Summary of Notes from Murahashi-san

1. Shashi (Japanese Company History) publication trend

Shashi has been constantly getting published approximately 200 titles per year. As a recent trend, many companies that started their business in Meiji era, commemorated their 100 years of business and published their centennial issues. To review new titles on Japanese company history books, the following publications are useful:

Kaishashi keizai dantaishi sogo mokuroku tsuuroku. Shashi Kenkyukai Senmon Toshokan Kyogikai Kanto Chiku Kyogikai

Issue # 53 covers the period of 1/2002 – 12/2004

Issue #55 covers the period of 1/2003 – 12/2005

A copy costs 5,000 yen (tax excluded)

2. Recently published reference book and a database to support Shashi research


Includes information on name changes of 4,317 major Japanese companies. One can check the company names that are not currently existing by their past names. Also, entries are indexed by industrial types.

Ginko hensenshi database by Tokyo Ginko Kyokai Chosabu Ginko Toshokan
http://www.zenginkyo.or.jp/hensen/index.html

Includes the profiles of all banks established in Japan since Meiji era. Free database. Updated every 3 months.

3. Murahashi-san’s activities

- Preparing for updating Kaishashi sogo mokuroku zoho kaiteiban published in 1996.
- Working on the Shashi database project funded by the Shibusawa Foundation.
- Providing consultations to Shashi editors of many companies and also holding the Shashi forum to discuss important editing issues, such as making chronological tables, indexes and how to gather resources, etc.
- Contributing articles on philosophy of Japanese entrepreneur’s life by studying and referring to Shashi publications and also working on books.
- Joined to the Nikkei Industrial Heritage Project and participated in the forum as a panelist etc. Also, participating in the panel discussion that takes place on 3/27
Generally speaking, Shashi has not been a reading material that attracted much readership. However, as you might see, there are many ways to make use of the information contained in Shashi publications.

As a recent phenomenon, it is frequently mentioned that the library community needs to support business sectors’ information needs. The libraries that are eager to support the business sector incline to collect Shashi and intend to make use of them. However, no matter how many Shashi titles a library holds, it is going to be useless treasures if a library cannot present how to utilize them. Unfortunately, at present, Japanese libraries are not making a good use out of Shashi resources. They need to make an effort toward better usage of Shashi publications.

Murahashi-san’s comment on Shashi group

I understand that your group will be discussing whether or not the group will be continued to exist. I hope that the group should consider remaining intact. If your group decided to keep intact, I think that it is important for your group to discuss the goals of the group activities and how to attain them. Otherwise, the group interest tends to disperse and the group members fail to see common ground.

I believe that there are unique ways to utilize Japanese company history publications for researchers in the USA, such as the role of key resources for Japanese culture etc. The first step you should consider is to collect Shashi publications. Next, consider what researchers can do with these Shashi publications. Then, consider how libraries can promote Shashi and assist researchers. Focus and prioritize the group activities accordingly, then, tackle with them one by one.