



Documentation Center on Contemporary Japan

(Reischauer Institute,
Sponsor):

Literature on Modern Japanese Sociologists

Hideki Takemura

Assistant Professor, Keio University
Reischauer Institute Visiting
Scholar and Guest Columnist



This article discusses some important reference works concerning Japanese sociologists and introduces a new work published in December 1998 for which I was one of the editors. This work is: KAWAI Takao and TAKEMURA Hideki, eds. *Kindai Nihon shakaigakusha shoden: shoshiteki kōsatsu* (Brief Biographies of Modern Japanese Sociologists, with special bibliographical resources), Tokyo: Keisō shobō, 1998. The new book deals with some 140 Japanese sociologists in the period ranging from the first half of the nineteenth century to the latter half of the twentieth century. The articles provide individual short chronologies, photographs, biographical descriptions, and overviews of the works and research publications of each scholar.

Five major sociology reference works have been published previously in Japan. These include: *Shin shakaigaku jiten* (New Encyclopedia of Sociology), Yūhikaku, 1993; *Shakaigaku jiten* (Encyclopedia of Sociology), Kōbundō, 1988; *Gendai shakaigaku jiten* (Modern Encyclopedia of Sociology), Yūshindō, 1984; *Shakaigaku jiten* (Encyclopedia of Sociology), Yūhikaku, 1958; and *Shakaigaku jiten* (Encyclopedia of Sociology), Kawade shobō, 1944. Peculiarly, no such works were published in the 1960s and 1970s. The five main reference works can be introduced in order and then compared with

the new *Shoden* (Brief Biographies), which emphasizes entries about individual persons.

The *Shin shakaigaku jiten* (New Encyclopedia of Sociology) (Yūhikaku, 1993) was edited by Kiyomi Morioka, Tsutomu Shiobara and Yasuhei Honma. This has been the newest among the modern Japanese sociological works, and at 1726 pages the largest. 55 Japanese sociologists are included among the entries, of whom 32 are also covered by *Shoden*.

The *Shakaigaku jiten* (Encyclopedia of Sociology) (Kōbundō, 1988, 1231 pages) was edited by Munesuke Mita, Akira Kurihara and Yoshihisa Tanaka. This reference book has entries for 269 Japanese scholars, of whom 45 are also covered by *Shoden*. Although the entries are short, the feature of this work is the large number of entries. However, because a great many scholars outside of the field of sociology are also included, the number of sociologists proper is less than 100.

The *Gendai shakaigaku jiten* (Modern Encyclopedia of Sociology) (Yūshindō, 1984) was edited by Ryūichi Kitagawa. This is a 759 page book organized in 35 large-scale categories. They are not arranged alphabetically, but rather according to the important sociological concepts. The margins of the pages include entries on individual persons—photographs and short biographies—and among these 39 Japanese scholars are included. Of these, 30 scholars are also covered in *Shoden*. For looking up scholars, however, the number is inadequate.

The *Shakaigaku jiten* (Encyclopedia of Sociology) (Yūhikaku, 1958; 977 pages plus index of 83 pages) was edited by Tadashi Fukutake, Rokurō Hidaka and Akira Takahashi. This was the first real postwar sociology reference book. It has entries for 53 Japanese scholars, of whom 47 are also covered in *Shoden*. Special bibliographical attention is given to the publishers which produced the authors' works. Scholars active in 1958 were included.

The *Shakaigaku jiten* (Encyclopedia of Sociology) (Kawade shobō, 1944) was edited by Masamichi Shinmei. This was the first reference book on sociology in Japan. Although it was sup-

posed to be a collective work without an editor, Shinmei probably wrote the majority of the entries himself. The work contains two parts. The first, on the discipline of sociology, is systematically laid out based on the various separate subdisciplines. The second, on the history of sociology, consists of sections divided according to each national tradition; in each of these, after a national overview, is included a substantial number of entries on individual sociologists. Thus the book effectively serves the purpose of biographical reference. Entries for 72 Japanese sociologists are included, of whom 58 are covered in *Shoden*. This is the best source for learning about sociologists from early Meiji up through World War II.

The personal and biographical information in these five reference sources has many problems. First, because of space limitations the amount of information offered is insufficient. The only kind of information shown is the basic professional career, accomplishments and research publications for each person. A second problem lies in the disappearance of individuals: there is a tendency in the course of historical and generational transitions for many sociologists to be forgotten. The gap between the 1944 book and the postwar reference works is especially large. A third problem is a tendency to discuss only certain key issues important to the major sociologists in the mainstream of the sociological establishment. Treatment of the multifaceted research work of sociologists outside of the mainstream is limited. A fourth problem is that the books only value certain works of the major sociologists in certain set periods. The total creative contribution of individual scholars, including their formative periods and innovative ideas in their senior years, is not made clear. (Especially, wartime discourse is ignored.) In this connection a fifth problem appears. It is difficult to grasp the long-term careers of the individuals, meaning not only the comprehensive pictures of their theories and research accomplishments but also the ordinary human backgrounds of the scholars. Their places of origin, school experiences, employment, social networks, academic connections and so on fail to come into view. Finally, attention is needed to scholars who have been active outside the borders of Japan in the evolution of modern Japanese sociology.



The *Shoden* aims to overcome these problems. Because the amount of descriptive space available is from ten to twenty times greater, it is possible to include all of the basic source information on each individual. In addition, since critical evaluations of the scholars have been diverse depending on various historical moments and points of view, in order to be useful to later research which may deal with the diversity of perspectives the content of *Shoden* is packed with bibliographical references.

Fifteen persons are included as common entries in each of the older five reference books and also *Shoden*. These are the big names of Japanese sociology: Shōtarō Yoneda (1873-1945), Yasuma Takada (1883-1972), Teizō Toda (1887-1955), Jun'ichirō Matsumoto (1893-1947), Eitarō Suzuki (1894-1966), Hisatoshi Tanabe (1894-1962), Kazuta Kurauchi (1896-1988), Kizaemon Aruga (1897-1979), Masamichi Shimei (1898-1984), Kiyoto Furuno (1899-1979), Sei'ichi Kitano (1900-1982), Takashi Koyama (1900-1983), Tatsumi Makino (1905-1974), Ikutarō Shimizu (1907-1988) and Kunio Odaka (1908-1993).

The fifteen demonstrate two main features. One of these is their limited generational range. With the exception of Yoneda, they are restricted to those who graduated from universities under the old pre-WWII system, began their research activities in the Taishō or prewar Shōwa periods, and took up teaching in the new postwar university system. This is the generation which founded the still continuing Japan Sociological Society (Nihon shakaigakkai). Forgotten, however, are the sociologists of the previous generation, who organized the Japanese Institute of Sociology (Nippon shakaigakuin), founded by Tongo Tatebe and Shōtarō Yoneda in 1913, or (going back one generation further) the Sociological Society (Shakaigakkai) founded by Magoichi Nunokawa, Masayoshi Takagi, and Hiroyuki Katō in 1896 (later renamed the Association of Sociological Studies, Shakaigaku kenkyūkai). The other main feature is that the big name positions are occupied by graduates of Tokyo Imperial University and Kyoto Imperial University. This illustrates the third of the earlier-described problems, i.e. the limited treatment of sociolo-

gists located outside of the mainstream. Even setting aside the problem of restricted generational coverage, a number of sociologists graduated from Waseda University, Nihon University, Keio University, and others in the same period (even if the quantity was small). But in many cases sociologists, even though they did solid research which was known within their own universities, were surprisingly unknown outside them. *Shoden* includes such sociologists—even those forgotten within their own schools—and rediscovers them as a common resource for us today. *Shoden* also draws attention to nonacademics who can be considered sociologists: journalists such as Iwagorō Matsubara and Gen'nosuke Yokoyama, who made social observations of urban lower classes, Nyozezan Hasegawa, who was not only a journalist but a social critic, and social welfare activists including Tadashi Yamaguchi, Shinando Shiga, and Yaso'o Kusama, who were regional government officials.

Finally, focusing on sociologists active outside of Japanese national boundaries, *Shoden* discusses the research by foreign scholars on Japan and the necessity to situate them among those who have contributed to modern Japanese sociology. These include Charles Wirgman and Georges Ferdinand Bigot, who came to observe Japan as journalistic illustrators in the bakumatsu and Meiji periods, special foreign experts Edward S. Morse and Ernest Fennolosa, the Korean sociologists Kyung-durk Har, Hyun-joon Kim, the Chinese Fu Yan and Xiaotong Fei, Western researchers on Japan John Fee Embree, Ronald P. Dore, James Christian Abegglen, Robert Nelly Bellah, and the Japanese-American sociologist Tamotsu Shibutani. Of course, because their countries of origin and generations differ, these thirteen scholars are not treated uniformly. It should be mentioned that in the reference works of the 1990s Western scholars on Japan in the postwar period are prominent, and in the 1993 *Shin shakaigaku jiten* sociologists from Asian countries are also described to a considerable extent. However, certain problems are still present in the treatment of these foreign scholars: that is, total views of their work are not provided, pictures of their whole research activity are hard to discern, and Meiji period scholars are not treated.

In the previous issue of *Tsūshin*, Professor Gordon discussed the question of why people outside Japan study Japan. Along related lines, no one should think that because it is somehow naturally expected that people should study their own society, Japanese themselves do not need or do not have their own distinct history of reasons for studying Japan. There are probably a variety of answers possible to such questions of reasons, but by means of the method attempted in *Shoden*—paying attention to the whole life careers of individual scholars and examining together a multiplicity of such lives—the beginnings of answers can perhaps be found. Without overspecialization or pedantry, we seek to know how our predecessors wrestled with their ongoing inquiries and thus to critically inherit their experience. Therefore a compilation of the fundamental resource material was the editorial purpose of *Shoden*.

Indeed, in looking through the lives and research work of the some 140 sociologists provided in this reference work, a number of research themes can be detected running like veins of ore. There is no room to detail them here. However, the book is available in the Documentation Center on Contemporary Japan and it would be beneficial for readers to examine it. (Also, each of the five earlier reference works discussed is available in the Harvard-Yenching Library.) Meanwhile, the authors of *Shoden* are mostly younger sociologists and would be glad to receive inquiries about their work.

