life. Coincidentally, Ted Bestor, a cultural anthropologist at Harvard University, translated "*Jitsugyô-shi* Museum" as the "Museum of Real-life Practices" at the

[12]「農業、工業、商業、水産などのような生産、経済に関する事業」
[13]「経済史上最モ画期的変化ノアリシ」
[14] "実の業"

workshop on the *jitsugyô-shi* collection held at the Reischauer Institute a year ago. I thought it was a beautiful interpretation of Keizo's concept, which situates him in contemporary anthropological thinking.

As an anthropologist, I am fully in tune with the idea to show historical dynamics through the vantage point of individuals, and it is my hunch that this was the foundation of Keizo's conception of the *Jitsugyô-shi* Museum. Several Japanese researchers who have studied the *jitsugyô-shi* collection agree that Keizo tried to show the process of industrialization from the eyes of common folks (Aoki personal communication 2005; Inoue 2004).

While Keizo admired and shared a special bond with his grandfather (see, for instance, Shibusawa 1966:29-31), his design for the museum was much more than just to show how great Ei'ichi was. Although the museum was named "Shibusawa Ei'ichi Memorial Museum" and one room was to be dedicated to Ei'ichi, the largest in—and perhaps central to—the collection was going to be the "*kinsei keizai-shi tenkan-shitsu*," a room to overview the history of modern economy. Shibusawa Masahide, Keizo's son, has said, "I think Keizo wanted to show how ordinary people lived through the new era that was brought to them by his grandfather. He wanted to show how Ei'ichi's doing affected people and changed their lives" (personal communication 2004).

I tend to agree with this view—In the design of *Jitsugyô-shi* Museum, I see Keizo's intention to capture people as an active agent, who interact with social, political, and economic forces. There was his grandfather—an individual who lived a dramatic life while his country was facing the drastic changes; there was the West; then, there were real people who, in their own places, innovated life strategies by living through such changes. Keizo paid attention to each one of them as an active participant in making history. History is a process by which multiple forces discursively construct.

I am not yet ready to give the definitive translation of the word, *jitsugyô-shi*. In order to do so, as Sato Kenji, a professor of Cultural Resources Studies at the University of Tokyo, has pointed out, we need to look into the local (indigenous) meaning of "*jitsugyô*" as used in those days.[15] He also says deciding how to translate "*Jitsugyô-shi Hakubutsukan*" into English is to carefully examine Keizo's conception of *jitsugyô-shi* (personal communication 2005). This is a future task for those of us interested in situating Keizo in the map of social science in modern Japan. Analyses of the *jitsugyô-shi* collection have just started, and I am sure that it would add tremendously to our understanding of Shibusawa Keizo and his role in the production of

[15] Sato calls for our attention to examining whether the word "*jitsugyô*" has something to do with the idea originated in Western social science that links industrialization with positivism.

knowledge in modern Japan.

IV. Future Research

Before concluding this presentation, let me mention a few more points regarding the future possibilities of research on Shibusawa Keizo. In the beginning, I pointed out the curious obscurity of Keizo in public discourse. Even in Japan, Keizo tends to be regarded merely as a patron of folklore and ethnology or as the leader of the Attic Museum who has contributed to the study of the material culture of Japan. When looking into his life, however, he is much more than that. I am genuinely impressed with the wide range of activities in which he was involved. The other thing that is notable (and interesting) about Keizo is his commitment to helping the development of scholarship[16]; he seemed almost selfless and genuinely generous in his support to other scholars and academic endeavors. This is testified by so many individuals, and I think examining his attitude and philosophy behind this generosity would be a worthwhile project.

Although it is quite easy to find compliments toward Keizo, Aoki at the NIJL is certain that Keizo was criticized in those days. For instance, he collected items that would have been regarded as "junk" by more conventional historians; some might have regarded Keizo's methodology as "a rich man buying up a storm just because he had money" (Aoki, personal communication 2005). Apparently, Keizo did not make ordinary judgments regarding the 'quality' of artifacts, and he sought to build a comprehensive collection, leaving room for viewers to make their own judgment.

Shibusawa Masahide once wrote, "Society in those days did not necessarily understand the value of my father's scholarship, but he himself was convinced that he'd had struck the right vein and moved forward bravely to the direction he had wished to go" (Shibusawa 1979:341). Aoki thinks that finding the literature critical of Keizo would be useful in locating him in relation to the academic map at that time.

I said in the beginning of this paper that some people have characterized Keizo as forgotten. A more accurate way to describe the current situation surrounding the life and career of Shibusawa Keizo is perhaps that his place in the history of Japanese social science is yet to be determined and that he remains a person who is hard to pigeonhole. A biographical approach is useful in a case like this: exploring the life and career trajectories of an individual almost always gives us new knowledge and concomitant insights about the society and culture.

[16] My thanks to Alan Christy for the discussion about this.

It allows us to pick up the information we have overlooked and to recognize the layers of discourses that are not the mainstream but are still very present.

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