

Report on the Results of “Systematization of Nonwritten Cultural Materials  
for the Study of Human Societies” Kanagawa University 21<sup>st</sup> Century COE Program

# Multilingual Version of Pictopedia of Everyday Life in Medieval Japan compiled from picture scrolls, vol.1

Original version compiled by SHIBUSAWA Keizo, Institute for the Study of Japanese Folk Culture, Kanagawa University

Multilingual version translated and edited by Kanagawa University 21<sup>st</sup> Century COE Program Group 1

“Systematization of Illustrated Materials and its Dissemination”

**Editors**

John BOCCELLARI  
KIM Jeong Ah  
KIMI Yasumichi  
MAEDA Yoshihiko  
SUZUKI Akira

**Translators**

Ruth S.McCREERY (overview, 54-63)  
NAKAI Maki (1-38, 45-47, 64-98)  
ITANI Yoshie (39-44)  
Trinh Pompili KHANH (48-53)  
Timothy COLEMAN (99-162)

**The Kanagawa University 21<sup>st</sup> Century COE Program****Group1 “Systematization of Illustrated Materials and its Dissemination”**

John BOCCELLARI (Program Representative)  
CAI Wengao (Research Collaborater)  
FUKUTA Ajiro (Program Representative)  
KIKUCHI Isao (Joint Senior Researcher)  
KIMI Yasumichi (Joint Senior Researcher)  
KIM Jeong Ah (COE Lecturer)  
NAKAMURA Hiroko (COE Professor)  
NISHI Kazuo (Program Representative)  
MAEDA Yoshihiko (Program Representative)  
SASAKI Makoto (Joint Senior Researcher)  
SUZUKI Akira (Research Collaborater)  
SUZUKI Yoichi (Program Representative)  
TAJIMA Yoshiya (Program Representative)

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## Explanatory Notes to the Original Edition

1. The illustrations contained in this volume were produced by Murata Deigyū based on a faithful copy of the *Senmen koshakyo*, *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, *Chōjū giga*, *Shigisan engi*, *Gaki zōshi*, *Kitano Tenjin engi*.
2. The illustrations have been chosen from scenes in picture scrolls of everyday life of common people and aspects of aristocratic life pertinent to the life of ordinary people in modern times. An effort has been made not to focus on objects in isolation, but to situate everyday life in the context of its surrounding circumstances and activities.  
The illustrations are presented not in the order of their appearance in the original scroll, but according to the following categories:
  1. dwellings
  2. clothing
  3. food
  4. furniture, facilities, techniques
  5. earning one's living, livelihood
  6. transportation
  7. trade
  8. appearance, actions, work
  9. life, status, disease
  10. death, burial
  11. life of children
  12. entertainment, play, social life
  13. annual events
  14. gods, festivals, religion
  15. animals, vegetation, nature
3. Explanatory notes below each illustration are keyed to numbers appended to the items and activities figuring in it. Standard terminology has been used as much as possible; items of uncertain identity are indicated by a question mark.  
A circle around a number indicates a general category and a square indicates an activity.
4. Illustrations are numbered consecutively.
5. General explanations of the illustrations focus primarily on the topic chosen as the title of the illustration. Individual items are not explained in detail.
6. The works consulted in preparing the explanations include *Kojiruien*, *Kōbunko*, *Kojitsu sōsho*, *Kinsei fūzokushi*, *Kiyūshōran*, *Emaki* by Okudaira Hideo, and others; specific sources are not listed for individual illustrations.
7. The introductory note at the beginning of each picture scroll explains the following:
  1. The number of volumes, the date of the work, and the author
  2. The outline of the story and the value of the work as a source
8. This project is based on the conviction that there should be a pictorial index for pictorial materials comparable to dictionaries for written materials. It aims to compile such a pictorial index of ordinary life, but it is not intended to be a substitute for the original works, which, it is hoped, the reader will consult as far as possible. Consequently, elements regarded as nonessential to the present purpose have been omitted.

## Explanatory Notes to the English Edition

1. This is an English translation of the revised edition of *Pictorial Dictionary of Japanese Folk Culture*, vol.1, edited by SHIBUSAWA Keizo and the Institute for the Study of Japanese Folk Culture, Kanagawa University, and published from Heibonsha in 1984. This volume includes English translations of the explanatory notes and lists of items appearing in the illustrations. A multilingual version of the lists of items, and a glossary and index are included in a separate volume.
2. An effort has been made to keep the translation as faithful as possible to the original text, but in some cases obvious and simple mistakes have been corrected. Some long quotations from historical sources have been omitted as well.
3. In principle, the original Japanese terms have not been included in the text, but where an English equivalent is hard to find, romanized Japanese terms are given in italics. These terms are explained in the glossary contained in the separate volume.
4. The original text may contain inaccuracies judged from today's understanding of the historical situation, statements about "modern" conditions that are no longer true in 2007, or discriminatory expressions, yet these passages have been in general translated as they are, preserving the content of the original.

# Introduction to the English Edition

The story of how the original Japanese edition of this *Pictopedia of Everyday Life in Medieval Japan* was compiled begins before the Second World War with Shibusawa Keizo (澁澤敬三, 1896-1963). Shibusawa, grandson of the influential financier and entrepreneur Shibusawa Eiichi (澁澤栄一, 1840-1931), was himself a very “public person”, serving in the Cabinet of Prime Minister Shidehara and as director of the Bank of Japan, as well as being a leading business figure. However, he also had a very different claim to fame—prominent pioneer and promoter in the field of Japanese folk culture studies.

Shibusawa’s particular interest lay in the fields of *mingu* (民具), “folk implements” such as agricultural and fishery tools, and the history of fisheries in Japan. However, he was also instrumental in encouraging and promoting, both inspirationally and financially, a wide range of studies in what came to be called Japan’s “material culture” (物質文化), to this end establishing the “Attic Museum”, which developed into the Institute for the Study of Japanese Folk Culture (日本常民文化研究所). This Museum and Institute attracted a large number of young, talented researchers who later formed part of the core for post-war folk culture studies in Japan.

Shibusawa developed an interest in the Japanese art known as *emakimono* (絵巻物), picture scrolls. These scrolls contain stories, lavishly illustrated with pictures of scenes described in the text, concerning historical, fictional, or religious themes. He was especially interested in scrolls painted during the Heian and Kamakura periods, but not only for their great artistic value. He noticed that the great detail in the illustrations could provide a unique window into actual lifestyles of the people at that time, their clothing, homes, food, their interpersonal relations, their manner of walking and carrying things. In other words, he recognized their ability to show concretely what could only be surmised through readings of literary works or historical documents. If, he suggested, a dictionary, in Japanese a *jibiki* (字引), literally a “puller of characters”, can be created to allow us to “pull out” the meanings of words, why not make an *ebiki* (絵引) to “pull out” the meanings of the things and customs illustrated in these scrolls?

In 1940, Shibusawa formed a “study group” to explore the possibilities of such an “*ebiki*”. However, its research was interrupted by the war, and much of the initial work destroyed. It was in 1955 that the work was resumed, with a newly formed group. In those days before the advent of copy machines, digital cameras, and word processors, it was a task requiring much time and effort. Pertinent sections of each scroll were selected, and the painter Murata Deigyū (村田泥牛) would then painstakingly copy them in detail by hand. The group, meeting the last Sunday of each month, would then allocate numbers to the objects or activities in each sketch, giving special attention to those involving the “com-

mon people” rather than those in authority. After identifying each to the best of the group’s ability there would be discussion of the function, context, and significance. The folk culture specialist Miyamoto Tsuneichi (宮本常一), a central member of the group, was delegated to write the analysis for each picture. A detailed index was also provided to enable prospective readers to “pull out” objects or actions they were interested in. For example, if there was interest in various styles of sitting—sitting cross-legged, sitting with knees up, sitting on the ground and worshipping, etc.—one would consult the index to find the relevant pictures and the occasional analysis in order to discover the how, when, or why of people sitting in the various contexts provided. It was hoped that this would enable readers to understand not only everyday life in medieval Japan, but also to help them understand what has changed and what has remained the same throughout the years.

This labor finally resulted in the publication by Kadokawa Shoten in 1966 of the *Emakimono ni yoru Nihon Jōmin Seikatsu Ebiki* (『絵巻物による日本常民生活絵引』) in five volumes. Unfortunately, Shibusawa did not live to see what became of one of his favorite projects, having died in 1963. After the Institute for the Study of Japanese Folk Culture was incorporated into Kanagawa University (1981), the *Ebiki* was re-issued by the Heibonsha publishing house in 1984. It is this edition to which the Kanagawa University 21<sup>st</sup> Century COE Program, “Systemization of Nonwritten Cultural Materials for the Study of Human Societies”, has provided this translation.

The first two volumes of the original five have been translated, and re-titled *Multilingual Version of Pictopedia of Everyday Life in Medieval Japan, compiled from picture scrolls*. “Multilingual Version” refers to the translation of the original Japanese captions into English, Chinese, and Korean, in order to assist and encourage comparative studies in Asian folk culture studies.

As might be expected in pioneer works such as the original *Ebiki*, not all of the information or interpretations have stood the test of time. Subsequent new research reveals some inaccuracies in the captions or in the analyses provided, or at least casts doubt on certain statements. However, the editors have chosen to respect the efforts of the original compilers and have for the most part translated the text as it stands, leaving judgments of accuracy to the discretion of the reader.

It is hoped that this *Pictopedia* will deepen interest in the rich folk culture of Japan, and at the same time give a glimpse of an interesting page in the history of folk culture studies in Japan as written by Shibusawa Keizo and his associates.

John Boccellari