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The Works of Japanese Business Historians in 1984: Business History of Japan

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REPORT:

The Works of Japanese Business Historians in 1984: Business History of Japan

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In summarizing trends in research concerning Japanese business history in 1984, certain tendencies can be pointed out. First, research in the history of the *zaibatsu* has been even more active, displaying greater breadth and depth. Particularly, we can discern a tendency towards research which as its basis takes into account the contrast between established (*kisei*) and new (*shinko*) *zaibatsu*. Second, mainly in the field of mining, results have been forthcoming concerning labor and labor management problems. Third, interest has been further aroused in the history of marine transportation. On the other hand, there were almost no results in the field of shipbuilding. And fourth, the area of international relations, a complex field of research, took a new direction. It is an area in which, along with the already unfolding history of postwar business, substantial results can be expected.

I. Business in the Tokugawa Period

Though the Meiji period is included, the first work to be mentioned is the result of research focused on the Tokugawa period, the *Chogin* History Research Association's *Henkaku-ki no Shonin Shihon — Omi Shonin Chogin no Kenkyu*¹⁾ (Merchants in a Period of Transition: Research on the Omi Merchants and Financiers [*Chogin*]). This research, a cooperative effort by Kanji Ishii, Kunitoshi Suenaga, Naosuke Takamura, Reiko Hayashi, and Tetsu Yamaguchi, analyzes the activities and character of mercantile business in the period of transition from the *Bakuhau* (feudal domain) system to modern society. The *Chogin*, who developed into newly urbanized merchants by opening branches in Edo and Kyoto in the latter Tokugawa period, expanded into trading, financial and investment activities centered on their textile *tonya* (wholesale houses) in the Meiji period. The significance of research concerning mercantile business in a transition period is made apparent once again by this work. One of the coauthors, Suenaga, has written an article, "*Bakumatsu Doran-ki no Toshi Shonin Shihon no Doko — Omi Shonin Chogin no Baai*"²⁾ (Trends Invol-

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